

Challenges and opportunities facing our Parish

The following challenges and opportunities have been identified that the Plan seeks to address:

- The need to balance growth (housing and employment) against preserving local character and safeguarding the landscape and its features.
- A shortage of family-sized homes and homes that are affordable.
- The difficulties posed by the route of the A21, which effectively cuts the village in half making movement by foot and bike challenging.
- Limited local shops and amenities.
- Hurst Green as a base for visitors, in light of its picturesque setting and close proximity to visitor attractions.
- Facilities are widely spread across the settlement with limited connectivity between them
- The lack of off-street residential space for car parking.
- A desire to improve walking and cycling opportunities, but limited opportunities to do so.
- Limited formal recreational spaces, with a need to upgrade.
- Under-utilised public spaces.

Objective 1

To protect against inappropriate and speculative development and to provide guidance and greater influence over how Hurst Green should be developed in the future.

What does the Rother Local Plan say?

The adopted Rother Local Plan (currently being updated) requires us to allocate a minimum of 75 new homes in Hurst Green Parish. Some of these homes have already been delivered, or have planning permission. This includes housing at Land east of Foundry Close for 20 dwellings. This means that we need to find sites for at least an additional 55 homes.



What if we do not want to allocate more homes?

The Neighbourhood Plan gives us the best opportunity to have a say on where housing is located, the sorts of homes to be provided and how they are designed. If we don't allocate sites, then Rother District Council will do this for us, or there may be speculative development, as we've seen nearby, for instance in Hawkhurst.



What we aim to achieve through the Neighbourhood Plan:

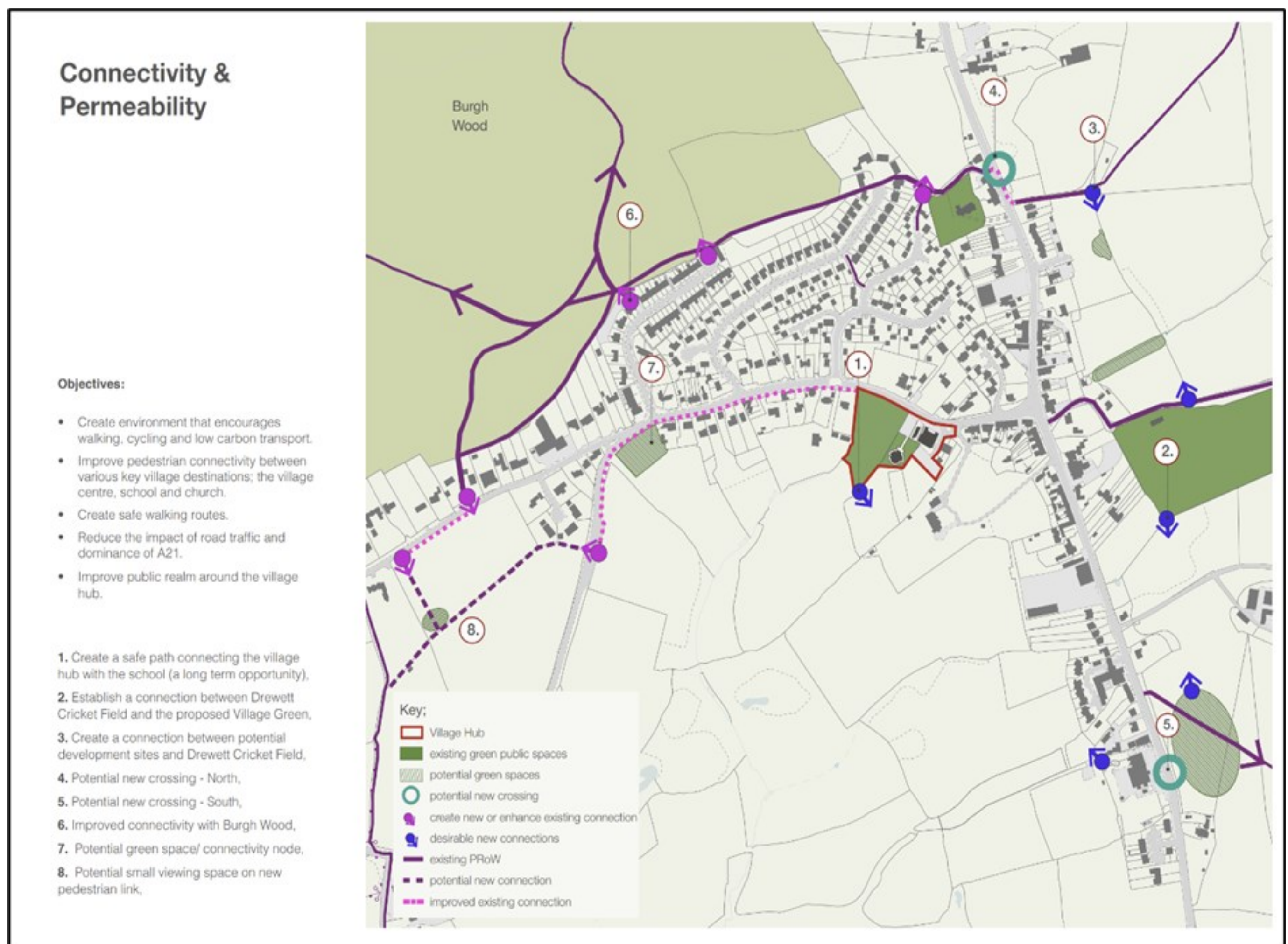
- Direct development to the **most sustainable places** - i.e. Hurst Green village
- Identify and **allocate sites** for 55 homes.
- Ensure that the sites **offer something positive**—e.g. local facilities, green space—to address the objectives of the Plan.
- Deliver homes that **meet local needs** - in particular for those wishing to downsize, those buying or renting their first home and those with families.
- Support **design** to mitigate climate change.



Objective 2

To improve public safety and reduce the harmful impact of road traffic, while providing sufficient parking for the community.

Traffic concerns rated very high in our consultations. Whilst our Neighbourhood Plan has limited influence on strategic highways issues, the Parish Council is continuing to work with East Sussex County Council and National Highways.



What we aim to achieve through the Neighbourhood Plan:

- All new housing developments should link to the public footpath network to make it easier to get to the local facilities on foot.
- Safeguard our existing public car parking.
- Provide additional cycle storage.
- Provide electric vehicle charging in public spaces and in new development.
- Optimise off-road car parking provision within new housing development.

Objectives 3 & 4

To create an environment that encourages residents to live active, social, meaningful lives that promote good health and well-being.

To bring forward action on facilities and improvements, which are needed by the village of Hurst Green; and the hamlets of Silver Hill and Swiftsden.

What we aim to achieve through the Neighbourhood Plan:

A Village Hub

We want to provide a renewed focus for community activity by enhancing the area around the existing village hall, the community café, and Hurst Green Park.

We are already upgrading the playground.

Also to provide space for an open-air market, secure cycle storage, create better access between the facilities and optimise the car park.



Allotments and growing spaces

Protecting our existing allotments and identifying opportunities for new 'growing spaces', which might be within developments or enhancing our green verges.



Valuing our dark skies

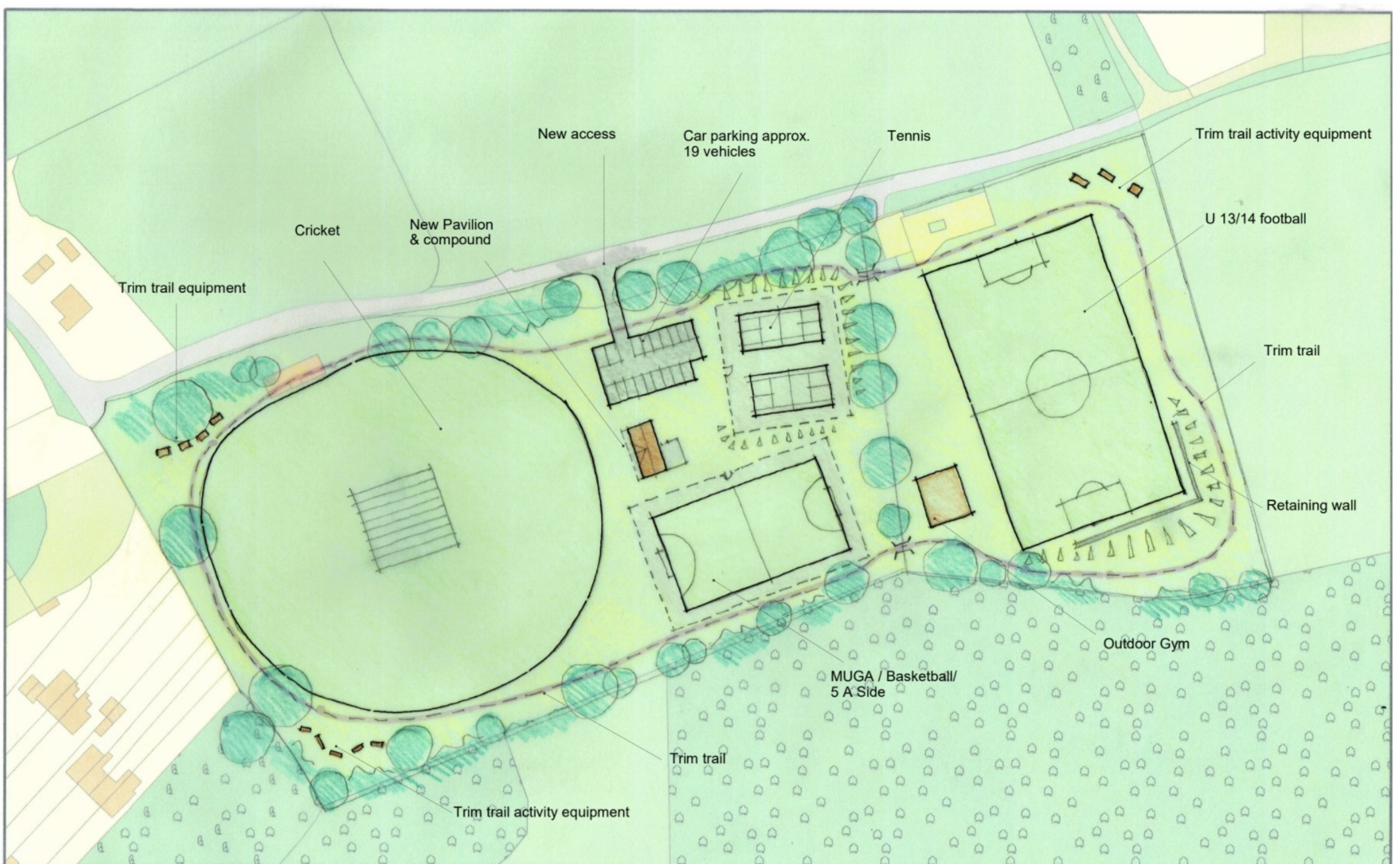
Our High Weald location affords us 'dark skies' that should be recognised and treasured.

Sports and Leisure Facilities

What we aim to achieve through the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Upgrading the playground in Hurst Green Park.
- Redeveloping Drewetts Field to provide improved facilities and a new pavilion.
- Providing more activities aimed at older children and teenagers, for instance bike trails.

Potential Masterplan for Drewett's Field



Next steps: The delivery of the vision for Drewett's Field is dependent on grants, planning contributions and donations.

Possible phasing:

Phase 1: Trim trail and equipment, possible MUGA

Phase 2: Football provision

Phase 3: Car parking and tennis courts

Phase 4: New cricket pavilion and changing facilities

Objective 5

To improve the visual appearance and overall perception of Hurst Green as a place where people want to live, work and visit.

What we aim to achieve through the Neighbourhood Plan:

As part of the Neighbourhood Plan, we have developed a Masterplan for Hurst Green Parish, which sets out our aspirations for:

- **Encouraging walking and cycling** and improving connectivity between the facilities within the Parish and to nearby settlements.
- **Improving the public realm throughout the village by:**
 - Incorporating native planting into development.
 - Planting wildflower verges.
 - Supporting additional tree planting.
- **Supporting the provision of additional green space:**
 - Within developments.
- **Identifying longer term traffic calming measures:**
 - Additional pedestrian crossing points.
 - Clearly marking the entrances to the village.

Objective 6

To enhance our existing, and create new, open green spaces and improve access to the countryside.

What we aim to achieve through the Neighbourhood Plan:

Protecting the natural features of the parish

The Parish is typical of the High Weald landscape and notably natural features, that we want to safeguard, include woodland, meadows, grassland and heath. Opportunities to incorporate such features within new developments.

Mapping our 'green infrastructure' network

Our Parish, located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, benefits from a rich tapestry of landscapes. Each provides a habitat for a wealth of plants and animals. We want to protect and link up this green network and enhance it where possible, to increase our biodiversity.

Map showing the landscape areas



Local Green Spaces

Local Green Spaces identified through a neighbourhood plan will receive protection equivalent to green belt land.

**They must be demonstrably special to the community for:
recreation, beauty, tranquility, wildlife, and/or historic value**



LGS1 Burgh Wood



LGS3 Community Shop grounds



LGS4 Countryside passageway



LGS5 Drewitts sports ground



LGS6 Lodge field playing ground



LGS7 School playing field



LGS8 Silver Hill Stage field



LGS9 Station Road Corner garden



LGS10 Holy Trinity churchyard



LGS11 Village allotments

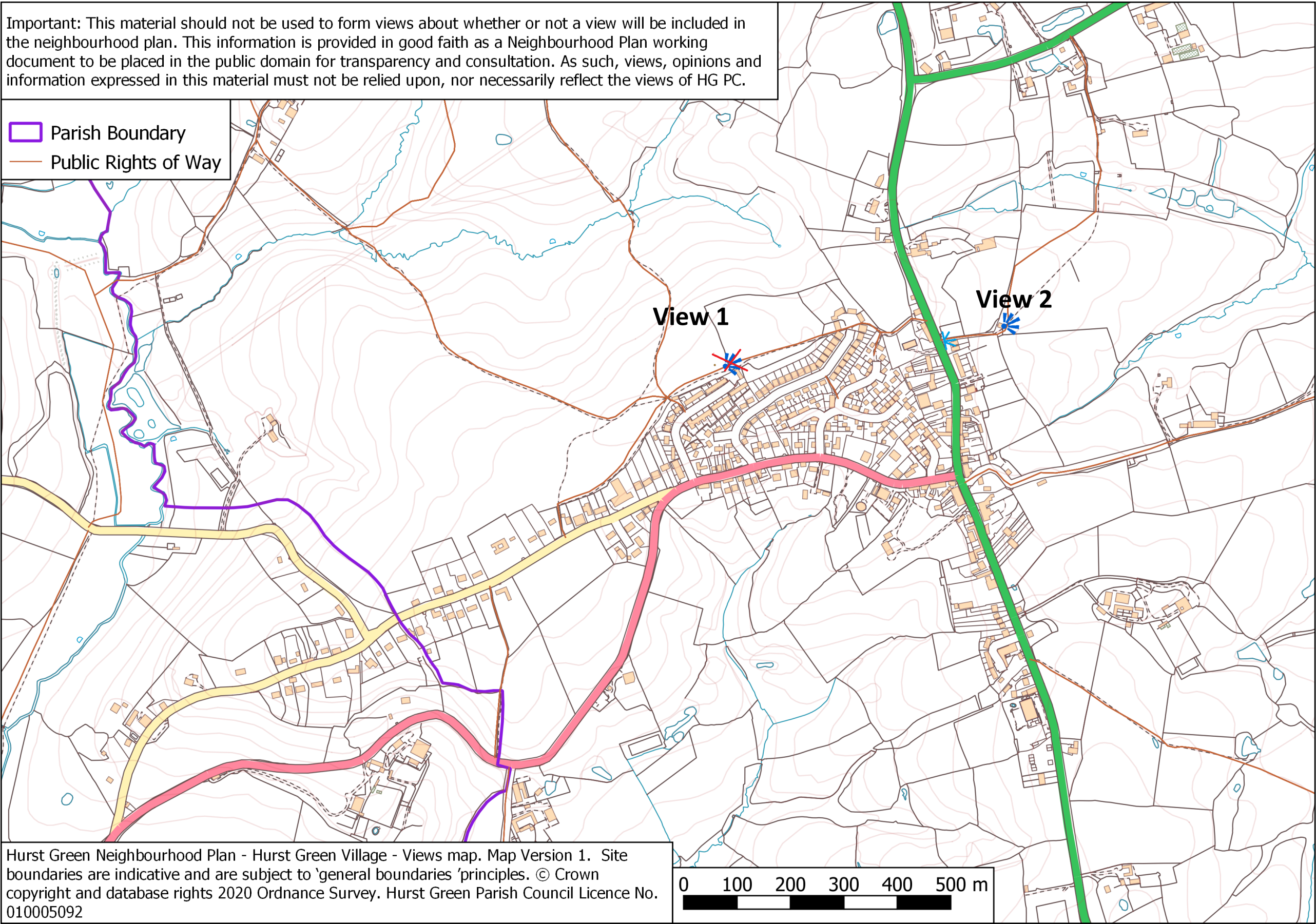
Views and Vistas

There are two particular views that we wish to protect from development



View 1:

From the footpath opposite the church, looking eastward towards the lowland meadows



View 2: View over the lowland meadows from the end of the footpath tree tunnel

Objective 7

To increase business, retail and tourism opportunities to encourage local employment, and grow the local economy.

What we aim to achieve through the Neighbourhood Plan:

Promoting sustainable rural tourism

Hurst Green's attractive location within the High Weald, coupled with its proximity to a great number of regionally and nationally significant visitor attractions, presents an opportunity for the parish to develop itself as a destination for sustainable rural tourism.



Supporting local employment opportunities

We want to safeguard existing commercial premises. Equally, we recognise the contribution of home-based and smaller businesses to Hurst Green and seeks to encourage opportunities for these including the provision of start-up and move-on business units. This would provide a greater incentive and opportunity for local people to work locally.

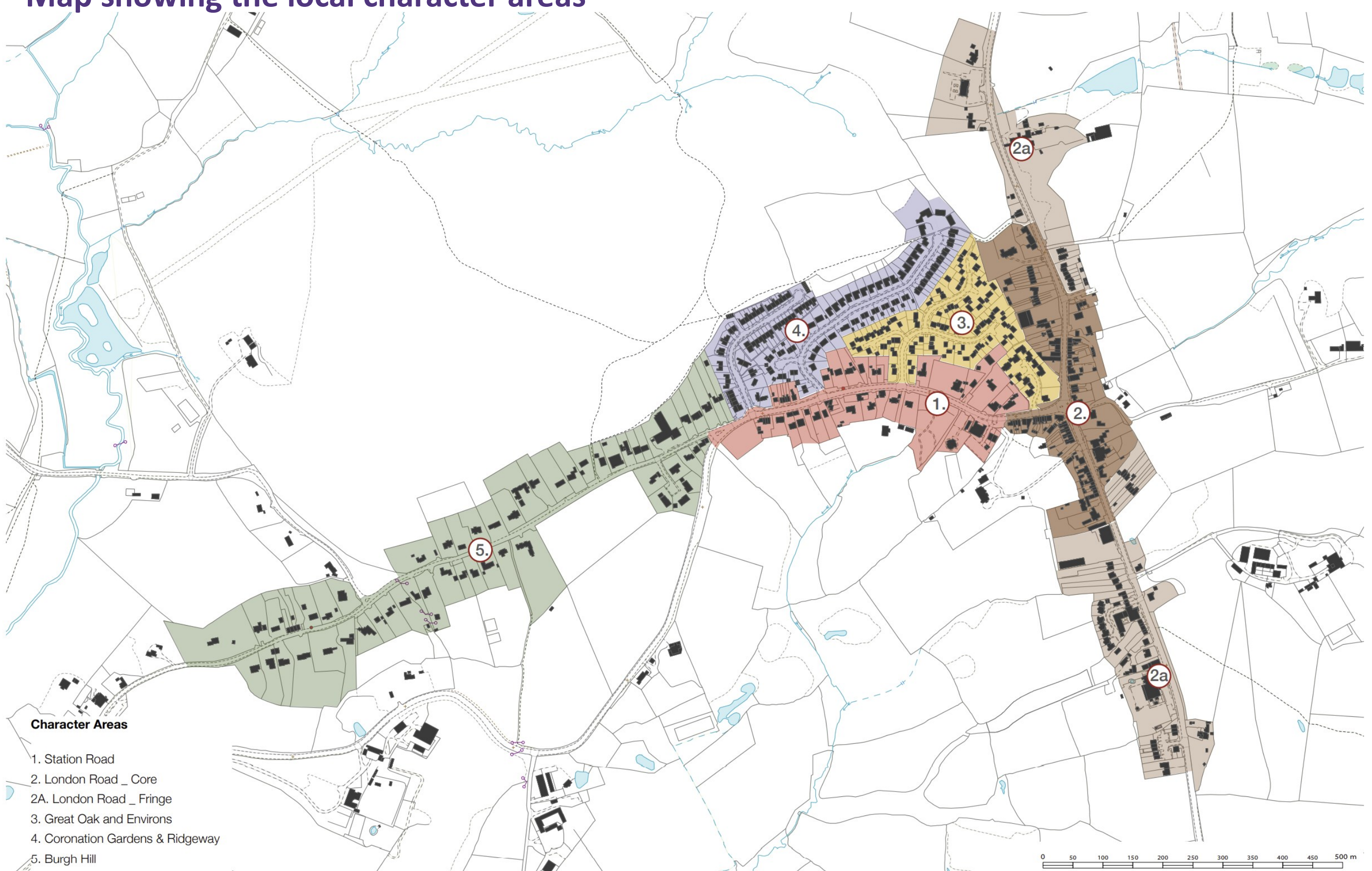
Objective 8

To conserve and enhance the built and historic environment and improve the general street scene around the parish.

What we aim to achieve through the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Any development should be designed to be in-keeping with and responding to the with the natural landscape.
- We have divided Hurst Green village into Character Areas and have prepared detailed local design guidance to ensure that any development reinforces the local character. For instance, the materials used, density, colours and architectural features.
- Historic assets should be preserved and, where possible, enhanced so that the community can continue to enjoy them.
- Entrances to the villages should be obvious and attractive.

Map showing the local character areas



The Site Identification, Assessment and Allocation Process

Why do we need to allocate sites for housing in Hurst Green?

Rother District Council prepares the strategic Local Plan for the whole district, setting out the overall housing need. The current Local Plan states a need for at least 5,700 dwellings between 2011 and 2028.

The majority of these homes will be delivered in the larger towns, for example Bexhill and Hastings. Approximately 1,670 are to be delivered in the villages across the district.

Each village has been allocated a number of homes to deliver, through their Neighbourhood Plans. For Hurst Green, the number required is 75 homes, to be delivered in the village of Hurst Green itself.

Already, 20 homes are being delivered on the Foundry Close site, which leaves a minimum of 55 homes to be allocated through the Neighbourhood Plan.

If we do not allocate sites in the Neighbourhood Plan, either Rother District Council will do this on our behalf, or we will be open to speculative development, which we will have little influence over.

Allocating sites in the Neighbourhood Plan gives us the opportunity to consider where homes should go, the design and layout of those homes and the facilities that might be

The Site Identification, Assessment and Allocation Process

Time line of the sites process

