



Land at  
**SAYERS COMMON**  
VISION DOCUMENT

December 2022

**Lambert  
Smith  
Hampton**

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# Land at SAYERS COMMON VISION DOCUMENT

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# 1

## Introduction

This Vision Document has been prepared to support Welbeck Land's Representations to the Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039: Consultation Draft (Regulation 18) (MSDPCD). The consultation period runs from 7th November to 19th December 2022.

The publication of this document, by Mid Sussex Council, follows the adoption of the Mid Sussex District Plan in March 2018. The Draft District Plan is a Review of the adopted Plan, and seeks to set out the vision, strategy and policy framework for the District up to 2039.

Our Client's interest relates to the 'Land at Coombe Farm, London Road, Sayers Common (the 'site'), and this has been promoted through the Local Plan process over recent years (e.g. District Plan 2018 and Call for Sites).

Importantly, the MSDPCD includes the allocation of further land within Mid Sussex, with one of the 21 new draft housing allocations being The Land at Coombe Farm. Welbeck Land fully support the inclusion of this site as a housing allocation, and strongly consider that the site is deliverable and will significantly boost housing delivery within the District in line with the Council's ambitious housing target (20,444 dwellings across the plan period).

#### DPH20: Land at Coombe Farm, London Road, Sayers Common

*Note: the boundary shown on the site map below represents the extent of the site inclusive of all built development and any mitigation requirements (e.g. landscape buffers or open space) listed within the policy requirements.*

<b>SHELAA:</b>	601	<b>Settlement:</b>	Sayers Common
<b>Gross Site Area (ha):</b>	14.2	<b>Number of Dwellings:</b>	210
<b>Infrastructure</b>			
On-site:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30% affordable housing</li> </ul>			
Financial contributions towards the provision of:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Playspace</li> <li>Sport facilities</li> <li>Community buildings</li> <li>Library</li> <li>Education</li> <li>Sustainable Transport</li> <li>Healthcare</li> <li>Emergency Services</li> </ul>			
Provision of:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wastewater treatment and sewerage network upgrades</li> <li>Sustainable transport measures</li> <li>Highway works</li> </ul>			



#### Policy Requirements

- Refer to Policy DPH4 which sets out the general development principles for all District Plan housing allocations.
- Informed by a Heritage Impact Assessment, provide an appropriate layout and design which protects the setting of nearby Grade II listed buildings 'Coombe Farmhouse' and 'Coombe Barn'.
- Prioritise pedestrian and cycle access throughout the site linking to Significant site allocation DPSC2 and bus stops on the B2118 to the west.
- Upgrade and integrate the existing PROW which crosses the site.
- Comprehensively masterplan development of the site including a main area of open space to create a focal point for the development and provide suitable access onto the B2118.
- Provide necessary buffer, protection and mitigation to areas of Ancient Woodland on and adjacent to the site, including measures to minimise public access to the woodland, provision of a woodland management plan and woodland enhancement package.
- Retain, protect and enhance mature trees across the site and hedgerows along site boundaries and ensure development provides a positive edge to these features and any areas of woodland.
- Avoid developing areas of existing flood risk and mitigate impacts through integration of SuDS.
- Mitigate noise impacts associated with the adjacent A23 to the east.

# 2

## The Site



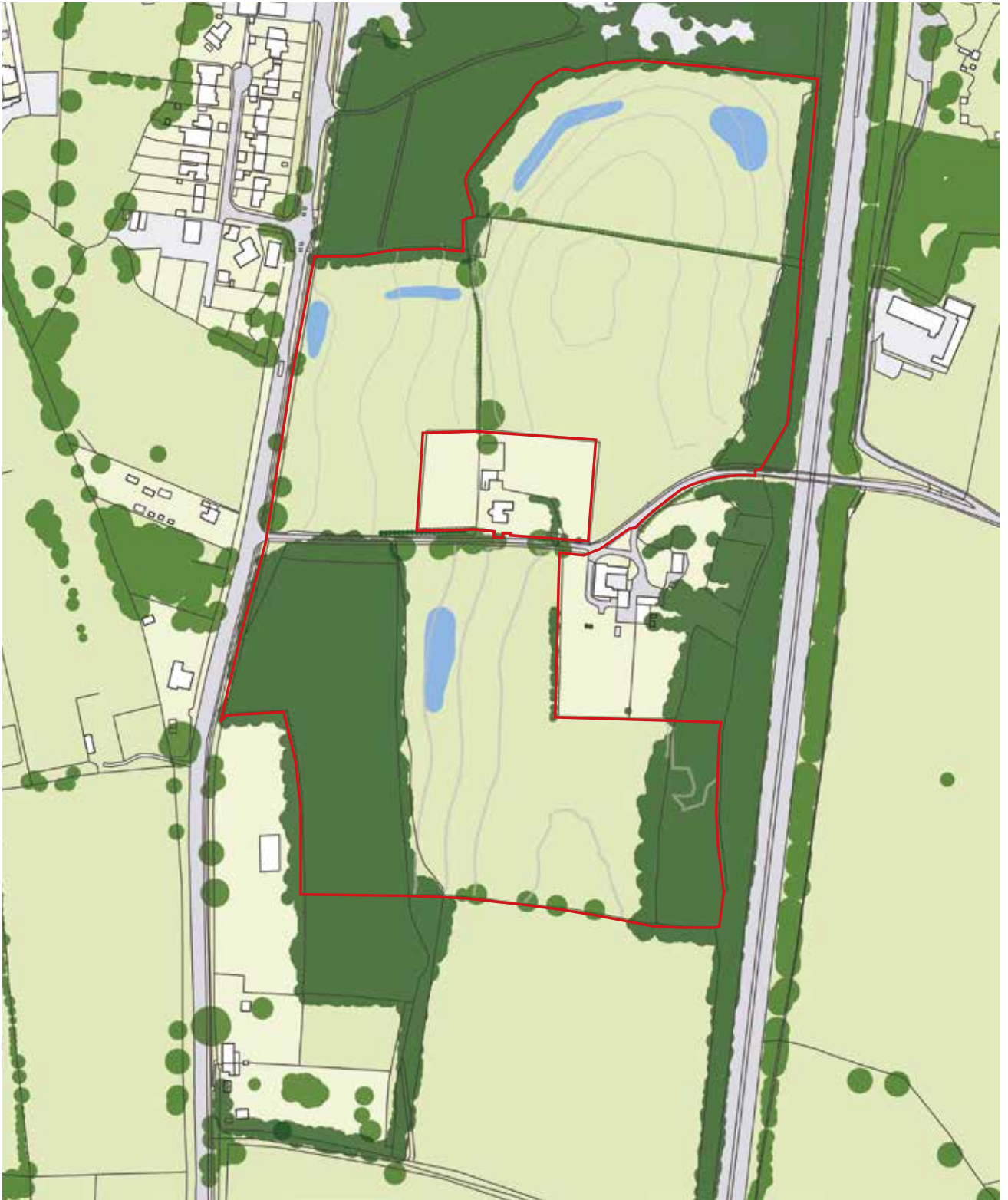
Site Context: Source Google Earth

The site allocation is some 14.2 ha. It comprises undeveloped land that includes four fields and part of Coombe Wood.

To the north and north west of the site, are the built envelope of Sayers Common. To the east, beyond a belt of woodland is the A23. To the south, beyond a hedgerow field boundary is open countryside, much of it planted with woodland; and to the west beyond woodland is the B2118 and residential properties on Furzeland Way.

The whole site is adjacent to the built-up area boundary of Sayers Common. The site is located within the open countryside and is designated a Local Gap in the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan. The site is outside of the Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, so there are no other environmental policy constraints to its development.





The Site

# 2 The Site

The Site lies the south of the village of Sayers Common. To the west are the local centres of Hurstpierpoint and Burgess Hill.

The site is within a sustainable location and within convenient walking distance of:

- Albourne CoE primary school (15 minute walk or 4 minute cycle);
- The Village Hall Community Shop (5 minute walk or 1 minute cycle);
- A Public house (3 minute walk or 1 minute cycle);
- A community centre/village hall (5 minute walk or 1 minute cycle);
- Employment areas to the west within 5 minutes walk; and
- The Berrylands Playing Fields (10 minute walk or 3 minute cycle).

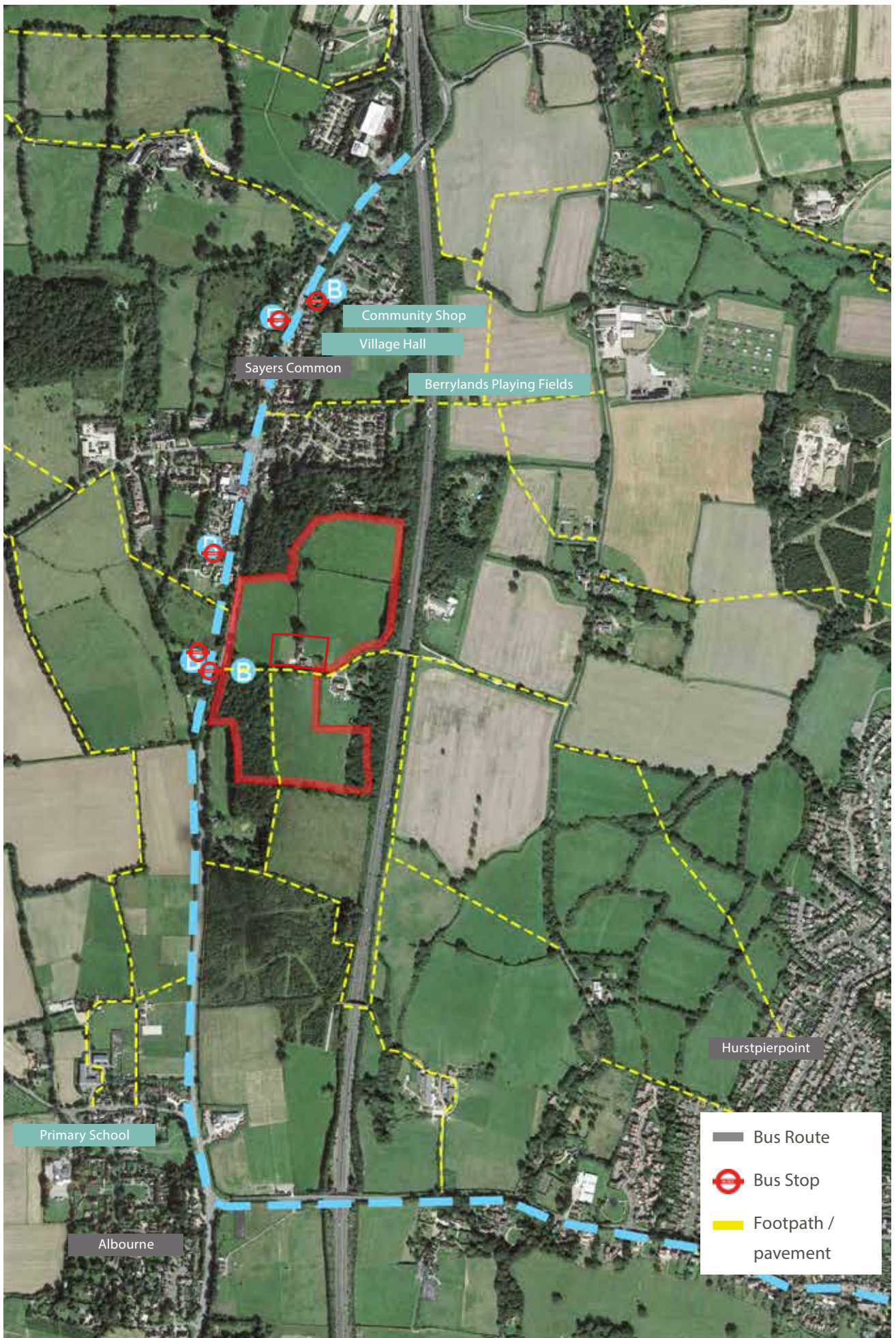
Hurstpierpoint is within 30 minutes walking distance or 7 minutes cycle ride. The majority of the route is on a Public Right of Way.

Bus stops adjacent to the site on the B2118 provide an hourly service linking Sayers Common to Burgess Hill, Henfield, Steyning and Pulborough. Additional school services during term times link to Downlands Community School in Keymer.



Surrounding Context





Surrounding Context: Source Google Earth



# 3

## Context

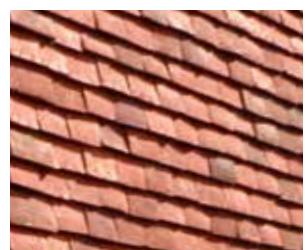


The whole site is adjacent to the existing built-up area boundary of Sayers Common, with the MSDPCD proposing an extension of this boundary to include the Land at Coombe Wood. The site is currently located within the open countryside and is designated a Local Gap in the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan. It would be perceived as a natural extension/growth of the village along the primary route.

The site is outside of the Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, so there are no significant environmental policy constraints to its development.

The site is not in a conservation area nor are there any listed buildings on site. Coombe Farm which is directly outside the site boundary contains three Grade II Listed buildings.

The site is well enclosed from surrounding views and can therefore be developed without impacting on the wider countryside. As such, it is anticipated that there will be no impact on surrounding landscape features and heritage assets.



Local Context





# 4

## Our Vision

To create a development of new homes within a woodland landscape, alongside accessible public open space, which maximises links for pedestrians and cyclists to the village centre, public transport and the wider countryside.

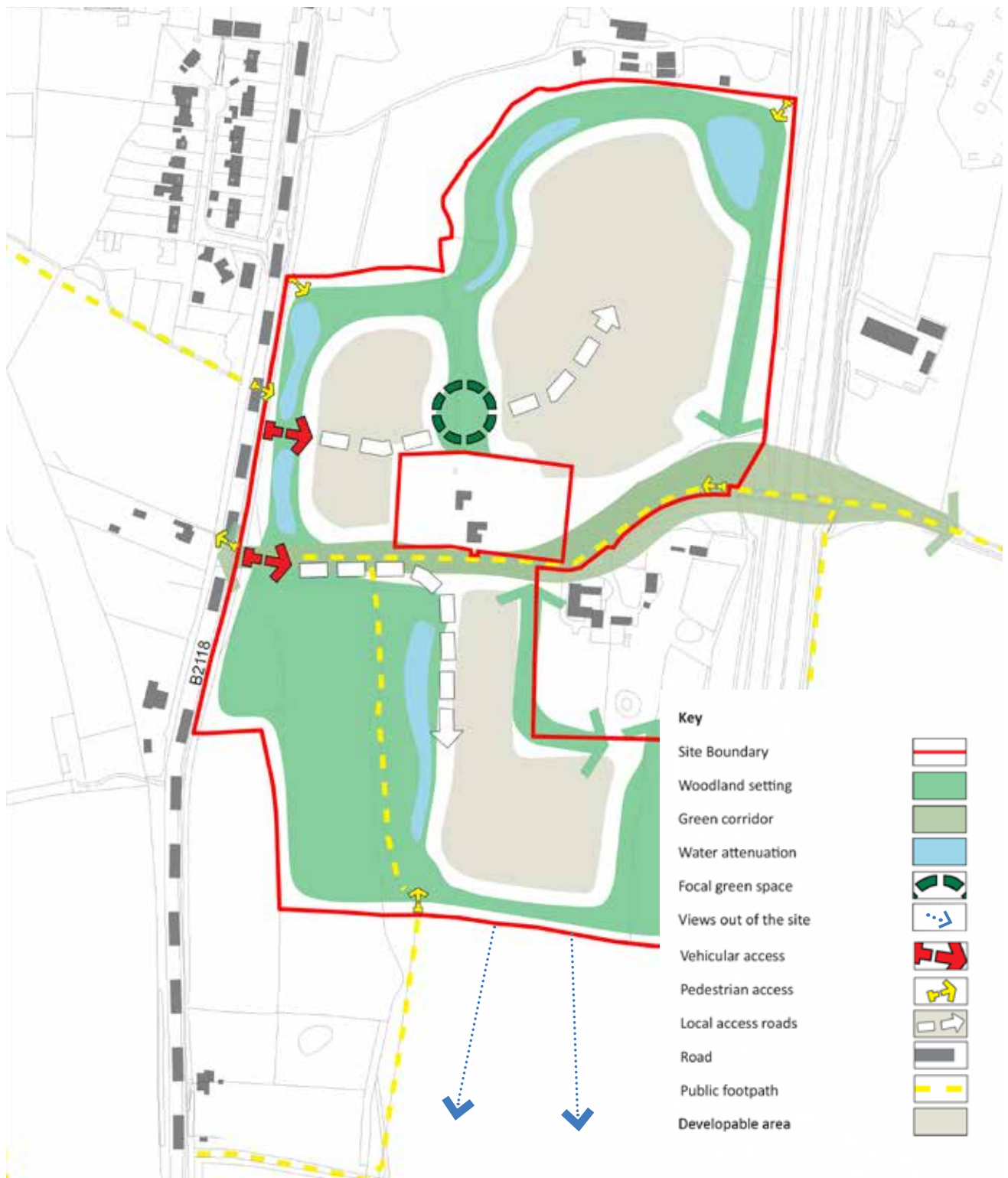
The allocation of Land at Coombe Farm proposes the creation of 210 new dwellings. Its development will play an important role in the growth of Sayers Common and bring with it many benefits to new and existing residents.

The main principles of the vision for Land at Coombe Farm are set out below:

- Quality of place - respect the adjoining countryside and local landscape and townscape character. The development will seek to identify and establish a character that draws from that of the surrounding context and is informed by the existing site features. Drawing out local strengths, views and distinctive features are an aid to legibility - navigating the space and understanding how it functions;
- Access - provide for safe, attractive and convenient access to the surrounding countryside, adjacent sites and the village through an integrated network of footpaths and cyclepaths;
- Density and scale - ensure the density, scale and design of buildings are informed by the local character and the landscape features on the site, retaining and integrating existing woodland and groups of trees;
- The environment - ensure that important biodiversity and heritage assets are protected, enhanced and managed for the future. The landscape framework of green corridors and areas of open space will provide a setting for the development, accommodate SuDs and provide a resource for the new and existing communities;
- Delivering high quality housing - ensure housing is of a high quality and provides a balanced mix of types to meet a range of identified needs; and
- Sustainability- ensure high standards of sustainable design and construction.and construction.



Footpath south of southern boundary





# 5

## Indicative Masterplan

The structure of the Indicative Masterplan has been influenced by the existing landscape features and the surrounding townscape. Landscape features are incorporated into green corridors which provide a woodland and parkland setting for development and the local townscape will help inform the character of development to create an identifiable place.

The green corridors form a network of multi-functional green spaces incorporating footpaths and cyclepaths that integrate with existing public rights of way and the surrounding area.

The Indicative Masterplan has the potential to accommodate 210 dwellings in total, which is in line with the allocation for the site. The northern parcel can accommodate 155 dwellings and the southern parcel 55 dwellings.







Footpath link

Woodland

Footpath link

Access

Woodland

Footpath/Cycle link

Footpath/Cycle link

Access bridleyway only  
allowing vehicular access to  
Stonecroft and the barn

Green Corridor

Woodland

Woodland

Footpath link





## Highways

Careful consideration has been given to the site's access. The site as a comprehensive land parcel allocation is 14.2 ha and comprises 2 separate parcels, north and south. The site is to be promoted as both two separate land parcels and as one comprehensive land parcel to provide greater flexibility and choice.

The proposed access is located further north and closer to the settlement boundary of Sayers Common from the existing access to Stonecroft and Coombe Barn. Transport Planning Associates (TPA) have preliminary assessed the proposed access and consider it will provide a safe and convenient access to the proposed development site. They have also explored the opportunity to relocate the start of the 30mph speed limit so that all properties fronting onto the B2118 are within the 'village boundary'. The location of the site also provides good access to the A23 and the wider strategic highway network.

The southern parcel will be accessed via a spur that will involve the removal of 1 mature tree (category A & B) as discussed later in this Vision Document.

The existing bridleway will be retained to provide access to Stonecroft and Coombe Barn.

Pedestrian and cycle access between the two parcels will also be provided.

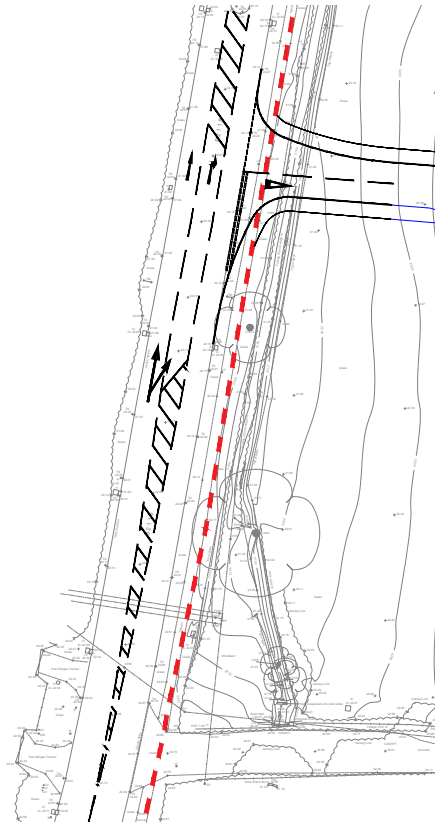
The indicative scheme will not cause an unacceptable impact on the local environment in terms of road safety and increased traffic. The access arrangements for the site will also enable improvements to pedestrian and cycle access along and across the B2118, by way of well-placed crossing points and footways. An improved access point to the site also allows easy access to the bus stops on the B2118, which allow for hourly bus services to Burgess Hill and Pulborough. The site also has the capabilities to link to existing footways, to access local facilities (both existing and proposed in the MSDPCD). This will be the subject of future detailed design work, associated with the development of the site and in consideration of the proposed allocation to the east, for which a common junction on the B2118 could be accommodated as indicated opposite.

With regard to highways and access, the development of the Land at Coombe Farm accords with draft Policy DPT1: Placemaking and Connectivity of the MSDPCD, as well as adopted Policy DP21: Transport of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2018.

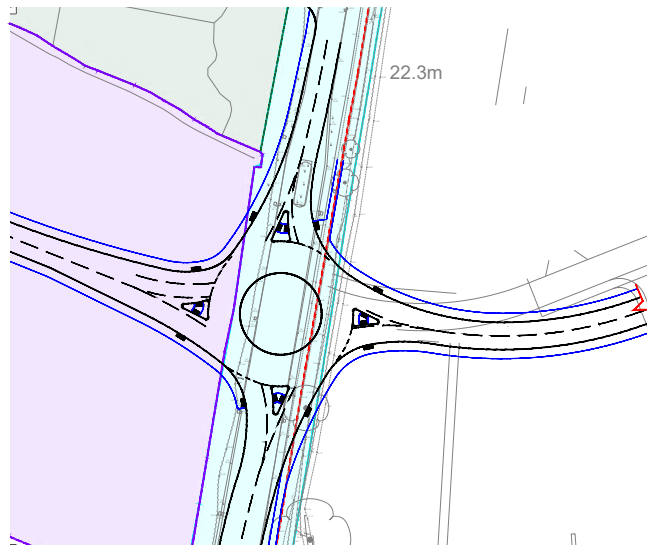
## DPSC2: Land South of Reeds Lane, Sayers Common

We acknowledge the proposed significant allocation at Reeds Lane, for circa 2,000 new dwellings, within the MSDPCD. This site could hold a strong future connection to Land at Coombe Farm, being located on the opposite (western) side of the B2118. It is noted that the intention, for that site, is to achieve a main access point from the B2118. On this basis, there is an opportunity to provide a single junction onto B2118 through a four-arm roundabout. This would provide sufficient capacity to access both sites while also creating an opportunity for a new 'gateway feature' to the existing village and proposed developments. This will have the added benefit of improving and enhancing the connectivity between the two sites, in line with draft policy DPT1 of the MSDPCD.





The access to the northern parcel is located further north and closer to the settlement. The northern access would have sufficient capacity for both parcels.



The access to the northern parcel could also be achieved from a common junction with the proposed allocation to the west (DPSC2: Land South of Reeds Lane, Sayers Common)



## Noise

The site is located adjacent to the A23 (east) and the B2118 (west), therefore road traffic potentially will be a source of noise with regard to the development of this site. This can be dealt with through mitigation measures such as acoustic bunds/barriers, stand-off, orientation of plots, and acoustics glazing and ventilation, to ensure that guideline internal noise levels are met within future dwellings.

The construction phase would be a relatively short process, and there are only a small number of noise receptors located close to the site boundary. Therefore, it is considered that the noise and vibration impact at these receptors will be limited during the construction phase.

It can be demonstrated that the proposals would not cause significant levels of noise during the construction phase nor the future occupiers of the development.

The proposal therefore is in accordance with draft Policies DPN7: Noise Impacts and DPB1 Character and Design of the MSDPCD, as well as Policy DP26: Character and Design of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2018. An updated Acoustic Survey will be undertaken to inform the masterplan as it evolves.



## Flood Risk and Drainage

The site is located within Flood Zone 1, the lowest risk of flooding according to the Environment Agency Flood Maps.

Surface water drainage will be addressed by attenuation basins which will be integrated into a wider green infrastructure. The drainage strategy proposes a pond in the northeast, two on the western boundary and one to the southern part of the site at natural low points in the topography. Restricting the site to greenfield runoff rates and implementing sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) will result in there being no increase in risk of flooding for the site or downstream of the development to accord with draft Policy DPS4: Flood Risk and Drainage of the MSDPCD, as well as adopted Policy DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2018.

## Utilities

Electricity, gas, potable water and telecoms utilities are located on or in close vicinity of the site and connections to these networks is feasible.

## Archaeology and Heritage

A desk based archaeological assessment has previously been undertaken, and the site is considered to have a low potential for archaeological remains and that there are no archaeological constraints restricting the site coming forward for development.

There are three Grade II Listed buildings immediately to the east of the site adjacent to the A23 (Coombe Farmhouse, barn at Coombe Farm and a granary).







A Heritage Assessment has also previously been undertaken and is submitted, again, alongside this Vision Document.

The proposed development would not directly impact on the buildings but would have some slight impact on their setting. The proposed development would be screened by existing vegetation and with appropriate design and landscaping, would have a very limited impact upon the setting of the listed buildings nor any meaningful loss of significance. The proposals would therefore in accordance with draft Policy DPB2: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets of the MSDPCD, as well as adopted Policy DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2018.

## Trees and Hedgerow

The design of the scheme has been carefully considered with regard to the existing trees on site. In accordance with the NPPF and current Standing Advice, the parcels of Ancient Woodland surrounding the application area are a key consideration and other than the reuse of existing infrastructure, built development should be avoided within 15m of the Ancient Woodland. A limited number of tree removals are anticipated to accommodate the scheme; these are expected to be limited to those required to provide access and interconnectivity between development parcels whilst providing spatial separation from Ancient Woodland.

It is acknowledged that Mid Sussex is home to a substantial amount of ancient woodland, and indeed the Land at Coombe Farm includes, and is surrounded by, three blocks of ancient woodland, as well as being located adjacent to a further area to the north (Sayers Common Wood).

The parcels of Ancient Woodland within the site boundary, which are currently neglected and in a poor condition, can be brought under a sensitive regime of management, thereby improving the woodlands' structure, quality, resilience and longevity.

The proposals are currently seeking to retain the majority of the hedgerows (1.04km out of 1.36km), whilst enhancing 0.54km and creating an additional 0.14km, which overall could result in a net gain in hedgerow units. It is considered that off-site habitat creation will not be required. Further detail can be obtained from the relevant reports.

Public access to the site will be provided and allow for an increase in the public's appreciation of, and therefore the amenity value of the retained high-quality trees and ancient woodland (albeit access into the ancient woodland will be restricted in line with policy).

Whilst the loss of one tree will be required to introduce development to the site, subject to ongoing arboricultural input during design, these can continue to be minimised. Opportunities can be taken to enhance the retained high quality trees as features of the development and areas of ancient woodland as important and irreplaceable assets.

The position of the main access and internal roads have sought to avoid the removal of hedgerows that are species rich. However, where minimal removal is required, mitigation planting is proposed as part of the wider green infrastructure strategy in accordance with draft and adopted policies as set out above.





In accordance with draft Policy DPN4: Trees Woodland and Hedgerows of the MSDPCD, as well as adopted Policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2018, the scheme has been designed to retain significant trees where possible and to protect the ancient woodland .

## Ecology

Due to the character of the site, Welbeck Land have appointed the Ecology Partnership to undertake numerous surveys over recent years, spanning from 2017 to the current day.

These surveys include a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (July 2017); Breeding Bird Survey (September 2018); Bat Activity Survey 2017-2018 (October 2018); Dormouse Survey 2017-18 (November 2018); and Reptile Survey 2018 (May 2018). The Ecology Partnership re-visited the site on 25th January 2021 as part of the Call for Sites 2021 consultation. A further walkover has been undertaken by our ecologist in November 2022, which has resulted in an updated 'Ecology Walkover Report and due to the updates to this Vision Document, a revised BNG calculation has been undertaken. The updated information has been submitted to the Council as part of the representations to the MSDPCD consultation.

The aforementioned surveys and site visits have comprehensively informed the indicative masterplan for the site and therefore the development of the site would be in accordance with draft Policies DPN1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery and DPN2: Biodiversity Net Gain of the MSDPCD, as well as adopted Policy DP38: Biodiversity of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2018.

The Council identifies that the overall ecological network of habitats and species is important for biodiversity and nature recovery, and that developments will need to deliver a net gain in biodiversity. It is the aspiration of Welbeck Land to deliver a net increase in biodiversity gain and indeed, The Ecology Partnership confirms that the site is capable of doing so, subject to further design.



## Green Infrastructure

It is envisaged that the existing landscape features will be integrated into the proposal to make a positive contribution to local character.

Significant Green Infrastructure will be provided in the form of internal green grid spaces, tree belts, swales and street trees. Usable public spaces will provide a wide range of opportunities for local residents to play, exercise or relax. On the boundaries on the site there would be sensitive buffer planting, to form a natural edge to the Ancient Woodland and buffer sensitive views.

The ancient woodland within the site, which is currently in poor condition, can be brought under a sensitive regime of management through development of the site.



## Landscaping, Views and Character

The vision for the Land at Coombe Farm is landscape led. The site is able to accommodate generous areas of open space for new planting and trees, in order to mitigate any visual effects of the development within the site. Landscaping will also be cleverly used to respect the setting of the adjacent Listed buildings.

The site is visually contained by established woodland along the B2118 and A23 roads, meaning that future development would not significantly harm the existing visual character of the village of Sayers Common from the roadside or, indeed, views into the village.

Effective landscape buffers would also be provided alongside ancient woodland, listed buildings at Coombe Farm, the A23 and the B2118 southern approach road.

As can be seen in the illustrative masterplan, the built form can be accommodated within the currently defined woodland and field boundaries, which are reinforced by trees and hedgerows.

Housing would be set back from the southern site boundary so that the rural character of long-distance views from the South Downs National Park would be conserved. The existing landscape would be enhanced through reinforcement and extension of the existing vegetation framework and implementation of a landscape and ecological management plan. The contribution of the site to the well-treed setting of the settlement and the rural character of the local landscape would be conserved on this basis.

There would be no inter-visibility between a southern extension of Sayers Common at this location and Hurstpierpoint, and Albourne on account of the enclosure provided by landform and large blocks of woodland in the intervening landscape. The separate identity and amenity of the settlements would be conserved on this basis.



# 7

## Summary



## Summary

This Vision Document has been prepared to support Welbeck Land's Representations to the Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039: Consultation Draft (Regulation 18). This forms a Review of the adopted District Plan and seeks to set out the vision, strategy and policy framework for the District up to 2039.

This Vision Document sets out the strategy for the Land at Coombe Wood, and how its development is supported by both adopted and emerging policy.

In summary, the vision document has demonstrated that:

- Sayers Common is within a sustainable location, within walking distance of many services.
- The site is well enclosed from surrounding views and can be developed without impacting on the wider countryside.
- Suitable and safe vehicle access can be achieved.
- Significant ecological enhancements will be delivered to achieve more than 10% biodiversity net gain on the site.
- Through appropriate mitigation measures internal guidelines on noise levels can be achieved.
- Natural attenuation ponds can be provided to aid drainage of the site and reduce the risk of flooding.
- Connection to the utilities network is feasible.
- The listed buildings on-site are well screened by existing vegetation, with appropriate design and landscaping, development would respect their setting.
- The ancient woodland within the site, which is currently in poor condition, can be brought under a sensitive regime of management through development of the site.
- The site does not lie within or adjacent to any statutory non-statutory designated sites.

It has therefore been demonstrated that the site is suitable, available, achievable and deliverable and we therefore fully support the Council's allocation of this site for 210 new homes for Mid Sussex.