

Mid Sussex District Council

District Plan 2021-2039

Assessment of the Impact of the SHELAA Sites on the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Version: 10th October 2022

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Introduction

1. The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 was adopted in March 2018. Policy DP4: Housing commits Mid Sussex District Council (the Council) to reviewing the District Plan. National planning policy also requires Local Plans to be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and then updated as required. The District Plan Review will result in a new District Plan 2021-2039.
2. As part of the review process, individuals, landowners, developers and site promoters were invited to put forward sites to be considered through the update to the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). The SHELAA will be a crucial piece of the evidence base for the District Plan Review. The sites submitted have been assessed for their potential for allocation as part of the District Plan Review process.
3. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that the potential impact of the SHELAA sites on the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has been considered in the preparation of the District Plan 2021-2039.
4. This paper sets out an approach to assess the potential impact of the SHELAA sites on the High Weald AONB. This forms part of the site selection process and background evidence for the District Plan Review. Each SHELAA site is assessed as a matter of planning judgement taking into account the legislation and policy context.
5. SHELAA sites within the High Weald AONB and SHELAA sites within the setting of the High Weald AONB have been assessed. This paper records the assessment of these SHELAA sites and has a conclusion as to the potential impact of the site on the High Weald AONB.
6. It is important to note that this paper is an assessment of the potential impact of the SHELAA sites on the High Weald AONB, rather than whether a SHELAA site is suitable for allocation in the District Plan 2021-2039. The process of determining whether it is acceptable development is through the site selection process for the District Plan. The decision on which sites are allocated in the District Plan 2021-2039 is a separate decision-making process.
7. This paper is the version for the Regulation 18 consultation. There will be ongoing work to refine the assessments as further information becomes available.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

8. An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is an area of land protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 for its outstanding natural beauty and landscape character. The purpose of the landscape designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. There are 34 AONBs in England covering 15% of the land.

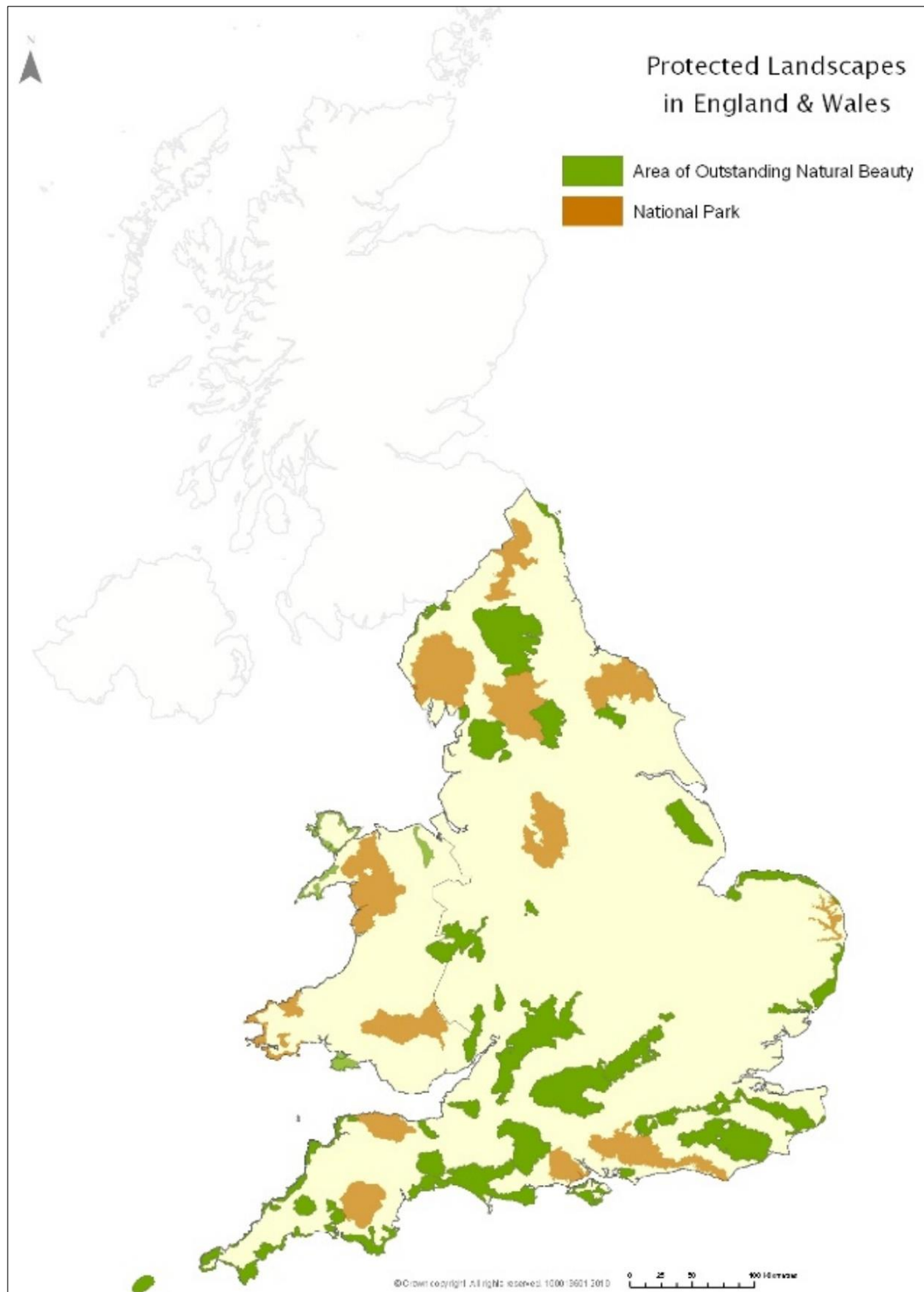


Figure 1 - Map of AONBs in England and Wales.¹

¹ Source: High Weald AONB: <https://www.highweald.org/learn-about/about-aonbs/protected-landscapes.html>

9. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000², Natural England can make orders to designate AONBs or vary the boundaries of existing ones within England. There is a prescribed process to designate or vary AONBs which includes deciding if a proposal meets the natural beauty criterion and if it is desirable to designate the land for the purpose of conserving and enhancing its natural beauty. Natural England must also define a detailed boundary for the AONB.
10. The natural beauty criterion could be a combination of factors such as³:
- Landscape quality, where natural or man-made landscape is good quality
 - Scenic quality, such as striking coastal landforms
 - Relative wildness, such as distance from housing or having few roads
 - Relative tranquillity, where natural sounds, such as streams or birdsong are predominant
 - Natural heritage features, such as distinctive geology or species and habitat
 - Cultural heritage, which can include the built environment that makes the area unique, such as archaeological remains or historic parkland.
11. It is the AONB as a whole that must satisfy the technical criteria of natural beauty. The weight and importance of factors indicating natural beauty may vary across the designation. The presence of incongruous features or degraded landscapes does not, in itself, detract from the value of the area as an AONB. The emphasis in these cases is on the second part of the designation purpose, that of enhancement of natural beauty⁴. Such cases may provide opportunities for nature recovery and they may still have an important role in climate change mitigation.

High Weald AONB

12. The High Weald AONB was designated in 1983. It has an area of 1,461 sq km and covers four counties and 11 districts (Figure 2). Nearly 50% of Mid Sussex District is within the High Weald AONB; there are 163.6 sq km of AONB land within Mid Sussex District which is approximately 11% of the High Weald AONB (Figure 3).

² Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, sections 82-84.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/areas-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-aonbs-designation-and-management>

⁴ High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024



Figure 2 - The High Weald AONB.⁵

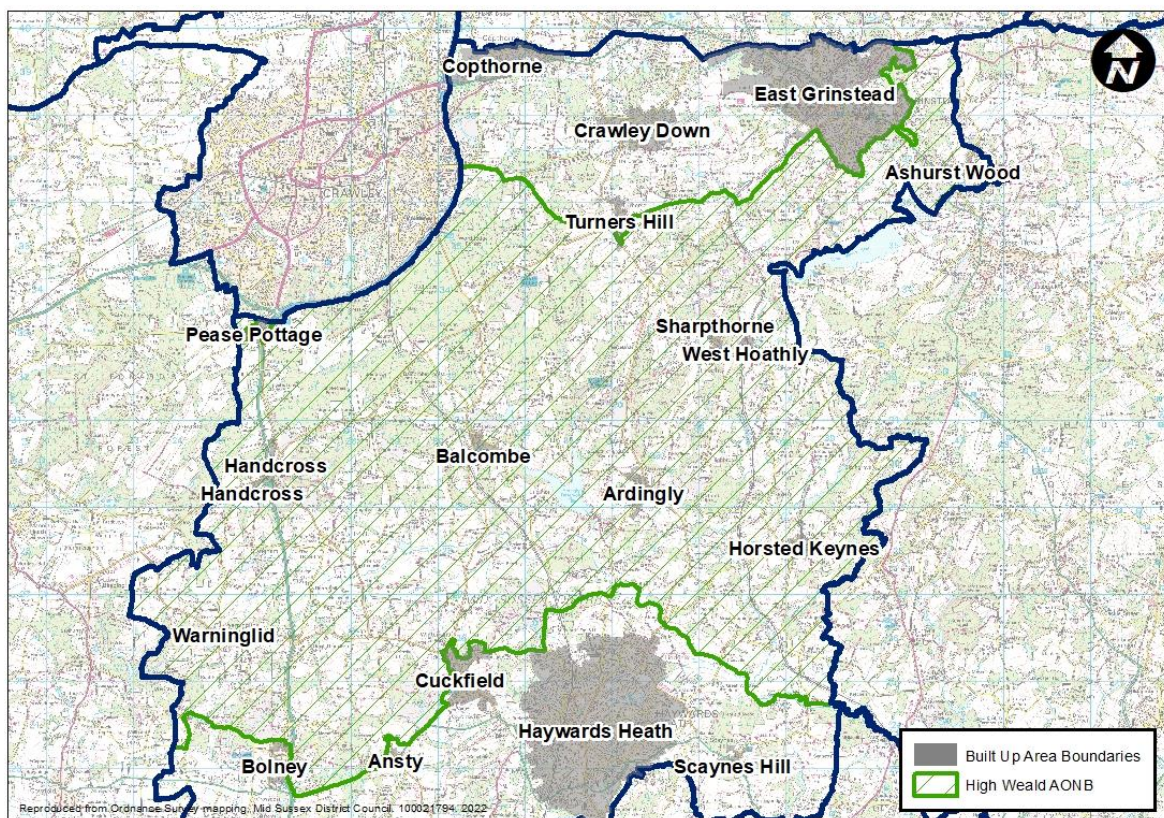


Figure 3 - The High Weald AONB in Mid Sussex District.

13. The High Weald AONB is a historic landscape characterised by a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone, with numerous gill streams and woodlands. Small irregularly-shaped and productive fields typically used for livestock grazing are often bounded by

⁵ Source: High Weald AONB: <https://www.highweald.org/learn-about/about-aonbs/high-weald-boundary.html>

hedgerows and woodland. Dispersed historic settlements of farmsteads and late Mediaeval villages are characteristics as are historic routeways.

14. The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 is the strategy for looking after the High Weald AONB in order to achieve the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the High Weald AONB. The Management Plan can be used to guide environmental land management and assess the impact of development or other changes on the High Weald AONB⁶.
15. The High Weald AONB Statement of Significance sets out what comprises the natural beauty of the High Weald (Figure 4).

The High Weald AONB Statement of Significance

The natural beauty of the High Weald comprises:

- **Five defining components of character** that have made the High Weald a recognisably distinct and homogenous area for at least the last 700 years.
 1. **Geology, landform and water systems** – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams.
 2. **Settlement** – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Mediaeval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.
 3. **Routeways** – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).
 4. **Woodland** – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings.
 5. **Field and Heath** – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heath, and inned river valleys.
- **Land-based economy and related rural life** bound up with, and underpinning, the observable character of the landscape with roots extending deep into history. An increasingly broad-based economy but with a significant land-based sector and related community life focused on mixed farming (particularly family farms and smallholdings), woodland management and rural crafts.
- **Other qualities** and features that are connected to the interaction between the landscape and people and which enrich character components. Such qualities and features enhance health and wellbeing, and foster enjoyment and appreciation of the beauty of nature. These include locally distinctive features which enrich the character components such as historic parks and gardens, orchards, hop gardens, veteran trees, along with their rich and varied biodiversity, and a wide range of appealing and locally distinctive historic buildings including oast houses, farm buildings, Wealden hall houses and their associated features such as clay-tile catslide roofs. People value the wonderful views and scenic beauty of the High Weald with its relative tranquillity. They appreciate the area's ancientness and sense of history, its intrinsically dark landscape with the opportunity to see our own galaxy – the Milky Way – and the ability to get close to nature through the myriad public rights of way.

Figure 4 - The High Weald AONB Statement of Significance.

⁶ <https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

Legislation and policy context

16. The legal framework for AONBs is set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Section 82 provides for the purposes of AONBs:

82(1) Where it appears to Natural England that an area which is in England but not in a National Park is of such outstanding natural beauty that it is desirable that the provisions of this Part relating to areas designated under this section should apply to it, Natural England may, for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area, by order designate the area for the purposes of this Part as an area of outstanding natural beauty.

17. Section 85 places a statutory duty on all relevant authorities, which includes Mid Sussex District Council:

85(1) In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.

18. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; July 2021) provides the Government's policy for conserving and enhancing landscape beauty:

176. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads⁵⁹. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

⁵⁹ English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 provides further guidance and information about their statutory purposes, management and other matters.

177 When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development⁶⁰, other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for in some other way; and

- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

⁶⁰ For the purposes of paragraphs 176 and 177, whether a proposal is ‘major development’ is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.

19. There is further advice contained in Planning Practice Guidance:

Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721

How can planning policies conserve and enhance landscapes?

The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.

Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.

Paragraph 040: Reference ID: 8-040-20190721

Do planning policies and decisions need to take account of management plans for National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty?

Management plans for National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty do not form part of the statutory development plan, but they help to set out the strategic context for development. They provide evidence of the value and special qualities of these areas, provide a basis for cross-organisational work to support the purposes of their designation and show how management activities contribute to their protection, enhancement and enjoyment. They may contain information which is relevant when preparing plan policies, or which is a material consideration when assessing planning applications.

Paragraph: 041 Reference ID: 8-041-20190721

How should development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty be approached?

The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that the scale and extent of development in these areas should be limited, in view of the importance of conserving and enhancing their

landscapes and scenic beauty. Its policies for protecting these areas may mean that it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs for development in full through the plan-making process, and they are unlikely to be suitable areas for accommodating unmet needs from adjoining (non-designated) areas. Effective joint working between planning authorities covering designated and adjoining areas, through the preparation and maintenance of statements of common ground, is particularly important in helping to identify how housing and other needs can best be accommodated.

All development in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Beauty will need to be located and designed in a way that reflects their status as landscapes of the highest quality. Where applications for major development come forward, paragraph [177] of the Framework sets out a number of particular considerations that should apply when deciding whether permission should be granted.

20. The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 has a policy on the High Weald AONB. This policy has been reviewed through the District Plan Review and a few minor updates have been proposed (Figure 5).

Policy DPC4: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on the Policies Maps, will only be permitted where it conserves and enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, in particular;

- **the identified landscape features or components of natural beauty and to their setting;**
- **the traditional interaction of people with the landscape and nature, and appropriate land management;**
- **the historic landscape, character and local distinctiveness, historic settlement pattern, sense of place and setting of the AONB; and**
- **the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage.**

Development should demonstrate a positive contribution to the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan and take account of the High Weald Housing Design Guide including applying a landscape-led design approach that reflects High Weald character; using high quality architecture; responding to the historic pattern and character of settlements; and protecting dark skies.

Proposals which support the land-based economy and social well-being of local communities within the AONB that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.

Development on land that contributes to the setting of the AONB will only be permitted where it does not detract from the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the AONB, and in particular should not adversely affect the views into and out of the AONB by virtue of its location or design.

Figure 5 - Draft District Plan 2021-2039 Policy DPC4: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

21. Two neighbourhood plans in Mid Sussex District also include a policy for the High Weald AONB: Ansty, Staplefield & Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan, and Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan.
22. To summarise, the national and local policy position is that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of AONBs, and that proposals regarded as major development should not be permitted other than in exceptional circumstances and where they are in the public interest. The social and economic needs of communities and businesses within the High Weald AONB also need to be considered so that these remain thriving places that meet the needs of current and future generations.

Methodology

23. Taking into account the legislation and policy context, an approach has been developed to assess the SHELAA sites for their potential impact on the High Weald AONB. This approach intends to be a clear framework to assess each SHELAA site in a consistent way and to inform the site selection process for the District Plan Review. This is in the context that the determination of whether a proposed development is major development is a matter of planning judgement for the decision maker.
24. The methodology for the District Plan Review has been developed and refined following previous work for the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) on whether each of the proposed site allocations could be regarded as major development. The approach for the Site Allocations DPD was developed and refined in discussion with the High Weald AONB Unit, Natural England and other partners across the High Weald AONB and other protected landscapes⁷. It is important to note that whilst the Inspector in his report for the Site Allocations DPD came to a different view for one of the proposed site allocations and whether it could be regarded as major development (a major development assessment is a matter of planning judgement to be decided by the decision maker), he did not discuss nor disagree with the methodology and approach taken. As such it is considered appropriate to continue with a similar approach for this paper.
25. The assessment of the SHELAA sites and their potential impact on the High Weald AONB has been undertaken as a desk-top exercise, however, the sites have been visited as part of the SHELAA and site selection assessment process and information recorded from these site visits has been taken into account. Site visits specifically to inform this assessment have not been undertaken and so specific details about the landscape and potential visual impact that may arise if a site is developed have not been included in the assessment tables.
26. Various sources have been drawn on to inform the assessment of SHELAA sites. These sources include:
 - High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024
 - High Weald AONB character component mapping
 - Landscape character assessments
 - Historic environment record

⁷ Site Allocations Development Plan Document: Major Development in the High Weald AONB Topic Paper (December 2020).

27. The first part of the assessment is a high-level screening that is undertaken as a desk-top assessment following review of various data sources. The high-level screening considers the potential impact of the SHELAA sites on the natural beauty in the High Weald AONB as well as an initial indication of whether development of the site is likely to be regarded as major development in line with paragraph 177 of the NPPF. Each character component is given a conclusion based on the presence or absence of features and how development of the SHELAA site may impact the High Weald AONB landscape. It is important to note that this high-level screening assessment is not intended to provide a score for the character component nor is it intended to give more weight to certain character components. As noted earlier in this paper, the presence or absence of features does not detract from the value of the AONB.

28. The high-level screening assessment conclusions are:

	Development of the site is likely to have a lower impact on the High Weald AONB
	Development of the site is likely to have a moderate impact on the High Weald AONB
	Development of the site is likely to have a higher impact on the High Weald AONB

29. This high-level screening assessment can be found in Appendix 3 of this paper.

30. Following this high-level screening assessment, a more detailed assessment is undertaken for the SHELAA sites that have progressed further in the site selection process to assess each site against the High Weald AONB character components. A conclusion of the potential impact on the High Weald AONB has been made based on a planning judgement. The conclusion for potential impact on the High Weald AONB is termed Low / Moderate / High. A conclusion of Low impact is generally only used for previously developed or brownfield sites.

31. The more detailed assessment of SHELAA sites is based on the following questions which have been provided by the High Weald AONB Unit who has recommended using these questions to assess the impact of the High Weald AONB (Figure 6).

Character component	Questions for assessment
Geology, landform and water systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the topography high or steep? Would development of the site require significant cut and fill or other changes to landform and soil disturbance? Are there any particular geological features such as sandstone outcrops? Are there any springs, ponds or watercourses on or downslope from the site?
Settlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the site well-related to an existing settlement? Is the proposed scale of development proportionate to the size of the existing settlement? Does the site form part of the separation between settlements (including farmsteads) and would its development result in their coalescence? Could it be developed in a way that would reflect the historic settlement pattern? Would this impact on the capacity of the site? Are there any historic buildings on or near the site that would be affected?

Character component	Questions for assessment
Routeways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the site accessed via historic routeways? • Would accessing the site impact on the features or ecological function of these routeways? • Are there any historic routeways (including PROWs) crossing the site? • Could these be retained on their historic alignment with any accompanying features (ditches, banks etc) protected? • Could their setting and public enjoyment be conserved? • How would the above impact on the capacity of the site?
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there ancient woodland on, adjacent to or downstream from the site? • How would retaining a minimum of 15m buffer to this ancient woodland impact on the capacity of the site? • Is there other woodland (especially priority habitat) on or near the site? • Are there important trees on or near the site? • Can the site be accessed and developed without affecting these? • How would retention of these features impact on the capacity of the site?
Field and heath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the site form part of a medieval field system according to the Historic Landscape Characterisation? • Does the site have historic field boundaries? • Is the field associated with a historic farmstead? • Are there any visible historic features within the site such as banks, ditches or former building platforms? • Is there any information available about the ecology of the site (for instance priority habitat or recent phase 1 survey)? • Does the site impact on heathland? • Would the capacity of the site allow for biodiversity net gain?
Land-based economy and related rural life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would the capacity of the site enable the provision of affordable housing? • Is it being put forward as a wholly affordable housing site? • If it is an employment site will it support land-based industries such as agriculture, horticulture or forestry? • Will it add to community facilities to support local communities?
Other qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the site in a tranquil area? • Is the area particularly dark? • Are there long views into or out of the site? • Are any recreation assets affected by the development? • Are there any cultural associations of the site or its surroundings that would be affected by its development?

Figure 6 - Assessment questions for the SHELAA sites.

32. The responses to the questions have been given a colour to indicate a likely more positive or negative impact, however, it is not intended that the conclusions indicate a score or weighting to be applied to each character component. As noted earlier in this paper, there are likely to be

opportunities for enhancing the AONB and this would include nature recovery and a role in climate change mitigation.

33. These detailed assessments can be found in Appendix 3 of this paper.
34. The overarching landscape details and characteristics for the High Weald AONB is provided in Appendix 1 of this paper. These landscape details and characteristics provide the context for the assessment and are applicable to the SHELAA sites within the High Weald AONB in Mid Sussex District.
35. Broad recommendations for the SHELAA sites within Mid Sussex District are made based on the High Weald AONB Statement of Significance. These recommendations should be taken into account should the SHELAA site be allocated, in pre-application advice and at the time of a planning application. The recommendations are important for the design and function of the site. The recommendations can be found in Appendix 2 of this paper.
36. For completeness, SHELAA sites both within the High Weald AONB and within the setting of the High Weald AONB have been assessed using the same approach but taking into account the differing requirements and considerations set out in national planning policy (NPPF paragraph 176).
37. Should a SHELAA site be taken forward as a potential allocation in the District Plan, a further assessment will be undertaken to determine if it is likely to be regarded as major development at the plan-making stage.

Appendix 1: Landscape Details and Characteristics

Landscape Details and Characteristics

The table below sets out the overarching landscape details and characteristics for the High Weald AONB. They are applicable for the SHELAA sites within Mid Sussex District.

Landscape details and characteristics	
National Character Area	High Weald National Character Area
Mid Sussex Landscape Character Area	High Weald Landscape Character Area / Worth Forest Landscape Character Area / High Weald Fringes Landscape Character Area / Ouse Valley Landscape Character Area / High Weald Plateau Landscape Character Area
West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment	Land Management Guidelines HW1: High Weald / HW2: High Weald Forests / HW3: Ouse Valley / HW4: High Weald Fringes Character Guidelines Local Distinctiveness: The High Weald Character Area
High Weald AONB	An AONB is a nationally-valued landscape with a high status of protection (NPPF paragraphs 176 and 177). AONBs are recognised internationally by the IUCN as 'Category V – Protected Landscapes', important as cultural landscapes.
	The High Weald AONB is a small-scale landscape of small fields, small woodlands and dispersed historic farmsteads and hamlets. The landscape also has perceptual qualities such as tranquillity, dark skies, views and a sense of naturalness.
	The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 is the strategy for looking after the High Weald AONB in order to achieve the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the High Weald AONB. The Management Plan can be used to guide environmental land management and assess the impact of development or other changes on the High Weald AONB.
	Some sites may be situated on the Weald Forest Ridge, which is the highest ridge of the High Weald AONB (328km ² in the north and west of the AONB). The landscape character of the Weald Forest Ridge is defined by the remnants of four mediaeval hunting forests.
	According to Roberts and Wrathmell's <i>An Atlas of Rural Settlement in England</i> , the High Weald AONB is classified as South-Eastern Province: Weald Sub-province (Western Weald). It has a medium to high density of settlement dispersion mainly formed of historic farmsteads and hamlets with later villages.
	The High Weald AONB contributes to ecosystem services. It provides Regulating Services (the benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem services), for example, in the form of carbon storage by woodland. The High Weald AONB has Provisioning Services (the products obtained from ecosystems) including timber and food production. Supporting Services (the services that are necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services) are present such as soil formation, nutrient cycling and water cycling. The landscape also provides Cultural Services (the non-material

	benefits people obtain from ecosystems) in the form of cultural heritage, recreation and tourism opportunities and aesthetic experience. Together these ecosystem services are an important part of the High Weald AONB landscape and its natural beauty.
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Appendix 2: Recommendations

Recommendations

The table below sets out the overarching recommendations for the SHELAA sites within Mid Sussex District based on the High Weald AONB Statement of Significance.

The potential for an impact on AONB purposes for which the area has been designated (as set out in the High Weald Statement of Significance)		
Character component: Geology, landform and water systems		
Objective G1 - To restore the natural function of rivers, water courses and water bodies	Objective G2 - To protect and enhance soils, sandstone outcrops, and other important landform and geological features	Objective G3 - To help secure climatic conditions and rates of change which support continued conservation and enhancement of the High Weald's valued landscape and habitats
Recommendations: The site should be designed to protect river catchments taking into account planning policies and best practice. For example, it may be appropriate to have SuDS on-site. Best practice should be complied with to protect soils during construction from disturbance, compaction, pollution and erosion. Undisturbed soils should be protected and measures should be taken to minimise sterilisation of soils by permanent impermeable surfaces. The site should seek to achieve sustainable construction and contribute to climate change mitigation and adaption through its design and in accordance with planning policies and best practice. The site should encourage sustainable transport.		
Character component: Settlement		
Objective S1 - To reconnect settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside	Objective S2 - To protect the historic pattern and character of settlement	Objective S3 - To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald and ensure development reflects the character of the High Weald in its scale, layout and design
Recommendations: The site should achieve biodiversity net gain in line with statutory requirements, planning policies and best practice. There should be consideration of how the site supports ecosystem services which should be taken into account in the design of the site. The site should be designed according to the principles set out in the High Weald Housing Design Guide and the High Weald AONB Colour Study. Appropriate use of colour for the buildings may help to reduce the visual impact of the site.		
Character component: Routeways		
Objective R1 - To maintain the historic pattern and features of routeways	Objective R2 - To enhance the ecological function of routeways	
Recommendations: The site should seek opportunities in its design to improve the ecological function of routeways.		

Character component: Woodland			
Objective W1 - To maintain the existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland	Objective W2 - To enhance the ecological quality and functioning of woodland at a landscape scale	Objective W3 - To protect the archaeology and historic assets of AONB woodlands	Objective W4 - To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets
Recommendations: The site should seek opportunities to retain all or some of the existing trees on the site in accordance with planning policies. The site should use locally grown and local provenance stock for tree planting and avoid imported stock or soil. Any archaeology found during construction should be investigated in line with standard requirements. The site should seek opportunities to use local wood in its construction, and for any fencing and gates.			
Character component: Field and heath			
Objective FH1 - To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management	Objective FH2 - To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands	Objective FH3 - To enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats	Objective FH4 - To protect the archaeology and historic assets of field and heath
Recommendations: Development should be avoided on the best and most versatile agricultural land. Opportunities should be taken to avoid soil disturbance, compaction, erosion and pollution. There may be opportunities to support local food producers once the site is occupied. Opportunities should be taken to retain hedges, ditches and other boundary features. Connectivity for wildlife should be maintained between the site and its associated boundary features with the fields to the south. The site should achieve biodiversity net gain. Any archaeology found during construction should be investigated in line with standard requirements.			
Land-based economy and related rural life			
Objective LBE1 - To improve returns from, and thereby increase entry and retention in, farming, forestry, horticulture and other land management activities that conserve and enhance natural beauty		Objective LBE2 - To improve amenities, infrastructure (including the provision of appropriate affordable housing), and skills development for rural communities and related sectors that contribute positively to conserving and enhancing natural beauty	
Recommendations: There may be opportunities for the site to contribute towards land management activities, for example, through the construction phase by using local forestry and timber supplies.			

There may be opportunities to provide suitable housing for land-based workers. The site should seek opportunities to contribute to local communities and community services. The site may help support rural services and amenities such as bus services, village shops and the post office through the additional people that the housing will bring.

Other qualities

Objective OQ1 - To increase opportunities for learning about and celebrating the character of the High Weald	Objective OQ2 - To increase the contribution of individuals and communities to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB	Objective OQ3 - To develop and manage access to maximise opportunities for everyone to enjoy, appreciate and understand the character of the AONB while conserving its natural beauty	Objective OQ4 - To protect and promote the perceptual qualities that people value
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Recommendations:

Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies (such as through dark sky-friendly lighting) need to be considered through the design process and masterplan for the site.

There may be opportunities to promote the High Weald AONB.

Appendix 3: High-Level Screening Assessment

High-Level Screening Assessment

Each SHELAA site is assessed as a matter of planning judgement and it is recognised that detailed landscape and design work may help to reduce any impact on the High Weald AONB and provide opportunities for its conservation and enhancement. The high-level screening assessment conclusions are:

	Development of the site is likely to have a lower impact on the High Weald AONB
	Development of the site is likely to have a moderate impact on the High Weald AONB
	Development of the site is likely to have a higher impact on the High Weald AONB

Note this high-level screening assessment provides an indication of the potential level of impact on the High Weald AONB; it does not draw any conclusions as to the overall suitability of the site for allocation. That decision is made through the site selection process and takes into account other factors and is documented elsewhere.

The specific assessment criteria in relation to the natural beauty of the High Weald AONB are:

Geology, landform and water systems

Assessment	
Factors	Water courses, water bodies and sandstone outcrops
Data Source	High Weald AONB Unit GIS data, MSDC GIS data
	Present in proximity to the site
	Present on site boundaries and/ or adjoining the site
	Present on site

Settlement

Assessment	
Factors	Historic settlement pattern, relationship to existing settlement, historic farmstead
Data Source	High Weald AONB Unit GIS data, MSDC GIS data
	The site would reflect the historic settlement pattern and is not a historic farmstead
	The site relates to the existing settlement
	The site does not reflect the historic settlement pattern and/ or is not well-related to the existing settlement and/ or is a historic farmstead

Routeways

Assessment	
Factors	PROW and historic routeways
Data Source	High Weald AONB Unit GIS data, MSDC GIS data
	Present in proximity to the site
	Present on site boundaries and/ or adjoining the site
	Present on site

Woodland

Assessment	
Factors	Woodland, ancient woodland, mature trees and hedgerows
Data Source	MSDC GIS data
	Present in proximity to the site
	Present on site boundaries and/ or adjoining the site
	Present on site

Field and heath

Assessment	
Factors	Mediaeval field system or historic field boundaries
Data Source	High Weald AONB Unit GIS data
	Historic field systems in proximity to the site/ no historic field systems nearby
	The site is partly a historic field system or shares a boundary with historic field systems
	The site is wholly a historic field system

Land-based economy and related rural life

Assessment	
Factors	Provision of affordable housing
Data Source	Proposed site yield (number of units)
	Rural exception site or policy compliant affordable housing provision
	Some provision of affordable housing (not policy compliant)
	No affordable housing provision (not policy compliant)

Other qualities

Assessment	
Factors	Tranquillity, dark skies, long views
Data Source	CPRE Dark Skies Analysis GIS data, site visits
	The site is within an existing settlement or in proximity to existing road noise or is affected by artificial lighting such as street lighting
	The site adjoins an existing settlement or may have dark skies or has views from the site
	The site is in a tranquil rural area or has dark skies or has long views

Major development (only for sites within the High Weald AONB)

Assessment	
Factors	NPPF paragraph 177 – note this is an initial consideration of major development and a further major development assessment may be required
Data Source	Type of development, proposed site yield (number of units), AONB components
	Not likely to be major development
	May potentially be regarded as major development
	Likely to be major development

Sites within the High Weald AONB

Sites within the High Weald AONB		Natural beauty of the High Weald AONB							Major development in the AONB
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Geology, landform and water systems	Settlement	Routeways	Woodland	Field and heath	Land-based economy and related rural life	Other qualities	
Ansty									
736	Broad location north and east of Ansty								
Ardingly									
261	Land east of High Street and Lindfield Road, Ardingly								
495	Butchers Field, south of Street Lane, Ardingly								
568	Middle Lodge and land to the south, Lindfield Road, Ardingly								
691	Land east of High Street, Ardingly								
1076	Land at North Field, College Road, Ardingly								
Ashurst Wood									
186	Land east of Beeches Lane, Ashurst Wood								
207	Land at Dirty Lane/ Hammerwood Road, Ashurst Wood								
634	Land west of Dirty Lane, Ashurst Wood								
984	The Paddocks, Lewes Road, Ashurst Wood								
997	Ivy Dene Industrial Estate, Ivy Dene Lane, Ashurst Wood								
Balcombe									
165	Land south of Oldlands Avenue (Vintens Nursery), Balcombe								
929	Land to the west of the Rectory, Haywards Heath Road, Balcombe								
Bolney									

Sites within the High Weald AONB		Natural beauty of the High Weald AONB							Major development in the AONB
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Geology, landform and water systems	Settlement	Routeways	Woodland	Field and heath	Land-based economy and related rural life	Other qualities	
155	Aurora Ranch Caravan Park, London Road, Bolney								
541	Land adj. to Packway House (north of Bolney Parcel B), Bolney								
1023	Badgers Brook, London Road, Bolney								
Cuckfield									
89	Land at South Taylors Barn, Whitemans Green/ Brook Street, Cuckfield								
420	Land north of Brainsmead, Cuckfield								
550	Land east of Whitemans Green, Cuckfield								
806	Land west of London Road, Cuckfield								
East Grinstead									
17	Land adj. Great Harwood Farm House off Harwoods Lane, East Grinstead								
145	Land east of Fairlight Lane, Holtye Road, East Grinstead								
198	Land off West Hoathly Way, East Grinstead								
598	Land south of Edinburgh Way, East Grinstead								
615	Land east of Stuart Way, East Grinstead								
733	Land between 43 and 59 Hurst Farm Road, East Grinstead								
850	Land to the east of Russetts, Holtye Road, East Grinstead								
1024	Land at Brook House Farm, Turners Hill Road, East Grinstead								
1027	Land at Coombe Hill Road, East Grinstead								
Handcross									
181	Land west of Truggers, Handcross								

Sites within the High Weald AONB		Natural beauty of the High Weald AONB							Major development in the AONB
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Geology, landform and water systems	Settlement	Routeways	Woodland	Field and heath	Land-based economy and related rural life	Other qualities	
670	Land at Coos Lane, Horsham Road, Handcross								
987	Land to the west of Park Road, Handcross								
1106	Land at Hyde Lodge, London Road, Handcross								
Horsted Keynes									
68	Farm Buildings, Jeffreys Farm, Lewes Road, Horsted Keynes								
69	Jeffrey's Farm Northern Fields (Ludwell Field adj. Keysford Lane and Sugar Lane)								
748	The Old Rectory, Church Lane, Horsted Keynes								
781	Land to the south of Robyns Barn, Birchgrove Road, Horsted Keynes								
893	Land west of Church Lane, Horsted Keynes								
945	Lucas Farm, Birchgrove Road, Horsted Keynes								
971	Jeffrey's Farm Southern Fields								
1021	King Field to north of Ludwell, Station Road, Horsted Keynes								
1051	Land south of The Old Police House Field, Danehill Lane, Horsted Keynes								
1052	Lucas Farm (whole farm), Birchgrove Road, Horsted Keynes								
Pease Pottage									
219	Land at former Driving Range, Horsham Road, Pease Pottage								
581	Woodhurst Farmhouse, Old Brighton Road South, Pease Pottage								
603	Land to the west of Woodhurst Farm, Old Brighton Road South, Pease Pottage								

Sites within the High Weald AONB		Natural beauty of the High Weald AONB							Major development in the AONB
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Geology, landform and water systems	Settlement	Routeways	Woodland	Field and heath	Land-based economy and related rural life	Other qualities	
674	Land north of Pease Pottage, West of Old Brighton Road, Pease Pottage								
818	Land north of the former Golf House, Horsham Road, Pease Pottage								
Sharpthorne									
386	Ibstock Brickworks, Sharpthorne								
1064	West Hoathly (Ibstock) Brickworks (large site), Sharpthorne								
Turners Hill									
474	Land adj. to 18 East Street, Turners Hill								
569	Land rear of Withypitts, Selsfield Road, Turners Hill								
916	Land on East Street and Withypitts Paddock, Turners Hill								
West Hoathly									
653	Webbs Mead, Land west of Broadfield, West Hoathly								
1013	Land at Hoathly Hill, West Hoathly								

Sites within the setting of the High Weald AONB

Sites within the setting of the High Weald AONB		Natural beauty of the High Weald AONB						
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Geology, landform and water systems	Settlement	Routeways	Woodland	Field and heath	Land-based economy and related rural life	Other qualities
18	Crabbet Park, Old Hollow, near Crawley					No data		
556	Land east of Borde Hill Lane, Haywards Heath					No data		
793	Land at Ansty Farm, Cuckfield Road, Ansty					No data		
1029	Land at Greenacre, Deaks Lane, Ansty					No data		
1060	Land north of Hill Place Farm buildings, Turners Hill Road, East Grinstead					No data		
1066	Land north of Springfield Close, north of Bolney							
1067	Land south of Hill Place Farm buildings, Turners Hill Road, East Grinstead					No data		
1096	Land at Hangman's Acre, Acre Farm, Lindfield					No data		

Appendix 3: Detailed Assessment

(Presented in a separate document)

Appendix 4: Assessment Conclusions

Sites within the High Weald AONB

Sites within the High Weald AONB		Conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
68	Farm Buildings, Jeffreys Farm, Lewes Road, Horsted Keynes	Low – provided it is farmstead-type development	<p>There are no watercourses or waterbodies on or adjacent to the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology. The site is to the west of Horsted Keynes and Jeffreys Farm is a historic farmstead. The site is separated from the main village by farmland and Sugar Lane. Farmstead-type development may be appropriate to protect the character and historic settlement pattern. Sugar Lane and Lewes Road to the east of the site are historic drove routeways. Keysford Lane to the north of the site is a historic lane. There are no PROW in close proximity to the site. There are mature trees within the site and on the site boundaries. There is ancient woodland to the south of the site. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.</p> <p>If the site were to be considered suitable for residential development, the site would need to be carefully designed to ensure the character and historic settlement pattern is protected. It is likely that units would need to be small and tightly knit to reflect farmstead form.</p>
145	Land east of Fairlight Lane, Holtye Road, East Grinstead	Moderate	<p>There are no watercourses or waterbodies on or adjacent to the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology. The site is to the north-east of East Grinstead and is outside of the built-up area boundary. It is separated from the main built-up area by a track and there is dispersed development and countryside to the north and east of the site. Development of the site would extend the settlement of East Grinstead into the AONB. Holtye Road is a historic lane as is the track forming the western boundary of the site. The track is also a PROW footpath. There are mature trees within the site and on the site boundaries. Ashplats Wood is to the south of the site. Development of the site would result in the loss of currently undeveloped land, potentially agricultural land or valued grassland. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.</p>

Sites within the High Weald AONB		Conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
			Whilst the site does not appear to directly impact on the AONB character components, development of this site would represent encroachment of the settlement into the AONB. The track to the west of the site currently forms a defensible boundary to the settlement. Development of this site may not fit in with the dispersed nature of the surrounding development.
155	Aurora Ranch Caravan Park, London Road, Bolney	Moderate	<p>There is a watercourse in the east of the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology. The site is to the north of Bolney and outside the built-up area boundary. The Bolney Stage to the north-west of the site is a Grade II listed building and on the site of a historic farmstead (Fords Farm) with significant loss. The site is separated from the main village of Bolney. London Road to the east of the site is a historic drove routeway. There are no PROW in close proximity to the site. There are mature trees on the site and site boundaries. There is woodland to the east, north and south between the site and the A23. There is no ancient woodland in close proximity to the site. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.</p> <p>Whilst the site is previously developed land and does not appear to directly impact on the AONB character components, residential development of this site would represent a significant scale of development within the AONB outside the built-up area of Bolney and separated from the main village.</p>
198	Land off West Hoathly Way, East Grinstead	Moderate	<p>There are no waterbodies on or adjacent to the site. There are watercourses to the north and east of the site which are part of the River Medway catchment. There is ghyll woodland to the south of the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site. The site is outside the built-up area but there is low density development to the west of the site. Sunnyside Recreation Ground is to the north of the site. West Hoathly Road to the west of the site is a historic lane. A historic route now a PROW lies to the north of the site beyond Sunnyside Recreation Ground. Coombe Hill Road is a historic route and PROW. There are mature trees on the site boundaries and there is ancient woodland adjacent to the site on its eastern boundary. This would require the appropriate buffer in line with policy requirements. There is ghyll woodland to the south of the site. Development of the site would result in the loss of currently undeveloped</p>

Sites within the High Weald AONB		Conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
			land, potentially agricultural land or valued grassland. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken. Whilst the site does not appear to directly impact on the AONB character components, there is likely to be loss of the mediaeval field system and potential impact on the ghyll woodland. Development would represent encroachment into the countryside, however, careful design of its layout and materials along with an appropriate defensible boundary may help to mitigate the impact. A layout should be characteristic of the surrounding settlement pattern to avoid the site appearing more urban than its surroundings and to take into account the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide, however, it may be difficult to satisfactorily accommodate the proposed site yield when the surrounding settlement pattern is large houses in big plots.
219	Land at former Driving Range, Horsham Road, Pease Pottage	Moderate	There is a pond within the site and a watercourse to the north of the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology on part of the site. The site is to the north-west of Pease Pottage and outside the built-up area. There is residential development to the south of the site. Horsham Road to the south of the site is a historic ridgeway route. There are no PROW within or adjacent to the site. There are mature trees within the site and on the site boundaries. There is ancient woodland in the south-west of site which will require an appropriate buffer in line with policy requirements. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken. The site may directly impact on the AONB woodland character component. Development of this site would reduce the green gap between Pease Pottage and Crawley and contribute to erosion of the countryside in this part of the AONB.
386	Ibstock Brickworks, Sharpthorne	Moderate	The site is previously developed land linked to the West Hoathly Brickworks. Consideration will need to be given to any industrial archaeology associated with the brickworks. There is a pond on-site with more ponds nearby on other parts of the wider brickworks site. There are watercourses in close proximity to the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology on part of the site. The site is to the north of Sharpthorne and is part of the historic settlement. There are PROW and historic routeways near to the site. There are

Sites within the High Weald AONB		Conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
			<p>mature trees on the site boundaries and a parcel of ancient woodland opposite the site on the other side of the Bluebell Railway. There is further woodland nearby as well as hedgerows. Historic field systems lie to the east of the site. As the village of Sharphorne is to the south of the site and countryside to the north of the site, the site may benefit from some tranquillity and dark skies. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.</p> <p>Whilst the site does not appear to directly impact on the AONB character components as it is previously developed land, consideration should still be given to its design and layout to ensure the AONB can be conserved and enhanced. If the site were to be considered suitable for residential development, opportunities should be taken to provide ecological connections to trees, woodland and hedgerows in the wider countryside. It would be important to follow the recommendations of the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide. There may be opportunities to retain the links to the previous industrial element of the site. For example, there may be opportunities for a mixed-use development to include provision of craft/ industrial/ manufacturing units for start-up business or land-based sector jobs.</p>
474	Land adjacent to 18 East Street, Turners Hill	Moderate	<p>There are no watercourses or waterbodies on or adjacent to the site, however, there is a watercourse to the south of the site (a ghyll woodland which is also ancient woodland). There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology on part of the site. The site lies outside of the built-up area boundary to the east of Turners Hill. It lies between the settlement of Turners Hill and Burleigh Farm which is a historic farmstead. East Street is a historic ridgeway. There are mature trees on the site boundaries. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken. Development of the site would result in the loss of currently undeveloped land, potentially agricultural land or valued grassland.</p> <p>Development of this site could affect the ghyll woodland to the south and it would extend the settlement of Turners Hill into the countryside.</p>
568	Middle Lodge and land to the south, Lindfield Road, Ardingly	Moderate	<p>There are no watercourses or waterbodies on or adjacent to the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site. The site is to the south-east of Ardingly and adjacent to the historic settlement. The site is not adjacent to the built-up area</p>

Sites within the High Weald AONB		Conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
			<p>boundary but is adjacent to development to the north, which is part of the historic settlement pattern. Berry Farm to the east of the site is a nearby historic farmstead. Lindfield Road is a historic drove routeway. There is a historic route to the west of the site which is also a PROW. There are mature trees on the site boundaries and there is ancient woodland to the east of the site on the opposite side of Lindfield Road. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken. Development of the site would result in the loss of currently undeveloped land, potentially agricultural land or valued grassland.</p> <p>Whilst the site does not appear to directly impact on the AONB character components, the potential yield of the site is fairly large in scale for the village.</p>
670	Land at Coos Lane, Horsham Road, Handcross	Moderate	<p>There are no watercourses or waterbodies on or adjacent to the site, however, there is a watercourse to the north of the site (a ghyll woodland which is also ancient woodland). There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology on part of the site. The site lies to the west of Handcross outside of the built-up area boundary. It lies between Horsham Road which is a historic lane and Coos Lane which is a historic drove route. Mature trees cover part of the site and are on the site boundaries. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken. Development of the site would result in the loss of currently undeveloped land, potentially agricultural land or valued grassland.</p> <p>Development of this site would extend the settlement of Handcross into the countryside. Horsham Road is a defensible boundary to the north, however, there is the potential for development to extend into the field westward which could represent a significant extension of the settlement.</p>
733	Land between 43 and 59 Hurst Farm Road, East Grinstead	Moderate	<p>There is a watercourse to the north of the site and a pond to the south of the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site. The site is to the south of East Grinstead and outside of the built-up area boundary. An appeal decision in 2018 for 11 dwellings on this site (DM/17/3008 – appeal dismissed) found that the site ‘contributes to the context of the wider countryside rather than that of the adjacent urban area. Its enclosed nature reflects that of other parcels of land surrounding by trees or hedgerows within the wider area of the countryside’. Development of this site could lead to a loss</p>

Sites within the High Weald AONB		Conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
			of enjoyment of a countryside outlook from the PROW. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken. Development of the site would result in the loss of currently undeveloped land, potentially agricultural land or valued grassland.
736	Broad location north and east of Ansty	High	As a large site, it impacts on most of the AONB character components. Development of the site would result in the loss of currently undeveloped land, potentially agricultural land or valued grassland. There are waterbodies and watercourses within the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology on part of the site. There is ancient woodland within the site. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken. Staplefield Road to the north of the site is a historic drove route and there are other historic tracks crossing the site along with PROW. The site is associated with Cuckfield Park. Development of this site would lead to coalescence between Ansty and Cuckfield. The northern part of the site is within the High Weald AONB but is not proposed for development. It is proposed as a country park, however, the creation of a country park may lead to impacts on the AONB. The design and management of the country park must be consistent with the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan.
818	Land north of the former Golf House, Horsham Road, Pease Pottage	Low	There are two ponds and a watercourse to the north of the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology on part of the site. The site is to the north-west of Pease Pottage and outside the built-up area. There is residential development to the south of the site. Horsham Road to the south of the site is a historic ridgeway route. There are no PROW within or adjacent to the site. There are few trees within the site. There is ancient woodland surrounding much of the site which will require an appropriate buffer in line with policy requirements. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken. The site may directly impact on the AONB woodland character component, however, with an adequate and appropriate buffer to the ancient woodland, it is considered a lower impact as it is previously developed land. Development of this site would reduce the green gap between Pease Pottage and Crawley and contribute to erosion of the countryside in this part of the AONB.

Sites within the High Weald AONB		Conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
929	Land to the west of the Rectory, Haywards Heath Road, Balcombe	Moderate	<p>There are no watercourses or waterbodies on or adjacent to the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology. The site is to the north of Balcombe adjacent to the built-up area boundary. Haywards Heath Road is a historic drove route. There is no ancient woodland on or adjacent to the site, but the site has woodland cover. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.</p> <p>Loss of this woodland is likely to have an impact on the AONB and development of this site would represent an extension of Balcombe.</p>
984	The Paddocks, Lewes Road, Ashurst Wood	Low	<p>There are no watercourses or waterbodies on or adjacent to the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site. The site is to the rear of existing residential development along Lewes Road. The existing residential development forms part of the historic settlement pattern of Ashurst Wood. The site is already previously developed with an existing dwelling in a large plot and a couple of paddocks. There are no PROW within or adjacent to the site. There are mature trees on the site boundaries with woodland to the south and west and ancient woodland in close proximity to the site. The site is not identified as a historic field nor is adjacent to historic fields. Close to the built-up area for Ashurst Wood and with access on to the A22 Lewes Road, the site is unlikely to be very tranquil nor is it likely to experience very dark skies due to nearby development and streetlights. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.</p> <p>The site may directly impact on the AONB woodland character component, however, with the retention and ongoing protection of the mature trees on the site boundaries and consideration given to the design and layout, it is considered a lower impact as it is previously developed land.</p>
997	Ivy Dene Industrial Estate, Ivy Dene Lane, Ashurst Wood	Low – provided development is restricted to the brownfield part of the site	<p>There is a watercourse to the north-west of the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology. The site is to the north of Ashurst Wood and detached from the main settlement. The site is previously developed and it is an existing employment site. Ivy Dene Lane is a historic routeway leading into a PROW footpath. There are historic fields to the east and west of the site. There are mature trees to the north and south of the site. Opportunities to</p>

Sites within the High Weald AONB		Conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
		and the existing woodland is retained	protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken. This site is already developed for an industrial use providing employment. Redevelopment of the site for housing is considered to be a lower impact as it is previously developed land but the existing mature trees would need to be retained and the watercourse to the west of the site would need to be protected.
1013	Land at Hoathly Hill, West Hoathly	Moderate	There is a pond within the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology. The site is to the south-west of Sharpthorne and outside the built-up area boundary. There is low density residential development to the north and east of the site, and countryside to the south and west of the site. Development of this site would need to consider the character and density of the adjacent residential development. Hammingden Lane to the east of the site is a historic drove route. There are historic routes and PROW (footpaths) to the north and west of the site. There are mature trees within the site and on the site boundary with Hammingden Lane. There is no ancient woodland in close proximity to the site. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken. The site does not appear to directly impact on the AONB character components, however, consideration will need to be given to its design and layout in order to avoid an urbanised feel to the site. The character of surrounding development and the historic settlement pattern will need to be taken into account.
1023	Badgers Brook, London Road, Bolney	Low	There are no watercourses or waterbodies on or adjacent to the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology. The site is to the north-east of Bolney and adjacent to the built-up area boundary. There is a dwelling on the site fronting London Road. London Road is a historic drove routeway. There are no PROW in close proximity to the site. There are mature trees on the site and site boundaries. There is woodland to the east, north and south between the site and the A23. There is no ancient woodland in close proximity to the site. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken. The site does not appear to directly impact on the AONB character components. The site is previously developed land adjacent to the settlement of Bolney. It is close to the A23 and on the edge of the AONB.

Sites within the High Weald AONB		Conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
1027	Land at Coombe Hill Road, East Grinstead	Moderate	<p>There are no watercourses or waterbodies on or adjacent to the site. There are watercourses to the north-west, north-east and south-west of the site which are part of the River Medway catchment. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site. The site is outside the built-up area but surrounded by low density development. West Hoathly Road to the east of the site is a historic lane. Parts of a historic route lie to the north of the site and this is now a PROW. Coombe Hill Road is a historic route and PROW. There are mature trees on the site boundary and ancient woodland to the south of the site on the opposite side of Coombe Hill Road. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.</p> <p>The site does not appear to directly impact on the AONB character components and the proposed yield of this site is small. The character of the surrounding development would need to be taken into account.</p>
1076	Land at North Field, College Road, Ardingly	Moderate	<p>There are no watercourses or waterbodies on or adjacent to the site. A watercourse of the River Ouse catchment lies to the west of the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology. The site is to the south-west of Ardingly and adjacent to the historic settlement. A row of mature trees separates the site from the development to the north which is part of the historic settlement pattern. The built-up area boundary is also further north of the site. There is a recent development opposite the site. College Road is a historic drove routeway. There is a historic route and PROW on the western and southern site boundaries. There are mature trees on the site boundaries and there is ancient woodland to the east of the site on the opposite side of Lindfield Road. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.</p> <p>Whilst the site does not appear to directly impact on the AONB character components, it would extend development to beyond a row of mature trees which acts as a boundary to existing development.</p>
1106	Land at Hyde Lodge, London Road, Handcross	Moderate	<p>There are no waterbodies on or adjacent to the site, however, there are drains shown on the western and southern site boundaries. There are watercourses to the south-west of the site and ponds in the vicinity of the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology. The site is to the</p>

Sites within the High Weald AONB		Conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
			<p>north of Handcross and does not adjoin the main village and historic settlement. However, recent development has extended Handcross northwards so that the site now abuts the built-up area boundary. The recreation ground is outside the built-up area boundary so there is still a sense of separation between the main village and the northern part of the built-up area. The B2114 London Road is a historic lane and the track along the northern boundary of the site is a historic routeway. There are no PROW in the immediate vicinity of the site. The site boundaries have mature trees and there are large areas of ancient woodland to the east and west of the site. The site is not identified as a historic field nor is adjacent to historic fields. The A23 lies to the west of the site so the site is unlikely to be in the most tranquil part of the AONB. The nearby main roads also have streetlighting which may impact on dark skies. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken. Development of the site would result in the loss of currently undeveloped land, potentially agricultural land or valued grassland.</p> <p>Whilst the site does not appear to directly impact on the AONB character components, it would extend development to the north of Handcross away from the main village and historic settlement. Hyde Lodge and its character should be retained. If the site were to be considered suitable for residential development, the site should be carefully designed and opportunities taken to provide ecological connections to nearby woodland.</p>

Sites within the setting of the High Weald AONB

Sites within the setting of the High Weald AONB		High-Level conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
18	Crabbet Park, Old Hollow, near Crawley	High	<p>Although the site is not within the High Weald AONB, it is within the High Weald National Character Area (NCA). The landscape of the High Weald NCA is described in similar terms to the High Weald AONB which means the site is likely to exhibit the same or similar features and characteristics as the AONB. The High Weald NCA is described as 'an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving mediaeval landscapes in northern Europe'.</p> <p>The site lies to the south of Copthorne, east of the M23 and west of Crawley Down. The AONB is to the south of the site. Turners Hill Road is a historic lane. The site is outside the High Weald AONB but within its setting.</p> <p>The site has waterbodies and watercourses, ancient woodland, and historic routeways and PROW. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology on part of the site. Development of the site would result in the loss of currently undeveloped land, potentially agricultural land or valued grassland.</p> <p>This is a significant site of a large scale and development of this site would need to protect the setting of the High Weald AONB. The site includes a number of features that contribute to the AONB character components. The scale of the site is large and careful design may be required to avoid or minimise any adverse impacts on the AONB, as well as retaining the landform, valued habitats, ecological connectivity and ensuring biodiversity net gain. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.</p>
556	Land east of Borde Hill Lane, Haywards Heath	Moderate	<p>Although the site is not within the High Weald AONB, it is within the High Weald National Character Area (NCA). The landscape of the High Weald NCA is described in similar terms to the High Weald AONB which means the site is likely to exhibit the same or similar features and characteristics as the AONB. The High Weald NCA is described as</p>

Sites within the setting of the High Weald AONB		High-Level conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
			<p>‘an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving mediaeval landscapes in northern Europe’.</p> <p>There is a watercourse in the north-east of the site flowing from Borde Hill towards Haywards Heath. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology on part of the site. The site is to the north of Haywards Heath and outside the built-up area. There is some low density development fronting Borde Hill Lane and the railway line lies to the west of the site. Borde Hill Lane to the west of the site is a historic lane. A Roman road cuts across the site running south-west to north-east and this part of the site is a WSCC Archaeological Notification Area. There are mature trees within the site and on the site boundaries. There is no ancient woodland in close proximity to the site. Development of the site would result in the loss of currently undeveloped land, potentially agricultural land or valued grassland. The site is outside the High Weald AONB but within its setting and does not appear to directly impact on the AONB character components. However, the scale of the site is quite large and careful design may be required to avoid or minimise any adverse impacts on the AONB, as well as retaining the landform, valued habitats, ecological connectivity and ensuring biodiversity net gain. The archaeology on the site associated with the Roman road should be protected and recorded. Access to the site in particular needs to be carefully considered to avoid or minimise any adverse impacts on the AONB. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.</p>
793	Land at Ansty Farm, Cuckfield Road, Ansty	High	<p>Although the site is not within the High Weald AONB, it is within the High Weald National Character Area (NCA). The landscape of the High Weald NCA is described in similar terms to the High Weald AONB which means the site is likely to exhibit the same or similar features and characteristics as the AONB. The High Weald NCA is described as ‘an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving mediaeval landscapes in northern Europe’.</p> <p>There are watercourses and waterbodies (ponds) within and to adjacent to the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is</p>

Sites within the setting of the High Weald AONB		High-Level conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
			<p>underlying sandstone geology on part of the site. The site is to the north of Ansty and south of the Cuckfield by-pass (A272) and outside a built-up area boundary. The site is of a significant scale and currently agricultural land. Development of this site would not be related to any settlement and would represent a new community between Ansty and Cuckfield. The northern part of the site is a WSCC Archaeological Notification Area as part of the Cuckfield Mediaeval Park and Park Pale. There are several PROW (footpaths) running through the site. Deaks Lane and Cuckfield Road to the west of the site are historic drove routes. There is also a historic track opposite the site to the west. There are mature trees and small areas of woodland within the site and on the site boundaries. There is ancient woodland within and adjacent to the site. There is woodland to the south of the site. Development of the site would result in the loss of currently undeveloped land, potentially agricultural land or valued grassland.</p> <p>The site is outside the High Weald AONB but within its setting. The site includes a number of features that contribute to the AONB character components. The scale of the site is large and careful design may be required to avoid or minimise any adverse impacts on the AONB, as well as retaining landform, valued habitats, ecological connectivity and ensuring biodiversity net gain. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.</p>
1029	Land at Greenacre, Deaks Lane, Ansty	Low	<p>Although the site is not within the High Weald AONB, it is within the High Weald National Character Area (NCA). The landscape of the High Weald NCA is described in similar terms to the High Weald AONB which means the site is likely to exhibit the same or similar features and characteristics as the AONB. The High Weald NCA is described as 'an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving mediaeval landscapes in northern Europe'.</p> <p>There is a drain and a pond within the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology on part of the site. The site is to the north of Ansty and outside the built-up area boundary. There is low density development either side of the site. There is open land to the north-east and</p>

Sites within the setting of the High Weald AONB		High-Level conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
			<p>west of the site. Deaks Lane is a historic drove route. There is a PROW (footpath) to the north of the site. There is significant tree coverage on part of the site. There is further tree coverage to the north-west and south-east of the site. There is ancient woodland to the north of the site.</p> <p>The site is outside the High Weald AONB but within its setting. The site does not appear to directly impact on the AONB character components, however, there are trees and a pond on the site. The scale of the site is small and careful design may be required to avoid or minimise any adverse impacts on the AONB, as well as retaining landform, valued habitats, ecological connectivity and ensuring biodiversity net gain. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.</p>
1060	Land north of Hill Place Farm buildings, Turners Hill Road, East Grinstead	Moderate	<p>Although the site is not within the High Weald AONB, it is within the High Weald National Character Area (NCA). The landscape of the High Weald NCA is described in similar terms to the High Weald AONB which means the site is likely to exhibit the same or similar features and characteristics as the AONB. The High Weald NCA is described as 'an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving mediaeval landscapes in northern Europe'.</p> <p>There are no watercourses or waterbodies on or adjacent to the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology. The site is outside the built-up area but development of 200 dwellings has commenced to the north of the site. The Bluebell Railway is on the western boundary of the site. There is low density residential development to the east of the site on the opposite side of Turners Hill Road. Turners Hill Road to the east of the site is a historic lane. A PROW (footpath) runs along the southern boundary of the site. There are mature trees on the site boundary with the Bluebell Railway and along Turners Hill Road. There is no ancient woodland in close proximity to the site. Development of the site would result in the loss of currently undeveloped land, potentially agricultural land or valued grassland.</p>

Sites within the setting of the High Weald AONB		High-Level conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
			The site is outside the High Weald AONB but within its setting and does not appear to directly impact on the AONB character components. Careful design may be required to avoid or minimise any adverse impacts on the AONB, as well as retaining landform, valued habitats, ecological connectivity and ensuring biodiversity net gain. There is likely to be a moderate impact on the AONB especially when considered cumulatively with the development to the north under construction as this increases the impact on the AONB. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.
1066	Land north of Springfield Close, north of Bolney	Moderate / High	<p>Although the site is not within the High Weald AONB, it is within the High Weald National Character Area (NCA). The landscape of the High Weald NCA is described in similar terms to the High Weald AONB which means the site is likely to exhibit the same or similar features and characteristics as the AONB. The High Weald NCA is described as 'an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving mediaeval landscapes in northern Europe'.</p> <p>There are no watercourses or waterbodies on or adjacent to the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology. The site is to the north of Bolney and adjacent to the built-up area boundary. London Road to the east of the site is a historic drove routeway. There are historic routes to the north-east and north-west of the site. There are no PROW in close proximity to the site. The site is covered by mature trees and there is further extensive tree coverage to the north of the site. There is no ancient woodland in close proximity to the site.</p> <p>Whilst the majority of the site is outside the High Weald AONB, the northern boundary of the site overlaps with the AONB boundary. The extensive tree coverage on the site contributes to the woodland character component. There would be an impact on the AONB due to the loss of the ecological network of woodland. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.</p>

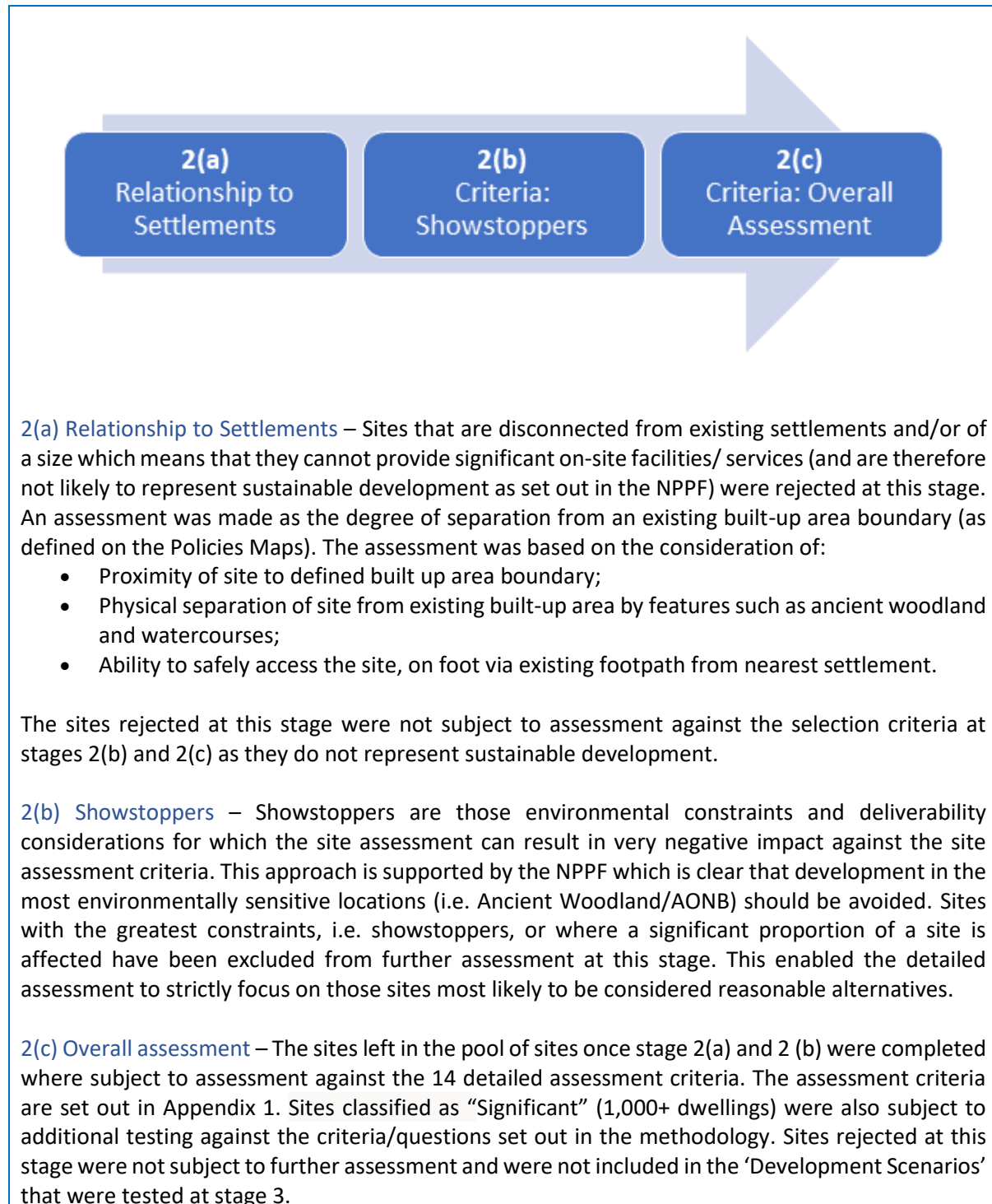
Sites within the setting of the High Weald AONB		High-Level conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
1067	Land south of Hill Place Farm buildings, Turners Hill Road, East Grinstead	Moderate	<p>Although the site is not within the High Weald AONB, it is within the High Weald National Character Area (NCA). The landscape of the High Weald NCA is described in similar terms to the High Weald AONB which means the site is likely to exhibit the same or similar features and characteristics as the AONB. The High Weald NCA is described as 'an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving mediaeval landscapes in northern Europe'.</p> <p>There are no watercourses or waterbodies on or adjacent to the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology. The site is outside the built-up area but development of 200 dwellings has commenced to the north of the site. The Bluebell Railway is on the western boundary of the site. There is low density residential development to the east of the site on the opposite side of Turners Hill Road. Turners Hill Road to the east of the site is a historic lane. Imberhorne Lane along the southern boundary of the site is a historic drove route. A PROW (footpath) runs along the northern boundary of the site. There are mature trees on the site boundary with the Bluebell Railway and along Turners Hill Road. There is no ancient woodland in close proximity to the site. Development of the site would result in the loss of currently undeveloped land, potentially agricultural land or valued grassland.</p> <p>The site is outside the High Weald AONB but within its setting and does not appear to directly impact on the AONB character components. However, the scale of the proposed development is fairly large. Careful design may be required to avoid or minimise any adverse impacts on the AONB, as well as retaining landform, valued habitats, ecological connectivity and ensuring biodiversity net gain. There is likely to be a moderate impact on the AONB especially when considered cumulatively with the development to the north under construction as this increases the impact on the AONB. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.</p>
1096	Land at Hangman's Acre Farm, Lindfield	Moderate	<p>Although the site is not within the High Weald AONB, it is within the High Weald National Character Area (NCA). The landscape of the High Weald NCA is described in</p>

Sites within the setting of the High Weald AONB		High-Level conclusion on AONB impact	
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Conclusion	Comments
			<p>similar terms to the High Weald AONB which means the site is likely to exhibit the same or similar features and characteristics as the AONB. The High Weald NCA is described as 'an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving mediaeval landscapes in northern Europe'.</p> <p>There are waterbodies and watercourses on the site and a watercourse to the north of the site. There is ancient woodland on the eastern boundary of the site and woodland and mature trees within the site. There are no sandstone outcrops on or adjacent to the site, however, there is underlying sandstone geology. The site is outside the built-up area and would represent a significant extension to Lindfield. The River Ouse forms the boundary of the High Weald AONB. There is a scheduled ancient monument (motte and bailey castle) within the High Weald AONB to the north-east of the site. Development of the site would result in the loss of currently undeveloped land, potentially agricultural land or valued grassland.</p> <p>The site is outside the High Weald AONB but within its setting. The site includes a number of features that contribute to the AONB character components. The scale of the site is large and careful design may be required to avoid or minimise any adverse impacts on the AONB, as well as retaining landform, valued habitats, ecological connectivity and ensuring biodiversity net gain. Opportunities to protect tranquillity and dark skies should be taken.</p>

Appendix 5: Link to Site Selection Process

Link to Site Selection Process

The SHELAA site assessment stage is a three-part process. As explained in the *Site Selection Conclusions Paper* (October 2022):



The table below lists the SHELAA sites that were not assessed for their potential impact on the High Weald AONB. These forty-two SHELAA sites were rejected early in the site selection process at Stage

2(a). This is because these SHELAA sites are disconnected from existing settlements and/or of a size which means that they cannot provide significant on-site facilities/ services. These SHELAA sites do not represent sustainable development.

SHELAA sites rejected at Stage 2(a)			
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Settlement	Yield
25	The Walled Garden, behind the Scout Hut, London Road, Balcombe	Balcombe	8
28	Area south of Redbridge Lane at junction with London Road, Balcombe	Balcombe	20
67	Castle Field, Cinder Hill Lane, Horsted Keynes	Horsted Keynes	20
574	Land at Hunters Moon, Old Brighton Road South, Pease Pottage	Pease Pottage	88
584	Bawtry - Little London - Ardingly	Ardingly	7
612	Land south of Warninglid Primary School, Slaugham Lane, Warninglid	Warninglid	240
641	Tanyards Field, Tanyard Lane, Staplefield (Larger option inclusive of Site 596)	Staplefield	6
642	Land south of village Hall, Cuckfield Road, Staplefield	Staplefield	26
656	Hangdown Mead Business Park, Top Road, Sharpthorne	Sharpthorne	15
659	Rosebank, Handcross Road, Staplefield (two options including and excluding Rosebank)	Staplefield	9
660	The Stables Field, Tanyard Lane, Staplefield	Staplefield	9
662	Dencombe Estate, High Beeches Lane, Handcross	Handcross	75
663	Field 1, Ludwell Grange, Keysford Lane, Horsted Keynes	Horsted Keynes	27
664	Field 2, Ludwell Grange, Keysford Lane, Horsted Keynes	Horsted Keynes	15
671	Land at Lywood Depot (WSCC), Lindfield Road, Ardingly	Ardingly	67
681	Land north Kingsmead, Turners Hill Road, East Grinstead	East Grinstead	30
724	Land at Truscott Manor, Hectors Lane, East Grinstead	Ashurst Wood	120
772	Land north of St Margarets, Brook Street, Cuckfield	Brook Street	9
774	Land at Tilgate Forest Lodge, Brighton Road, Pease Pottage	Pease Pottage	33
790	Deaks Manor, Deaks Lane, Cuckfield, RH17 5JA	Ansty	400
792	Land at Ansty Farm (Site C), Deaks Lane, Ansty	Ansty	25
805	Land adjacent to Meadow Woods, Brook Street, Cuckfield	Staplefield	5
811	Worth Lodge Farm, Turners Hill Road, Turners Hill	Copthorne	27
816	Old Park Farm, Slaugham Lane, Warninglid	Warninglid	12

SHELAA sites rejected at Stage 2(a)			
SHELAA ID	Site Address	Settlement	Yield
817	The Old Milking Parlour, The Street, Warninglid	Warninglid	60
820	Land at Stanbridge Farm, Stanbridge Lane, Staplefield	Staplefield	10
821	Land at Slaugham Garden Nursery, Staplefield Road, Slaugham	Staplefield	10
822	Land west of Cedar Cottage, Tilgate Forest Lodge, Brighton Road, Pease Pottage	Pease Pottage	40
831	Gardeners Arms, Selsfield Road, Ardingly	Ardingly	5
837	Land at Little Oddyness Farm, Waterbury Hill, Horsted Keynes	Horsted Keynes	5
839	Land at Hazeldene Farm, north of Orchard Way, Warninglid	Warninglid	80
856	Moonwood Barn, Hangdown Mead Farm, Top Road, West Hoathly	Sharpthorne	30
896	Land at Old Beech Farm, Staplefield Road, Cuckfield	Cuckfield	10
903	Land at Meadow Wood and Ashbourne Brook Street, Cuckfield	Staplefield	150
1015	North east of Ashurst Field, Highbrook Lane, West Hoathly	West Hoathly	14
1069	Land to east Rivers Farm Cottage, Copyhold Lane, Ardingly	Haywards Heath	268
1070	Land to west of Rivers Farm Cottage, Copyhold Lane, Ardingly	Haywards Heath	633
1074	Land to north of Lower Yard Sparks Lane/ Brook Street, Cuckfield	Brook Street	40
1079	Land north of Diamond Cottages, Brook Street	Brook Street	14
1080	Land south of Tanyards Cottage Brook Street	Brook Street	94
1082	Land north and south of Strood Cottages, Brook Street	Brook Street	12
1093	Land South of Medway Drive, East Grinstead	East Grinstead	75

For sites within the High Weald AONB, fifty-five SHELAA sites were assessed at the high-level screening assessment stage. Thirty-seven of these sites were rejected at Stage 2(b) because of their environmental constraints and so were not assessed further for their potential impact on the High Weald AONB (with the exception of two sites that were subject to previous consideration or further discussion). A total of twenty SHELAA sites were taken forward for a detailed assessment of their potential impact on the High Weald AONB. This allows the detailed assessment to focus on those SHELAA sites most likely to be considered for allocation in the District Plan 2021-2039.

In addition, eight SHELAA sites had a high-level screening assessment and a detailed assessment because they are regarded as being within the setting of the High Weald AONB.