

Southborough and High Brooms Neighbourhood Development Plan



2024 to 2038

Submission Version

May 2025

**Prepared by the Southborough and High Brooms
Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group on behalf of
Southborough Town Council**

Foreword

This Neighbourhood Plan sets out the community's vision of how the area of Southborough and High Brooms should evolve and thrive to meet the needs of its residents. Our plan will align with the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan but will have more local detail specific to our area.

A Neighbourhood Plan gives local people a voice in defining planning policies. It aims to protect green spaces, encourage better designed housing and provide a framework for delivering sustainable development that genuinely meets local needs. Under the Government's Localism Act of 2011, every community in the country is encouraged to produce their own specific plan.

The Southborough and High Brooms Neighbourhood Development Plan (SHBNDP) has been developed under the auspices of the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, (as amended) by a Steering Group with guidance from our Planning Consultant, Alison Eardley, and Community Engagement Advisor, Jim Boot.

The plan received financial and administrative support from Southborough Town Council and from AECOM (infrastructure consultants).

Our Neighbourhood Plan describes the community's aspirations for change and development and calls for more sustainable design standards to protect our biodiversity and environment. In addition, it lists our cherished green spaces, views and heritage assets to help maintain and support the character of the area. Finally, it endeavours to support the businesses operating within the area, including our creative industries, and to maintain and develop our sports and leisure facilities.

Once the plan is approved with a positive referendum result, we will be able to exert a very positive influence on any change and development that is proposed to occur in the parish over the lifetime of the plan.

My grateful thanks are due to Alison Eardley, Planning Consultant, and Jim Boot, community engagement Advisor, SHB staff members as well as the individual Steering Group members who have contributed so much knowledge, data and photographs as well as time to prepare the plan.

Nick Woollett

Chair, SHB Working Group

May 2025

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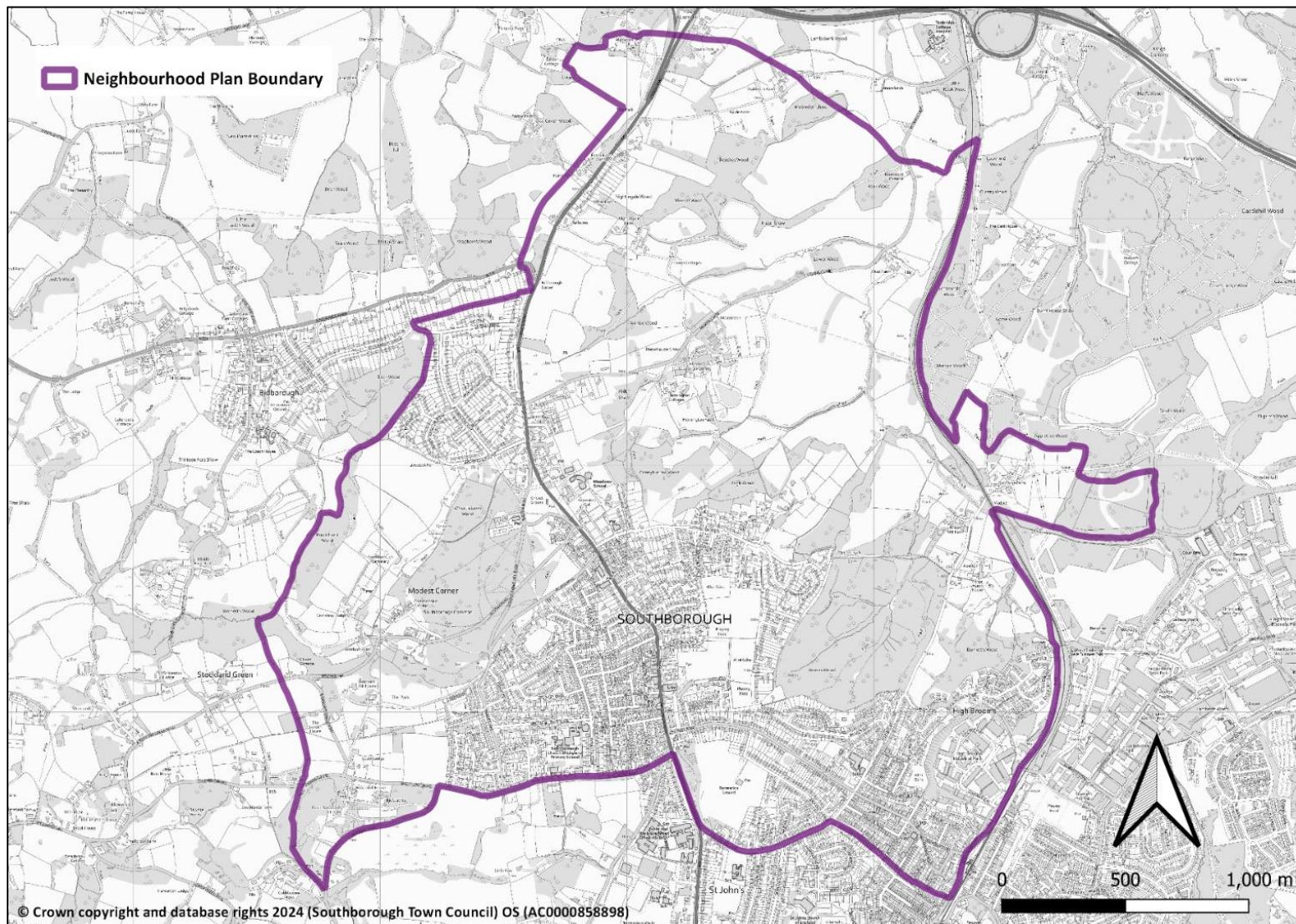
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is the Southborough and High Brooms Neighbourhood Development Plan (SHBNDP). It sets out planning and land-use policy for the settled areas of Southborough and High Brooms and the wider rural parish, over the period 2024 to 2038, forming part of the development plan for Tunbridge Wells borough. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC), as the local planning authority, designated the Southborough and High Brooms Neighbourhood Area on 11 August 2023. The neighbourhood area shares its boundary with that of the Civil Parish of Southborough (*Figure 1*).
- 1.2 The SHBNDP has been prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Development Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Southborough Town Council, as the qualifying body, set up a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group comprising local councillors and volunteers from the community, to lead on the preparation of the Plan. In consultation with the community, local businesses and others, the Steering Group has established a vision and framework for the future of the designated area and set out how that vision will be realised through planning land use and development change over the period 2024 to 2038.
- 1.3 Once the SHBNDP is 'made', its policies form part of the development plan for Tunbridge Wells borough and must be considered by any interested parties wishing to submit planning applications for development within Southborough parish. The policies also set out how land should be considered, in planning terms, and are a material planning consideration in the determination of applications, alongside the policies of the adopted local development plan.
- 1.4 The process of producing the SHBNDP has sought to involve the community as widely as possible and the different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance in the area. Within each section there is a summary of what the policy seeks to achieve and a justification, providing the necessary understanding of why the policy is needed and how it should be applied. The policies themselves are presented in the green boxes and these will be used to determine planning applications. To understand the full context for any individual policy, it should be read alongside the supporting text and evidence documents that have been compiled to underpin the SHBNDP.
- 1.5 Beneath each policy is a conformity reference, listing the relevant policies in the TWBC adopted and emerging Local Plan documents, the relevant objectives of the High Weald National Landscape (formally known as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) Management Plan and the paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that the policy conforms to.
- 1.6 The SHBNDP also identifies local community projects that are not met through planning policy, but which are important to the well-being of the community. Finally, the Plan sets out the Community Infrastructure Priorities and a framework for monitoring and implementation.

Figure 1: Southborough and High Brooms Neighbourhood Plan designated area



The Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy

1.7 The SHBNDP has been prepared in accordance with the NPPF (most recently revised in December 2024). Its states:

*"Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. **Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies** (Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area). Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, **the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict**; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently."*

Local Planning Policy

1.8 The policies of the SHBNDP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the following adopted Local plan documents:

- The saved policies of the Local Plan 2006 - remaining 2006 Local Plan saved policies are listed in Appendix 1 of the [Site Allocations Local Plan document](#)
- The [Core Strategy Development Document](#) (adopted 2010)
- The [Site Allocations Local Plan](#) (adopted 2016)

1.9 There are also various 'Made' Neighbourhood Plans across the borough and a series of Supplementary Planning documents which form part of the Development Plan.

1.10 **Minerals and Waste:** The Development Plan also comprises The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (KMWLP) 2013-2030 (adopted 2016, modified in 2020, since subject to further review and currently subject to examination, the main modifications to the KMWLP having been subject to a public consultation in October/November 2024). In addition, The County Council, as Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, confirms that within the plan area, there are significant safeguarded land-won minerals, mainly a suite of sandstones that have low to no current demand. These minerals are, in all probability, now only suitable for historic building/structure restoration and building purposes. The 'growth' identified by the Neighbourhood Plan aligns with the emerging Tunbridge Wells Borough (TWBC) Local Plan and the County Council has commented on the allocations in terms of mineral safeguarding. Therefore, any development that comes forward in the future would need to accord with the emerging Local Plan. Any mineral safeguarding considerations would have to be addressed, as required by the adopted Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 (Adopted Early Partial Review 2020) policy DM 7.

1.11 A new Local Plan for Tunbridge Wells borough is in the process of being developed. Following the Regulation 19 consultation it was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent Examination on 1 November 2021. Upon receipt of the Inspector's Initial Findings Letter in

November 2022, TWBC decided to progress the examination with revisions to the Development Strategy to the Tunbridge Wells Submission Local Plan (SLP).

- 1.12 The latest [Local Development Scheme](#) (October 2024) sets out the proposed timetable for the emerging Local Plan and states that the intention is to adopt the new Local Plan in Mar/Apr/May 2025. Once adopted, the new Local Plan will replace the saved policies of the 2006 Local Plan, the Core Strategy (2010) and the Site Allocations Local Plan (adopted 2016).
- 1.13 As the [Submission Local Plan \(SLP\)](#) is well-advanced, its policies carry increasing weight as the Plan goes through the process and are an important consideration in the development of the SP policies. The draft strategic policies (starting 'STR') – and the evidence base sitting behind them – have therefore been used to inform the SHBNDP.
- 1.14 The emerging Local Plan seeks to deliver, across the borough, a minimum of 11,880 dwellings and 14 hectares of employment (Use Classes B (Business use) and E (Commercial use)) land, together with supporting infrastructure and services over the plan period (Policy STR 1).
- 1.15 Southborough Town Centre and the Neighbourhood Centres in High Brooms and North Southborough, together with the surrounding built-up areas, form part of what is referred to as the Main Urban Area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough (MUA). The Limits to built development (LBD) of Southborough merges with the LBD of Bidborough to the north west, and with the LBD of Royal Tunbridge Wells to the south and east. The proposed strategy (at October 2024) for the Southborough part of the neighbourhood area (SLP Policy STR/SO 1) is shown below, although the TWBC new Local Plan is subject to main modifications and public consultation in due course and therefore the policy could be amended.

Policy STR/SO 1

The Strategy for Southborough

The development strategy for Southborough is to:

1. Set Limits to Built Development for Southborough on the Policies Map (Inset Map 3) as a framework for new development over the plan period;
2. Build approximately 42 new dwellings on two sites (Policies AL/SO 1 and AL/SO 3), including affordable housing, allocated in this Local Plan in the plan period. Of these sites, AL/SO 1 already has planning permission for 16 dwellings;
3. Identify the Southborough Hub recreation area as a local sports hub as part of the Sports Strategy;
4. Protect and retain the public car park(s) within Southborough, as defined on the Southborough Policies Map;
5. Retain an appropriate mix of uses within the town centre, as defined on the Policies Map, and support proposals which would contribute to the vitality and viability of the centre;
6. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the provision of:
 - a. one new health facility to replace an existing facility;
 - b. new play space provision to reduce gap in access to provision;
 - c. enhancements to natural green spaces at Barnetts Wood and Southborough Common;
 - d. additional natural green space and food growing areas/allotments;
 - e. recreation and sports provision at Hawkenbury (site allocation Policy AL/RTW 19) and/or at Land at and adjacent to Rusthall Recreation Ground, Southwood Road, Rusthall (site allocation Policy AL/SP 2);
 - f. other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

- 1.16 In addition, SLP Policy ED 1 identifies Southborough and High Brooms Industrial Area as a Key Employment Area, appropriate for the following mixed uses: Class E (financial, professional and other business uses, and appropriate leisure), Class F (appropriate leisure uses), Class B8 (storage and distribution), and other *sui generis* uses of an appropriate type and scale.
- 1.17 Land at Mabledon House (Policy AL/S02), which sits outside the LBD but within the HWNL and Green Belt is allocated for use as a hotel and spa with restoration of parkland and gardens. Both the house and parkland are Grade II listed.

The High Weald AONB Management Plan

- 1.18 Much of the parish, beyond the settled areas fall within the High Weald National Landscape. Local authorities with land in a National Landscape are legally obliged under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to produce a Management Plan. [The High Weald Management Plan 2024-2029](#) was approved by the Joint Advisory Committee on 27 March 2024 for adoption by each of the Local Authorities. It will be used to guide environmental land management and assess the impact of development or other changes on the NL. The objectives of the Management Plan have been considered in the development of this

Neighbourhood Plan, as has the advice contained in both the [High Weald Housing Design Guide](#) and the [Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development](#).

Community engagement

1.19 From the beginning, work on the SHBNDP has been guided by the need to engage as widely as possible with the local community. Efforts have been made to reach those people who are often more difficult to involve in formal consultations. Aside from the statutory requirements for public consultation at various stages, measures to draw in a wider range of contributions have included presentations, an area-wide survey, mapping workshops, business events and community exhibitions. These will be described more fully in the Consultation Statement, which will be submitted alongside the Submission SHBNDP later in the process. A timeline of activity is summarised in *Table 1*.

Images from the local consultation events



Table 1: High-level summary of key milestones and engagement activity

Date	Milestone	Key activities
2023	Launching the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designating the neighbourhood area • Setting up a Steering Group • Issuing community questionnaire
2023 to 2024	Identifying Key themes Engagement and evidence gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visioning Event • Community survey • Working up the objectives for each of the key themes • Engagement with local children and teenagers, businesses, residents groups etc. • Commissioning Housing Needs Survey • Developing Design Guidance
2024 to 2025	Pre-Submission Draft Plan Submission Plan Examination Referendum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEA/ HRA Screening of the emerging draft plan • First round of formal consultation at Regulation 14 • Submitting documents to TWBC and Regulation 16 consultation • Examination • Plan ‘made’

Sustainability of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.20 The Town Council is committed to environmental sustainability and issued an [Environmental Policy](#) in 2021, following in the footsteps of Kent County Council (KCC) and TWBC.
- 1.21 The SHBNDP has been screened by TWBC to ascertain whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required. The screening document was subject to consultation with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency during September and October 2024. The Screening Determination Statement has concluded that the SHBNDP is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 1.22 In addition, the screening determined that the ‘appropriate assessment’ stage of the HRA process (that ascertains the effect on integrity of the European Site) does not need to be undertaken. This conclusion was sent to Natural England for consideration and their response is in agreement.
- 1.23 A copy of the Screening Determination statements is available on the Neighbourhood Plan website: www.shbndp.com.

2. ABOUT SOUTHBOROUGH AND HIGH BROOMS

- 2.1. The Southborough and High Brooms Neighbourhood Area covers the whole of the Civil Parish of Southborough which is located at the north-western edge of the borough of Tunbridge Wells under the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC). The parish lies north of the town of Royal Tunbridge Wells and south of the town of Tonbridge (which is beyond the borough boundary). High Brooms is an area within the Civil Parish that was originally a separate settlement and has retained its own identity.
- 2.2. The overall size of the parish is 732.73 hectares. The built-up area of the parish that includes the settlements of both Southborough and High Brooms, forms the Main Urban Area (MUA) of the borough with Royal Tunbridge Wells and is densely populated. The settlement's Limits to Built Development (LBD) merges with that of Royal Tunbridge Wells to the south and south-east and with Bidborough to the north.
- 2.3. The areas outside of the LBD to the north-east and south-west are defined as Wooded Farmland in terms of landscape character, with a small area of Wooded Plateau east of the Colebrook Railway Viaduct. These areas retain their ancient rural aspect with some limited built development. 66% of the parish is within the Metropolitan Green Belt and 64% is within the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL) which has been described as one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe. Although the built-up areas of Southborough and High Brooms are not within the HWNL designation (due to an historical decision to exclude urban areas when the National Landscape was originally designated) they share the same landform and geology as their rural hinterland.
- 2.4. Southborough's large Conservation Area stretches from Holden Corner in the south west to Vauxhall Lane in the north east, with buildings and open spaces of special architectural, environmental or historic interest. This includes Southborough Common, Modest Corner and St Peter's Church and cemetery.
- 2.5. Southborough town centre, at the southern end of the parish, is bisected by the A26, London Road, with a range of services and facilities including retail units offering a range of everyday and specialist goods. A smaller range of services and shops are provided in High Brooms.
- 2.6. The A26 runs north to the A21 major trunk road and the town of Tonbridge and south to Royal Tunbridge Wells. Buses along this roadway connect Southborough with these larger towns and with Sevenoaks and Maidstone. There is no bus service linking High Brooms and its railway station to Southborough, but a bus service links High Brooms to Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre. There is very limited provision of dedicated cycle routes within the parish.
- 2.7. Direct rail services to Sevenoaks, London and to the South Coast are accessible from High Brooms railway station, which is just outside the parish boundary, and from Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge stations, 2 miles and 2.5 miles respectively from Southborough town centre.

- 2.8. There is good recreation provision in the parish, with sports pitches to the east of Southborough Town Centre being identified as a local sports hub in the emerging TWBC Local Plan (see Policy STR/SO1 Strategy for Southborough).
- 2.9. The High Brooms Industrial Area (Chapmans Way and the Orchard Business Centre on North Farm Road) remains as a Key Employment Area in the emerging TWBC Local Plan, with business, retail, leisure and industrial uses.

Historical Context

- 2.10. The particular elements of the HWNL that have influenced settlement in the area are the typical high ridges, steep sided valleys, areas of Ancient Woodland and water features, with underlying geology of iron-rich sandstone and clay.
- 2.11. An iguanodon discovered in High Brooms is the oldest archaeological find in the area dating from some 135 million years ago. Stone Age flints, an Iron Age axe and Iron and Bronze Age burials off Powder Mill Lane hint at the possibility of initial development of a settlement, rather than just an itinerant population. London Road and Powder Mill Lane follow sections of ancient routes linking Iron Age hill forts at Oldbury, Saxonbury and Castle Hill.
- 2.12. At the time of the Norman invasion the area administratively came within the domain of Tonbridge Castle as part of its South Borough. The western part was under the Manor of Southborough at Great Bounds and the eastern part was in the domain of the Manor of South Frith. The Forest of South Frith was reserved by royalty for hunting until the middle of the 16th century; herds of wild deer roam freely here to this day.
- 2.13. During the Medieval period, in common with other areas in the High Weald, small areas of trees were cleared for farming, with a dispersed settlement pattern developing of historic farmsteads, agricultural workers dwellings and isolated hamlets for associated trades.
- 2.14. The Tudor period brought heavy industry, with iron manufacture along the river tributary between Vauxhall Lane and Powder Mill Lane. While charcoal-powered furnaces had been used in earlier times, water-powered furnaces were now located on fast-flowing gill streams, with the iron smelted at nearby forges. The Vauxhall Furnace operated from at least 1552, near Mote Farm in what is now Vauxhall Lane.
- 2.15. The development of Royal Tunbridge Wells as a spa town early in the 17th century, resulting from the perceived health-giving properties of the iron-rich mineral waters of the Chalybeate Spring, also benefited Southborough. For much of the 17th century Southborough provided accommodation for holidaymakers taking the waters at “the Wells”. The most notable visitor was Charles II's Queen Catherine, whose thirteen-week visit to Great Bounds (a fine mansion which no longer exists) in 1663 is documented in the Royal Household's financial archives.

- 2.16. The settlements continued to grow as industries associated with agriculture and the natural resources of the area thrived in the 18th century. As the country's need for iron decreased some furnaces were taken over for the production of gunpowder. By the early nineteenth century cricket ball manufacture was a major source of employment in Southborough.
- 2.17. A period of gentrification in the early 19th Century developed the settlement further, with the area becoming a desirable place for rich business and professional people to live. Monied businessmen purchased farms and small country estates to create mansions and ornamental parklands. The well-known architect Decimus Burton designed and built Bentham Hill House (this is its commonly known spelling but listed on Historic England website as Bentam Hill House) and extensions to Broomhill House (now known as Salomons) and Mabledon. In addition to the mansions and large villas, homes were required for the domestic servants and their families.
- 2.18. Improvements to transport in the 19th century gave further impetus, enabling residents to commute more easily to London. The railway line from London to Tonbridge opened 1842 and the branch line from Tonbridge to Tunbridge Wells opened in 1845, following the building of the Colebrook Viaduct, now Grade II Listed, although the station at High Brooms, originally known as Southborough Station, did not open until 1893.
- 2.19. The settlement at High Brooms grew rapidly as a working-class area with the founding of the High Brooms Brick and Tile Company in 1855 by a methodist builder and developer, Frank Weare. Weare created the community of High Brooms on farm and woodland sold off for development. By 1901 there were over 2000 people living here, including builders, colliers and men who worked in the brick factory, many in company houses built in the characteristic top-quality red brick. The High Brooms Laundry, on the corner of North Farm Road and Highfield Road was another large employer.
- 2.20. The pits of Wealden clay in what later became the High Brooms Industrial Estate (Chapmans Way and the Orchard Business Centre on North Farm Road), coupled with the plentiful supply of fuel from the local managed woodlands, provided the basis for development of this successful industry, while the railway provided an efficient means of transporting bricks, as well as other goods, for use elsewhere in England and abroad.
- 2.21. Settlement in Southborough and High Brooms continued to grow through the 20th Century, with new-build houses and apartments, conversion of farm buildings to residential and subdivision of large houses into flats.

Southborough and High Brooms Today

- 2.22. Southborough and High Brooms have active communities with groups and clubs catering for variety of interests across all age groups. Popular Facebook pages promote local activities and events, and the Town Council website provides information for residents and visitors on local services and facilities. The TWBC and Visit Tunbridge Wells websites also provide information.

The new Southborough Civic Centre and Town Square (opened in 2021) are in Southborough town centre, adjacent to the A26. The Civic Centre has meeting rooms and a large hall available for hire, providing spaces for conferences, exercise classes, indoor markets and performing arts events. Regular community events have included a Winter Fayre, Quiz and Game Nights plus a market in the Town Square and a May Day festival on Southborough Common.

- 2.23. The Civic Centre also has a well-stocked library that additionally hosts associated clubs and groups for children and adults, plus offers free public computers and wi-fi, with digital support if required. Several medical facilities, including a doctor's surgery and a pharmacy, are located around the Town Square.
- 2.24. The primary shopping area of the parish lies in the Town Centre, close to the Civic Centre, and is bisected by the A26 (London Road). Two small supermarkets, a post office, a range of independent specialist shops and businesses and several cafes and take-aways meet local needs. There is a parade of shops and a small supermarket along with a car wash and other small businesses in High Brooms.
- 2.25. The Yew Tree Road car park provides vital support for Southborough town centre, giving two hours free parking to enable residents and visitors to frequent the independent shops and business, participate in events at the Civic Centre and attend doctor's appointments etc. without high parking costs.
- 2.26. Active community groups include litter picking, Southborough in Bloom, historical and archaeological societies and the town twinning association that links Southborough with Lambersaart in France. Churches of all denominations support the local communities. Youth Groups include Scouts and Girl Guides from early years to age 18. Both football and cricket have clubs for adults and young people, with groups/teams from the wider area visiting for matches and tournaments. Facilities for cricket are provided in the picturesque setting of Southborough Common, with football at the Ridgewaye playing fields, where the Ridgemont Pavilion is also used for community events. There is additional sport and leisure provision at Pennington Recreation Ground, including tennis courts, a basketball court, an adult outdoor gym and a children's play area and a Petanque Ground at the coppice of trees and rest garden in Yew Tree Road. Plots at the Ridgewaye and Yew Tree Road Allotments are available for rent by residents of Southborough and High Brooms.
- 2.27. In terms of education, there are two primary schools plus nursery and pre-school provision, and easy access to a number of secondary schools, state and independent, in the neighbouring towns of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge.
- 2.28. While the long-standing restaurant site at The Weavers has closed and is likely to be repurposed, there is a restaurant beside Southborough Common and two restaurants in pubs nearby. The Salomons Estate serves lunches and afternoon teas on selected dates, while also

providing a venue for corporate and private celebration events. There are other, smaller eating places within the shop parades.

- 2.29. A network of footpaths and permissive paths within the parish and to neighbouring parishes, enable walkers to enjoy the landscape. The rural hinterland, which a number of these footpaths cross, is mainly unspoilt by built development and remains a medieval landscape with areas of ancient woodland, scattered farmsteads, and ancient routeways. The Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk passes through Southborough and a shorter Southborough Circular Walk follows part of this route.
- 2.30. Barnetts Wood, a Local Nature Reserve, and Southborough Common, a Local Wildlife Site are managed by the Kent High Weald Project to maintain a variety of habitats including woodland, heathland, streams, meadows and ponds. They are open to the public and each offers a place for families to explore the woodlands, flora and fauna of the High Weald, with nature trails and a network of paths. Volunteers from the local community assist in the upkeep of both facilities. There are other Local Wildlife Sites on private land. The Southborough Pit (the former brick pit lying north of Colebrook Road and Baldwins Lane) is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- 2.31. The parish has 46 listed buildings, many of them in the large Southborough Conservation Area. The majority are from the 18th and 19th century including three churches, the Colebrook railway viaduct, cottages, farmhouses and farm buildings. In the 19th century several gardens and ornamental parklands were created, with picturesque villas designed by the architect Decimus Burton. Mabledon Park is included in the National Heritage List for England and Bentham Hill House and Salomons (formerly Broomhill) are listed in the Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens.

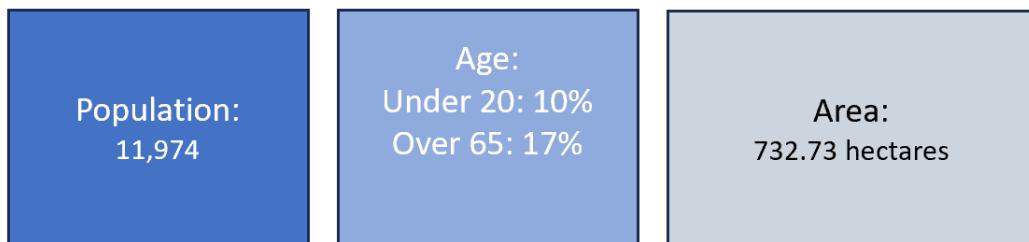
Photos of Southborough and High Brooms



Key characteristics of the Parish

A profile of the neighbourhood area can be found in the evidence base. *Figure 2* provides a summary:

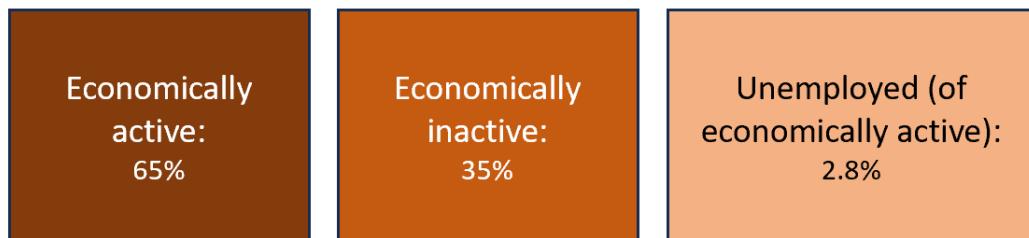
Figure 2: Summary of 2021 Census data for the neighbourhood area



Households



Employment



Car and van availability



3. A VISION FOR SOUTHBOROUGH AND HIGH BROOMS

Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan

3.1. In consultation with the community, the vision for Southborough and High Brooms to 2038 is:

In 2038 Southborough and High Brooms will be vibrant, thriving places, where people choose to live, work and visit.

The two settlements will remain closely connected while recognising their distinctiveness both from each other and from nearby places, such as Royal Tunbridge Wells.

Our High Street will have been regenerated to offer a range of recreational, retail and community facilities, as an appealing destination for those living here or visiting from the wider area. Within this, the Southborough Civic Centre and town square will provide a safe, inclusive spaces to host events, live music and other activities that bring together local culture and creativity.

The High Brooms Industrial Estate will have evolved its offering to a mix of commercial and other leisure/ recreational uses.

New housing will be carefully planned and managed to meet local needs and all development will seek to reinforce the character of the local area, with design that is both attractive and sustainable. Our residents will have opportunities to work locally should they wish.

We will celebrate our rich history, protecting and further promoting our heritage. Equally, our rural Green Belt setting, within the High Weald National Landscape, will continue to be highly valued and we will seek opportunities to enhance opportunities for accessing open space and enabling biodiversity. Treasured green spaces and views will be protected for our future generations. The Common will remain a focus for traditional community activities and events.

We will strive to be a walkable, rideable and 'wheelable' (mobility scooters, pushchairs etc.) area, promoting safe, attractive and well-signposted routes to access local facilities, the wider countryside and nearby towns and villages with the infrastructure to support this, including lobbying for improved public transport links.

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

3.2. The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

Objective 1: Sustainable development and housing: There are well-designed homes to meet the needs of the local community. They allow growth and adaptation to serve all phases of life, promoting health and wellbeing. The architecture uses passive energy and low carbon building materials, water use is optimised, there is increased biodiversity and reduced carbon emissions for existing and proposed development.

Objective 2: Protecting the natural and built environment: The natural environment of the High Weald National Landscape is protected and celebrated. Green spaces and views that are important to the community are safeguarded and opportunities for biodiversity improvements are sought. There is a network of ecological corridors that connect through the settlements to the wider countryside. Space for a wide range of active and passive recreation, for all ages, is provided. The neighbourhood area's historic buildings are protected and conserved. They are appreciated alongside contemporary architecture as part of our daily activities.

Objective 3: Safe and sustainable travel: Opportunities to encourage walking and cycling are optimised to encourage active travel for local journeys. There is the infrastructure to support electric cars as a less polluting option. The Town Council will lobby for improved bus services.

Objective 4: Connected and supported communities: The existing facilities are safeguarded and, where necessary improved and expanded, to serve all needs – for health, social and wellbeing, local food production, education, culture, retail, sport and recreation. They are inclusive spaces that connect and bring people together.

Objective 5: Local economy: Established local businesses and new businesses are supported, including working from home, commercial, agricultural and leisure uses. There is a strategy for the High Street and Neighbourhood Centres to ensure their ongoing success. The ongoing provision of employment at the High Brooms Industrial Estate is supported.

4. SPATIAL STRATEGY

Policy SHB1: Location of development

Purpose

4.1. This policy sets out the SHBNDP approach to the location of development within the neighbourhood area. It emphasises the importance of new development being directed to the most sustainable locations, near to local services and amenities, which will help to protect the valued National Landscape, the Green Belt and important green spaces and green corridors in the area. It will also help to retain the identity of the two main settlements, notably where they abut Royal Tunbridge Wells to the south, Bidborough to the northwest and Tonbridge to the north, by restricting further coalescence.

Justification

4.2. Beyond much of the settled areas, the neighbourhood area lies wholly within the High Weald National Landscape and the Metropolitan Green Belt. The engagement process revealed a strong desire among local people to preserve this special landscape and characterful setting of the parish.

4.3. The SLP seeks to allocate approximately 42 new dwellings in the parish. It does not identify a housing figure to be delivered through the SHBNDP itself, as it is considered that housing supply will have been addressed adequately at the strategic level through the strategic allocations and any windfall sites. The SHBNDP therefore does not allocate sites for housing, rather it sets out a series of parameters to support TWBC's proposed growth strategy. These are:

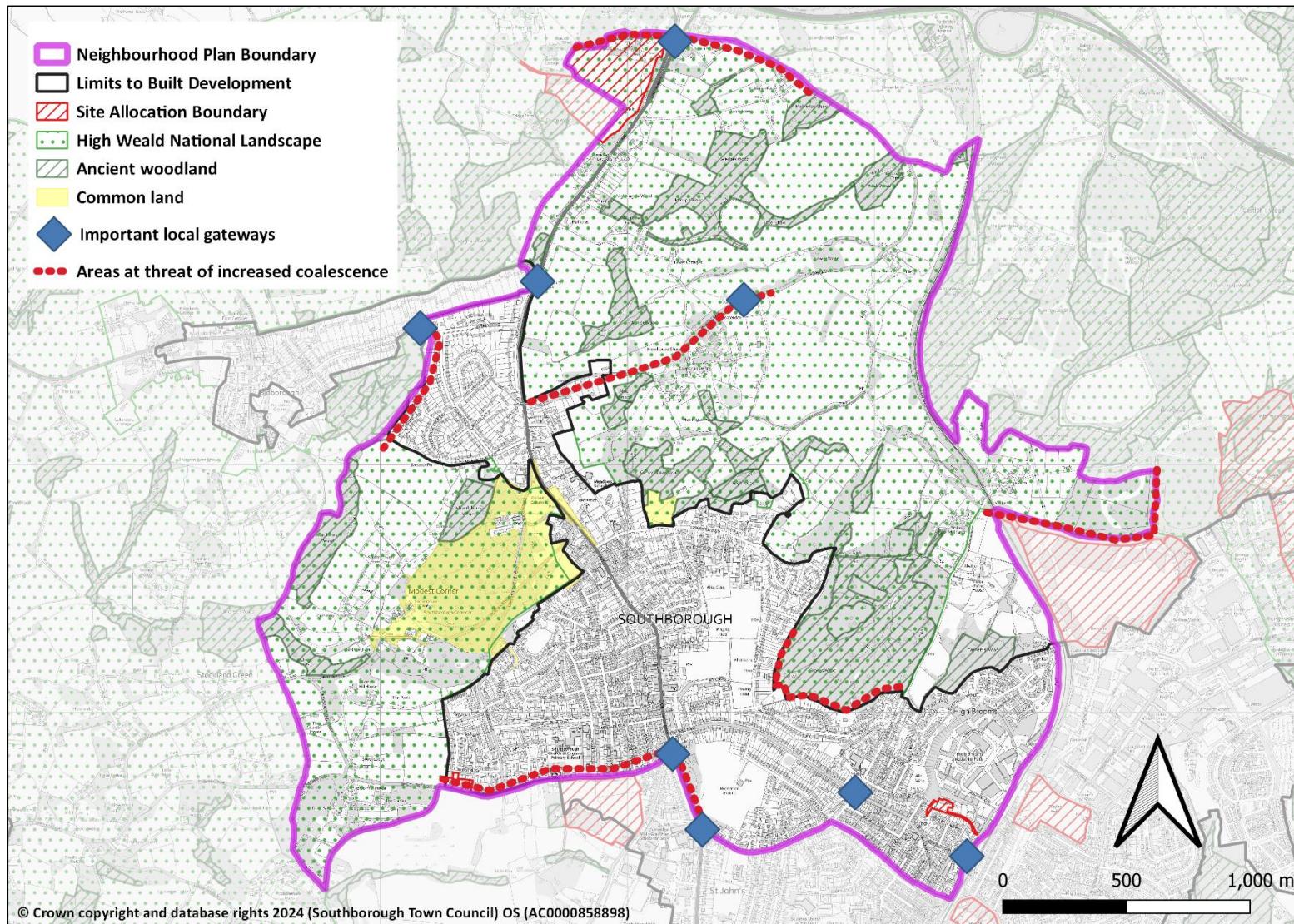
- focusing development to within the Limits to Built Development (LBD) – this will ensure that development takes place in the most sustainable locations, near to facilities. It will also assist in restricting development into the Metropolitan Green Belt and the High Weald National Landscape. The LBD is currently that shown in the adopted Core Strategy (2010), but it may be amended on adoption of the new Local Plan.
- maintaining the identity of the parish and its individual settlements by identifying areas where further coalescence poses a risk – the settlements of the parish already abut one another and neighbouring settlements, notably Royal Tunbridge Wells and Bidborough. A gap between Southborough and Tonbridge, to the north, also needs to be maintained. The concept of restricting coalescence between individual settlements not only protects the open countryside from inappropriate development but also enables a clear break between settlements. This helps maintain a “sense of place” for residents and visitors. *Figure 3* shows areas most at risk and also identifies strategic ‘gateways’ to the area, which should be reinforced through development and design. Where necessary, the Town Council will need to work with neighbouring councils to achieve this.
- prioritising the use of brownfield sites in preference to greenfield sites – there are only few sites available for development within the LBD. These can be found in the most recent [Brownfield Register](#) for TWBC, updated annually. There are also numerous vacant / underutilised buildings and other plots in the area, notably within the High Street (London

Road) itself. These should be prioritised for re-use with further detail provided in the Local Economy chapter.

- conserving and enhancing the historic and natural environment - the area is home to a wide range of natural features including the High Weald National Landscape, areas of Common Land, Ancient Woodland and some sites of landscape importance. Alongside these natural features, elements of the historic environment also need protecting. These include the Southborough Conservation Area and numerous designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- ensuring that the overall quantum of development does not put an unacceptable strain on infrastructure capacity – much of the infrastructure planning (e.g. schools, GPs) sits outside the scope of the SHBNDP as it is the responsibility of other organisations, however the Plan seeks to ensure that major development is carefully masterplanned, with community involvement, to ensure that adequate facilities are provided.
- ensuring that new development is well-connected to the existing movement network - improving and adding to this network where possible, to provide accessible, safe and pleasant pedestrian and cycle links. The Town and Country Planning Association supports Walkable Neighbourhoods and a 20 minute journey time (from home to destination and back again) is considered optimal. For the SHBNDP, the emphasis is on connectivity and ensuring that where development takes place, it can help to improve the strategic links within the area, to help unlock identified pedestrian and vehicular pinchpoints. These are described in Policy SHB13.
- Restricting development from areas prone to flooding – parts of the neighbourhood area are prone to flooding, largely surface water, exacerbated by clay soils. It should be noted that there is no/minimal risk mapped at the national level from watercourses (Flood zone 2/3); this is because watercourses with a catchment area of <3ha are not included in this mapping. Given that there are lots of smaller watercourses not mapped in the area, developers should therefore consider the risk of flooding from these non-mapped watercourses, to ensure this risk is appropriately considered. Flooding-related maps are periodically updated by the Environment Agency. The most up-to date mapping should be used and can be found at <https://flood-map-forplanning.service.gov.uk/>

4.4. *Figure 3* shows the existing designations in the parish, the adopted LBC and the strategic sites proposed in the Submission Local Plan.

Figure 3: Map showing key designations and Limits to Built Development for Southborough and High Brooms (Core Strategy 2010)



POLICY SHB1: LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

A. Development in the neighbourhood area will be supported within the Limits to Built Development as shown on *Figure 3*, but on adoption of the new Local Plan, they will accord with the updated boundaries. Development proposals on brownfield land will be particularly supported, subject to compliance with other policies in this plan.

B. Development in the countryside, beyond the Limits to Built Development, will be strictly controlled in the interests of conserving the nationally important landscape of the High Weald National Landscape (and its setting) and the Green Belt and will only be supported where:

- i. the proposal is necessary to meet a demonstrable agricultural or forestry need or needs of other activities which require a rural location, in accordance with national planning practice guidance; or**
- ii. it relates to necessary utilities infrastructure and where no reasonable alternative location is available; or**
- iii. the proposal is a "rural exceptions scheme" to provide social housing tailored to meet local needs in the parish, supported by appropriate evidence, in accordance with Policy SHB2 (Meeting Local Housing Needs) of the Neighbourhood Plan, and managed in perpetuity by a social housing provider in accordance with adopted Local Plan policy; or**
- iv. it relates to limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land so long as it meets the criteria set out in the NPPF; or**
- v. the proposal brings redundant or vacant agricultural/farm buildings into use or historic buildings of heritage value back into viable use consistent with their conservation.**

Such development must:

- vi. be sited away from areas susceptible to flooding. The use of multifunction sustainable drainage systems is strongly encouraged, especially where these can offer biodiversity opportunities; and**
- vii. not individually or cumulatively result in the further loss of separate identity of the individual communities that make up the neighbourhood area, in particular (further) coalescence between Southborough, High Brooms, Bidborough, Royal Tunbridge Wells, and Tonbridge. Opportunities to make a positive contribution to the visual impact of the main highway and approaches into the neighbourhood area (as shown on *Figure 3*) should be sought; and**
- viii. preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area, with consideration given to how the proposal will mitigate any impacts on the character, or visual amenity, or tranquillity of the High Weald National Landscape; and**
- ix. not, because of traffic generation and parking, adversely affect road and pedestrian safety; and**
- x. enhance the biodiversity of the Parish, in accordance with Policy SHB9 (Landscape and Biodiversity).**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 1; Saved TWBC Local Plan policies: MGB1, LBD1, ED5; TWBC Core Strategy: Core Policies 1, 2, 10 and 14; TWBC Submission Local Plan: STR/SO 1, STR1-5, STR9; NL Management Plan objectives: S1, PQ2, LBE2; NPPF (2024): 7, 8, 29, 61, 73, 82-84, 96, 98, 111, 124-126, 129, 130, 135, 142-160, 170, 187

5. HOUSING

Policy SHB2: Meeting local housing needs

Purpose

5.1. This policy seeks to ensure that there is a range of housing that is designed to be capable of meeting the specific housing needs of the neighbourhood area.

Justification

5.2. Policy H1 (Housing Mix) of the emerging Local Plan states that "*proposals for residential development should support the creation and maintenance of balanced communities by providing an appropriate housing mix with a range of sizes, types, and tenures of dwellings*". It suggests that the mix may be informed by intelligence on local housing needs and demands, and such information may be explored as part of a Neighbourhood Plan.

5.3. To inform this policy, a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), contained in the Evidence Base, was prepared for the neighbourhood area in January 2024, building on the work of the Strategic Market Housing Assessment at the strategic level as well as national datasets and population forecasts. In addition, a housing survey of the local residents was undertaken. The findings have informed the policy.

5.4. **The need for affordable housing:** The Tunbridge Wells SLP policy requires 40% of all new housing on greenfield land to be affordable with the target reduced to 30% for housing on brownfield land.

5.5. AECOM's modelling suggests that the tenure mix of Affordable Housing secured in future years is weighted in favour of meeting some of the significant potential demand for affordable home ownership dwellings, whilst also maintaining a healthy supply of social/affordable dwellings. The policy requirement at SHB2 accords with TWBC's SLP policy which proposes 60% social rent and 40% affordable home ownership

5.6. **There is an imbalance of property sizes available within the Parish:** AECOM's modelling suggests that improving the mix of homes by providing 1-bed homes along with larger 4+ bed homes would help diversify the existing housing profile in the area. However, with a focus on affordability, there may be justification to deviate from this to provide more homes between 1- and 3-bedroom homes. This would also better position the neighbourhood area's housing stock to meet the needs of the shifting demographic profile (notably improving downsizing opportunities and providing larger homes for newly forming families).

5.7. Up-to-date housing statistics should always be obtained from the TWBC affordable housing officer.

5.8. **Housing to suit the needs of older people:** There are currently estimated to be around 1,028 individuals aged 75 or over in Southborough, a number that has grown from 971 in 2011 and is

projected to rise to 1,566 by the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period. The main unmet need in the neighbourhood area is for market sheltered accommodation.

5.9. Specialist housing for older people (including care and residential homes) is being considered at the strategic level via the SLP. At the neighbourhood level, improved accessibility and adaptability standards should be a key consideration for new homes (both market and affordable). The "[Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation \(HAPPI\)](#)" has developed a series of principles for good design of housing covering light, ventilation, room to move around and good storage. They have particular relevance to older persons' housing. The ten principles are:

- Space and flexibility
- Daylight in the home and in shared spaces
- Balconies and outdoor space
- Adaptability and 'care ready' design
- Positive use of circulation space
- Shared facilities and 'hubs'
- Plants, trees, and the natural environment
- Energy efficiency and sustainable design
- Storage for belongings and bicycles
- External shared surfaces and 'home zones'

5.10. Good design to deliver these criteria is particularly important for smaller dwellings including apartments and bungalows. Housing should be designed to support the needs of those living with disabilities. The Royal Town Planning Institute's guidance "[Dementia and town planning: Creating better environments for people living with dementia](#)" should inform planning applications. This could include, for instance, high density bungalows/chalets/single-floor accommodation.

POLICY SHB2: MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

A. Other than in development designed to meet an identified specialist housing need, the mix of housing sizes, types, tenures, and affordability in proposed development should, in so far as is reasonably practicable and subject to viability, assist in meeting needs identified in the most recently available [Southborough and High Brooms Housing Needs Assessment](#). In particular:

- i. proposals which provide a mix of dwelling sizes with a particular focus on homes between 1- and 3-bedroom homes to address the needs of single people, young couples, smaller families and those wishing to downsize. Larger (4 bedrooms and over) homes should be restricted to a low percentage of the overall site total, perhaps up to 5% of overall dwelling numbers;**
- ii. proposals that deliver an appropriate mix of affordable housing, based on 60:40 split between social rent and affordable housing for sale (intermediate housing);**
- iii. the provision of affordable housing which meets with the requirements in the adopted Local Plan. Affordable homes should be tenure-blind and well-integrated with market housing. The tenure of affordable units should meet the specific needs of the parish.**
- iv. proposals that enable greater affordability uplifts (such as the use of First Homes) and prioritise local residents (see [Glossary definition](#)) and key workers when it comes to allocating housing.**

B. Residential development that could reasonably be expected to meet the needs of older people (by virtue of its size and location) should demonstrate how it has reflected the [Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation \(HAPPI\) principles](#) and the guidance contained in the RTPI's "[Dementia and town planning: Creating better environments for people living with dementia](#)".

C. Affordable homes should be well integrated with market housing. The type and size of affordable homes should meet the specific needs identified for the neighbourhood area.

D. Where exceptional circumstances exist to demonstrate that affordable housing cannot be met on-site, a commuted sum will be required to ensure that the provision of affordable units is not lost in accordance with Local Plan policy and national guidance and testing on viability.

E. Subject to the other policies of this plan, proposals for self- and custom-build housing will be supported.

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 1; TWBC Core Strategy: Core Policies 6 and 10; TWBC Submission Local Plan: STR 1, STR/SO 1; H1, H3, H6, H8; NPPF (2024): 61-68, 71, 73, 82-84, 156, 157

6. CHARACTER, HERITAGE, AND DESIGN

Policy SHB3: Character and Design of development

Purpose

6.1. Good quality housing design can improve social wellbeing and the quality of life by improving the built environment, reducing crime, improving public health, easing transport problems and providing supportive neighbourhoods. The policy seeks to encourage development proposals within Southborough and High Brooms to comply with the highest design standards, adhere to the High Weald National Landscape Housing Design Guide and the locally specific Design Guidelines and Codes (Appendix A) prepared for the Parish. The policy and its supporting text add greater detail to the Local Plan policies, in particular EN4 which requires development to “reflect local distinctiveness” but are not specific in how this is achieved at the neighbourhood level.

Justification

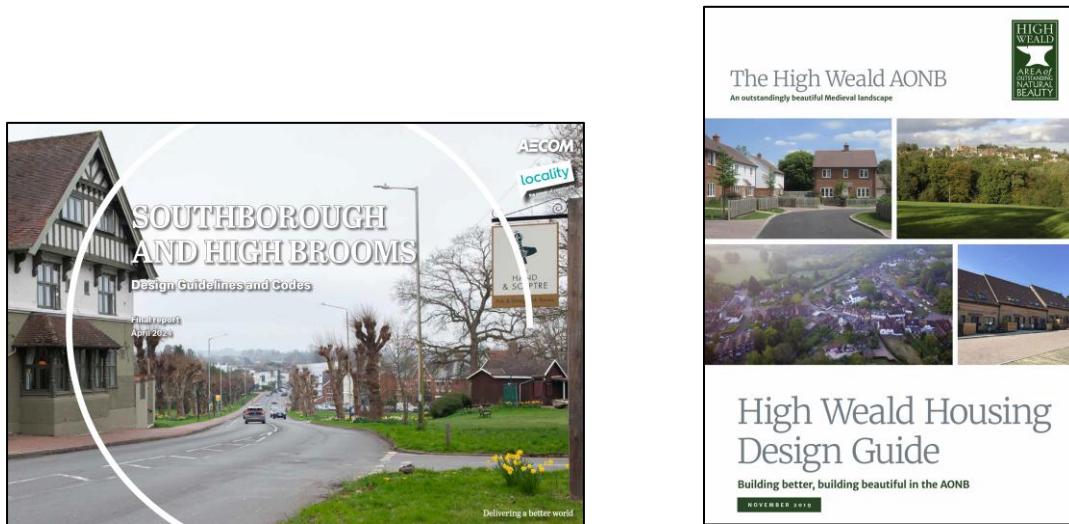
6.2. Past generations of people and development have created the features that give Southborough and High Brooms their identities today. This process has been gradual, taking place over many centuries, and the settlement that exists today have a distinctiveness that derives from variety. The area contains heritage assets of all kinds, including characterful buildings, historic landmarks and archaeological features, both exposed and still beneath the ground.

6.3. The importance of good design has received renewed attention over recent years. In October 2019, a [National Design Guide](#) was launched, forming part of the Government’s collection of Planning Practice Guidance. The document sets out the ten characteristics necessary for creating a well-designed place, contributing to its physical character, a sense of community and addressing environmental issues affecting climate. The [National Model Design Guide](#) expands on the ten characteristics and was used in the creation of the Southborough and High Brooms Design Guidance and Codes.

6.4. Furthermore, the guide [Building for a Healthy Life 2020](#) is the Government-endorsed industry standard for the design of new housing developments. It is a tool for assessing the design quality of homes and neighbourhoods. The criteria also link to other standards for housing design, including [Secured by Design](#). It should be used to inform development proposals along with other policies contained within this plan to achieve the industry standard’s ‘Building for a Healthy Life’ commendation.

6.5. It is important that development is designed from a landscape-led perspective and the [High Weald Housing Design Guide](#) provides a comprehensive set of advice, specific to the characteristics of the landscape, to promote well-designed places and the conservation and enhancement of the National Landscape. It focusses policies on three core considerations: respecting the setting of the High Weald; incorporating sympathetic placemaking principles; and encouraging detailed design. In addition, the High Weald [Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development](#) provides a further source of information that should be considered by applicants.

Images show: *Southborough and High Brooms Design Guidance and Codes; The High Weald Housing Design Guide*



- 6.6. Within the context of the SLP and both windfall sites and new sites being allocated for housing development in the area, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group commissioned AECOM to develop a more localised set of design codes guiding future development in the area.
- 6.7. The Design Guidelines and Codes form part of formal policy for the SHBNDP, to support the creation of distinctive places that are well-integrated with the existing settlements in the parish and to promote high-quality and popular built forms. It draws on the design guidance available at the national, regional, and county level, and that which exists at the local level, such as the [Southborough Conservation Area Appraisal](#). This latter document will need updating, which is included as a project in Section 13 of this SHBNDP.
- 6.8. It was also informed by local engagement in the form of a series of 'walkabouts' and feedback drawn from the community survey and workshops. The Guidelines should be applied to all development proposals in the parish including any strategic site allocations.
- 6.9. The Design Guidelines identifies five indicative character areas, each with their own distinctive variations in street patterns, patterns of growth, building lines and plot sizes (*Figure 4*). Applicants are advised to consult the Design Guidance when putting forward proposals to ensure that they adhere to the specifications of the relevant character area.
- 6.10. In addition, the Guidelines provide detailed information to inform the design further, by theme. *Figure 5* provides an overview of this.

Figure 4: Indicative Character Areas in the Parish (source: Southborough and High Brooms Design Guidance and Codes)

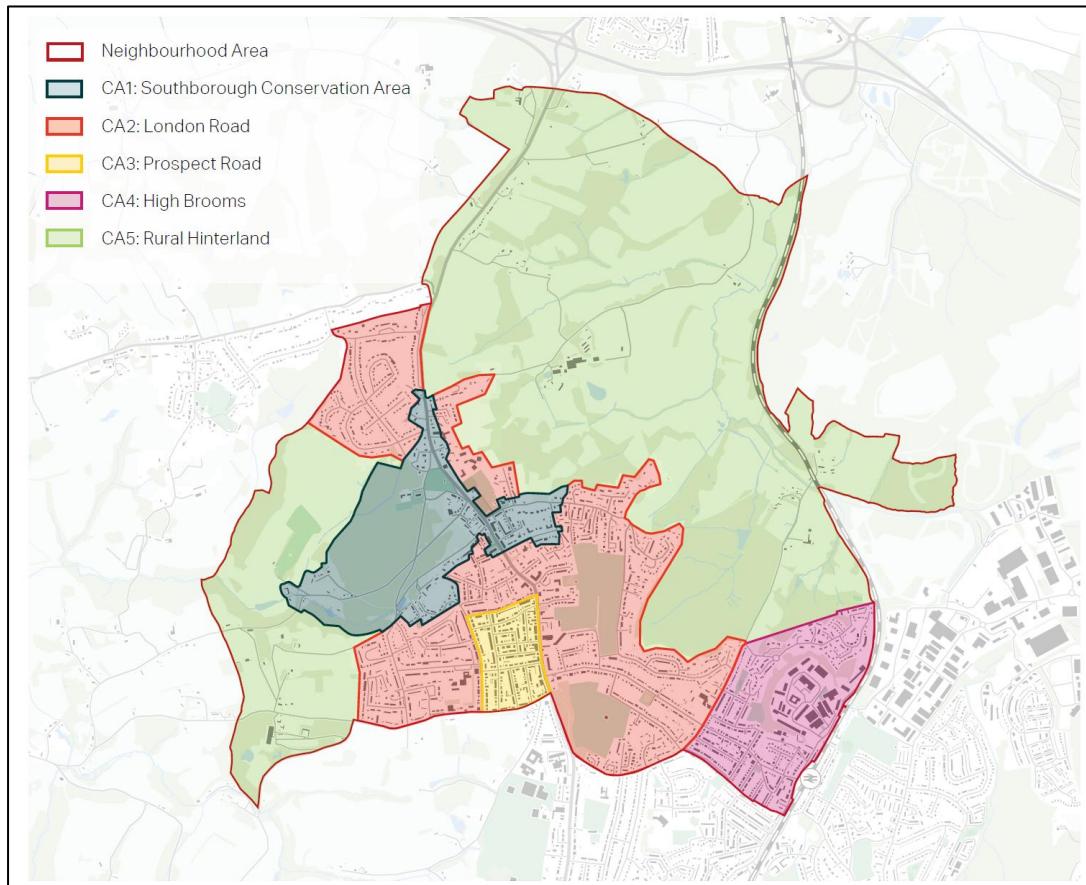


Figure 5: Aspects of design guidance to be followed in the neighbourhood area

Theme	Prefix	Code	Relevant Character Area
Layout and buildings (LB)	LB01	Pattern of development	CA1,2,3,4
	LB02	Preserving and promoting the local vernacular	CA1,2,3,4
	LB03	Extensions, conversions and infill	CA1,2,3,4
	LB04	Shop fronts	CA1,2
Sustainable futures (SF)	SF01	Energy efficiency	CA1,2,3,4
	SF02	Safe and friendly neighbourhoods	CA1,2,3,4
Ecology (EC)	EC01	Landscape setting	CA1,2,3,4,5
	EC02	Wildlife and biodiversity	CA5
Access and movement (AM)	AM01	Promoting active travel	CA1,2,5
	AM02	Parking typologies	CA1,2,3,4
	AM03	Traffic calming measures	CA1,2

- 6.11. Policy SHB3 has a close relationship with Policy SHB4 (Energy Efficiency and Design) of this Plan. Where it is appropriate to do so developments should take account of both policies.
- 6.12. Policy SHB3 should be read in conjunction with the Design Guidelines and Code, which form an integral part of the SHBNDP. Clause B of Policy SHB3, for instance, would be read in accordance with the Character Area to which the proposal relates.

POLICY SHB3: CHARACTER AND DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT

- A. Development proposals should be landscape- and heritage-led and incorporate a high quality of design, which responds to and integrates well with its surrounds in the context of the character area it falls within. Proposals should meet the changing needs of residents and minimise the impact on the natural environment of the High Weald National Landscape. The scale, character, appearance and siting of the proposal should respect the landscape and its features, valued views into, out of and within the neighbourhood area, the local streetscape and heritage assets. It should reflect the variety of architectural styles found locally, using materials that are in keeping with those used in existing buildings in the immediate locality. Innovation in design will be supported where this demonstrably enhances the quality of the built form in a local character area.**
- B. As appropriate to their scale, nature and the Character Area in which they are located, development proposals should demonstrate how they have sought to address the following matters:**
 - i. the guidance contained in the Southborough and High Brooms Design Guidelines and Codes, the High Weald Management Plan, the High Weald Housing Design Guide, the High Weald Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development, the Kent Design Guide SPD, and the Southborough Conservation Area Appraisal; and**
 - ii. make a positive contribution to the visual appearance of the main highway approaches into the area (*Figure 2*). Improvements and enhancements should include, where appropriate, additional tree planting, the provision and enhancement of roadside green spaces (for instance through planting), the reduction/consolidation of road signs and other street furniture and wider green infrastructure improvements that are identified as being necessary; and**
 - iii. incorporate soft landscaping, including large native canopy trees with sufficient root protection areas to ensure growth to maturity, and other boundary treatments to provide active frontages; and**
 - iv. promote the use of sustainable transport and active travel through adopting a [Healthy Streets Approach](#) to street design;**
 - v. provide adequate vehicular access and space for cycle parking and vehicular off-road parking for residents, visitors and service vehicles, in accordance with the adopted car parking standards for TWBC; and**

- vi. ensure there is no significant loss of amenity for neighbouring uses through the loss of privacy loss of light or visual intrusion on the views and surroundings that create the backdrop to an area; and
- vii. traffic generation and parking does not adversely affect vehicular and pedestrian safety.

C. Where development sites abut open countryside, development on the rural boundary edge should mitigate any detrimental visual impacts on the countryside. This should be achieved through:

- i. the siting of lower density development at the rural boundary of the site in order to provide a gradual transition from the built form to open countryside;
- ii. the inclusion of meaningful and characteristic landscape buffers to help ensure an appropriate transition from built development to open countryside; and
- iii. a layout that clearly minimises the visual impact of any larger buildings on both the open countryside and existing street-scape.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 1; Saved TWBC Local Plan policies: EN1, EN5, TP5; TWBC Core Strategy: Core Policies 4, 5 and 10; TWBC Submission Local Plan: STR2, STR6, EN1, EN2, EN16, EN17, H2, H6, H11, H12, TP3; NL Management Plan objectives: S1-S3; NPPF (2024): 96, 109, 125, 129, 130-140, 187, 203

Policy SHB4: Energy efficiency and design

Purpose

6.13. This policy seeks to ensure that development meets the highest environmental standards in terms of its construction, materials and energy use. This will help to mitigate against climate change and contribute to achieving the national target of zero net carbon by 2050.

Justification

6.14. The Climate Change Act 2008, as amended, introduces a new UK target for a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (from 1990 levels) by 2050. This will require everyone to be engaged, from households and communities to businesses and local and national government. The government has set an interim target to cut the country's greenhouse gas emissions by 78% by 2035.

6.15. The Future Homes Standard anticipated to come into force from 2025, will require CO₂ emissions produced by new homes to be 75-80% lower than those built to current standards. Homes will need to be 'zero carbon ready'. Fossil fuel heating (such as gas boilers) will be banned in new homes, with an expected shift to reliance on heat pumps and heat networks.

6.16. Unlike Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans are more limited in what they can dictate in terms of environmental standards, as they must conform to the minimum requirements as set out by national policy and building regulations. The SHBNDP can, however, strongly encourage the design and layout of new development to maximise its potential to be as energy efficient as possible and to encourage the use of renewable energy.

Examples of discreet solar panels (source: Historic England)



6.17. Kent County Council recognised the UK climate emergency in 2019, as a response to the need to act locally and in the context of climate change impacts being observed at the local level: dry riverbeds, reduced water supply, intense weather events, localised flooding and loss of habitats and species. It supports a range of projects designed to help adapt to climate change and these have informed the SHBNDP. As part of this, KCC has produced a [climate change risk and impact assessment](#) for Kent, which highlights key projections for future Kent and Medway climate and findings on the impacts of these projections. It should be used to inform policy and decision-makers of the key climate risks that will have the greatest impact on Kent's society, economy and environment, within the context of other future socio-economic drivers, providing the evidence for future planning

- 6.18. TWBC too declared a climate emergency in 2019, and principles are embedded in the emerging Local Plan. TWBC consulted on a borough-wide [Climate Change Strategy](#) in summer 2024, which is due for adoption in early/mid-2025. This strategy sets out the Borough's approach to achieving net zero. Policy EN 1 of the emerging Local Plan supports development proposals to be designed to enable significant carbon dioxide emissions reductions and more sustainable energy sources, through energy efficiency improvements and facilitating low and zero carbon technology ensuring development supports a path to net zero emissions by 2030.
- 6.19. Opportunities to improve and promote sustainability in the neighbourhood area, which would help to deliver the government's climate change targets, include:
 - following basic Passivhaus (net zero-ready) environmental design including use of efficient and insulative materials;
 - integrating renewable energy systems into new development (including existing and new public buildings) such as photovoltaics, air and ground source heat pumps;
 - reducing water consumption including through grey water systems;
 - reducing the risk of overheating in warmer months by designing in features such as trees and shutters for shading, appropriate fenestration, orientation of development and ventilation; and
 - promoting sustainable forms of transport through priority systems for pedestrians and cyclists and public transport (buses).
- 6.20. The retrofitting of existing properties is supported and, for older properties, Historic England's [Retrofit and Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings](#), provides helpful guidance.
- 6.21. The availability of water is an issue in the south-east, and the neighbourhood area falls within a zone highlighted as a water-stressed area South East Water is the statutory water supplied in the neighbourhood area. Its Business Plan 2025-305 states that it intends to cut individual daily water use to 110 litres per person by 2050. The Building Regulations optional standard for water efficiency in water stressed areas aligns with this and this is supported in both the new Local Plan and Policy SHB4.
- 6.22. Community-scale energy schemes will be supported where these can be undertaken sympathetically within the landscape.

POLICY SHB4: ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND DESIGN

- A. Development proposals which incorporate measures and standards to adapt to, and mitigate, the impacts of predicted climate change will be supported, subject to compliance with other policies in this Plan.**
- B. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals which incorporate the following sustainable design features will be strongly supported, where measures will not have a detrimental impact on character, appearance, features, setting, landscape and views:**
 - i. siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain.
 - ii. Reduced embodied carbon through the use of high quality, thermally efficient sustainable building materials.
 - iii. installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and double glazing.
 - iv. incorporating on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels, ground source heating and energy generation etc.
 - v. reducing water consumption using water re-use measures including rainwater harvesting, use of smart water butts, surface water harvesting and/or grey water recycling systems. Personal water consumption per day for new build should not exceed 110l
 - vi. give priority to the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate
 - vii. providing low carbon sustainable design and avoid or mitigate all regulated emissions using a combination of on-site energy efficiency measures (such as insulation and low energy heating systems), on-site zero carbon technologies (such as solar panels) and, only where necessary, off-site measures to deal with any remaining emissions.
 - viii. designing development in a way that will help to reduce overheating in warmer months.
 - ix. Incorporating urban greening (green walls, green roofs etc.) where this does not detrimentally impact the fabric of the building.
- C. Proposals for the retrofitting of historic buildings, including designated and non-designated heritage assets, to reduce energy demand and to generate renewable energy will be supported where they safeguard the character, appearance, features, interest, and setting of the building concerned.**
- D. Proposals for individual and community scale energy schemes, for instance the installation of solar panels on community and public sector buildings, will be supported subject to the following criteria:**
 - i. the siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape; and
 - ii. the proposed development does not create an unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring residents; and
 - iii. the proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on a feature of natural or biodiversity importance.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 1, 2; Saved TWBC Local Plan policies: EN1, EN24; TWBC Core Strategy: Core Policies 4, 5 and 10; TWBC Submission Local Plan: STR2, STR7; NL Management Plan objectives: G3; NPPF (2024): 131-140, 161-167

Policy SHB5: Conserving heritage assets

Purpose

6.23. This policy recognises the important contribution that heritage assets – both designated and non-designated – make to the local character and distinctiveness of the area, both individually and collectively. Where possible, they should be conserved, enhanced and celebrated.

Justification

6.24. Part of Southborough is designated as a Conservation Area and planning applications here should heed the guidance contained within the [Southborough Conservation Area Appraisal](#).

6.25. There are 46 individual/groups of buildings and assets in the neighbourhood area today that are recognised through a listing for their contribution to national heritage. Further information can be found on the [Southborough Society website](#).

6.26. There are some other heritage assets, however, that contribute to the historic local context and story of the parish, but which are not nationally important enough to be included on the statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest compiled by the Government.

6.27. The National Planning Practice Guidance supports the identification of non-designated heritage assets through the neighbourhood planning process (Paragraph 018-039). An audit of local buildings and assets was undertaken by members of the Steering Group to determine non-designated heritage assets, recognising their value to the local character and history of the parish. Members of the community were also invited to make suggestions. 15 individual / collections of assets have been identified with photographs and descriptions provided in Appendix B.

6.28. *Figures 6 and 7* show the location of the assets on a map. This list is not exhaustive and additional assets may be identified.

6.29. Note that a series of ‘heritage brick pavements’ are identified as non-designated heritage assets. Those on the map show the oldest such brick pavements, but the designation also applies to replacement brick pavements, which contribute to local character.

Figure 6: Heritage Assets in High Brooms

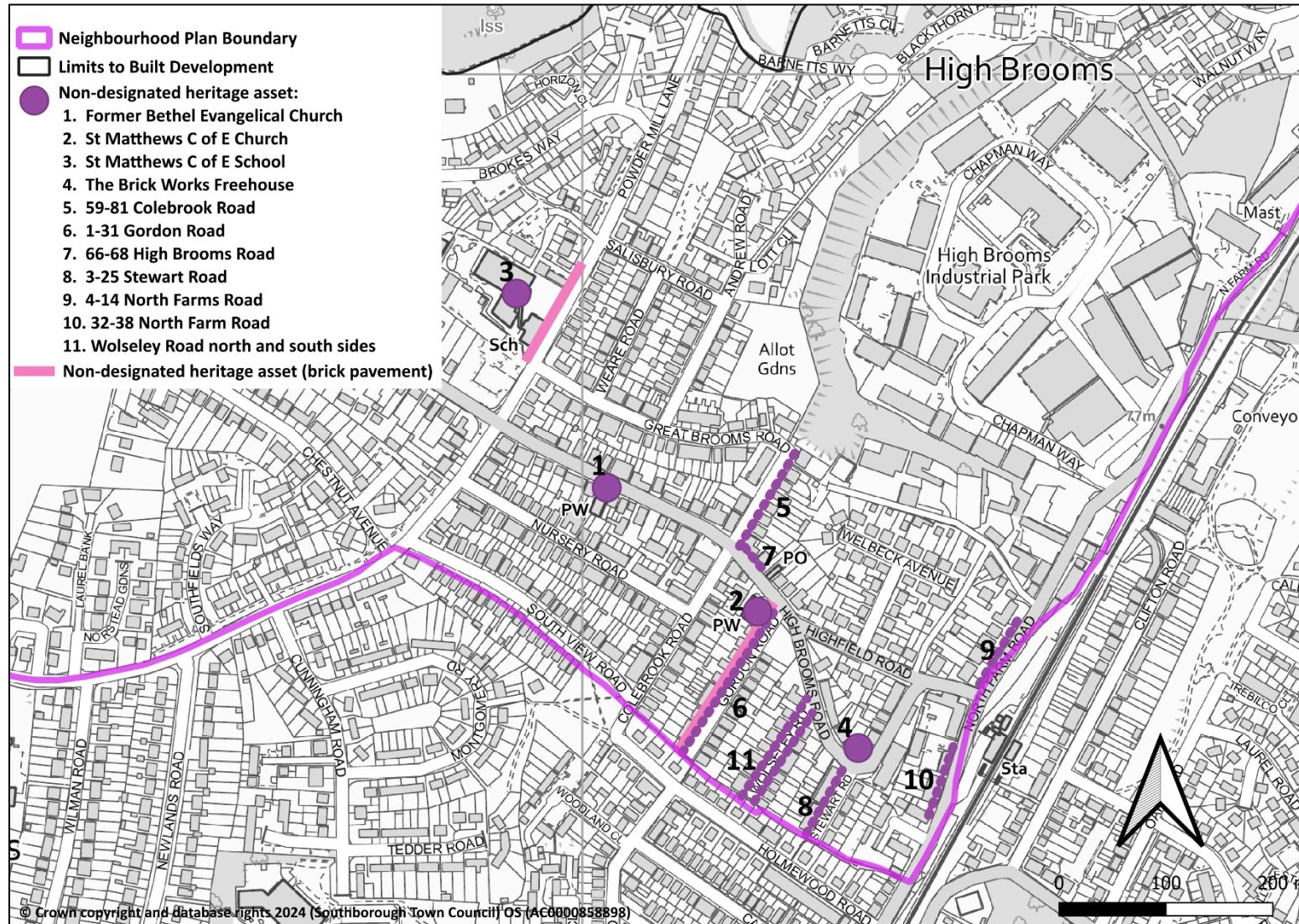
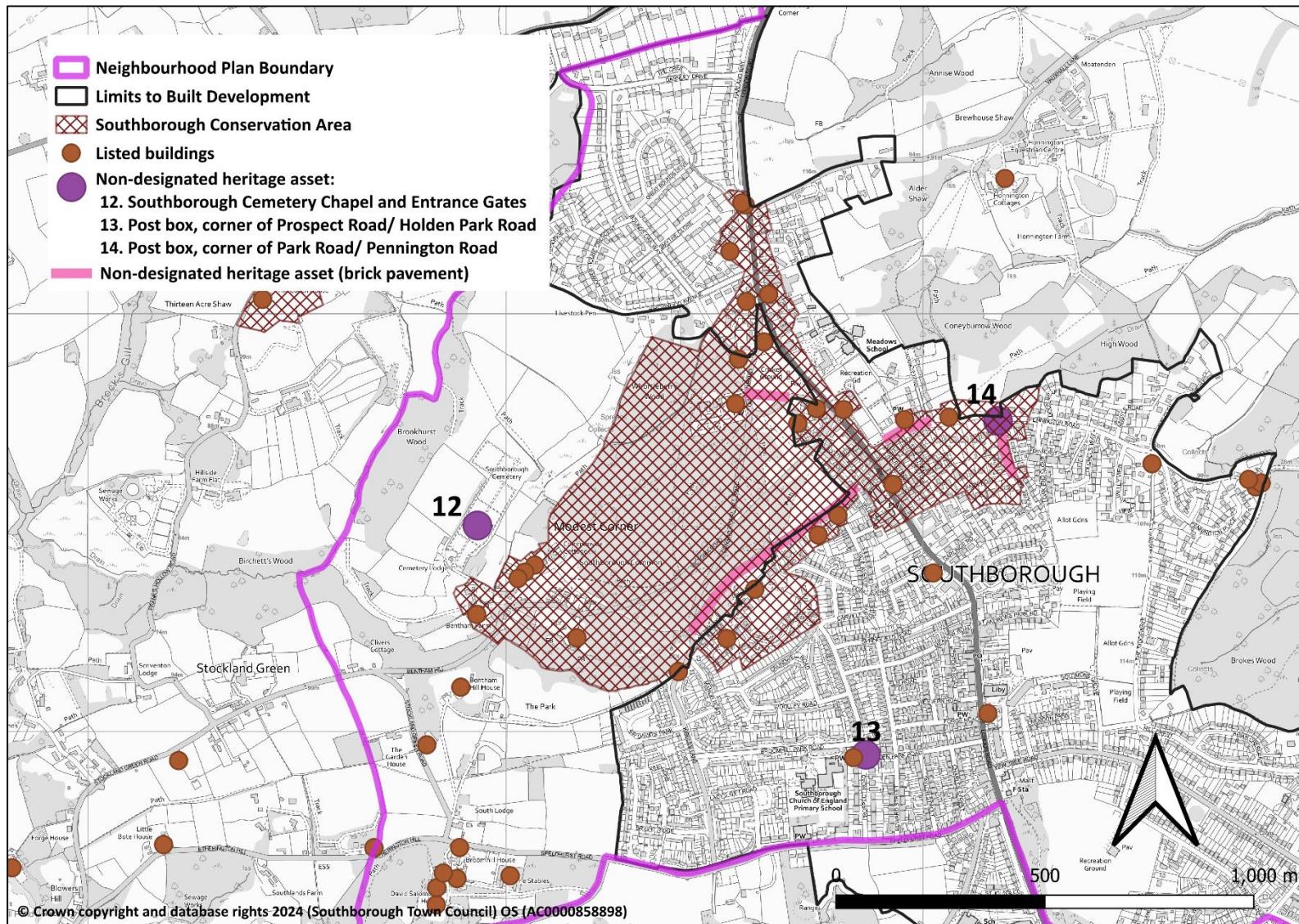


Figure 7: Heritage assets in Southborough



- 6.30. In addition, the [Historic Environment Record](#) contains details of additional assets, some of which are not nationally listed. The record should be consulted by prospective developers.
- 6.31. In parallel with this policy, it is proposed that the identified non-designated heritage assets are considered by TWBC for inclusion on their list of local heritage assets. However, the inclusion of any building or structure on such a register is not necessary for the application of this policy.
- 6.32. Further information on the historic landscape of the area can be found in the [Historic Landscape Characterisation for Southborough](#) (2016) and the [Southborough Common Report](#) (2018).

Local Heritage at Risk

- 6.33. Historic England produces an annual Register of Heritage at Risk. Outside of London it does not include Grade II listings, apart from churches. TWBC is in the process of developing an 'at risk' Register to identify these assets and others in the Borough. There are a number of buildings within the High Street that could be considered 'at risk' and an audit of buildings and assets should be undertaken to inform the TWBC work.
- 6.34. Opportunities to restore assets should be taken when they arise, in partnership with the owner.

POLICY SHB5: CONSERVING HERITAGE ASSETS

A. Designated heritage assets: Development proposals affecting designated heritage assets, either directly or indirectly, should conserve or enhance the significance of the asset and those elements of the setting that contribute to the significance. This could include, where appropriate, the delivery of development that will make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the heritage asset, or reflect and enhance local character and distinctiveness with specific focus on the prevailing styles of design and use of materials in a local area. These details should be explained in a Heritage Statement.

In addition, development proposals should demonstrate that they have considered the potential impact on above and below ground archaeological deposits. Where a scheme has a potential impact on archaeological remains (below or above the ground) a Heritage Statement or similar should be prepared to address how archaeological deposits will be safeguarded.

B. Non-designated heritage assets: The following buildings and structures as shown on *Figures 6 and 7* are designated as non-designated heritage assets:

1. Former Bethel Evangelical Church
2. St Matthew's C of E Church
3. St Matthew's C of E School
4. The Brickworks Freehouse
5. 59-81 Colebrook Road

- 6. 1-31 Gordon Road**
- 7. 66-68 High Brooms Road**
- 8. 3-25 Stewart Road**
- 9. 4-14 North Farm Road**
- 10. 32-38 North Farm Road 32-38**
- 11. Wolseley Road north and south sides**
- 12. Southborough Cemetery Chapel and Entrance Gates**
- 13. Southborough Post Boxes**
- 14. High Brooms brick pavements**
- 15. Southborough Conservation Area brick pavements**

- C. Proposals affecting the non-designated heritage assets will be determined based on national planning policy.**
- D. Particular care should be taken in the Southborough Conservation Area to ensure that alterations and new buildings conserve or enhance the historic environment, in accordance with the guidance set out in the [Southborough Conservation Area Appraisal](#).**

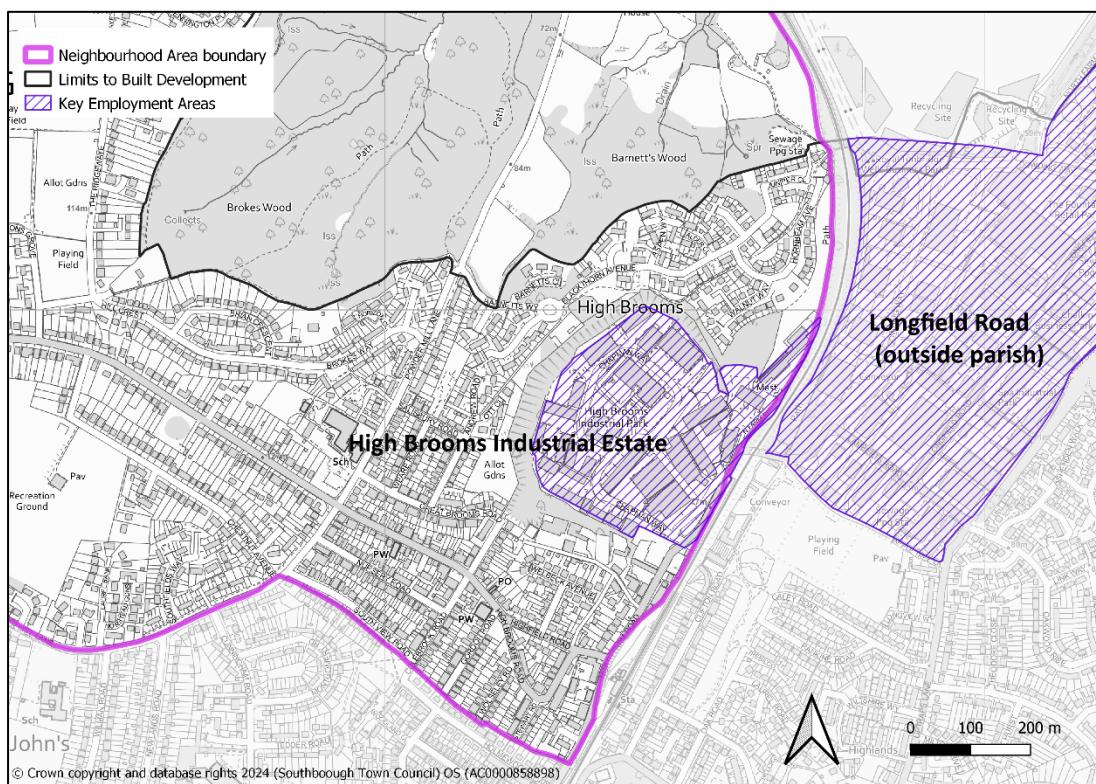
Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 2; Saved TWBC Local Plan policies: EN5, EN10; TWBC Core Strategy: Core Policies 4 and 10; TWBC Submission Local Plan: STR2, STR8; NL Management Plan: S1-S3, W3, R1; NPPF (2024): 135, 202, 203, 205-221

7. THE TOWN CENTRE AND KEY EMPLOYMENT SITES

Key employment sites

7.1. In terms of employment generally the Economic Needs Study, 2016, prepared as evidence for the Borough Local Plan, finds that all of the existing Key Employment Areas, as previously defined in the Core Strategy 2010, are performing well and should therefore be retained as broad employment locations to provide future economic development opportunities over the plan period. Within the neighbourhood area, this includes the Southborough High Brooms Industrial Area (*Figure 8*). Such sites are safeguarded for employment at the strategic level, therefore there is no need to repeat this in neighbourhood plan policy.

Figure 8: Key Employment Areas in the neighbourhood area



Policy SHB6: Southborough High Street and other neighbourhood centres

Purpose

7.2. This policy seeks to support uses that will enable an economically vibrant, mixed-use high street destination in Southborough, attracting additional footfall, enhancing its historic setting, supporting the reuse of vacant buildings, improving accessibility and improving overall the look and feel of the public areas.

7.3. The policy also seeks to ensure the continued provision of smaller, neighbourhood centres, which provide convenience facilities to residents across the area.

7.4. The policy is closely linked to Policy SHB7 (Supporting the cultural and creative economy) as the High Street provides an important location for such activities.

Justification

- 7.5. Southborough High Street
- 7.6. TWBC's Retail and Leisure Study (2017) and its recent update, the Tunbridge Wells Retail, Commercial Leisure and Town Centre Uses Study Update (2021), considers the vitality and viability of the existing defined centres within the borough and assesses the requirements for new retail development and leisure facilities over the SLP plan period. The changing nature of high streets has led TWBC to promote a flexible approach to the provision of retail and complementary uses and the SHBNDP endorses this.
- 7.7. Southborough High Street is defined by TWBC as a 'town centre' that serves the local population and ensures a sustainable focus and pattern of development. Such centres typically consist of a number of small and often independent shops, with one or two small supermarkets and other complementary uses, such as pharmacy, post office, restaurants, cafés, and takeaways. This reflects the Southborough High Street, which offers both retail provision and a range of other complementary uses that serve the local community. The main shopping area is concentrated in a linear fashion along the western side of London Road, running from the junction with Speldhurst Road to the junction of Springfield Road. The character of the Primary Shopping Area is one of a small urban centre made up primarily of independent traders, many of them specialist, occupying fairly small units, and a limited number of ancillary uses serving the local community. It is important that there is a car park adjacent.
- 7.8. Engagement for the SHBNDP identified the following priorities relating to the High Street:
- 7.9. Better connectivity (both movement and visual) between the two parts of the High Street: The town centre boundary and primary shopping area, as defined in the Core Strategy, are shown on *Figure 9*. It should be noted that there is also an (older) area of the High Street located within the Southborough Conservation Area, which offers a range of independent shops and eateries. TWBC defines this as a Neighbourhood Centre, known as North Southborough.
- 7.10. The two sections of the High Street are, in practice, somewhat disconnected, and opportunities should be sought to consolidate them to maximise footfall across the piece. This might be achieved through signage and as part of any works to improve pedestrianisation/cycling in Southborough, as supported in Policy SHB12.
- 7.11. Support uses that will enable an economically vibrant mixed-use high street centre: The provision of a range of shops and other facilities is greatly valued by the community. Priorities include:
 - Bringing vacant buildings back into optimal use – there are a number of unused/ vacant sites along the High Street. These should be prioritised for non-residential use (ground floor) where possible, to contribute to the mix of retail and other facilities available locally. In line with Policy SHB8, these could provide cultural opportunities.
 - Providing new and improved signage for pedestrians within and between the two retail areas.

- Ensuring that proposals for development or alteration to retail units in the High Street conserve or enhance the character of the area, with further guidance set out in the Southborough and High Brooms Design Guidance and Codes.
- Supporting residential uses at first floor level and above (where this is accessible and adaptable to changing needs).
- Enabling temporary use of vacant shops as 'pop-up' shops.

7.12. A vibrant Civic Centre and town square: The Civic Centre and outdoor town square, located close to the recreation/ sport areas, provide important spaces for community activity. They already host a regular market but additional opportunities to maximise this as a focal point for the community should be sought, in line with Policy SHB7.

7.13. Improve the look and feel of the public areas: These need to be pedestrian-friendly, safe, accessible and attractive. Priorities include:

- Reducing the negative effects of car, van and HGV movements along the High Street (A26), in partnership with KCC and TWBC. The route is identified as an Air Quality Management Area. Additional information is provided within Section 9 of this SHBNDP.
- Installing public art that reinforces the history of the area.
- Improved pavements.
- Retention of public car parking and provision of new (off-street) where possible.
- Reducing superfluous clutter in terms of bollards, bins etc. Where these are required, there needs to be a consistency in design to reflect the local character.
- Supporting opportunities for new or replacement tree planting within the street scene. Trees are an important feature within the neighbourhood area and provide a role in combating climate change, providing shade and also making the street-scene more attractive. They should be selected to reflect native species, colour etc.

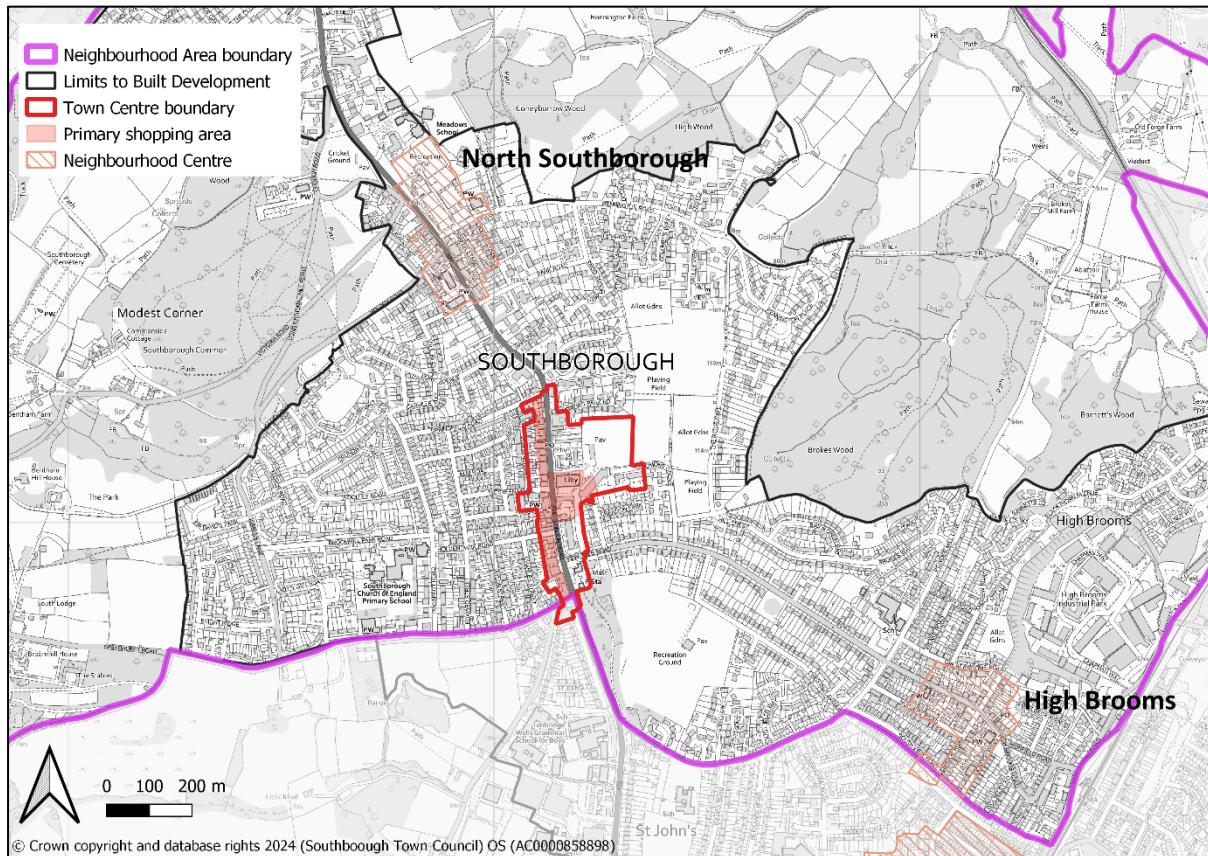
7.14. Signage and accessibility: In order to optimise the High Street experience for those on foot, an audit of signage would be beneficial. Priorities would include:

- Restricting signs to those which convey essential information.
- Promoting accessibility, for instance by applying the guidance contained in the RTPI's guidance aimed at planning neighbourhoods for those living with dementia as well as measures to assist other disabilities.
- Signage designed to be accessible and reinforce local character. Further guidance is available from Historic England's booklet Web link is [Streets for All: South East](#).

7.15. Neighbourhood Centres

7.16. Neighbourhood centres in the area (*Figure 9*) perform the role of local centres with day-to-day facilities. Many typically include a small convenience shop, newsagents, public house, or other café/restaurant uses, and complementary facilities. Provision of such facilities within the Neighbourhood Centres should be safeguarded against change of use.

Figure 9: Town Centre boundary and neighbourhood centres



POLICY SHB6: SOUTHBOROUGH HIGH STREET AND OTHER NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

- A. To secure the ongoing vitality of Southborough High Street (Figure 9), and smaller parades of shops elsewhere in the area, proposals which protect, enhance and promote a diverse range of town centre uses (Uses C1, E, F and Sui Generis) – including retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural and community - will be supported, subject to the other policies in this Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- B. Upper floor residential: Proposals that offer opportunities for housing on otherwise underused upper floors will be supported and notably where separate access can be achieved and where these are shown to be no longer suitable for commercial use.
- C. Existing retail premises: Notwithstanding permitted development rights, the permanent change of use of Classes C1, E, F1 and F2 to other uses will only be supported where the following can be demonstrated:
 - i. the proposed use will maintain the vitality and viability of Southborough High Street;
 - ii. the premises in question have not been in continuous active use for at least 12 consecutive months; and

iii. the Class E retail premises have no potential for either reoccupation as demonstrated through the results both of a full viability report and a marketing campaign lasting for a continuous period of at least 6 months.

D. **Temporary uses:** The use of Class E, F1 and F2 premises for temporary uses will be supported. Such uses include 'pop up' shops and cultural, creative and leisure uses introduced on a temporary basis or for specific events. Such uses must demonstrate that they will not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses, particularly residential through excessive noise and pollution. Such uses will generally not be considered appropriate if the operation of the business requires such large amounts of vehicle parking in order to function unless sufficient parking arrangements have been presented.

E. **Re-use of historic buildings:** The reuse of historic buildings within the High Street for activities that will enhance its vitality and viability will be particularly supported. This could include community uses, eating places, retail, creative industries or business. Any associated physical alterations should be sympathetic to the historic and architectural significance and character of the building concerned.

F. **Public realm:** Development proposals to enhance the public realm will be supported where this will not result in the demolition of or significant detrimental impact to existing heritage assets. Proposals which enhance the pedestrian experience will be supported including:

- i. the widening of pavements;
- ii. the consolidation of street clutter and superfluous signage, including provision of signage that will improve pedestrian links between the retail areas along High Street;
- iii. the inclusion of cycling facilities;
- iv. reinforcing the distinctive character of the area, as set out in Policy SHB3 (Design and character of development) including through the use of planting, seating, and installation of public art, celebrating the heritage and history of the parish; and
- v. as appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should contribute to improved wayfinding and signage for the parish, provided that they can be satisfactorily integrated within their surroundings.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 2; Saved TWBC Local Plan policies: CR3, CR7, ED2, ED3, ED5; TWBC Core Strategy: Core Policies 7, 8 and 10; TWBC Submission Local Plan: STR/SO1, STR2, ED1, ED2, ED8, ED9, ED11; NPPF (2024): 85, 88, 90, 96, 98, 101, 111a, 131-136, 141

Policy SHB7: Supporting the cultural and creative economy

Purpose

7.17. Cultural wellbeing is identified as one of the twelve core planning principles underpinning both plan-making and decision-making in the NPPF. This policy supports a flourishing creative and arts sector in Southborough and High Brooms.

Justification

7.18. The creative economy is one of the fastest growing sectors in the UK. Within Kent, culture is considered a key driver for the prosperity of the county. The digital and creative industries are a government priority for growth and Kent has much to contribute to this. The Kent Cultural Strategy, [Inspirational creativity: transforming lives every day: our cultural ambition for Kent](#), seeks to embed culture and the creative economy firmly within the planning frameworks across Kent, ensuring that cultural provision and inspiring design is at the heart of all new developments and integral to the growth of strong, resilient and successful communities.

7.19. The [Creative Industries Bulletin \(2024\)](#) prepared by Kent Analytics, notes that Tunbridge Wells borough has the highest number and proportion of creative enterprises in Kent (895 enterprises equivalent to 14.6% of all enterprises in the area). To capitalise on this, TWBC has developed a Creative Economy Strategy for the borough. A Southborough Working Group meets regularly as part of the broader [Creative Tunbridge Wells](#) group (see Glossary) to explore opportunities for how creative opportunities can be delivered in the area.

7.20. The idea of Southborough as a creative hub was raised during many of the community events and via the community survey. There are a number of existing private businesses operating in this sector including ArtyFarty and Knot Work. In addition, Applause Rural Training is based in the Civic Centre. It is a cultural charitable organisation with Arts Council England National Portfolio status that collaborates with people across Kent, Sussex, Essex, and the wider region to create opportunities for creative experiences in their local communities. Applause has trialled a year-long pilot family theatre programme at the Civic Centre and is seeking to work with STC on recommendations for future activity.

7.21. The Civic Centre itself provides a focal hub within the High Street. Formerly a theatre space and Town Council offices, the site has been redeveloped to house a library, meeting and performance spaces, set within a town square. There is scope to further utilise this space for community activities, including the arts. Using the [Cultural Planning Toolkit](#) (commissioned by Creative Estuary and KCC) as guidance, and based on local feedback, priorities include:

- Optimising the use of the Civic Centre and town square space as a focal destination for the development and hosting of cultural and creative activities. This could include events, productions, markets and other community activities.
- Stimulating the evening economy within the High Street, which would attract footfall and remove the need for residents to commute out to reach evening activities.
- Considering the use of vacant properties (particularly heritage buildings) and land for pop-ups or meanwhile uses for cultural and creative activities during the day and at night-time to

stimulate vibrancy and viability and promote diversity in town centres. There are numerous such sites in Southborough.

- Supporting the use of the public realm and green spaces (including the Common and other Local Green Spaces) across the neighbourhood area for public art and as outdoor venues for cultural events and festivals. The neighbourhood area has a rich history to draw from that could be illustrated through public art and performance in key locations.
- Support for the provision of workshops, studios and other units that offer creative spaces. There are a number of run-down garages in the neighbourhood area, for instance, which could be redeveloped for such uses.

7.22. To maximise creative opportunities, The Cultural Planning Toolkit recommends that development proposals in the town centre locations should demonstrate that future cultural provision has been considered (which may include the provision of public realm capable of hosting events and performances, as well as cultural space within buildings). This will help to provide an enduring mix of uses (as required in Policy SHB7). Applicants are encouraged to prepare a Cultural Wellbeing Action Plan, describing how the provisions of Policy SHB8 have been addressed. The Action Plan should be developed through detailed engagement with the local community and its proposed proposals should be co-designed at an early stage at pre-application.

POLICY SHB7: SUPPORTING THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ECONOMY

- A. Non-residential development proposals in the High Street will need to demonstrate that future cultural provision has been considered (which may include the provision of public realm capable of hosting events and performances, as well as cultural space within buildings). This assessment should be included in a Cultural Wellbeing Action Plan, describing how the above provisions of this policy have been addressed (as outlined in TWBC S106 Planning Obligations Good Practice Guide). The Cultural Wellbeing Action Plan should be developed through detailed engagement with the local community and its proposals should be co-designed at an early stage at pre-application.
- B. Development proposals in the neighbourhood area, notably within the High Street, will be supported where they:
 - i. protect existing heritage, cultural and community venues, facilities and uses.
 - ii. involve and/ or support the development of new cultural venues.
 - iii. can provide an anchor for High Street centre renewal, for instance the positive use of vacant properties (particularly heritage buildings) and land for pop-ups or 'Meanwhile' uses for cultural and creative activities during the day and at night-time to stimulate vibrancy and viability and promote diversity in the town / city centre.
 - iv. support the use of the public realm, parks and green spaces for public art and as outdoor venues for cultural events and festivals.
 - v. maximise opportunities for redundant heritage assets and the role they can play in economic and social well-being.

vi. enable the provision of affordable workshops, studios, offices and other commercial/employment premises suitable for newly formed, growing and established businesses.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 2; Saved TWBC Local Plan policies: CR2, CR3, CR7; TWBC Core Strategy: Core Policies 7, 8 and 10; TWBC Submission Local Plan: STR5, ED1; NPPF (2024): 85, 86, 87, 96, 98

Policy SHB8: Supporting flexible workspaces and opportunities for homeworking

Purpose

7.23. This policy recognises the growing contribution of home-based and small-to-medium sized businesses in the area and seeks to encourage opportunities for them, including by supporting the provision of start-up and move-on business units as well as the provision of shared office space. This would provide a greater incentive and opportunity for local people to work locally. Homeworking too has become commonplace for many in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Justification

7.24. The 2021 census reveals that a large percentage of those living in the area are working from home: 38% compared to 31.5% nationally.

7.25. Due to its location within the High Weald National Landscape, the area is fairly limited in its ability to identify land for employment uses. There is however an opportunity to explore ways to provide more space for early-stage businesses and start-ups, shared working space and opportunities to enable further homeworking, where this can be done sympathetically within the landscape. Noting that permitted development rights for home extensions/outbuildings means that not all proposals will always require full planning permission).

POLICY SHB8: SUPPORTING FLEXIBLE WORKSPACES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOMEWORKING

A. Proposals to provide working spaces that encourage homeworking, co-working and creative small industries, for instance through incubator/start-up business space on flexible terms, will be supported through:

- i. the provision of new buildings or conversion of existing buildings, within the Limits to Built Development;
- ii. enabling extensions and garden offices to facilitate homeworking;
- iii. enabling microbusinesses;
- iv. supporting the diversification of rural businesses, in accordance with Clause B (vi) of Policy SHB1; and
- v. the provision of start-up businesses by enabling low-cost facilities in cooperative clusters.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, proposals for new workspaces should demonstrate the way in which they can be incorporated within their immediate locality without generating any unacceptable impact on the amenity of residential properties and on the capacity and safety of the local highways network.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 5; TWBC Core Strategy: Core Policies 7 and 10; TWBC Submission Local Plan: STR1, ED2, ED4, ED12; NL Management Plan: LBE1; NPPF (2024): 85, 86

8. ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACE

Policy SHB9: Landscape and biodiversity

Purpose

- 8.1. This policy seeks to ensure that the multiple benefits of the area's green (land) and blue (water) spaces – including their importance in combating pressure on wildlife, habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity and in off-setting the effects of air pollution – are recognised and enhanced. This applies particularly where individual spaces have a greater collective value as part of wider chains of green infrastructure. This will serve to support the requirement to conserve and, where possible, provide a net gain in biodiversity through planning policy whilst accommodating sustainable development.
- 8.2. It also sets out how development proposals should support flora and fauna effectively.

Justification

- 8.3. The NPPF states that plans should seek to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity. A useful starting point is to map the existing habitats and networks as well as those that offer opportunities for the future and *Figure 10* does this. It has been informed by the High Weald Management Plan, the [Borough-wide green infrastructure Framework](#) and information from the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre (KMBRC). The public rights of way network offers opportunities for planting, to enable wildlife routes through the area and into the wider countryside. Private gardens, road verges and tree strips can also support such routes, particularly in a more urban setting.
- 8.4. The majority of the parish sits within the High Weald National Landscape. Such areas are afforded a high level of protection in national planning policy and this is further recognised in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023), which has amended section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) Act, to create a new duty on relevant authorities to '*seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area*' when discharging their functions in National Landscapes. The new duty replaces the previous requirement for relevant authorities to '*have regard*' to the purpose of National Landscapes and is intended as a more proactive and strengthened requirement.
- 8.5. Other formally designated natural assets in the neighbourhood area are shown in *Table 2*

Table 2: Environmental designations in the area

Designation	Local examples
National Landscape A designated exceptional landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are precious enough to be safeguarded in the national interest. On par with National Parks, National Landscapes are protected and	High Weald

enhanced for nature, people, business and culture.	
Ancient woodland Woods that have existed since at least AD 1600 and have developed irreplaceable, complex ecosystems.	Numerous patches of ancient woodland including Brokes Wood, Anise Wood, Mabledon Wood and Barnetts Wood.
Local Wildlife Site Sites with 'substantive nature conservation value'. They are defined areas, identified and selected for their nature conservation value, based on important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species with a national, region.	Numerous, including Brokes Wood, Bidborough Woods pastures, and Vauxhall Lane Woods.
Common Land Common land is land that has an owner but over which other people have the right to use and take away certain natural produce.	There are two areas of Common land in the neighbourhood area.
Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) A Tree Preservation Order is an order made by a local planning authority in England to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of amenity. An Order prohibits the: cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting, wilful damage, wilful destruction, of trees without the local planning authority's written consent. If consent is given, it can be subject to conditions which have to be followed. In the Secretary of State's view, cutting roots is also a prohibited activity and requires the authority's consent.	There are many TPOs in the neighbourhood area. Further information on this is available from TWBC.
Local Green Spaces Spaces that are demonstrably special to the community and which are protected against inappropriate development.	These are set out in Policy SHB10. Some are identified for their wildlife value.

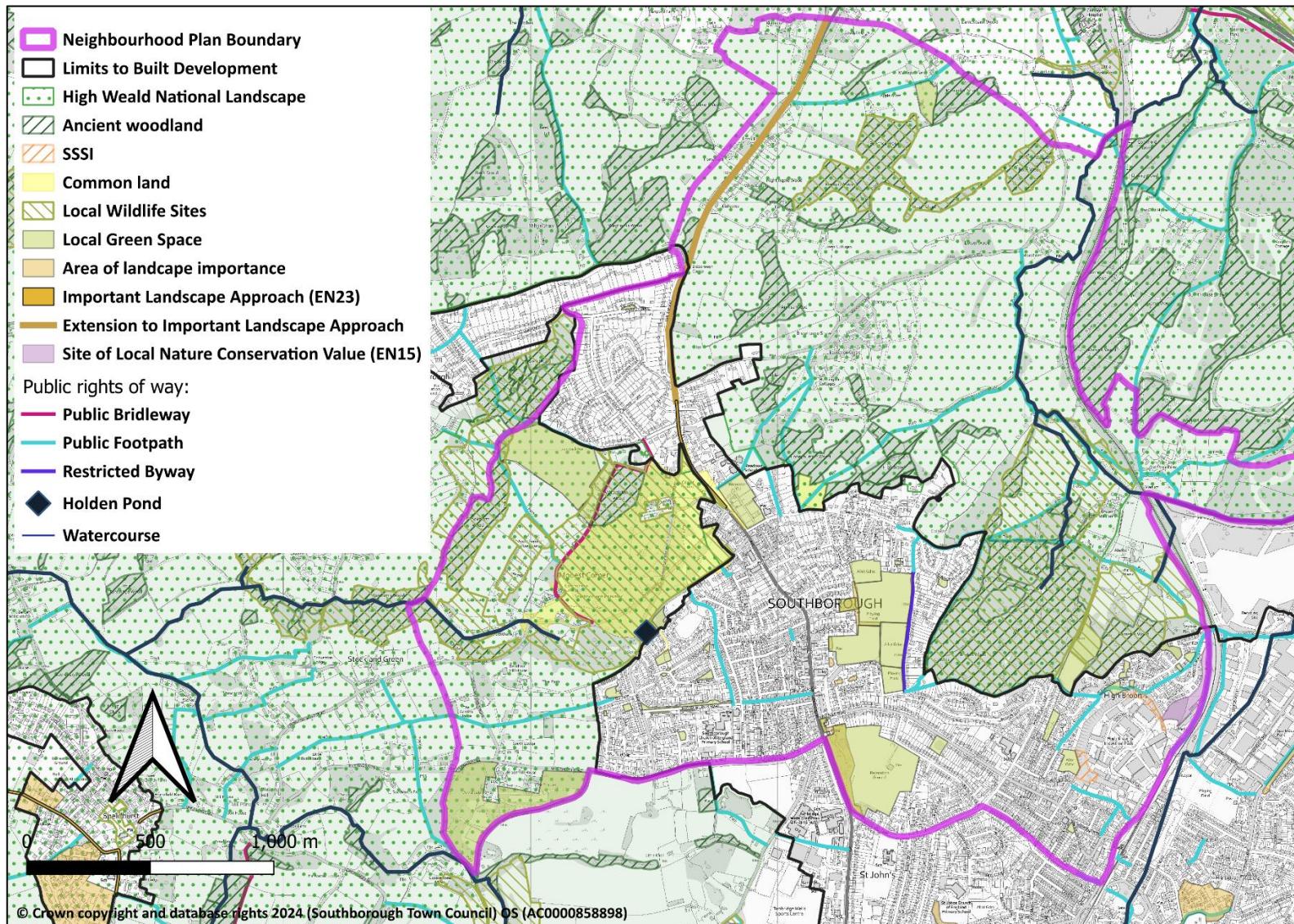
- 8.6. Other natural features exist locally that are not necessarily protected through a designation, but which are nevertheless important from a habitat and biodiversity aspect:
- 8.7. Trees and ancient woodland - The parish is home to a significant number of trees and woodland – including veteran trees, ancient woodland and shaws (strips of woodland often between field or lining road, which are typical High Weald features). As noted in the NPPF at paragraph 136, trees play a vital part in dealing with the effects of climate change and managing pollution. They provide shade, reduce flood risk, enable carbon capture, improve air quality and contribute to the purification of water. They also contribute to local character.
- 8.8. New trees planted in the area should be native to the UK and selected based on the guidance provided in the [Woodland Trust Urban Air Quality Report](#) (2012), which provides guidance for street trees based on Urban Tree Air Quality Score (UTAQS) to ensure the best effect is achieved for air quality, to optimise their cooling effect and to protect from disease. Colour of foliage will also be considered as this can enhance the overall appearance of the town throughout the year. Resistance to drought, in light of climate change, will also be an important factor to consider.
- 8.9. Ancient woodland and veteran trees - These are irreplaceable habitats, which have both heritage and cultural value. Within Southborough (in its High Weald location) shaws are a common feature, which are strips of ancient woodland often found between field boundaries or alongside roads). Natural England advises that development which would result in the loss of, or damage to, ancient woodland and ancient or notable trees will not be permitted except in wholly exceptional circumstances, as set out in paragraph 186 of the NPPF. They also advise that it is preferable to link up fragmented areas of woodland, which might be divided by development, with green bridges or tunnels. Also, to buffer ancient woodland and notable/veteran trees by leaving an appropriate zone of semi-natural habitat between the development and the woodland, providing wildlife corridors, and balancing new developments and residential areas with green infrastructure and allowing space for trees.
- 8.10. Planning permission should be refused for any development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as veteran trees and trees of a high conservation value, unless the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. In this instance, substantial compensation as quantified by the Defra biodiversity metric will be considered.
- 8.11. Hedgerows – The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 make provision for the protection of important hedgerows in England and Wales. Not only do these provide habitats for a range of fauna, they also link up habitat patches and have a conservation value in their own right. Hedgerows should be retained and extended wherever possible. The use of hedgerows to define the street scene should be integral to development.
- 8.12. Ponds – Ponds support two thirds of all freshwater species, and creating clean new ponds is one of the simplest and most effective ways to protect freshwater wildlife. Such features are typical in the area, including both private and field ponds. Holden Pond, which has existed for many centuries, is a notable example, but privately owned garden ponds also contribute to this ‘blue’ network. Furthermore, there are a number of gill streams in the area. These are

streams with very steep sides and a rocky bed and are a characteristic of the High Weald landscape.

- 8.13. Roadside verges - Verges provide an important corridor for wildlife. Examples include the verges along the A26 in the north of the area, which are identified as an important landscape approach. Other
- 8.14. Other individual habitats and wildlife corridors provide critical spaces as wildlife refuges and routes for wildlife, such as bats, to prevent species becoming isolated. Where it can be achieved sustainably, they can also be important spaces and routes for the local community to access for recreational purposes, contributing to people's physical well-being and mental health.
- 8.15. To inform the SHBNDP, the Kent Biodiversity Record Centre prepared information about the species found in the parish. It reveals that there is a significant number of species of both flora and fauna recorded locally that are considered to be protected, scarce or at risk. This includes bluebells, orchids, great-crested newts, slow-worms, newts, bats and badgers. Feedback from the community events and survey revealed strong support for protecting and enhancing biodiversity locally.
- 8.16. The green and blue infrastructure assets of the parish should be maximised and made properly accessible, where feasible and where this would not be detrimental to the landscape. Development proposals are encouraged to facilitate improved connectivity between these wildlife areas and green spaces that are used by the community. The habitats within the area host an array of wildlife eager to be able to cross through the more urban areas via the networks of trees, hedgerows, gardens and pocket parks, etc. It is essential to protect these wildlife corridors and, wherever possible, link up further networks.
- 8.17. If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (for instance by locating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
- 8.18. Important Landscape Approaches – These are stretches of landscape areas that are along access routes leading to settlements that are principally lined with mature hedges and native trees that partly conceal built development. They give the impression of the countryside extending well into the built-up area. Policy EN23 of the 2006 Local Plan identifies an Important Landscape Approach along the A26 between Manor Fields and Victoria Road. This designation is carried forward in the SLP (Policy EN16). The Steering Group consider that this designation should be extended north to the boundary of the parish (excluding the area on the east where there is housing), where there are trees, hedges and fields on both sides of the road, prior to entering the town centre. This stretch also coincides with two 'gateway' points into the town centre, as shown on *Figure 3*. The Important Landscape Approach does not prohibit development in this area but seeks to ensure that development proposals maintain the contribution this approach makes to local character and appearance. Such an approach is supported in [TWBC policy](#) and also in national policy (NPPF para 8 and para 30), which acknowledges the importance of urban green spaces and features as part of green infrastructure in relation to climate change, air quality, good design, and mental health and wellbeing.

- 8.19. Biodiversity net gain - The Environment Act includes provision for a mandatory requirement for new developments to provide a 10% biodiversity net gain. TWBC has been successful in achieving this, with many developments contributing more than this. The Environment Act also recognises the need to protect what it describes as “Nature Recovery Networks”, joined-up system of places important for wildlife on land (and at sea). Key elements of the Environment Act are now in place. As such Policy SHB8 does not repeat the national requirements for biodiversity net gain. Rather it seeks to identify a complementary policy approach which advises about the ways in which biodiversity net gain can be delivered locally. The High Weald itself is a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (and National Character Area 122) and further information about environmental opportunities can be found on the [High Weald - Detailed Statements of Environmental Opportunity](#).
- 8.20. At the Kent level, the Making Space for Nature Kent project is developing a strategy to enable biodiversity improvement across Kent. The Kent Nature Partnership has established a directory of biodiversity net gain spaces, which could attract off-site biodiversity units. An action for Southborough Town Council will be to work with the project to identify biodiversity opportunity areas within the neighbourhood area where developer's looking to 'spend' their net gain can be used. It is expected that where a development within the parish cannot demonstrate that the net gain can be delivered (wholly) on-site, suitable spaces within the parish should be sought in the first instance before spaces further afield.
- 8.21. Opportunities to improve biodiversity locally include the restoration and enhancement of lowland dry acid grassland. This habitat has suffered severe decline since the war, predominantly because the land has been intensively improved for agriculture and/or developed. Thus, the little that is remaining is of national significance, with Kent now only having 0.2% of acid grassland remaining.
- 8.22. Acid grassland has a unique flora structure incorporating an array of rare plants, which encourage rare birds such as woodlark to forage and nest, making this habitat vital for their survival. Southborough Common includes such grassland and opportunities should be sought to restore (where necessary) and enhance this landscape type.
- 8.23. The Kent Nature Partnership (KNP) is promoting the adoption of a 20% biodiversity net gain requirement across the county, and the Town Council, through Policy SHB9, supports this. To assist this, the KNP has undertaken a strategic level viability assessment for 15% and 20% requirements. The assessment has found that a shift from 10% to 15% or 20% biodiversity net gain will not materially affect viability in the majority of instances when delivered onsite or offsite. Further detail can be found in its report, [Viability Assessment of Biodiversity Net Gain in Kent – June 2022](#).
- 8.24. Flora and fauna-friendly development - Provision for wildlife needs on-site includes, for example, bird and bat nesting-boxes, hedgehog holes in fencing, ponds (a distinctive feature locally) and wildlife friendly communal green spaces.

Figure 10: Biodiversity features in the area



POLICY SHB9: LANDSCAPE AND BODIVERSITY

- A. As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals should be designed to create, conserve, enhance and manage green spaces and connect chains of green and blue infrastructure, as identified on *Figure 10* with the aim of delivering a measurable biodiversity net gain of 20%, where possible, but at a minimum, a net gain of at least 10%.**
- B. Development proposals that would improve the connectivity between local wildlife sites, other designated sites, wildlife areas and green spaces will be supported. Development proposals which would reduce connectivity between local wildlife sites, other designated sites, wildlife areas and green spaces will not be supported.**
- C. Development proposals that consolidate the enhancement and management of identified Biodiversity Opportunity areas within the parish will be supported.**
- D. Development proposals should maintain or enhance the natural environment, landscape features and the rural character and setting of the neighbourhood area. Where possible, development proposals should seek to incorporate natural features typical of the parish, for instance trees, hedgerows, dry acid grassland, ponds, and verges. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should demonstrate that they have addressed the following matters:**

Trees and woodland:

- i. There is no unacceptable loss of, or damage to, existing trees or woodlands during or as a result of development. Ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees must not be removed except in exceptional circumstances and in that case, they should be replaced with trees of a similar potential size and native species elsewhere on the site, unless this is clearly not possible.**
- ii. Where trees and/or shrubs are replaced with new plantings, native or locally appropriate varieties attractive to insects, birds and other wildlife must be used.**

Hedgerows

- iii. Natural boundaries (i.e. hedgerows in preference to fencing) are supported.**
- iv. The infilling of hedgerows with native species will be supported.**
- v. Development that would result in the loss of, or the deterioration in the quality of, hedgerows will not be supported with the exception of removal for vehicular access; in this case, the access should include trees at either end of the retained hedgerow to aid wildlife to cross overhead from crown to crown.**

Fauna:

- vi. The provision of wildlife-friendly features such as hedgehog holes in new residential fencing, hedgehog houses, bird and bat boxes, ponds, bee bricks, insect hotels and log piles/hibernacula will be supported.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 2; TWBC Core Strategy: Core Policy 4; TWBC Submission Local Plan: STR2, STR8; NL Management Plan objectives: PQ1-3, FH1-4, W1-4, R2; NPPF (2024): 135, 136, 187, 188, 189, 190, 192, 195

Policy SHB10: Local Green Space

Purpose

8.25. The policy designates Local Green Spaces within the neighbourhood area that are demonstrably special to the local community.

Justification

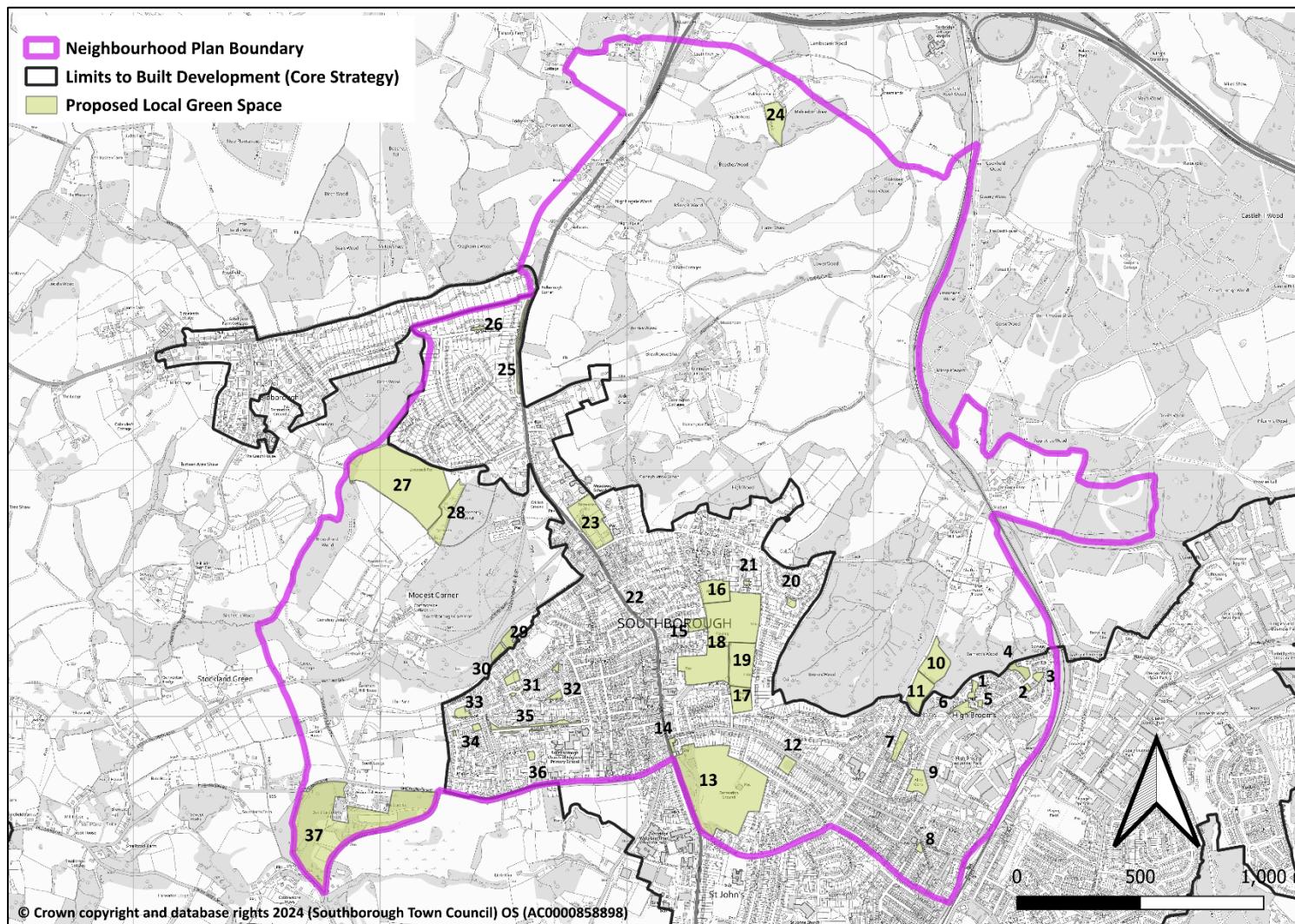
8.26. Under the NPPF, Neighbourhood Plans can designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to the community. This will afford them protection from development other than in very special circumstances. The NPPF says that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

8.27. A survey of green spaces in area was undertaken by the Steering Group. Building on feedback from the local community via the survey and mapping workshops, they reviewed the green spaces across the parish to ascertain whether they might be suitable for designation as a Local Green Space. *Figure 11* shows the areas to be designated. Detailed maps of each space are shown in Appendix C along with details as to how each space meets the NPPF criteria.

8.28. It should be noted that some of the Local Green Spaces identified have also been identified either wholly or partially as part of the SLP process (these are shown with an * in the policy). As the new Local Plan has not yet been adopted, the spaces are listed in the SHBNDP also. Additionally, several green spaces that are considered important to the local community, for instance the Common, have not been proposed for designation as Local Green Space. This is because they are already adequately protected from inappropriate development by other mechanisms, such as via the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Figure 11: Local Green Spaces



POLICY SHB10: LOCAL GREEN SPACE

The following green spaces and clusters of spaces, mapped in *Figure 11* and detailed in Appendix C, are designated as Local Green Spaces:

1. Blackthorn Avenue
2. Blackthorn Avenue Dog Park
3. Blackthorn Avenue right
4. Corner of Blackthorn Avenue and Juniper Close
5. Open space adjacent to TCHG flats and car park
6. Blackthorn Avenue entrance space
7. Frank Weare Recreation Ground *
8. High Brooms Rest Garden *
9. Barnett's Wood Allotments *
10. The Piggery
11. Wheelers Field*
12. Petanque Ground *
13. Southfields Park Skinners School Football Rugby Grounds *
14. Corner near to the library
15. Redwood Sequoia Grove
16. Ridgewaye Allotments *
17. Southborough Hockey Pitch*
18. Ridgewaye, Southborough Recreation Grounds *
19. Yew Tree Allotments*
20. Pennington Place off Pennington Road
21. Valley View
22. Garlinge Road
23. Pennington Recreation Ground *
24. Apple Orchard
25. Harland Way tree strip
26. The Crescent, Darnley Drive
27. Camp Field
28. Doctor's Meadow
29. Woodland Area, near Holden Pond
30. Holden Pond
31. Crundwell Road Recreation Ground *

- 32. Crundwell Road cluster**
- 33. Sir David's Park green space**
- 34. Green spaces at Keel Gardens**
- 35. Broomhill Park/Kibbles Lane/ Speldhurst Road cluster**
- 36. Neighbourhood Green, Lady's Gift Road ***
- 37. David Saloman's Estate (gardens)**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives:2; Saved TWBC Local Plan policies: EN22; TWBC Core Strategy: Core Policy 4; TWBC Submission Local Plan: STR2, STR5; NL Management Plan objectives: PQ1-3; NPPF (2024): 106-108, 153 to 160

NB. Spaces with * are included for designation in the SLP (wholly or partially)

Policy SHB11: Locally significant views

Purpose

8.29. This policy sets out a series of views in and across the neighbourhood area, which have been identified by the community as being important to safeguard. The policy seeks to safeguard the views from inappropriate development.

Justification

8.30. In consultation with the community, ten views have been identified, which are felt to be particularly important. *Figure 12* provides a map of the views and further details about why they are important is contained in Appendix D.

8.31. Development should be designed in a way that safeguards, where possible, the locally significant view or views concerned. It attempts to provide the flexibility required for the range of development proposals which will come forward within the Plan period.

8.32. In circumstances where the proposed development would be likely to have a significant impact on an identified significant view – which is highly likely for the views coinciding with the allocated sites – the planning application concerned should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment that is proportionate to the scale of the development proposed. Appropriate mitigation measures should be incorporated within the design of the development proposed and captured in the assessment. It is accepted that in some areas, views will be compromised, but developers should seek to incorporate glimpses of views within proposals. This will assist in embedding a landscape approach to development and perpetuate a sense of place, connecting with the High Weald.

8.33. It is noted that Policy EN1 (Sustainable Design) of the SLP requires proposals to respect site characteristics including its topography, natural features, relationship with immediate surroundings, historic setting, and views into and out of the site.

POLICY SHB11: LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT VIEWS

A. Development proposals are required to ensure that they have been informed by, and do not have a significantly detrimental impact on the views set out below (*Figure 12*):

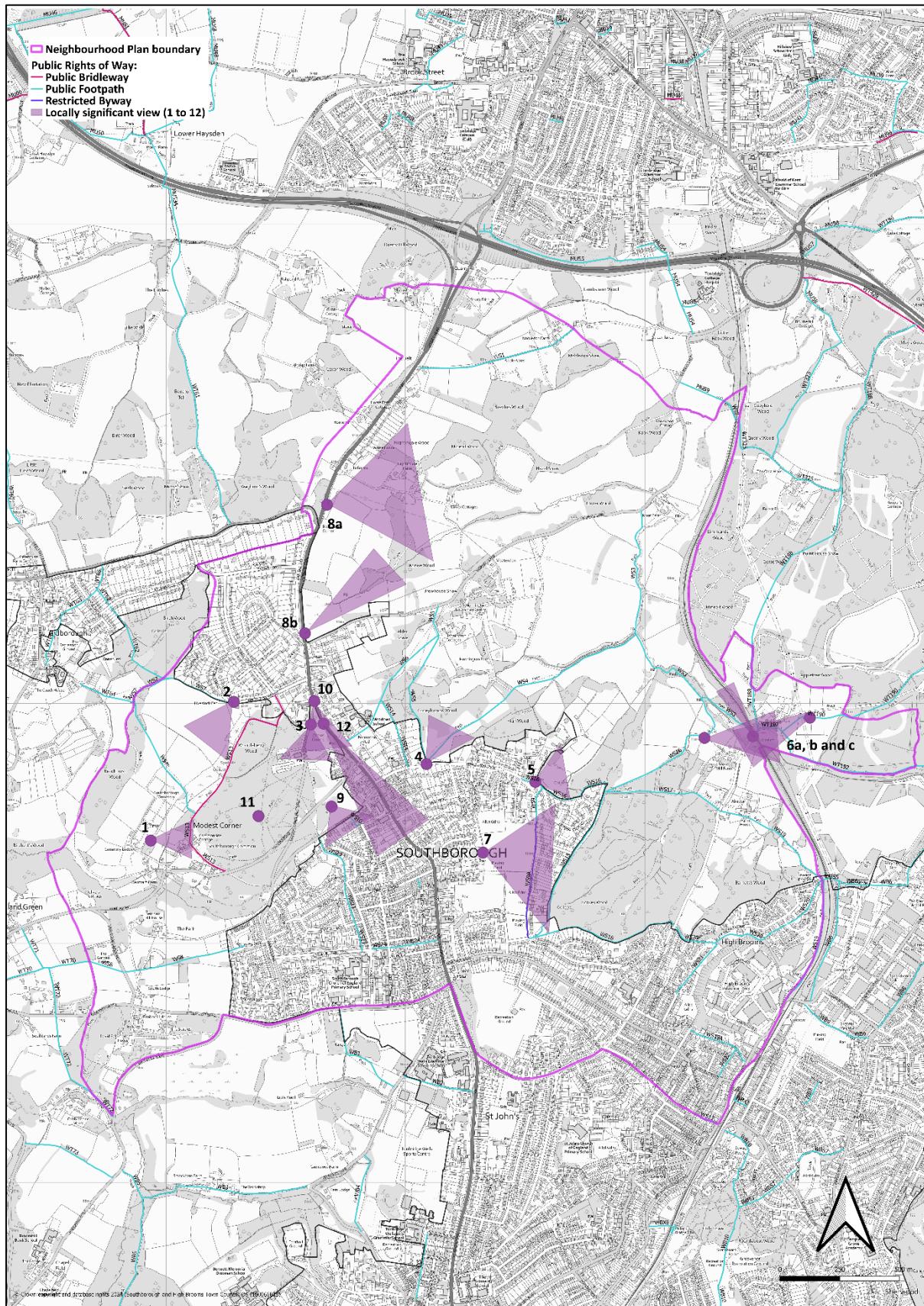
- **View 1 – View of Modest Corner from the Cemetery**
- **View 2 - View of Camp Field from Birchwood Avenue**
- **View 3 - Looking down Church Road towards St Peter's Church**
- **View 4 - View over Hilly Fields**
- **View 5 - View over The Glen towards Castle Hill**
- **Views 6a, 6b and 6c - Views of Colebrook Viaduct**
- **View 7 - View over the Ridgewaye Playing Fields**
- **Views 8a and 8b - Views over the High Weald from London Road in the north of Southborough**
- **View 9 - View of open space “South of France” towards the houses in Holden Road**
- **View 10 - Views across Southborough Common from Sceptre Hill**
- **View 11 - Views within the Common**
- **View 12 - View down Sceptre Hill in the Conservation Area**

B. As appropriate to their scale and nature development proposals within the shaded arcs of the various views as shown on *Figure 13* should be designed in a way that safeguards the locally significant view or views concerned. Proposals for major development should be supported by a landscape/visual impact assessment which clearly demonstrates the potential impacts that such a proposal would have on significant views where relevant and how these impacts will be mitigated.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 2; Saved TWBC Local Plan policies: EN1; TWBC Core Strategy: Core Policy 4, Core Policy 5; TWBC Submission Local Plan: STR7, STR8; NL Management Plan objectives: PQ1-3; NPPF (2024): 131-135, 187

Southborough and High Brooms Neighbourhood Development Plan Submission Version

Figure 12: Significant local views – Views 1 to 12 as per the policy and Appendix D



Policy SHB12: Dark skies

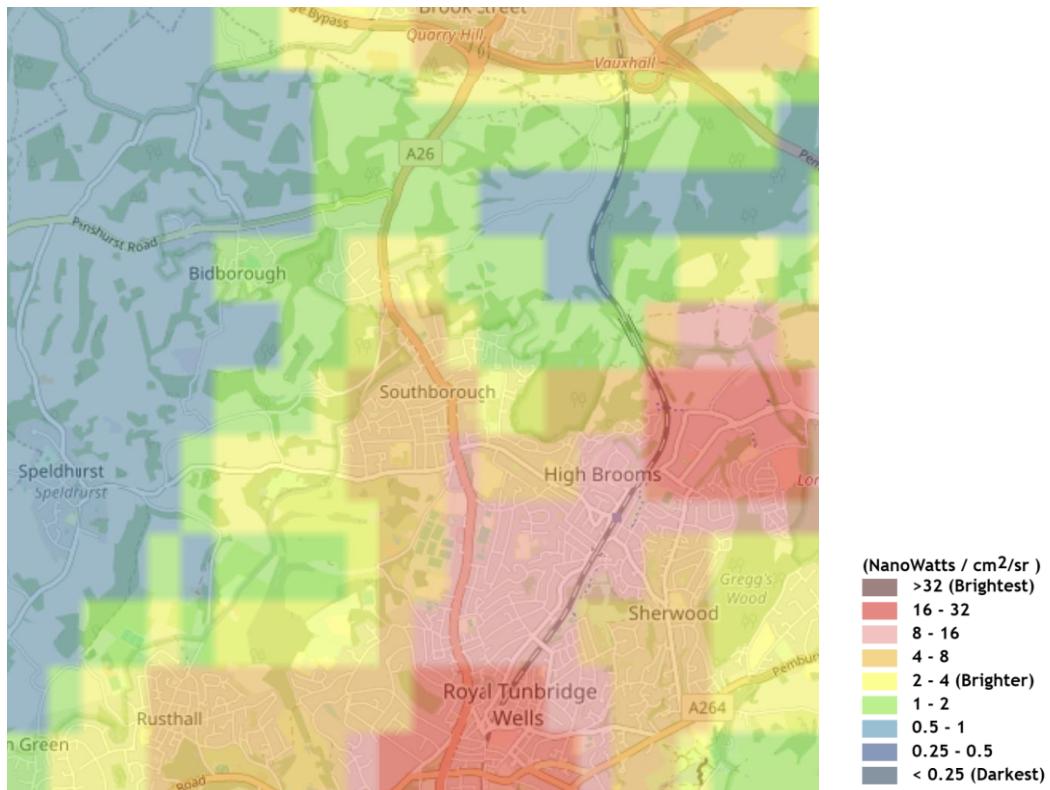
Purpose

8.34. Situated in the High Weald National Landscape, parts of Southborough and High Brooms parish provide ideal locations from which to enjoy dark skies and stargazing. These dark skies also support both nocturnal and diurnal wildlife. This policy seeks to ensure that development does not encroach on this valued aspect of parish.

Justification

8.35. Despite its location close to Tonbridge and Royal Tunbridge Wells, parts of the parish remain largely unlit (*Figure 13*), for instance the significant areas of woodland away from the urban area. The dark night skies in these areas are predominantly unspoilt, and it is important that they are kept that way. Where pollution can be reduced elsewhere, this should be considered.

Figure 13: Map showing levels of radiance for Southborough Parish, 2016 source: CPRE, The Countryside Charity. Each pixel shows the levels of radiance (night lights) shining up into the night sky



8.36. The benefits derived from the prevention of light pollution include:

- Enjoyment and appreciation – improving quality of life and providing creative inspiration
- Health – promoting better sleep patterns and reducing stress
- Wildlife – supporting a more natural environment for both nocturnal and diurnal animals
- Energy efficiency – reducing wastage from unnecessary or excessive lighting, thus reducing the parish's carbon footprint

- 8.37. The High Weald AONB Management Plan (Objectives DS1 and DS2) recognise the special qualities that people value, such as tranquillity, dark skies and clean air, are recognised and taken into account in new developments. It encourages neighbourhood planning groups to include policies that minimise light pollution.
- 8.38. The impact of light pollution is particularly harmful in the open countryside where rural character is eroded. Light pollution can also compromise the architectural and historical character of conservation areas and listed buildings or their settings. Artificial lighting has an impact on biodiversity especially for nocturnal animals and invertebrates can be seriously affected by artificial light at even very low levels, adversely affecting their ability to feed and reproduce.

POLICY SHB12: DARK SKIES

Proposals for development will be supported where it is demonstrated that, if external lighting is required, it protects the night sky from light pollution, where:

- i. the lighting is necessary for operational, safety or security reasons;
- ii. any light spillage beyond the application site is eliminated, or reduced by measures such as timing and proximity controls, orientation, screening, shielding or glazing;
- iii. impact on nearby residential properties, wildlife, local heritage assets or the wider landscape is minimised; and
- iv. the guidance on lighting provided in the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note GN01: The Reduction of Obtrusive Light (and any subsequent revisions) is adhered to. Proposals should consider carefully, and provide details of, the light source and intensity being used, the luminaire design, height, and angle, adding baffles and cut-off shields where required, and details of control mechanisms to dim or switch off lighting schemes when not required. Where appropriate, lights should be controlled by passive infrared detectors so that they only come on when needed.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 2; Saved TWBC Local Plan policies: EN4; TWBC Core Strategy: Core Policy 4; TWBC Submission Local Plan: STR8, EN8; NL Management Plan objectives: DS1-2; NPPF (2024): 96, 131, 187, 198

9. TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

Policy SHB13: Improving walking, cycling and equestrian opportunities

Purpose

9.1. This policy seeks to enhance walking and cycling opportunities along routes which are most likely to encourage a shift away from the private car for short journeys in and around the neighbourhood area. This accords with the strategic transport priorities for the area, as set out in the [Local Transport Plan 5: Striking the Balance](#), published by KCC, which support opportunities for active travel. Note that the emerging Local Transport Plan 5 – Striking the Balance, which went out to consultation in 2024, continues to promote ‘active travel’. There are also opportunities to link in to the emerging [Kent Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#), which includes seven proposals relating to Southborough, the [Kent Rights of Way Improvement Plan](#) and the [Framing Kent's Future](#) strategy (2022-2026).

Justification

9.2. The community has a high level of concern about the existing amount of traffic in the neighbourhood area, notably caused by the A26, which runs directly through the centre of Southborough town. There is a high volume of cars, vans and HGVs using this road. Many of the larger vehicles are more polluting diesels.

9.3. Many people rely on their car for a variety of reasons - they may have limited mobility, they may be transporting young children, carrying larger loads, or simply be short of time. The topography of Southborough and High Brooms is also hilly, which can have an impact.

9.4. Whilst such journeys may be unavoidable, it is important that active travel (i.e. walking, wheeling and cycling) is enabled and encouraged, particularly for journeys within the neighbourhood area and, where possible, to nearby settlements. Active travel brings health benefits, both physical and mental, and can assist in reducing congestion and air pollution whilst freeing the roads for those who are less able to give up their cars for the reasons stated above. Its role in reducing carbon emissions can also help to support local businesses.

9.5. Promoting Walking and cycling

9.6. An aspiration of the SHBNDP is to promote the area as [a 20-minute neighbourhood](#). This is a concept promoted by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) whereby developments are encouraged to be no more than 20 minutes from key facilities (*Figure 14*).

9.7. The concept is not intended to stifle development, rather to emphasise the importance of enabling and improving connectivity by foot and by bike. New major development proposals in the Parish, which may be allocated in a future Local Plan for instance, should take account of the walkable town concept and provide the infrastructure to link new homes to existing facilities to encourage active travel.

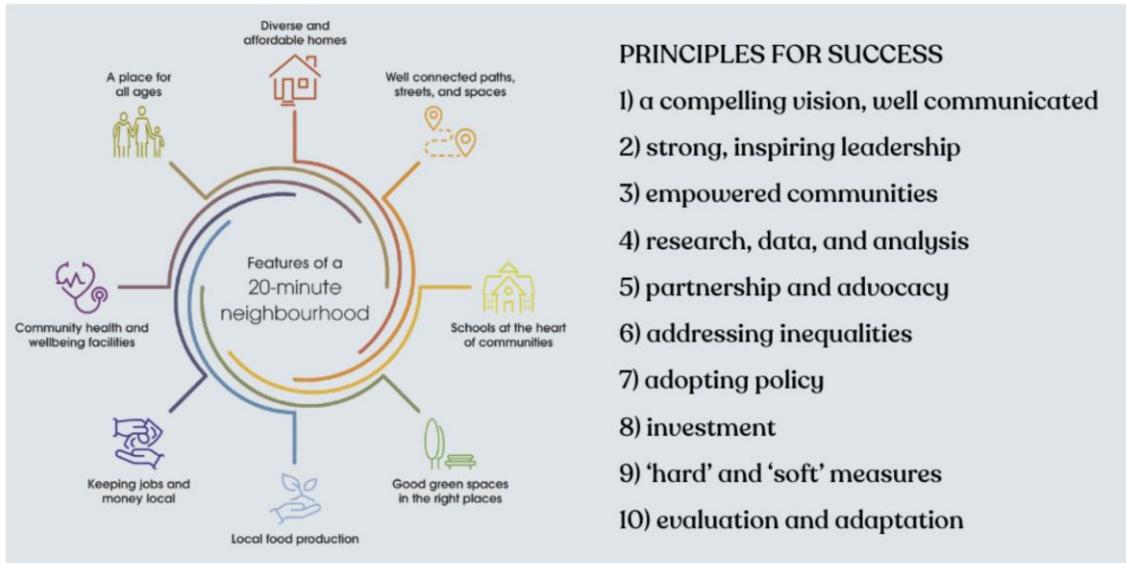


Figure 14: Principles of the '20 minute' neighbourhood (source: TCPA)

- 9.8. Figure 15 shows the areas that are walkable within this timeframe in the area. Policy SHB13 does not directly comment on the 20-minute neighbourhood. Rather it takes a more general approach in advising that development proposals should ensure safe pedestrian, and where possible cycle, access to link up with the existing footpath and cycleway network, and public transport network, as defined in Figure 16. Nevertheless, proposals which meet the 20-minute neighbourhood concept will be particularly supported. This approach overlaps with that taken in Policy SHB1 which focuses on new development within the LBD. Plainly this approach will provide convenient access to the high street, railway station and other facilities.
- 9.9. This aspiration ties in with strategic objectives on active travel. TWBC is supporting enhancements measures locally which would make the area safer for those walking, wheeling and cycling.
- 9.10. At the KCC level, a priority within the LCWIP is the 'Southborough Walking Zone' and TWBC has been awarded further funding to explore opportunities to improve walking routes within Southborough and High Brooms as part of this.
- 9.11. The Mapping Workshops and Community Survey revealed a desire to improve walking opportunities locally. The findings are described in Table 3 and illustrated on Figure 15, where the numbers on the map relate to the references in the Table. Whilst sitting outside planning policy per se, they should be used to inform any strategic walking documents, funding applications and the use of any developer contributions.
- 9.12. To support walking locally, there is support for the publication of a Southborough and High Brooms Walking Guide, including heritage trail, in conjunction with the Southborough Society. In addition, the provision of traditional fingerpost signs to identify non-road routes to access key facilities.

Table 3: Potential walking improvements

Ref.	Issue	Potential solution
1.	Road safety: Wooley Road and Prospect Road (and Broomhill Road) are important routes to access the Southborough C of E Primary School. Improvements need to be made at peak times to reduce traffic speed and parking along this area, that can block sightlines and make the area feel less safe.	Encouraging parents to walk to school with their children. Encouraging the use of FP WS23 and WS24. Introducing additional access/speed restrictions along Broomhill Park Road during peak times. This road is already closed to traffic at school arrival times.
2.	Road crossings needed at points across the A26 to enable access from those homes located on the north-eastern side of Southborough to the west of the area. Locations identified include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian crossing along the A26 just south of Birchwood Avenue • Toucan crossing outside the Civic Centre, which forms part of the cycle route (see cycling section for further detail). 	Work with KCC to consider additional crossing points within any update to the Kent LCWIP. Include within the Southborough Walking Zone strategy.
3.	Bounds Oak Way has steep steps along the bridleway. This is challenging for those with mobility difficulties, with pushchairs and also for equestrian users.	Explore ways to remove steps and provide a gentler slope for access.
4.	Potential to create a new circular route around the edge of the Ridgewaye Fields recreation ground, avoiding activities on the playing field. This would be welcomed by dogwalkers. The route would also enable a link between the High Street and High Brooms without needing to walk along the busy A26.	There are ongoing drainage issues in parts of this field, hence the path surfacing would need to be reviewed. There are also few lights in this area, although dark skies are an ambition of this plan. Low level lighting (as per ILP advice) could be helpful here.
5.	Additional wayfinding signs within The Common. For example, the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk passes through Southborough and The Common but is not	Better signing (see Pembury fingerposts for design) would encourage greater use of the Common, including

Ref.	Issue	Potential solution
	well-signposted. The High Weald Trail also cuts through the area and could be better sign-posted.	as an alternative route to remove the need to walk long the A26 at times.
6.	A26 footways from the north of the area are sometimes narrow, overgrown, noisy and challenging with the traffic along this route. There are no controlled crossings on the A26 north of the one by the North Southborough shops. The area is also considered poor in terms of air pollution.	For those accessing the town facilities from the north, an alternative walking route could be promoted along Harland Way, Darnley Drive and Bound Oak Way and reconnecting to the A26 near to the cricket ground – routes through the Common would enable access further south avoiding the A road. In addition, an improved A26 road crossing near Harland Way is needed. Currently there is a small island between the lanes of this 40mph stretch, which is unsuitable for vulnerable users.
7.	<p>Accessing High Brooms Railway Station by foot can be challenging for some due to the topography here. Walking to Southborough from the station is largely uphill.</p> <p>There are also issues around access by public transport to Tonbridge and Royal Tunbridge Wells railway stations. Whilst there is a bus link provided from Southborough, services do not run very late and can be full at school pickup and drop off times.</p>	<p>Some progress has been made following enhancement works by TWBC. Scope to work further with TWBC to consider improvements that could be made as part of the Southborough Walking Zone.</p> <p>One option could be to explore the provision of a pavement 'build out' near to the station to offer refuge to those on foot from traffic.</p> <p>There are heavy goods vehicles using the narrow roads in this area to access the industrial estate. An option to explore would be providing laybys in this area to optimise the flow of traffic, which would also make it easier for pedestrians.</p>

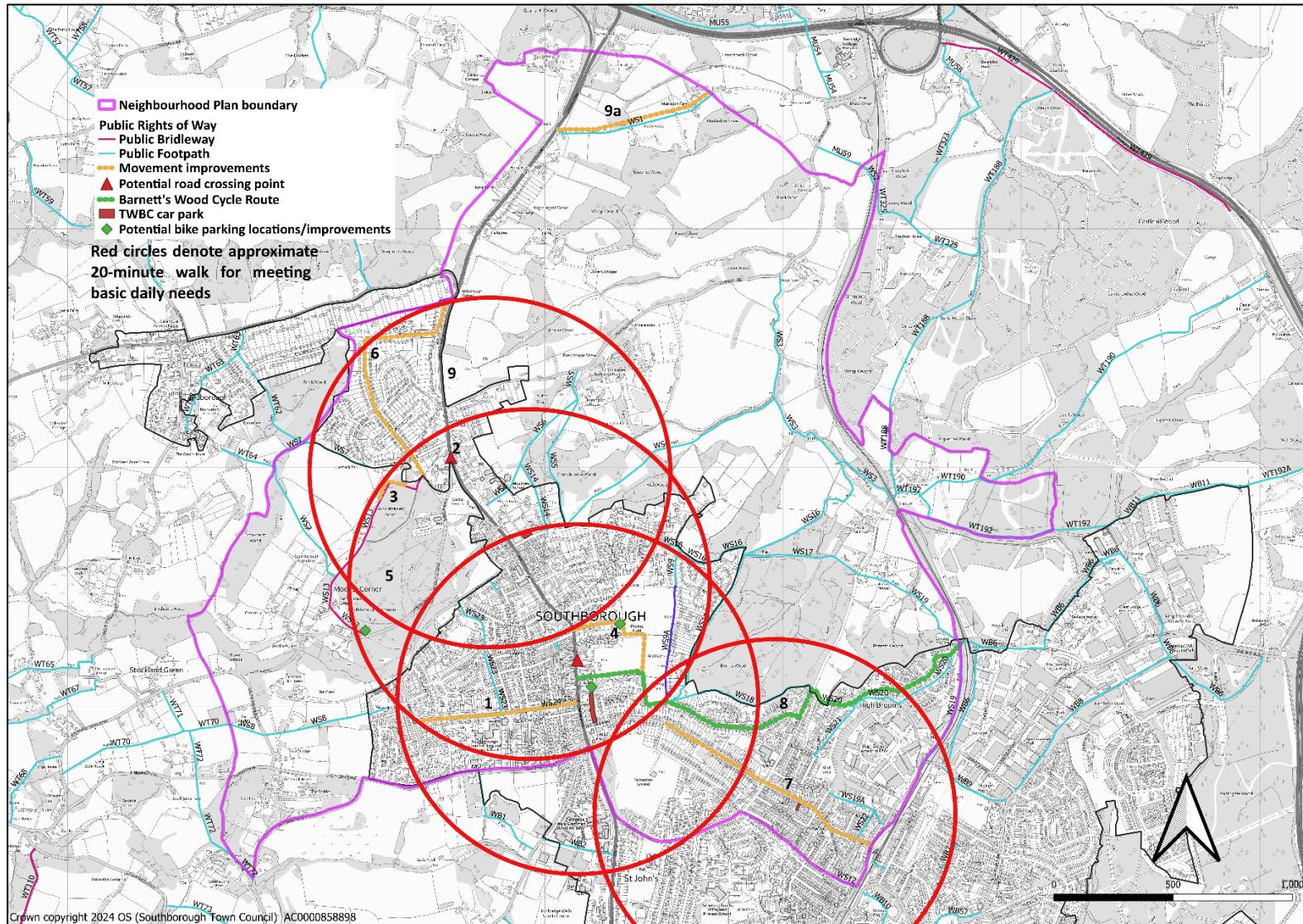
9.13. From a cycling perspective, the only proposed dedicated cycle route through the area is the Barnett's Wood route. It would enter the neighbourhood area at Dowding Way to the east and stop at the Civic Centre. Currently, only the route at the Civic Centre exists. This project is included in TWBC's LCWIP Phase 1. *Table 4* sets out cycling priorities for the area:

Table 4: Potential cycling improvements

Ref.	Issue	Potential solution
8.	Support the development of the Barnett's Wood Cycle route. This would enable formal cycle access to the industrial area to the east (High Brooms) and could help connectivity to the station.	This is part of the LCWIP Strategy Phase 1. There is a potential issue at the eastern end of the route where it meets steps.
9.	A26 cycle lanes would be welcomed if they can be segregated from other vehicles and from pedestrians. The A26 Cycle Plan has been discussed for many years but has never been brought into force in its entirety. The A26 Cycle Route is a priority for TWBC and is included in the Borough Council's LCWIP Phase 2 document.	Work with KCC and TWBC to influence the A26 cycle plan. The following is included in the TWBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan (August 2024): Upgrade existing A26 cycle route between Tonbridge and Royal Tunbridge Wells (including south of RTW). PROW WS1 has potential to be upgraded to a bridleway linking A26 to Vauxhall Lane (9a on <i>Figure 15</i>)
10.	Provision of additional secure, covered cycle parking across the area. There is provision near the Civic Centre, but this is not fully covered and therefore exposed to the elements. There is an annual bicycle ride that comes through the area. Provision of facilities would promote such visitors to stay and visit the town. There is covered cycle parking at the railway station.	Locations suggested include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Near to the Scout Hut • Improve those at the Civic Centre • Additional provision at The Common

9.14. Provision for horse riders is very limited locally, with only a few bridleways locally. Horse riders currently are forced largely onto the roads, which presents safety issues and is less rewarding for the rider. The British Horse Society report that the most recent figures from KCC indicate that 18% of the public rights of way network is available to horse riders and 6% is available to carriage drivers. The SHBNDP would support the upgrading of footpaths to bridleway status, notably through the Common and woodlands. The Town Council will work with the local community and KCC to identify potential routes to upgrade.

Figure 15: Public Rights of Way and potential improvements



POLICY SHB13: IMPROVING WALKING, CYCLING AND EQUESTRIAN OPPORTUNITIES

- A. To ensure that residents can access social, community, public transport, the primary school, village amenities and other important facilities in the neighbourhood area and in neighbouring settlements in a sustainable and safe way, all new major residential or employment developments should ensure safe pedestrian, and where possible cycle, routes to link up with the existing active movement network, and public transport network, as defined in *Figure 15*.**
- B. The provision of new, or the enhancement of existing, cycle and pedestrian routes that are, where feasible, physically separated from vehicular traffic and from one another will be strongly supported. Such routes should be of permeable material and ensure that access by disabled users and users of mobility scooters is secured.**
- C. The design and layout of works related to the widening of footways or the provision of traffic-calming measures should enhance the rural, town character, for example retaining and/or providing hedgerows, trees and soft verges where possible. Materials and layout must be sympathetic to local character.**
- D. Proposals for new bridleways will be supported wherever possible; in all new developments existing bridleways must be retained where they exist or, alternatively, new or amended bridleway links provided together with safe road crossing points that enable connectivity between the built-up area and the wider countryside.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 4; Saved TWBC Local Plan policies: TP1, TP3; TWBC Core Strategy: Core Policy 3; TWBC Submission Local Plan: STR5, STR6, TP2; NL Management Plan objectives: R1, PQ3; NPPF (2024): 96, 105, 109, 110, 111, 115-117, 135

Public transport

- 9.15. Public transport sits largely outside the influence of the SHBNDP, however is a topic that has been commonly raised throughout the engagement. For those people who cannot drive and / or afford to run a car, access to services such as schools, colleges, health and employment opportunities and so on can be limited. Equally, access to cultural events and activities outside the area can also be challenging. Bus services only run to the early evening and there are no railway stations within a 20-minute walking distance of much of Southborough. This latter point is exacerbated by the fact that there are no buses running from the nearby railway stations to Southborough in the late evenings.
- 9.16. There is no bus service between High Brooms Railway Station and Southborough and vice versa.
- 9.17. Section 106 contributions and other grants or donations made available via TWBC or directly to the Town Council should be used to fund projects to improve the public transport facilities to the area – for instance provision of electric bus boards, additional bus services to connect to Tonbridge and later into the evening. Further information is provided in Section 13 (Non-Policy Actions).

Policy SHB14: Publicly accessible off-road car parking

Purpose

9.18. Notwithstanding the aim to promote active travel, this policy seeks to ensure that adequate off-road car parking provision is provided and, where possible, electric vehicle charging points installed.

Justification

9.19. Whilst the SHBNDP promotes active travel (walking, cycling, wheeling and equestrian), it is inevitable that the majority of residents will need to use their cars for the foreseeable future. Many of the key facilities are beyond an acceptable walking distance for many residents in the neighbourhood area, for instance hospitals, secondary schools, larger supermarkets and railway stations. Some journeys are not easy to make by foot or bike and therefore vehicle access to the key services and locations is essential.

9.20. Accessing car parking near to the High Street has been highlighted by the community as problematic. Pennington Road car park is often full, as is the Yew Tree Road car park. When there are sports matches being played, this can lead to the car parks filling quickly and the knock-on effect is that people park on-street. There are also parking issues near to High Brooms railway station, with commuters from the broader geographic area choosing to park on-street instead of paying for the station parking. If the town is to, for instance, hold additional creative events and promote the High Street, it will be important to retain existing space and, where possible add to this.

POLICY SHB14: PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE OFF-ROAD PARKING

- A. Development proposals that would result in the loss of existing publicly available off-street car parking spaces will not be supported.**
- B. Proposals that enable the provision of additional, publicly accessible off-road car parking spaces will be supported subject to the policies of this Neighbourhood Plan. In particular proposals which:**
 - i alleviate parking congestion along the residential roads surrounding the High Street and the roads located near to High Brooms railway station will be supported; and where**
 - ii parking spaces are landscaped, ideally with native species, to minimise the visual impact of parked vehicles. They must also not exacerbate or cause additional surface-water runoff.**
- C. At existing locations and alongside any new public car parking provision, the following facilities will be strongly supported to be provided as part of that provision:**
 - i dedicated covered and secure bicycle parking facilities, preferably with e-bike charging points; and**
 - ii future-proofed four hour or faster electric vehicle charging points (or wireless charging facilities).**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 4; Saved TWBC Local Plan policies: TP9; TWBC Core Strategy: Core Policy 3; TWBC Submission Local Plan: STR6, TP4; NL Management Plan objectives: PQ3; NPPF (2024): 109, 113

10. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Policy SHB15: Improving opportunities for community and cultural facilities, sport and recreation

Purpose

- 10.1. This policy seeks to ensure that those living in and moving to the neighbourhood are adequately served with a range of good quality facilities and activities and that there are opportunities for residents to shape this.

Justification

- 10.2. The area is fortunate to have a good range facilities serving the local community, including schools, GPs, the High Street shopping, pubs and restaurants, allotments, playgrounds and so forth. Feedback was sought from the community via the Community Survey and the Mapping Workshop as to any additional facilities that would be supported or facilities that exist, but which could be improved. Additionally, the Steering Group met with teenagers to gain their views. Common issues raised by the older members of the community were:

- More activities and facilities for teenagers, such a space to meet, youth centre etc.
- Facilities (covered and uncovered) to enable local performances, live theatre and other artistic ventures in addition to the Civic Centre (this is discussed in Policy SHB7)
- A pavilion for the cricket club, which could be a community asset and social hub
- Improved use of the Civic Centre
- An all-weather football pitch at Ridgewaye, Southborough Recreation Grounds
- A men's shed
- Play parks for younger children
- Community café at the Civic Centre

Figure 16: Feedback from teenagers



- 10.3. Feedback from the teenagers (Figure 16) revealed that they value St John's swimming pool (just outside the neighbourhood area), the shops, library, parks and sports hall, local wildlife,

the nearby woodland, local walks, the local history, the schools and local clubs such as the scouts. They considered there to be a lack generally of activities aimed at them including a lack of skate parks, climbing places and football pitches. Of most importance was the need to upgrade Pennington Grounds with facilities for them.

10.4. The [TWBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan](#), August 2024, (IDP) notes the following for Southborough:

- Southborough Civic Centre Recreation Area to serve as a Local Sports Hub
- Opportunities for play space provision to reduce the gap in access in this area
- May be potential for natural green space or amenity green space to accommodate food growing areas/allotments to reduce shortfall/gaps in access to this typology
- Good access to natural green spaces at Barnetts Wood Nature Reserve and Southborough Common, which could be further enhanced.

10.5. The IDP should be monitored as it is updated.

POLICY SHB15: IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL FACILITIES, SPORT AND RECREATION

A. Proposals for new community, recreational, cultural and leisure facilities, or the improvement of existing facilities - in particular facilities for teenagers (e.g. for socialising, safe spaces), additional allotment/community growing space, upgrades to children's play equipment, provision of additional sports facilities - will be supported where:

- i. the proposal is, where relevant, consistent with Green Belt policy and contributes to the National Landscape and its setting; and
- ii. the proposal would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of surrounding residents and the local environment; and
- iii. the proposal would not have significant adverse impacts upon the local road network; and
- iv. the proposal would not have harmful impacts on the heritage aspects, including the setting, of the facility.

B. The provision of new and upgraded play areas to serve the needs of children of all ages, in accordance with [Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Local Plan/Open Space Study standards](#) Local Plan policy OSSR2 (or its successor), will be supported. Where possible, these should incorporate areas for 'natural play' (defined as play provision with natural environments as opposed to 'man-made' ones).

C. Proposals that would result in the loss of community, leisure and recreational facilities will only be supported if either the facility is surplus to requirements and there is no longer a proven need for such a facility or alternative and equivalent facilities demonstrate by comparison to the existing facility that:

- i. the replacement will be of at least an equivalent scale, specification and located in an accessible location to the community to be served;
- ii. reprofiling of these facilities will incorporate adequate safeguards for delivery; and
- iii. satisfy all other relevant policy expectations of this neighbourhood plan.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 4; Saved TWBC Local Plan policies: OSSR2, CS6, R1; TWBC Core Strategy: Core Policy 8; TWBC Submission Local Plan: STR5, STR7; NL Management Plan objectives: LBE2; NPPF (2024): 96, 98, 101, 103, 104

11. IMPLEMENTATION AND PLAN REVIEW

- 11.1. Southborough Town Council is the qualifying body responsible for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 11.2. Once the Plan has been 'made', there will be a series of actions that need to be undertaken to ensure that the policies within the SHBNDP are being interpreted and used in the way intended. It will also be necessary to maintain a watching brief on changes to the planning policy landscape, both at the national and local planning authority levels, which may have an impact on the Plan's policies. Finally, any non-planning-related projects and activities that were identified will need to be prioritised for delivery, in partnership with other organisations.
- 11.3. Specific actions to be undertaken are as follows:
 - Pursuing the projects and activities that are not policy-based, but nevertheless contribute to the delivery of the Plan - these are set out in Section 13, divided into priorities towards which developer contributions may be directed and broader, community projects, which have been collated throughout the process, but which sit beyond planning policy. A range of organisations may be involved in delivering these projects and there will be a need for a co-ordinated approach. Many will require funding and therefore it would be helpful to consult with the community to understand the potential costs and achievability of each. Funding may be sourced from developer contributions or tailored funds, such as the Big Lottery Fund.
 - Commenting on planning applications or consultations relating to the neighbourhood plan area – the Town Council has a role in ensuring that the SHBNDP policies are being adequately considered, where relevant, in decisions to determine the outcome of planning applications in the Parish. A meeting between local councillors, planning committee members and the supporting planning officers at TWBC would be a useful step in ensuring that the purpose and application of the policies is fully understood by all parties. This will assist in ensuring that policies are interpreted and applied in the way intended.
 - Monitoring the application of the SHBNDP policies to ensure they have been applied consistently and interpreted correctly in response to planning applications – there is scope to identify indicators to measure the effect that each policy is having and the extent to which this is delivering against the associated objective. As a minimum, the Town Council would wish to maintain a log of planning applications relating to the neighbourhood area, detailing which Neighbourhood Plan policies have informed the Town Council response and the outcome of the decision. This will assist in understanding whether the policies have been used in the manner intended or whether changes may be required, for instance in any future review of the Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Maintaining a dialogue with TWBC regarding the timing and content of the emerging Local Plan – it will be important to consider the policies in the emerging document and how these may impact the SHBNDP policies. The adoption of the new Local Plan may trigger a light-touch review of the SHBNDP.

- Maintaining a dialogue with TWBC and the promoter/developers of the sites allocated within the Local Plan.
- Monitoring government's plans for devolution and implications of this for the neighbourhood area.

11.4. Maintaining a watching brief on the national policy landscape – changes at the national level may impact on the policies contained in the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore important to keep abreast of this, as this could also provide a trigger to undertake a light-touch review of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- Maintaining a dialogue with neighbouring parishes and non-parished areas on cross-boundary projects.
- Maintaining a dialogue with the local community on the plan implementation – ensuring that all records of how the plan has been used should be made public. It is also recommended that a regular update – for instance at the Annual Town Meeting – is provided, to feed back to the community on progress about both the effectiveness of the policies and the pursing of the projects.

11.5. Considering gaps in the Neighbourhood Plan – local issues, concerns or opportunities may arise during the lifespan of the Plan that trigger the need for the inclusion of a new policy. Such issues can be most effectively understood by maintaining open dialogue with the community and other partners.

11.6. Whilst it is not a legislative requirement to review a Neighbourhood Plan, it is good practice to do so periodically. This may be because of any of the points noted above. A light-touch review will enable the Town Council to keep the Neighbourhood Plan up to date in general terms, and to ensure that it remains in general conformity with the wider development plan. Any review should be undertaken in partnership with and ensuring the engagement of the wider community.

11.7. The Town Council will consider how best to progress these actions.

12. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND PROVISION

12.1. The Town Council is keen to influence the way in which developer contributions are spent in the neighbourhood area to the full extent of their powers under national legislation and planning guidance. There are different types of contributions arising from section 106 agreements, section 278 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

- A section 106 agreement (based on that section of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act) or planning obligation is a private agreement made between local authorities and developers and can be attached to a planning permission to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms.
- A section 278 agreement refers to a section of the Highways Act 1980 that allows developers to enter into a legal agreement with the local authority to make alterations or improvements to a public highway as part of a planning application.
- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a non-negotiable charge on development based on a fixed rate per square metre of net additional development on a site. TWBC does not currently have a CIL. If the Government proceed with implementing the Infrastructure Levy from the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, TWBC would consider and action as necessary. Different charge rates would apply for different types of uses and in different areas. The levy is intended to fund the provision, improvement, replacement or maintenance of infrastructure required to support development in an area as set out in its local plan. With a 'made' (adopted) Neighbourhood Plan, the local community benefits from an uplift in the level of CIL received, from 15% (capped at £100 per existing property) to an uncapped 25% of CIL receipts.

12.2. Spending and infrastructure priorities for Southborough and High Brooms Parish are included within the TWBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and within the emerging TWBC Local Plan, the strategic parish policy for Southborough, STR/SO 1, and the strategic policy on infrastructure and connectivity, Policy STR 5. The Town Council intends to regularly review its spending priorities. Any proposed changes to spending principles or priorities will be published for comment by the community and other interested parties on the Town Council website.

Potential Infrastructure Priorities:

- Bus service from Southborough Town Centre to High Brooms Railway Station and Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury.
- Bus services from Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge town centres/railway stations to run to Southborough later in the evening, to serve residents returning from cultural or social events in these towns or in London.
- Improved warning signs for North Farm Road/Dowding Way low bridge, to reduce events of lorries getting stuck under bridge and causing significant traffic disruption.
- Improve reliability of water supply in High Brooms - full replacement of water main in High Brooms (North Farm Road and surrounding streets) rather than frequent ad hoc repairs for bursts.

13. NON-POLICY ACTIONS / PROJECTS

13.1. These are potential projects that have been raised via the consultation, but which sit outside planning and land-use policy. The projects will be kept under review by the Town Council.

Encouraging Active Travel

- Map key walking routes (including heritage walks, quiet routes, leisure walks within the parish and to destinations in neighbouring parishes) and develop supporting documentation to be available on the Town Council website.
- Provide way-finding signage for key walking routes and destinations within the parish.
- Identify footways where width and usability is limited due to overgrown hedgerows and weeds/nettles/brambles and poor surfaces, to explore ways of ensuring regular maintenance by KCC Highways or private owners of overgrown frontages.
- Lobby for real time information and shelters for bus stops.
- Identifying routes to be upgraded to (segregated) bridleways.

Heritage

- Undertake audit to establish designated and non-designated heritage assets that are at risk and put in place on-going monitoring of upkeep and maintenance.
- Map and assess all areas of brick pavements in parish, both historic and replacement, to confirm which should be recorded as non-designated heritage assets.
- Work with TWBC to update the Southborough Conservation Area Appraisal.

Enhancing biodiversity

- Identify areas where biodiversity could be improved, for example through wildflower planting on verges and greening of urban areas, to provide a baseline of information and a potential project list.

Road Safety

- Consider speed reduction and traffic calming options to improve road safety e.g. roads near to primary schools, streets used as “rat runs” from A26 and A21, 40mph section of A26 between Vauxhall Lane and Mabledon.
- Assess whether additional/alternative managed crossing points are required on roads where speed and/or volume of traffic places vulnerable users at risk
- Remove the extruding part of the pavement that is obstructing entering the left filter lane from the A26 when turning left into Yew Tree Lane.

Local economy and the arts

- Identify investment and funding opportunities to further support the arts and cultural sector in the area.
- Promotion of the town centre, both to attract additional businesses, but also to increase footfall.

14. POLICIES MAPS

The maps (*Figures 17 to 23*) show the designations in the Parish.

-  Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
-  Green Belt
-  Limits to Built Development (Policy SHB1)
-  Site Allocation Boundary (SLP)
-  Important local gateway (Policy SHB1)
-  Areas at threat of increased coalescence (Policy SHB1)
-  Designated heritage asset (Policy SHB5)
-  Conservation Area (Policy SHB5)
-  Registered Parks and Gardens
-  Non-Designated Heritage Asset (Policy SHB5)
-  Non-designated heritage asset row (Policy SHB5)
-  Brick pavements (Policy SHB5)
-  Primary Shopping Area (Policy SHB6)
-  Key employment area
-  Town Centre Boundary (Policy SHB6)
-  High Weald National Landscape
-  Ancient Woodland (Policy SHB9)
-  SSSI (Policy SH9)
-  Holden Pond (Policy SHB9)
-  Watercourse (Policy SHB9)
-  Common Land
-  Area of Landscape Importance (Policy SHB9)
-  Important Landscape Approach (Policy SHB9)
-  Proposed Local Green Space (Policy SHB10)
-  Significant local view, shown as triangles (Policy SHB11)
-  Extension to Important Landscape Approach (Policy SHB9)
-  Location for bike parking (Policy SHB13)
-  Barnett's Wood Cycle Route (proposed route) (Policy SHB13)
-  Potential road crossing point (Policy SHB13)
-  Potential movement improvements (Policy SHB13)
- Public right of way:**
-  Byway open to all traffic
-  Public Bridleway
-  Public Footpath
-  Restricted Byway

Figure 17: Policies Map - neighbourhood area

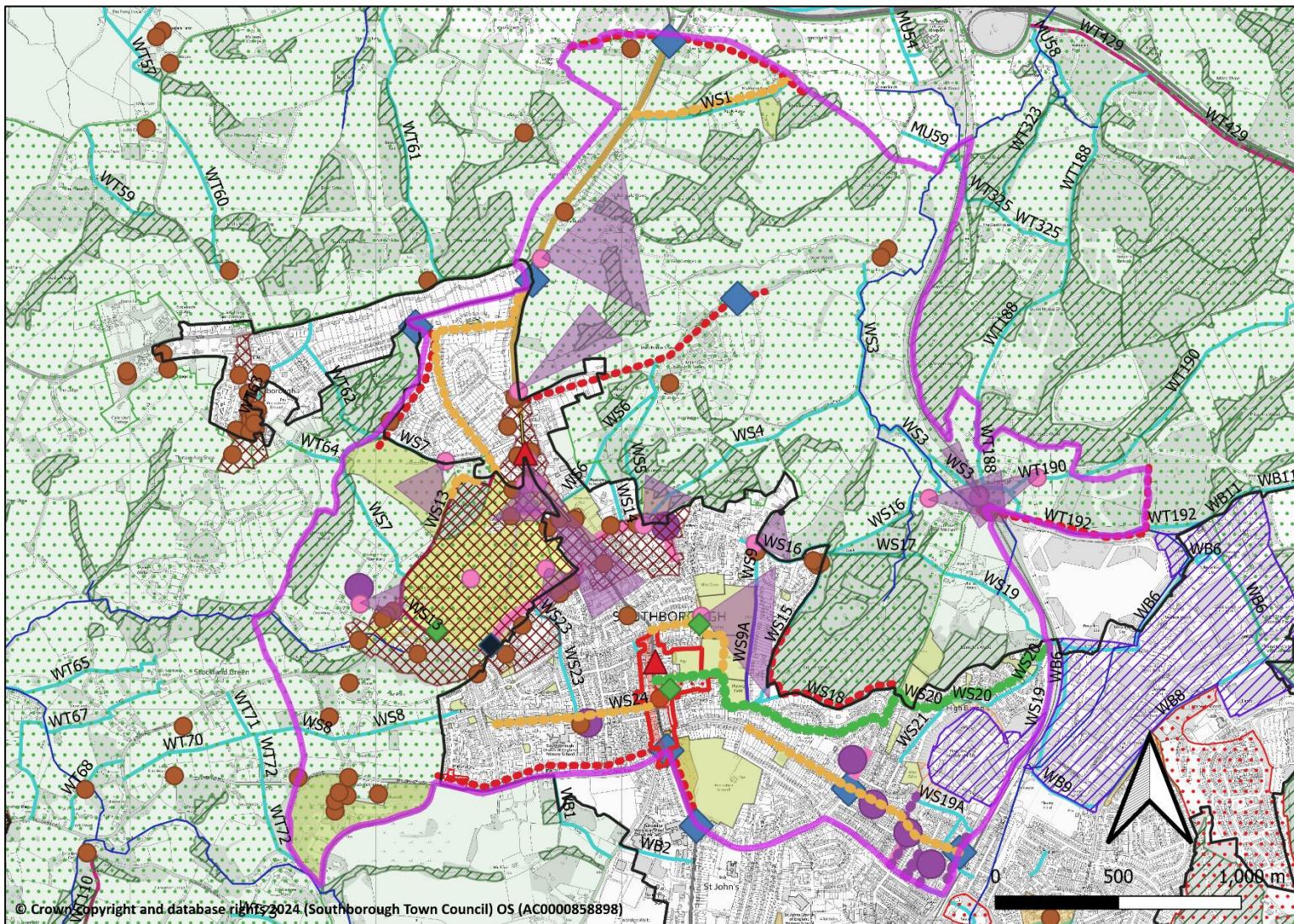


Figure 18: Policies Map – centre/north

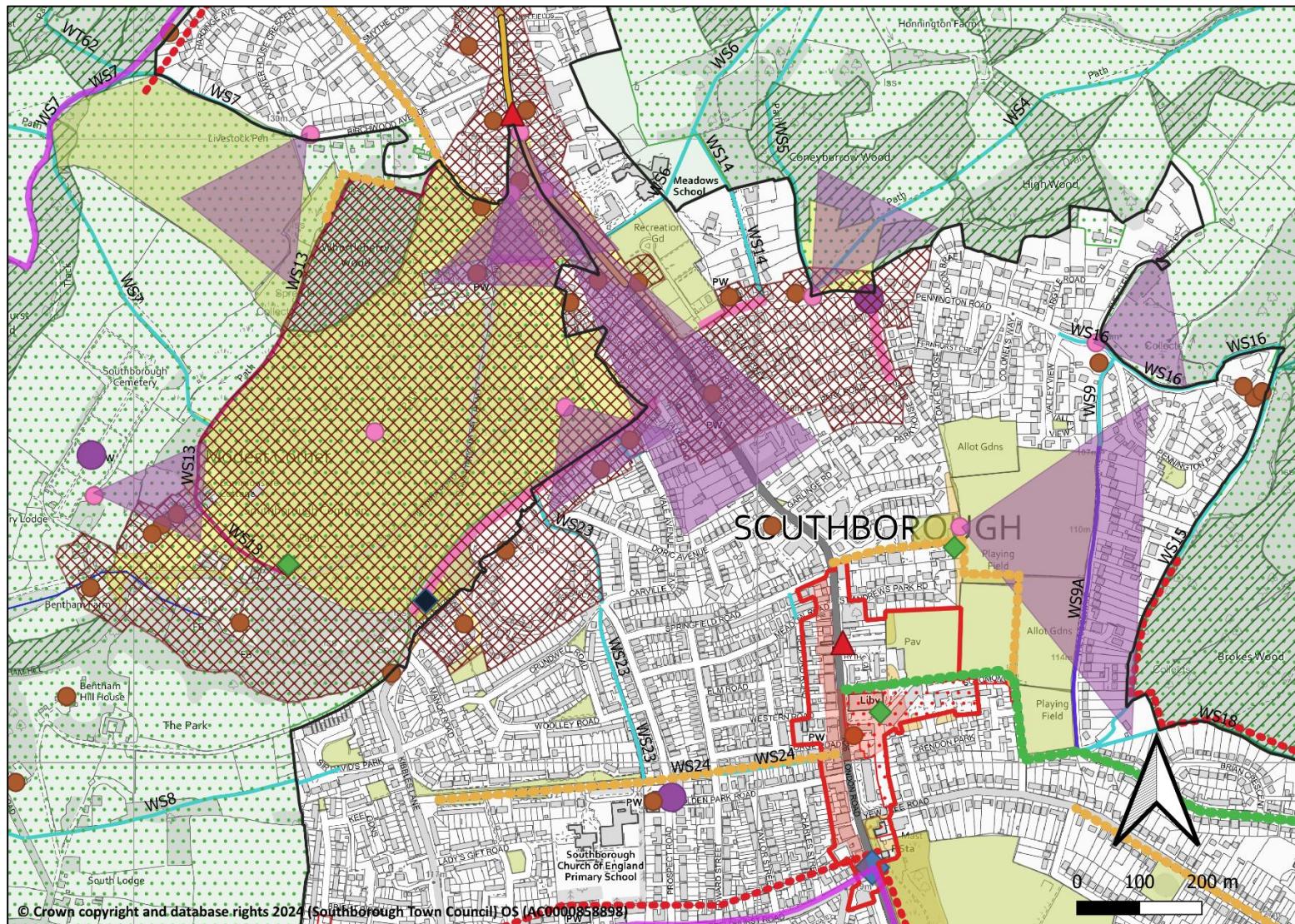


Figure 19: Policies Map – south-east

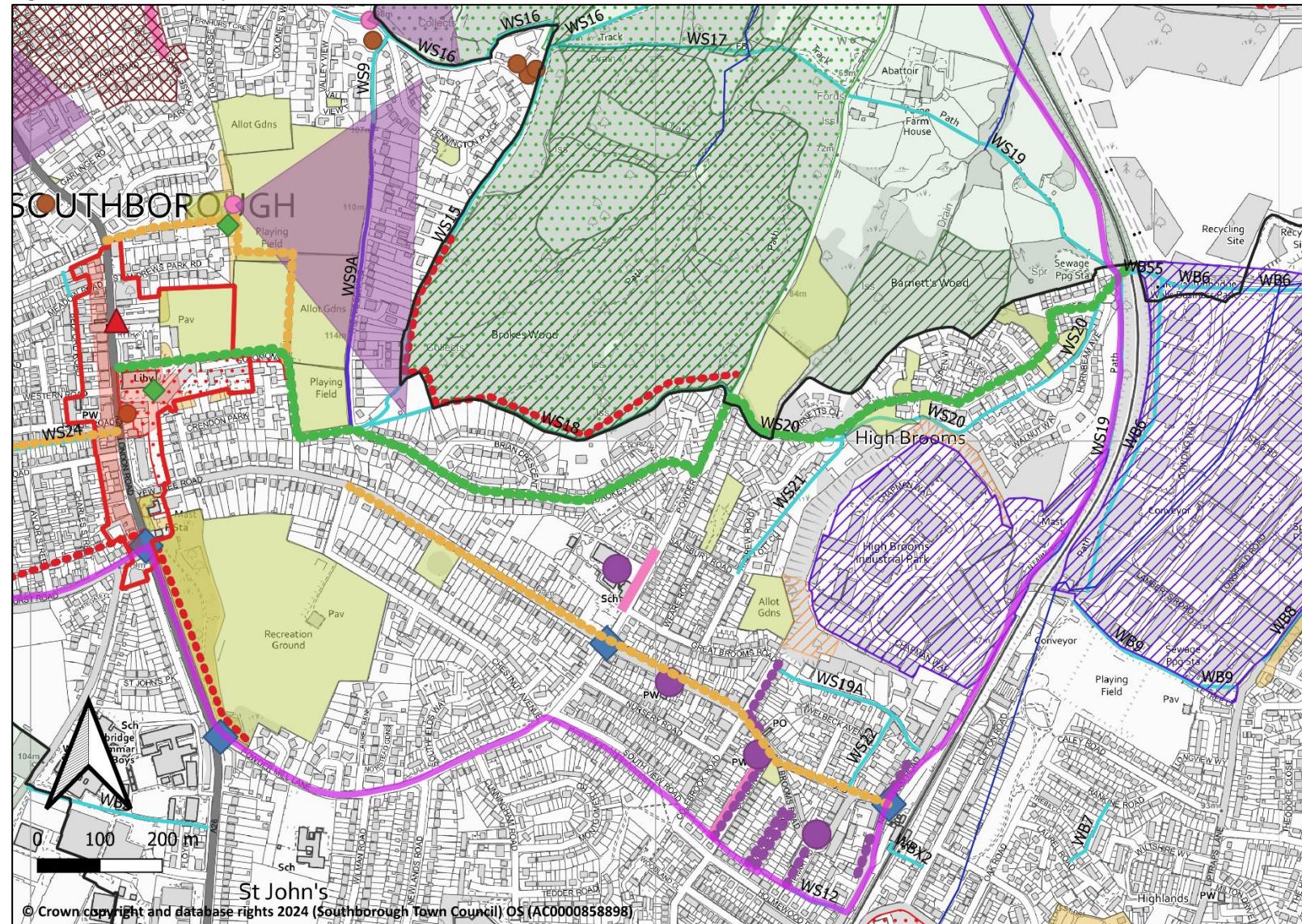


Figure 20: Policies Map - north east

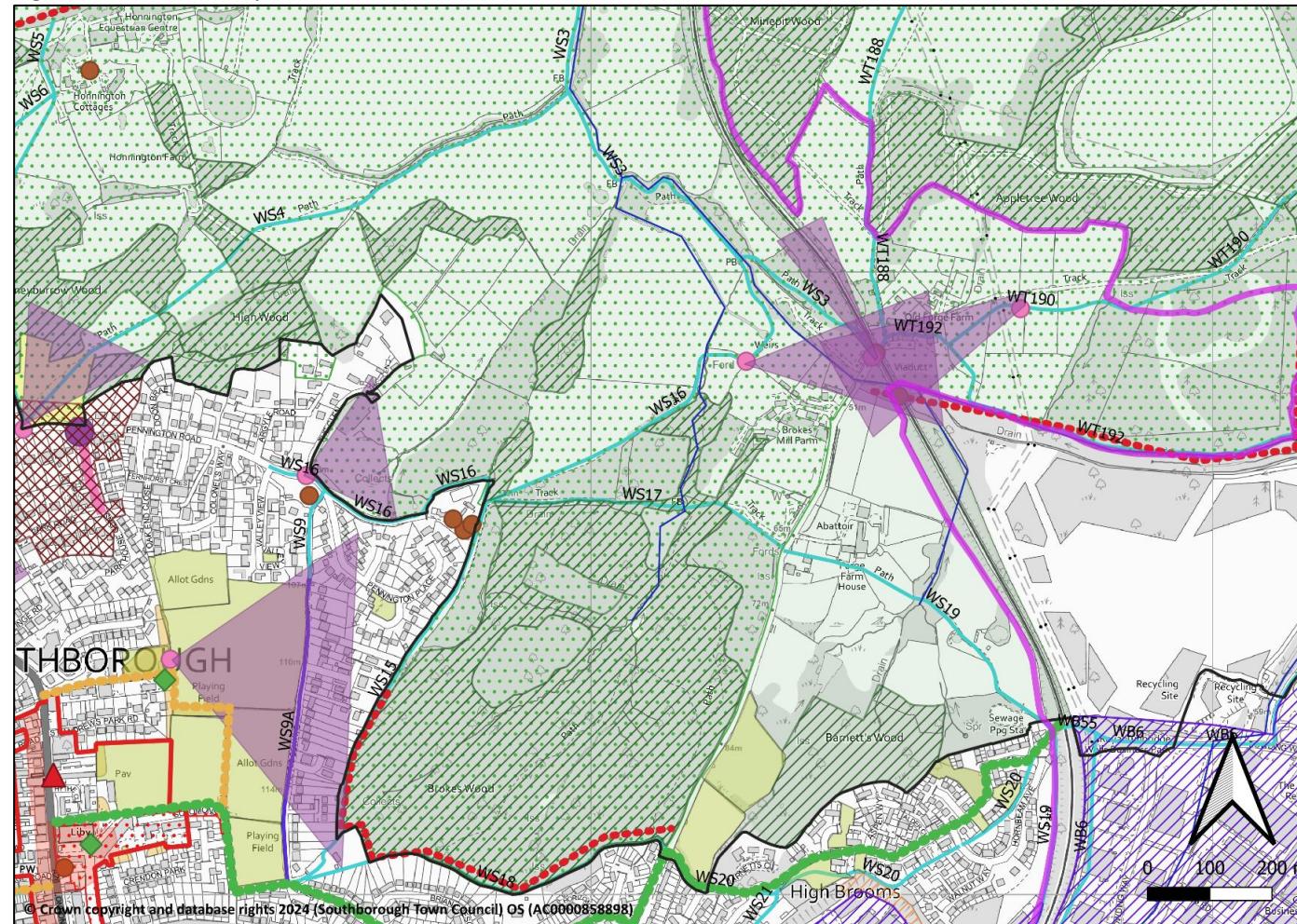


Figure 21: Policies Map - north

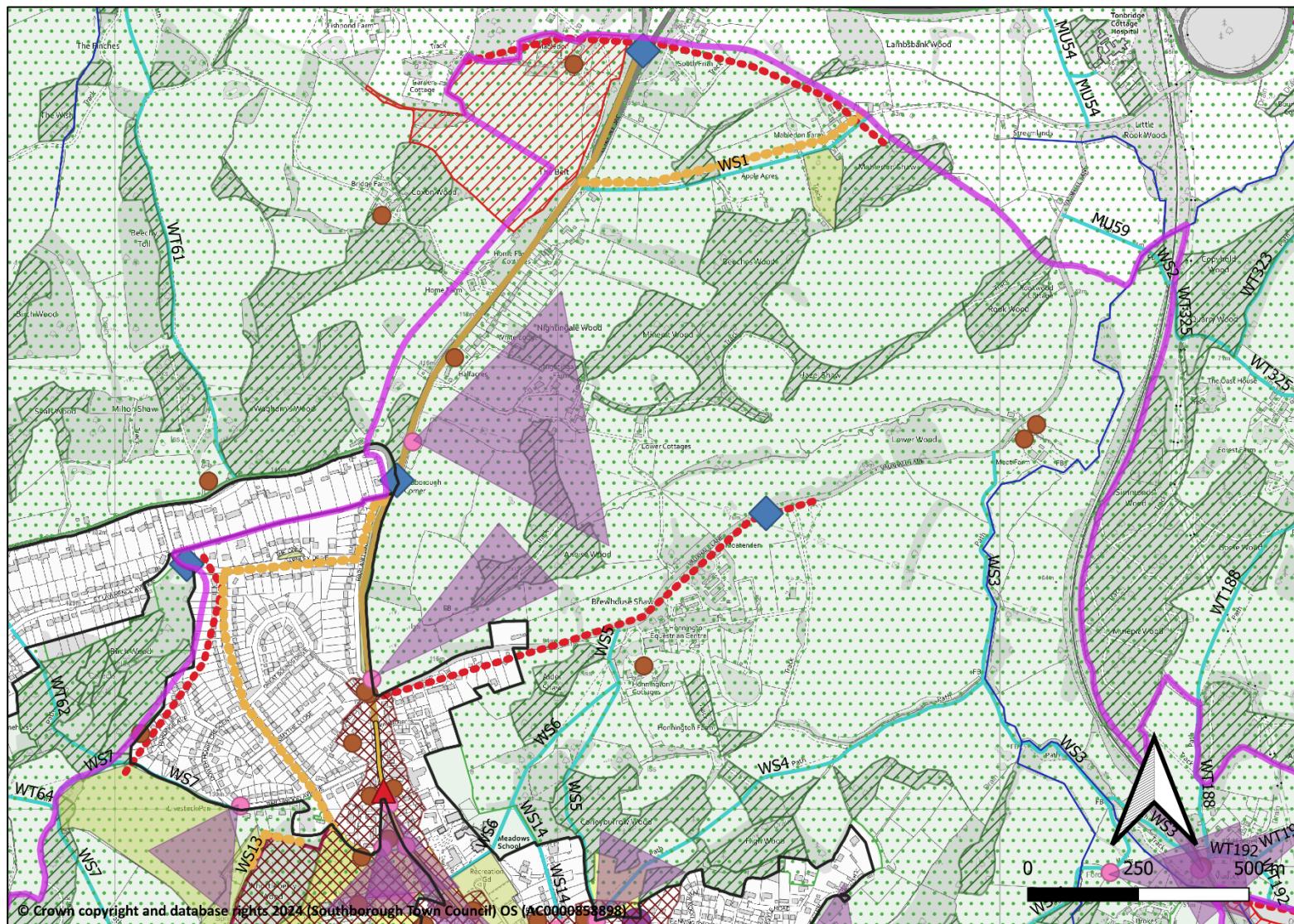


Figure 22: Policies Map - centre

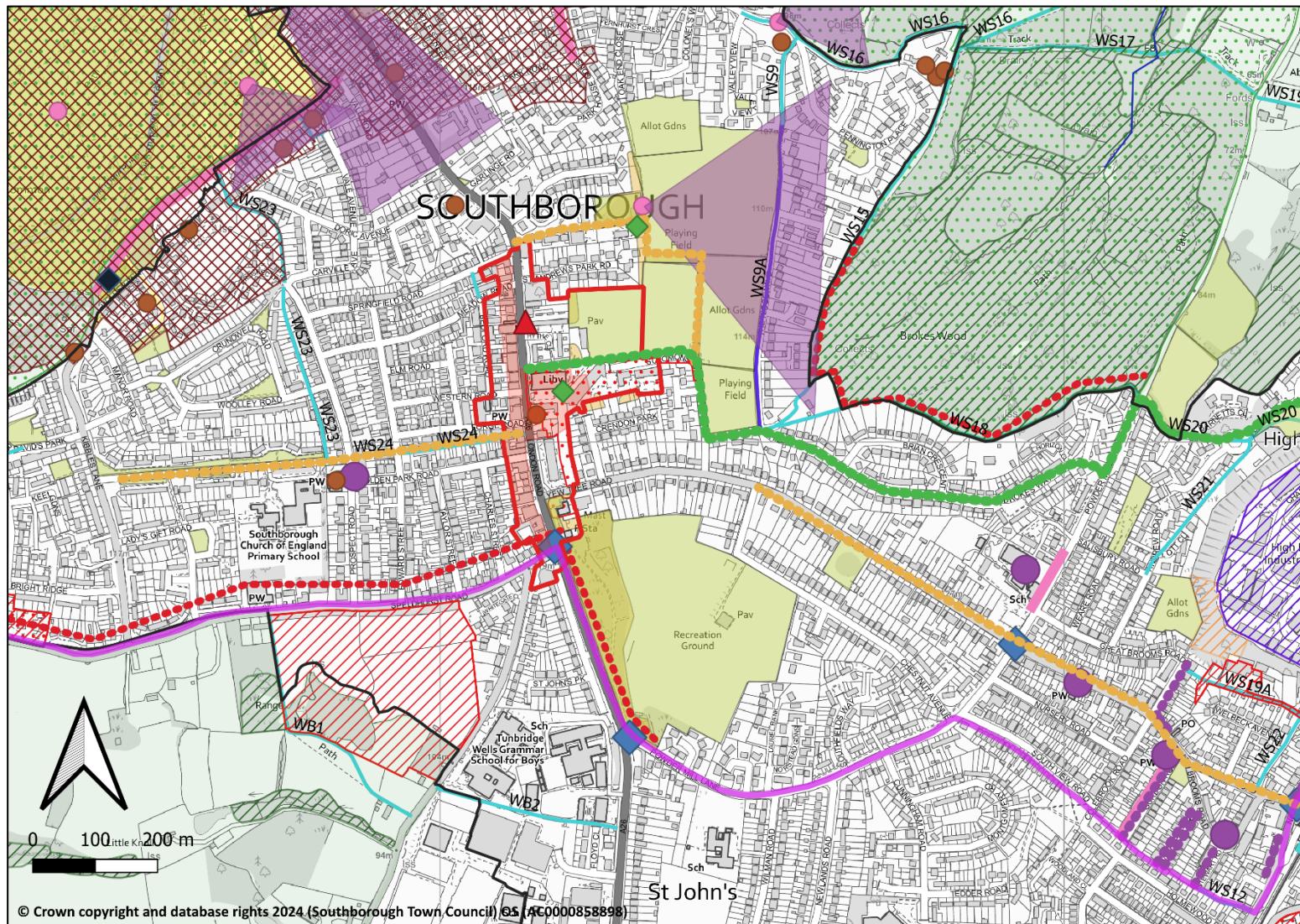
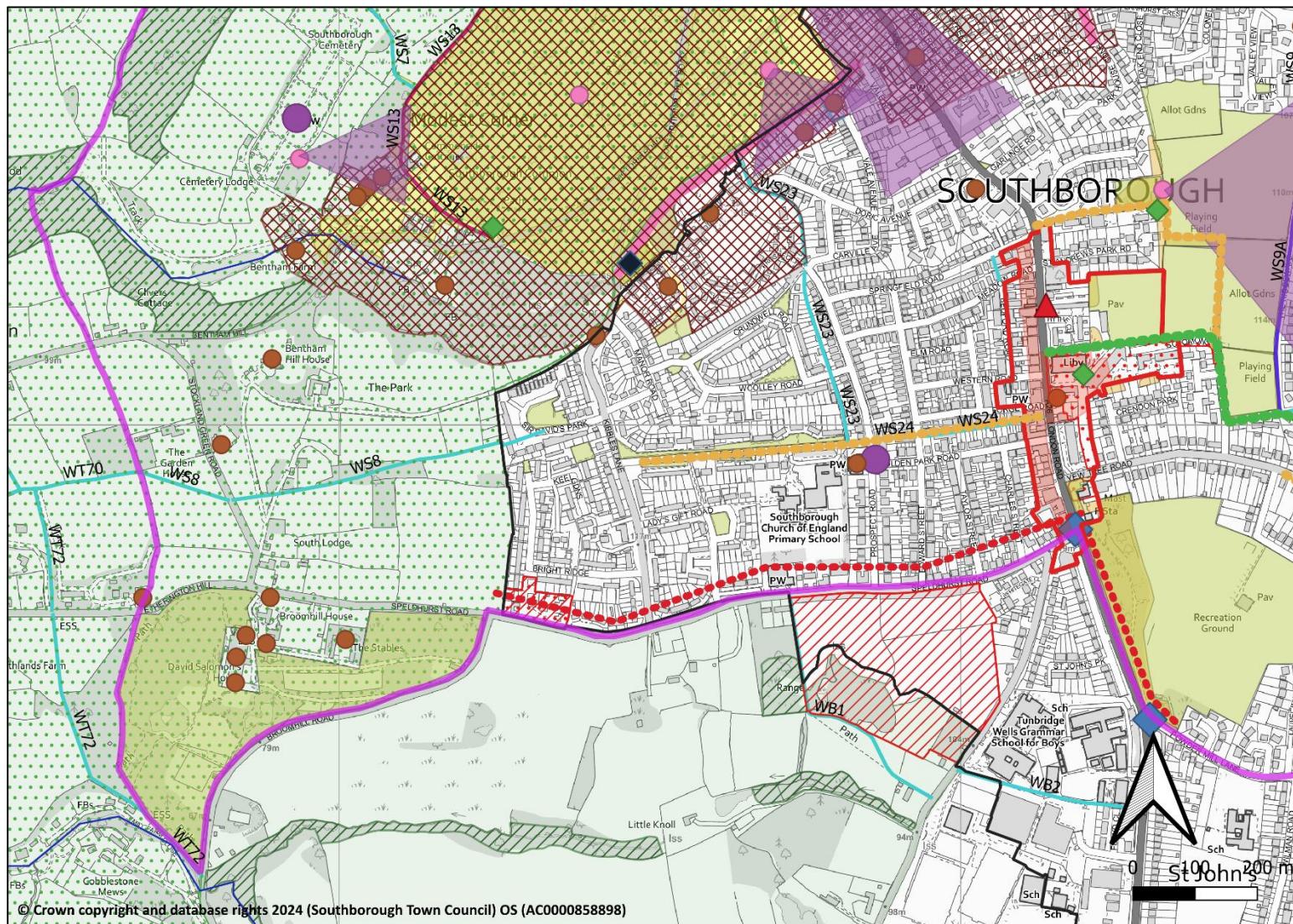


Figure 23: Policies Map - south west



15. GLOSSARY

- **Active travel:** as defined in the Kent Active Travel Strategy: Active Travel means walking or cycling as a means of transport, in order to get to a particular destination such as work, the shops or to visit friends. It does not cover walking and cycling done purely for pleasure, for health reasons, or simply walking the dog (Welsh Government (2014) Active Travel: Walking and Cycling www.gov.uk/government/statistics/active-travel-financial-year-ending-march-2015)
- **Affordable housing:** housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:
 - a) Social Rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent; (b) the landlord is a registered provider; and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.
 - b) Other affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
 - c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
 - d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.
- **Ancient or veteran tree/tree of arboricultural value:** A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.
- **Ancient woodland:** An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).
- **Archaeological interest:** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- **Blue infrastructure:** Blue infrastructure refers to water elements, like rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands, floodplains, water treatment facilities, etc. Green infrastructure refers to trees, lawns, hedgerows, parks, fields, forests, etc. These terms come from urban planning and land-use planning.
- **Brownfield land registers:** Registers of previously developed land that local planning authorities consider to be appropriate for residential development, having regard to criteria in the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Registers) Regulations 2017. Local planning authorities

will be able to trigger a grant of permission in principle for residential development on suitable sites in their registers where they follow the required procedures.

- **Change of Use:** A change in the way that land or buildings are used (see Use Classes Order). Planning permission is usually necessary to change a "use class".
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** a fixed, non-negotiable contribution that must be made by new development. It is chargeable on each net additional square metre of development built and would be set, once adopted, by TWBC.
- **Conservation area:** an area of notable environmental or historical interest or importance which is protected by law against undesirable changes.
- **Creative Tunbridge Wells (CTW):** CTW is a strategic partnership including TWBC, KCC, Applause Rural Touring, Royal Tunbridge Wells Together (BID) and The Forum which have recently prepared a Creative Economy Strategy for Tunbridge Wells borough. CTW has formed a Southborough Working Group including representation from STC to explore opportunities for future cultural and creative activity in the neighbourhood area.
- **Designated heritage asset:** A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation
- **Disability:** There is no single definition for 'disability'. Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is defined as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.
- **Green infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- **Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
- **Kent County Council:** The county-wide authority has responsibility for strategic matters including waste and minerals planning, maintaining the public rights of way network, education, libraries and roads.
- **Limits to built development (LBD):** These identify the areas of primarily built form, rather than countryside. They identify areas within which development of brownfield land may normally be appropriate, including infilling, redevelopment and conversions in accordance with Government Policy and Guidance (NPPF and NPPG). They do not include a presumption for the development of greenfield land such as playing fields and other open space. Identified built-up area boundaries do not necessarily include all existing developed areas. The SLP does not seek to amend the current LBD for the neighbourhood area.
- **Local connection:** For the purposes of allocating affordable homes, housing shall be occupied in accordance with the [Borough Council's standard allocation procedures](#) with priority given to applicants who can demonstrate that they have a local connection to the parish of Southborough at the time of occupation.
- **Local housing need:** The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance.
- **Local Plan** - Local Plans set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as a basis for safeguarding the environment, adapting to climate change and securing good design for the area they cover. They are a critical tool in guiding decisions about individual development proposals, as Local Plans (together with any Neighbourhood Development Plans that have been made) are the starting-point for considering

whether applications can be approved. It is important for all areas to put an up to date Local Plan in place to positively guide development decisions.

- **Major Development:** For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** the national planning policy document which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- **Nature Recovery Network:** An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife-rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats as well as and landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats.
- **Non-strategic policies:** Policies contained in a neighbourhood plan, or those policies in a local plan that are not strategic policies.
- **Older people:** People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.
- **Permitted development:** Permitted development rights are an automatic grant of planning permission which allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. Most houses have permitted development rights, but flats and maisonettes do not, so planning permission is required. A further example is the conversion of offices, for instance to flats, without the need for planning permission.
- **Previously developed land/ brownfield land:** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.
- **Public Rights of Way (PRoW):** Public rights of way are paths or routes that the public has a legal right to use. Kent County Council manages public rights of way to ensure they are accessible, safe, and well-maintained. They provide essential routes for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders, ensuring that people can move freely and safely.
- **Section 106 agreement:** A mechanism under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which makes a development proposal acceptable in planning terms that would not otherwise be acceptable.
- **SMEs (Small to medium-sized enterprises):** The UK definition of SME is generally a small or medium-sized enterprise with fewer than 250 employees. While the SME meaning defined by the EU is also business with fewer than 250 employees, and a turnover of less than €50 million, or a balance sheet total of less than €43 million. Within this umbrella there are three different categories: medium-sized, small, and micro-businesses. These categories are defined by turnover and number of employees.
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):** Supplementary Planning Documents may cover a range of issues, both topic and site specific, which may expand policy or provide further detail to policies contained in a Development Plan Document, where they can help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery.
- **Use Classes Order:** The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (As amended in 1995, 2005 and 2013) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories. Planning permission is not needed for changes of use within the same use class.

16. LIST OF EVIDENCE AND OTHER USEFUL DOCUMENTS

Document/ Evidence	Author	Year
20-Minute Neighbourhoods	Town and Country Planning Association	ongoing
Urban Air Quality	Woodland Trust	2012
Ancient tree guide 4: What are ancient, veteran and other trees of special interest?	The Woodland Trust	2008
Brownfield Register	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	updated annually
Building for a Healthy Life 2020	BHL	2020
Climate Change Act 2008	HM Government	2008
Countryside and Rights of Way Act	HM Government	2000
Creative Industries Bulletin (2024)	Kent County Council	2024
Defra Biodiversity Metric Guidance	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and Natural England	2021
Dementia and town planning: Creating better environments for people living with dementia	Royal Town Planning Institute	2020
Environment Act 2021	HM Government	2021
Examination of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Hearing Statement - Matter 13: Landscape, Local Green Space and Open Space, Sport and Recreation (Policies STR8, EN8, EN15, EN16, EN17, EN18, EN19, OSSR1 and OSSR2) Issue 1: Landscape within the Built Environment Issue 2: Arcadian Areas	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2022
Farmsteads Assessment Guidance for Tunbridge Wells Borough	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2016
Framing Kent's Future strategy (2022-2026)	Kent County Council	2022
Good Practice Guidance for Habitats and Species	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management	2021

<u>Green Infrastructure Framework for Draft Local Plan</u>	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2019
<u>Guidance Note 1: The reduction of obtrusive light</u>	Institution of Lighting Professionals	2021
<u>Guidance Note 8: Bats and Artificial Lighting</u>	Institution of Lighting Professionals	2023
<u>Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development</u>	High Weald National Landscape Joint Advisory Committee	2017
<u>High Weald - Detailed Statements of Environmental Opportunity</u>	Natural England	No date
<u>High Weald Housing Design Guide</u>	High Weald National Landscape Joint Advisory Committee	2019
<u>High Weald Management Plan 2024 to 2029</u>	High Weald National Landscape Unit	2024
<u>Historic Environment Record</u>	Kent County Council	ongoing
<u>Historic Environment Review – Part One Tunbridge Wells Borough Council</u>	Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners	2018
<u>Historic Landscape Characterisation for Southborough</u>	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, High Weald National Landscape Unit, Kent County Council	2016
<u>Housing Register Allocations Policy (for Tunbridge Wells Borough)</u>	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2016
<u>Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI)</u>	Communities and Local Government, Department of Health, Homes and Communities Agency	2009
<u>Inspirational creativity: transforming lives every day: our cultural ambition for Kent</u>	Kent County Council	no date
<u>Kent Design Guide</u>	Kent County Council	2000 (currently being updated)
<u>Kent Farmsteads Guidance</u>	Kent County Council	2012
<u>Kent Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan</u>	Kent County Council	2023
<u>Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30</u>	Kent County Council	2016 (modified 2020)

<u>Kent Rights of Way Improvement Plan</u>	Kent County Council	2018
<u>List of Local Heritage Assets: Nomination Form</u>	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	No date
<u>Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock 2016 to 2031</u>	Kent County Council	2016
<u>Localism Act 2011</u>	HM Government	2011
<u>Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage Historic England Advice Note 7 (Second Edition)</u>	Historic England	2021
<u>Making local green space designations in your neighbourhood plan</u>	Locality	2021
<u>National Design Guide</u>	HM Government	2019
<u>National Model Design Guide</u>	HM Government	2021
<u>National Planning Policy Framework</u>	HM Government	2023
<u>Neighbourhood Development Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended)</u>	HM Government	2012
<u>Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004</u>	HM Government	2004
<u>Planners' Manual for Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees</u>	Woodland Trust	2019
<u>Red List Birds of the UK</u>	RSPB	No date
<u>Routeways in the High Weald - A guide to their historic function, character and significance</u>	Jeremy Lake and Nicola Bannister	2021
<u>Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Document</u>	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1998
<u>Saved policies of the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan 2006</u>	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2006
<u>Secured by Design</u>	Secured by Design Partnership	Ongoing

<u>Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Strategic Housing Market Assessment</u>	G L Hearn	2015
<u>Southborough Common Report</u>	Dr Nicola R. Bannister ACIfA	2018
<u>Southborough Conservation Area Appraisal</u>	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2003
<u>Southborough Environmental Policy</u>	Southborough Town Council	2021
<u>Southborough Housing Needs Assessment</u>	AECOM	2024
<u>Streets for All: South East</u>	Historic England	2018
<u>Ten Dark Sky Policies for the Government</u>	Government All Party Parliamentary Group for Dark Skies	2021
<u>Town & Country Planning Act 1990</u>	HM Government	1990
<u>Tunbridge Wells Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2017</u>	LUC	2017
<u>Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy 2010</u>	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2010
<u>Tunbridge Wells Site Allocation Local Plan 2016</u>	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2016
<u>Viability Assessment of Biodiversity Net Gain in Kent</u>	Kent County Council	2022

APPENDIX A – SOUTHBOROUGH AND HIGH BROOMS DESIGN GUIDANCE AND CODES

The Design Guidelines and Codes for Southborough and High Brooms forms an integral part of the Southborough and High Brooms Neighbourhood Development Plan, underpinning a number of the policies.

The document can be accessed on the [Neighbourhood Plan website](#):

APPENDIX B – NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

The following buildings and structures are identified as non-designated heritage assets. Evidence as to why each is considered to be significant locally is provided, based on the information required by TWBC to inform nominations to their Local List.

The non-designated heritage assets have been identified by the Steering Group in consultation with the Southborough Society and following engagement with the community. The TWBC proforma has been used to evaluate the heritage value of each.

1.	Building Name/or Structure type (if applicable)	1. FORMER BETHEL EVANGELICAL CHAPEL
2.	Property Address/location	High Brooms Road, High Brooms, Southborough
3.	Local Heritage Asset Type e.g. building (private/public), street furniture etc.	Originally used as a church but the last worshipping community ceased using the building over 20 years ago. the Bethel trust's charitable status contains a number of very restrictive covenants which mean the buildings only permitted use is for religious services and the proclamation of the gospel. The buildings public use is therefore severely limited by these covenants and it cannot let as a hall for public use. The current use as a food larder was a temporary response to the growth in extreme food poverty during the covid crisis and strictly speaking falls outside of the permitted use of the building. The trustees are currently in consultation with the Charities Commission about the future of the trust and the building as there is no likelihood of religious worship resuming in the building.
4.	Age of Property/Structure (approx.)	1898
5.	Is the property occupied?	Used for weekly Community Larder
6.	Ownership details (if known)	The Bethel Trust
7.	Description of the building or asset	Brick-built single storey
8a.	Architectural Significance	Late Victorian gothic
8b	Historic Interest	Originally a Wesleyan Chapel until 1937.

8c	Social and Economic Significance	First religious building in High Brooms
8d	Townscape Significance	Located on main road from Southborough amongst 19 th and early 20 th century houses
9.	Photograph	

1.	Building Name/or Structure type (if applicable)	2. ST MATTHEWS C OF E CHURCH
2.	Property Address/location	High Brooms Road, High Brooms, Southborough
3.	Local Heritage Asset Type e.g. building (private/public), street furniture etc.	Public
4.	Age of Property/Structure (approx.)	1902
5.	Is the property occupied?	Yes

6.	Ownership details (if known)	Church of England
7.	Description of the building or asset	Parish Church brick- built.
8a.	Architectural Significance	A wide single nave
8b	Historic Interest	Contains large memorial board with names of 1 officer (the only son of Sir David Salomons) and 127 men of the Royal Engineers, many from Southborough and High Brooms. drowned in the Hythe Disaster near Gallipoli 28 October 1915
8c	Social and Economic Significance	The parish church of High Brooms, a centre for community activities
8d	Townscape Significance	Imposing presence at the top of the steep hill leading down to High Brooms station.
9.	Photograph	

1.	Building Name/or Structure type (if applicable)	3. ST MATTHEW'S C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL
2.	Property Address/location	Powder Mill Lane, High Brooms, Southborough
3.	Local Heritage Asset Type e.g. building (private/public), street furniture etc.	Public building

4.	Age of Property/Structure (approx.)	1903
5.	Is the property occupied?	Yes
6.	Ownership details (if known)	Kent County Council
7.	Description of the building or asset	Original brick school, with later extensions
8a.	Architectural Significance	Original classrooms and school office, opened for the School Board of Southborough.
8b	Historic Interest	Replaced temporary facilities for boys (who previously had been in the National School in Great Brooms Road) in High Brooms Road. It became fully integrated in 1990 when the girls' school closed. The present school site includes an underground air raid shelter from World War II, often open on Heritage Weekends.
8c	Social and Economic Significance	As well as serving the primary education needs of High Brooms children, the school offers facilities for the local community.
8d	Townscape Significance	The school occupies a prominent site at the junction of Yew Tree Road and Powder Mill Lane.
9.	Photograph	

1.	Building Name/or Structure type (if applicable)	4. THE BRICK WORKS FREEHOUSE
2.	Property Address/location	High Brooms Road, High Brooms, Southborough
3.	Local Heritage Asset Type e.g. building (private/public), street furniture etc.	Licensed public house with rooms
4.	Age of Property/Structure (approx.)	1891-1899 on frontage.
5.	Is the property occupied?	Yes
6.	Ownership details (if known)	Anylastorders Ltd, trading as The Brick Works
7.	Description of the building or asset	Large brick-built, with external covered terrace and square tower with decorative plasterwork to front of gable.
8a.	Architectural Significance	Largely unaltered Late- Victorian public house with original bar, fireplaces and first and second floor rooms. Dragon finial on gable.
8b	Historic Interest	Said to date from about 1860, but rebuilt in 1890s as a hotel to serve the needs of the fast growing community following the establishment of the High Brooms Brick Company in 1885.
8c	Social and Economic Significance	The only Public House in High Brooms, providing a range of social and leisure activities
8d	Townscape Significance	Occupies a prominent corner site

9.	Photograph	
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1.	Building Name/or Structure type (if applicable)	5. 59-81 COLEBROOK ROAD
2.	Property Address/location	59-81 Colebrook Road, High Brooms, Southborough
3.	Local Heritage Asset Type e.g. building (private/public), street furniture etc.	Private houses
4.	Age of Property/Structure (approx.)	1885, recorded on wall plaques (see photo below)
5.	Is the property occupied?	Yes
6.	Ownership details (if known)	Privately owned
7.	Description of the building or asset	Pairs of brick houses with local feature of ornamental fascias to gable and porches.

8a.	Architectural Significance	First houses built by High Brooms Brick and Tile Company (HBBC) using particular architectural features
8b	Historic Interest	The HBBC was founded in 1885 and operated until 1968 to exploit a local source of clay in what is now the High Brooms Industrial Park. Much of the housing in the lower end of High Brooms was for the Company's workforce.
8c	Social and Economic Significance	These houses were explicitly for the HBBC's workers. In this road probably for senior grades.
8d	Townscape Significance	These houses were the forerunners of many incorporating similar design features.

9.	Photograph (s) and Map	 
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1.	Building Name/or Structure type (if applicable)	6. 1-31 GORDON ROAD
2.	Property Address/location	1-31 Gordon Road, High Brooms, Southborough
3.	Local Heritage Asset Type e.g. building (private/public), street furniture etc.	Privately-owned houses
4.	Age of Property/Structure (approx.)	Late 1880s
5.	Is the property occupied?	Yes
6.	Ownership details (if known)	Individual private owners
7.	Description of the building or asset	Street of brick-built semi-detached and terraced houses.
8a.	Architectural Significance	Semi-detached houses feature decorative facias to gables and porches, ornamental finials and dentil courses, and particularly stucco images of leading persons involved in the Siege of Khartoum. These were produced by craftsmen at the HBBC. Numbers 17/19 have an image of General George Gordon.
8b	Historic Interest	In late 1884 the Gordon Relief Expedition commanded by General Garnet Wolseley attempted to rescue General Gordon who was besieged in Khartoum by a Moslem army. The Expedition arrived too late to prevent the massacre of Gordon, his garrison and 4000 local residents.
8c	Social and Economic Significance	These houses were built by the High Brooms Brick and Tile Company for its employees.
8d	Townscape Significance	The ensemble forms a striking collection of HBBC workmanship.

9.	Photograph	
		 A photograph showing the exterior of a two-story red brick terraced house. The house features decorative black brickwork around the windows and a decorative chimney. A wrought-iron lamp post is visible in the foreground. A car with the license plate 'BN60 WYA' is parked in front of the house. The sky is blue with some white clouds.
		 A close-up photograph of the brickwork on the side of the house. The brickwork is a mix of red and orange colors. A decorative plaque is mounted on the wall, featuring a crest and the letters 'HOB' and 'B.C'. The house has a tiled roof with white decorative trim around the windows.

1.	Building Name/or Structure type (if applicable)	7. 66-68 HIGH BROOMS ROAD (HOUSES)
2.	Property Address/location	66-68 High Brooms Road, High Brooms, Southborough
3.	Local Heritage Asset Type e.g. building (private/public), street furniture etc.	Private Houses
4.	Age of Property/Structure (approx.)	Late 19 th century
5.	Is the property occupied?	Yes
6.	Ownership details (if known)	Private ownership
7.	Description of the building or asset	Brick built residential, left-hand house with HBBC plaque "High Brooms Road"
8a.	Architectural Significance	Distinctive dormer windows
8b	Historic Interest	Part of housing built for employees of High Brooms Brick and Tile Company (HBBC)
8c	Social and Economic Significance	As for 8b
8d	Townscape Significance	Variation of building style

9.	Photograph	
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1.	Building Name/or Structure type (if applicable)	8. 3-25 STEWART ROAD (TERRACED HOUSES)
2.	Property Address/location	3-25 Stewart Road, High Brooms, Southborough
3.	Local Heritage Asset Type e.g. building (private/public), street furniture etc.	Privately-owned houses
4.	Age of Property/Structure (approx.)	Early 1900s
5.	Is the property occupied?	Yes
6.	Ownership details (if known)	Separate private ownerships
7.	Description of the building or asset	Two rows of brick-built terraced houses

8a.	Architectural Significance	Decorative porches
8b	Historic Interest	The third of streets commemorating the Gordon Relief Expedition in the Sudan 1884-85. Brigadier Sir Herbert Stewart, one of its commanders, was wounded in action and later died after being promoted to Major-General
8c	Social and Economic Significance	Further examples of housing for employees of the High Brooms Tile and Brick Company
8d	Townscape Significance	Prominent on the bend off the steep ascent up High Brooms Road
9.	Photograph	

1.	Building Name/or Structure type (if applicable)	9. 4-14 NORTH FARM ROAD (ROW OF HOUSES)
2.	Property Address/location	4-14 North Farm Road, High Brooms, Southborough
3.	Local Heritage Asset Type e.g. building (private/public), street furniture etc.	Privately-owned residential buildings

4.	Age of Property/Structure (approx.)	Late Victorian
5.	Is the property occupied?	Yes
6.	Ownership details (if known)	Individual private owners
7.	Description of the building or asset	2 to 3 storey brick-built semi-detached houses
8a.	Architectural Significance	Notable finials of stork and mythical beast, reportedly made by an HBBC craftsman in his spare time. Several plaques including one of Disraeli.
8b	Historic Interest	These were the nearest buildings to the entrance to the High Brooms Brick and Tile Company's works
8c	Social and Economic Significance	These houses were probably intended for senior management of the brick company
8d	Townscape Significance	Very prominent on hill above North Farm Road
9.	Photograph	

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1.	Building Name/or Structure type (if applicable)	10.32-38 NORTH FARM ROAD (TERRACE OF FOUR EDWARDIAN HOUSES)
2.	Property Address/location	32-38 North Farm Road, High Brooms, Southborough
3.	Local Heritage Asset Type e.g. building (private/public), street furniture etc.	Privately-owned houses
4.	Age of Property/Structure (approx.)	Early 1900s
5.	Is the property occupied?	Yes
6.	Ownership details (if known)	Individual private owners
7.	Description of the building or asset	Substantial brick-built houses on 3 floors
8a.	Architectural Significance	The frontage of these 4 houses features all of the characteristics of the High Brooms style; finials, decorative ridge tiles and fascias, tiled apex to gables, ornamental plaques, brick string course and distinctive porches.
8b	Historic Interest	Built by the High Brooms Brick and Tile Company (HBBC) for employees with large families
8c	Social and Economic Significance	Further evidence of the growth of the High Brooms community
8d	Townscape Significance	The first HBBC houses encountered coming on the main access from Tunbridge Wells into High Brooms.

9.	Photograph	
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1.	Building Name/or Structure type (if applicable)	11. PAIRS OF 3 AND 2 STOREY HOUSES, AND TERRACE
2.	Property Address/location	North side 1-3, 9-11, 17-19, 25-35 and 18-32 south side Wolseley Road, High Brooms, Southborough
3.	Local Heritage Asset Type e.g. building (private/public), street furniture etc.	Privately- owned houses
4.	Age of Property/Structure (approx.)	1904 and 1907 (south side)
5.	Is the property occupied?	Yes
6.	Ownership details (if known)	Individual private owners
7.	Description of the building or asset	3 pairs of Brick-built houses on north side with 3 floors and short 2 floor terrace. 4 pairs of 2 floor houses on south side.

8a.	Architectural Significance	Larger houses have ornamental fascias to roof and porch. All houses have decorative plaques.
8b	Historic Interest	This road is the middle of 3 commemorating the Gordon Relief Expedition in the Sudan 1884-85. Sir Garnet Wolseley was the very senior commanding general.
8c	Social and Economic Significance	Further houses built by the High Brooms Brick and Tile Company for its expanding workforce.
9.	Photograph	

1.	Building Name/or Structure type (if applicable)	12. SOUTHBOROUGH CEMETERY CHAPEL AND ENTRANCE GATES
2.	Property Address/location	Victoria Road. Southborough
3.	Local Heritage Asset Type e.g. building (private/public), street furniture etc.	Public building and street furniture
4.	Age of Property/Structure (approx.)	Chapel and Gates around 1905
5.	Is the property occupied?	No
6.	Ownership details (if known)	Southborough Town Council

7.	Description of the building or asset	Victorian style brick built funeral chapel with mortuary (disused) beneath. Iron gates painted white and black.
8a.	Architectural Significance	Late example of simple Victorian Gothic style
8b	Historic Interest	Land bought by Southborough Urban District Council in 1901 as site for its cemetery.
8c	Social and Economic Significance	Apart from St Peter's Church cemetery (now closed), the cemetery is the only public burial ground in the town. It is non-sectarian and has an area containing graves of the Traveller Community.
8d	Townscape Significance	Sited on the western edge of Southborough Common, on a hillside with views across to the hamlet of Modest Corner.
		

1.	Building Name/or Structure type (if applicable)	13.AND 14. POST BOXES IN SOUTHBOROUGH
2.	Property Address/location	12. 1 Corner of Prospect Road/ Holden Park Road 13. 2 Corner of Park Road/ Pennington Road
3.	Local Heritage Asset Type e.g. building (private/public), street furniture etc.	Royal Mail letter boxes.

4.	Age of Property/Structure (approx.)	Late Victorian.
5.	Is the property occupied?	N/A
6.	Ownership details (if known)	Royal Mail/Post Office
7.	Description of the building or asset	12. Free standing pillar box with VR in script. 13. Letter box mounted in wall with VR in capitals.
8a.	Architectural Significance	Rare examples of Victorian street furniture.
8b	Historic Interest	Last remaining letter boxes of this date in Southborough.
8c	Social and Economic Significance	Evidence of early ease of public access to postal service.
8d	Townscape Significance	Reminders of early facilities for residents.
9.	Photograph (s)	

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The following two tables provide detail on the older brick pavements in the area (in High Brooms and Southborough):

1.	Building Name/or Structure type (if applicable)	14. HIGH BROOMS BRICK PAVEMENTS
2.	Property Address/location	1 Gordon Road north side 2 St Matthews School boundary to Powder Mill Lane
3.	Local Heritage Asset Type e.g. building (private/public), street furniture etc.	Public pavements
4.	Age of Property/Structure (approx.)	Late Victorian/ Edwardian
5.	Is the property occupied?	N/A
6.	Ownership details (if known)	Kent County Council
7.	Description of the building or asset	Rectangular brick pavers
8a.	Architectural Significance	Distinctive pavers in shades of red
8b	Historic Interest	Last remaining original pavement tiles in High Brooms
8c	Social and Economic Significance	Those in Gordon Road reflect the quality of the houses and the status of their original occupants. Those outside the School would have been for the benefit of pupils and parents
8d	Townscape Significance	Noticeable difference with drab modern surface

9.	Photograph	
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1.	Building Name/or Structure type (if applicable)	14. SOUTHBOROUGH BRICK PAVEMENTS AND FOOTPATH
2.	Property Address/location	All in Southborough Conservation Area Holden Road, from Vale Road to Holden Pond Church Road, footpath leading to St Peter's Church Pennington Road, bordering St Thomas's Church Park Road, west side from Pennington Road to Park House Gardens
3.	Local Heritage Asset Type e.g. building (private/public), street furniture etc.	Public pavements
4.	Age of Property/Structure (approx.)	Late Victorian/ Edwardian
5.	Is the property occupied?	N/A
6.	Ownership details (if known)	Kent County Council

7.	Description of the building or asset	Rectangular red brick pavers
8a.	Architectural Significance	Located in the Conservation Area with its varied architecture, these brick pavers add to the use of traditional materials in the area
8b	Historic Interest	Although there are extensive lengths of modern brick paving along London Road, these four locations are the last remaining lengths of original paving.
8c	Social and Economic Significance	The paved footpath leading to St Peter's Church provided secure pedestrian access across a grassy area for residents attending services, and to the former School behind the church.
8d	Townscape Significance	These pavements blend into the townscape, in contrast with the dull tarmacked areas which have replaced them.
9.	Photograph	

Southborough and High Brooms Neighbourhood Development Plan
Submission Version



APPENDIX C – LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The list of Local Green Spaces (LGS) has been developed and tested following the Locality guidance [“Making local green space designations in your neighbourhood plan”](#).

Members of the Steering Group drew up a long list of potential green spaces. This included:

- Spaces that had previously been put forward as part of the Local Plan process for inclusion in the Local Plan
- Spaces identified from desk-top research and local walkabouts
- Spaces proposed by the community through the two surveys and local workshops.

A high-level review of the spaces was undertaken by the Steering Group. Some of the spaces were considered to be already adequately protected, while others were not felt to meet the strict LGS criteria, for instance where they are verges. Of the spaces proposed for designation, seven are included in the SLP. As the SLP has yet to be adopted, it was considered prudent to include them in the Neighbourhood Plan.

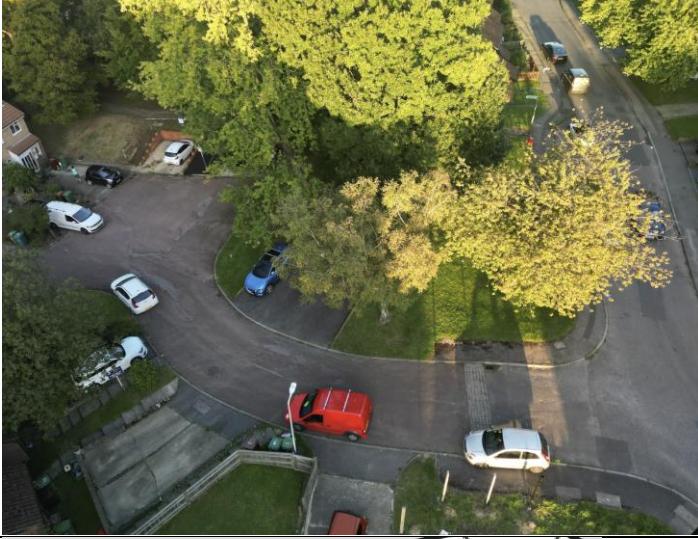
The tables below provide the justification for the Local Green Space designations. These use the methodology promoted by Locality to assess spaces.

Designations could be e.g. Site of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserve.

Local Green Spaces

LGS1: Blackthorn Avenue

Name, Address and location	Blackthorn Ave/Blackthorn Ave. Left of Entrance to Blackthorn Ave Blackthorn Avenue has a bifurcation about a fifth of the way along on the left, which is also designated as Blackthorn Ave, hence Blackthorn Ave/Blackthorn Ave.
Ownership details	Private ownership.
Description and purpose / current use	Green Space including Pathway to Barnett's Wood Nature Reserve
Any designations	Within setting of High Weald National Landscape plus northern edge is adjacent to Green Belt, Barnetts Wood Local Nature Reserve.
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	None. A Car Park has been placed here without permission, for 4/5 cars.
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Green Space giving access to Nature Reserve and Providing Established Trees and Shade and a Picturesque outlook for the Residents of the Blackthorn Ave Close.
Demonstrably Special?	Beauty: Giving a Rural Aspect to those living in an otherwise Urbanised Area.

Local in character?	Yes
Photos	
Location map	

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LGS2: Blackthorn Avenue Dog Park

Name, Address and location	Blackthorn Avenue Dog Park
Ownership details	TWBC
Description and purpose / current use	Open Space with large Tree and Bench
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No

Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Yes, located in residential area.
Demonstrably Special?	<p>Recreation: Dog Walkers frequently use the space. It is a local quiet space, where people often meet informally.</p> <p>Wildlife: There are a number of mature trees on the space, which provide important standalone habitats as well as contributing to the wider network of green space.</p>
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	
Location map	

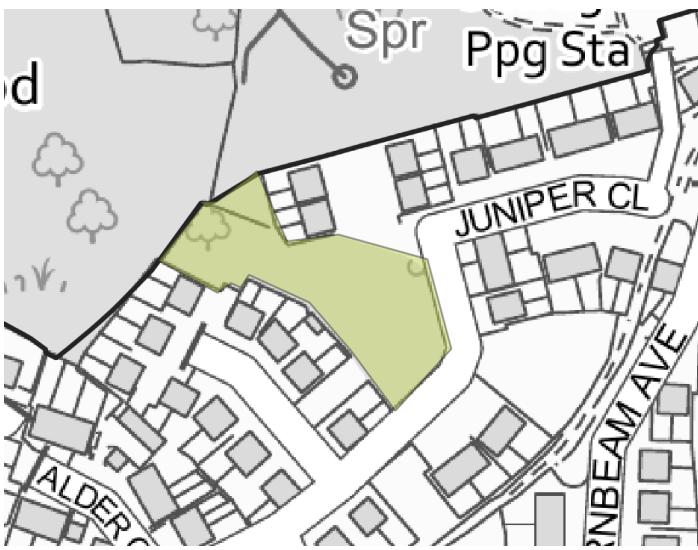
LGS3: Blackthorn Ave right

Address and location	Juniper Close end of Blackthorn Avenue.
Ownership details	TWBC.
Description and purpose / current use	A small cared for grassed area bordered with trees and shrubs.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The space is part of the overall original design of the estate here.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: This is a small, cared-for space that is nestled between houses. It is used by the local community, including children, for informal recreation as a safe space away from the road.
Local in character?	Yes.
Photo	

Location map	
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LGS4: Corner of Blackthorn Avenue and Juniper Close

Name, Address and location	Corner of Blackthorn Avenue and Juniper Close
Ownership details	TWBC (/Town and Country Housing Group)
Description and purpose / current use	Green Space area for local residents, shortcut across to Blackthorn Avenue, informal pathway across back of site. Access to grassed passageway to other local areas.
Any designations	Within setting of High Weald National Landscape plus northern edge adjacent to Green Belt, Ancient Woodland, Barnetts Wood Local Nature Reserve.
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	None
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Close to the local residential Community. Regular Dog Walking Area. Informal Nature Reserve. Children's informal play area. Dilapidated Children's Rustic Play Area.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: The space is used by residents for informal recreation and play space. There is potential to improve the play equipment at the space.
Local in character?	Yes

Photos	
Location map	

LSG5: Open space adjacent to TCHG flats and car park

Name, Address and location	Open space adjacent to TCHG flats and car park.
Ownership details	TCHG
Description and purpose / current use	A grassed area located adjacent to flats and a small residential car park. It is used by dog walkers and residents.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No

Planning permissions?	No.
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Adjacent to flats and local housing.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: The space is used for informal recreation for local people living nearby. The space formed part of the original design when the estate was built, to enable access to shared open green spaces.
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	
Location map	

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LGS6: Blackthorn Avenue entrance space

Name, Address and location	Right Hand Side Entrance to blackthorn Avenue adjacent to 32 Blackthorn Avenue.
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Ownership details	TWBC
Description and purpose / current use	Long deep grassed area with Well Established Trees and Shrubs with Access to Footpath towards North Farm.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The space is located within the residential area. There is a footpath providing access to the site. It is surrounded on three sides by houses. It is a popular space for dog walkers and informal and recreation space for local children and adults.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: This is an attractive, slightly wooded space that provides an area of greenery for informal recreation including for dog walking. Wildlife: The space comprises a number of trees, which provide an important habitat and connection to the wider green infrastructure network. Beauty: The space gives a rural feel to an otherwise built up area.
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	
Location map	

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LG7: Frank Weare Recreation Ground

Name, Address and location	Frank Weare Recreation Ground
Ownership details	STC.
Description and purpose / current use	Formal childrens' recreation ground with a play area.
Any designations	Open space in the TWBC Local Plan.
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Bounded by residential buildings on three sides and Weare Road.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: The space includes a secure play and recreational ground for children. It has a large array of play equipment and grassed areas for further informal recreation.
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	

Location map	
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LGS8: High Brooms Rest Gardens

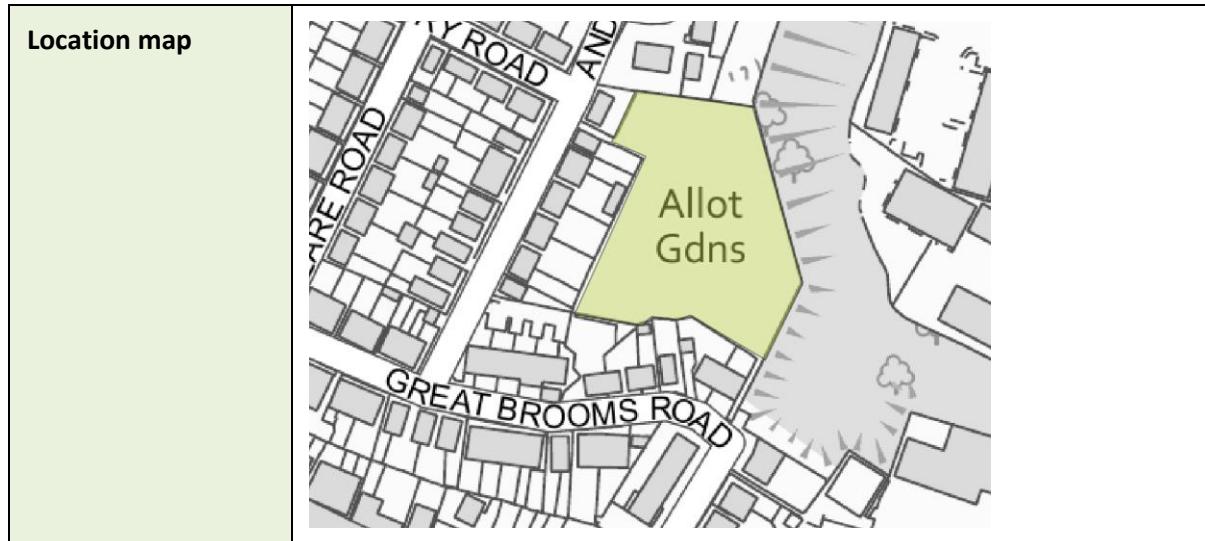
Name, Address and location	Garden of Rest, adjacent to St Matthews Church and on the Corner of High Brooms Road and Gordon Road.
Ownership details	STC.
Description and purpose / current use	Garden of Rest. Pleasant well-maintained garden and tranquil spot for local residents.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	N
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	This is a space that is well-used by local residents and their teenage and younger children for recreation. It offers a peaceful quiet place for local families and older residents.
Demonstrably Special?	Tranquillity: A beautifully kept garden with shrubs, trees and flower beds. Haven for wildlife.

	<p>Historic: The space was gifted by Frank Weare to the community as a place, as the time, for the brickmakers and their families for recreational use. It has maintained this role ever since.</p>
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	
Location map	

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LGS9: Barnett's Wood Allotments

Name, Address and location	Also known as High Brooms Allotments. Adjacent to 40 Andrew Road, behind Residential dwellings, enclosed on all sides.
Ownership details	TWBC.

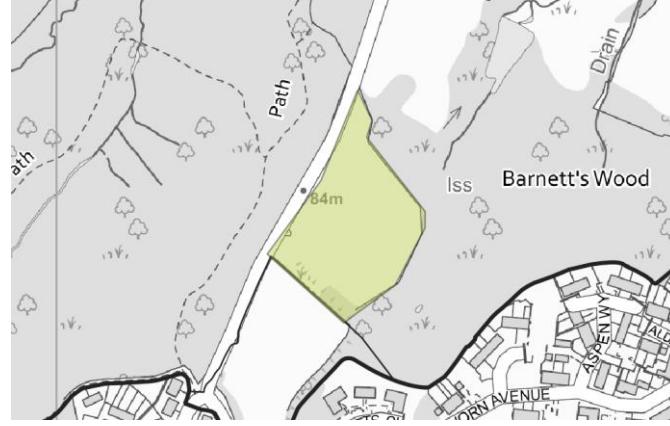
Description and purpose / current use	Allotments.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Access to the allotments is via Andrew Road and Great Brooms Road along a passageway between houses.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: The space has been used as allotments for some decades. Allotments provide important spaces for people to access land to grow their own plants and produce. They contribute positively to mental and physical health and well-being. Their important role is recognised in national policy. There are few allotments in this part of the neighbourhood area and for this reason, they should be safeguarded.
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	



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LGS10: The Piggery

Name, Address and location	The Piggery, Powdermill Lane
Ownership details	STC.
Description and purpose / current use	An area of open space that provides circular and diagonal walkways for dog and recreational walking/rambling.
Any designations	Located within the setting of High Weald National Landscape, Green Belt, adjacent to Brokes Wood (Ancient Woodland). The space is a Local Wildlife Site and located adjacent to Barnett's Wood Local Nature Reserve.
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Bounded on one side by Barnett's Wood Nature Reserve.
Demonstrably Special?	<p>Recreation: The space is used by local people for informal recreation. It is located close to homes, so easily accessible.</p> <p>Wildlife: The space is a Local Wildlife Site, noted for its diverse species.</p>
Local in character?	Yes.

Photos	
Location map	

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LGS11: Wheelers Field

Name, Address and location	Wheelers Field
Ownership details	STC.
Description and purpose / current use	Informal Dog Walking and Rambling Walk leading to Barnetts Wood. Used as an Informal Sports Ground and Recreational Green Space For Adults, Children and Animals.
Any designations	No.
Site allocations in Local Plan	No.
Planning permissions?	No.

Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Located within easy walking distance of Barnett's Wood housing estate and provides a shortcut into Barnett's Wood Nature Reserve for Powdermill Lane residents.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: This is a popular open space used by local residents for informal recreation (walking, rambling, dog walking etc.)
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	
Location map	

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LGS12: Petanque Ground

Name, Address and location	Yew Tree Road, Southborough
Ownership details	STC

Description and purpose / current use	A small area of land laid to grass incorporating a dedicated pétanque court. It is used for playing pétanque but also informal recreation.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Surrounded by dwellings on all sides.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: The space provides unusual sporting activity facilities, that are well-used locally. It also encompasses a grassed space used for informal recreation.
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	



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LGS13: Southfields Park Skinners School Football Rugby Grounds

Name, Address and location	Southfields Skinners School Football Rugby Grounds
Ownership details	Skinners School.
Description and purpose / current use	Rugby and football pitches for use by the Skinners School Sports Club.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The space is accessed from Chestnut Road. It is located within the residential area.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: The space has historic recreation use and this is a much valued resource locally. Although the area has restricted public access, this area is visually prominent and contributes to the character/setting and local visual amenity of the settlement.

Local in character?	Yes
Photos	
Location map	

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LGS14: Corner near to the library

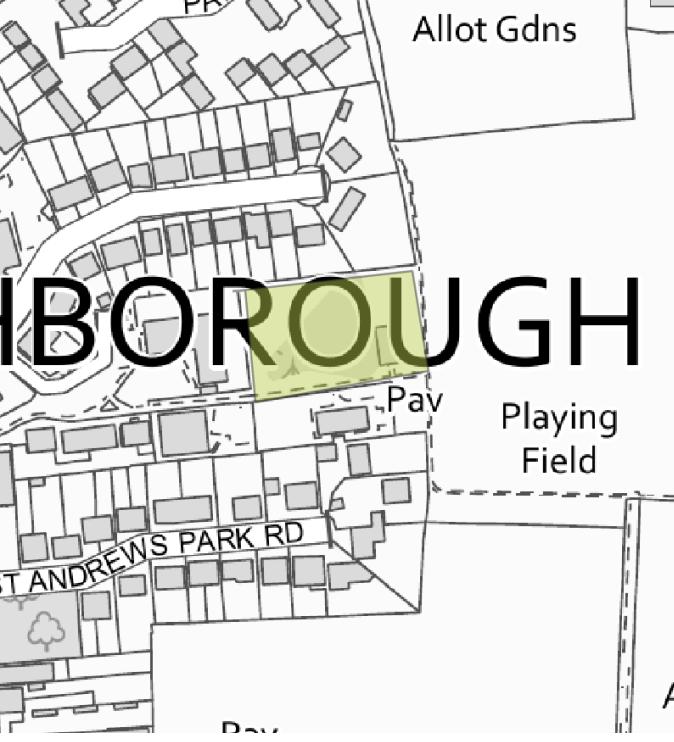
Name, Address and location	London Road, at the junction with Yew Tree Road.
Ownership details	KCC
Description and purpose / current use	A small area of green space outside the former library. It is laid to grass with some trees.
Any designations	The site of the former library has been sold. This green space is valued by the community, is covered by Tree Preservation Order 5002/2016 and thus should be retained.

Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	None as such, but Policy AL/SO1 of the TWBC Site Allocations Local Plan adopted in 2016 identified the site "for residential development providing approximately 10 dwellings."
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The space is located along London Road and is fully accessible from the pavement.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: This space provides a tranquil spot in this otherwise busy area of the parish.
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	
Location map	

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LGS15: Redwood Sequoia Grove

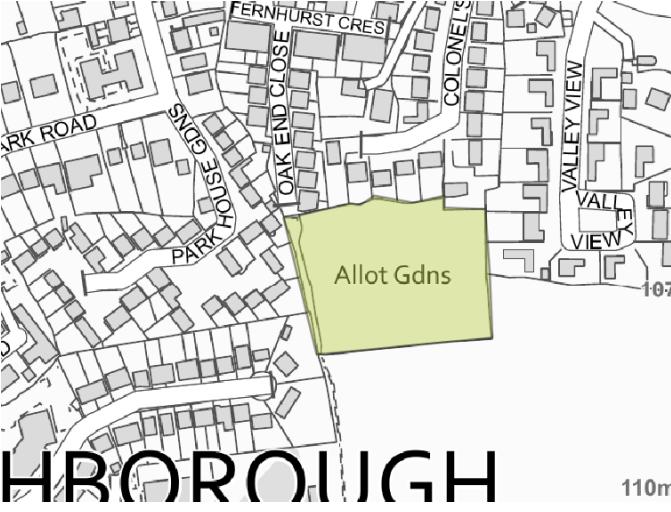
Name, Address and location	Redwood Grove adjacent to the rear of St Andrews Court and Southborough Football Club and Southborough Scout Hut.
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Ownership details	STC.
Description and purpose / current use	A heritage area, which is considered to be particularly beautiful, containing at least seven well-established Redwood Trees, which were planted in the Victorian era. The space is accessible to the public and links to the Ridgeway Recreation Grounds. It is used by those accessing the sports facilities, the Scouts attendees, dog walkers and the general public. It also provides a shortcut to the Ridgeway Allotments and informal path through the grove to footpath.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	It is adjacent to the Recreation Ground and includes a pathway to London Road.
Demonstrably Special?	Wildlife: Unique and unusual plantings including at least seven redwoods. Also hawthorn, red cedars among other species. This is unusual to find in the centre of a largely otherwise urbanised area. Historic: The redwoods were originally planted at the time of St Andrew's School, circa 19 th century.
Local in character?	Yes.
Photos	

	
Location map	

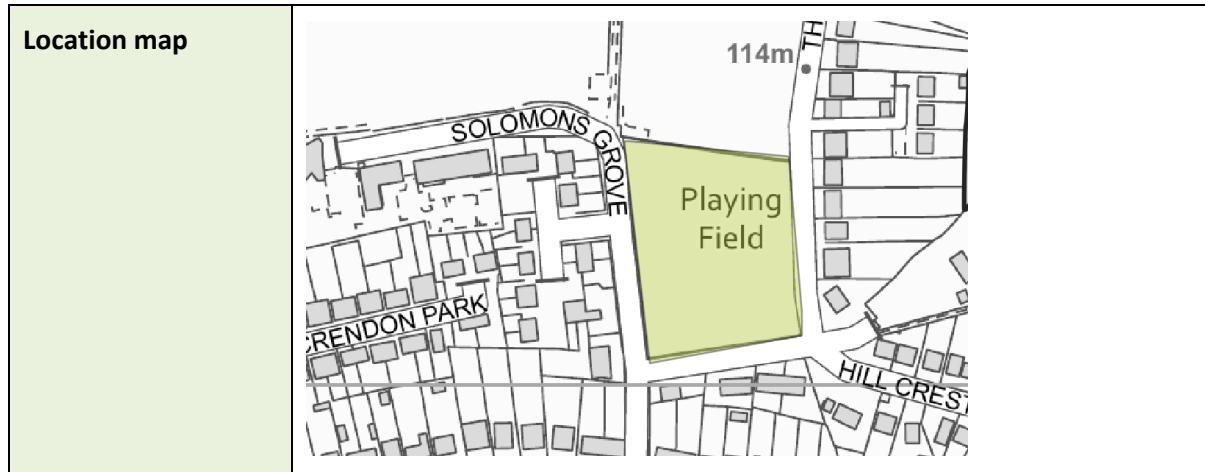
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LGS16: Ridgeway Allotments

Name, Address and location	Adjacent to the Ridgeway Playing Fields, Recreation Grounds
Ownership details	STC.
Description and purpose / current use	Formal allotments for use by the community.
Any designations	No

Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The space is surrounded by residential buildings and adjacent to the Recreation Ground. There is a path through the centre of the Allotments leading to a gated access into the Ridgewaye playing fields.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: The allotments provide an important community asset for recreational, social and horticulture purposes, contributing to the physical and mental well-being of those using them. The allotment provides an important community space and the importance of safeguarding such assets is noted in national policy.
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	
Location map	 <p>Map showing the location of the allotment gardens (Allot Gdns) highlighted in green. The map includes labels for Fernhurst Cres, Colonels, Valley View, and various roads like Park Road, Snug, and Park House. A scale bar indicates 110m.</p>

LGS17: Southborough Hockey Pitch

Name, Address and location	Ridgewaye, off Yew Tree Road adjacent to Yew Tree Allotments.
Ownership details	STC.
Description and purpose / current use	An area used for both formal and informal recreation, with a practice pitch.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Gated access is provided from The Ridgewaye. The space is located close to Ridgewaye homes.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: This is a defined recreation area. It is named the Hockey Pitch as it had been used for this purpose by the Ridgewaye School, until the school was closed in 1990. The name, however, has stuck albeit the space is no longer used for hockey explicitly, rather a wider range of formal and informal recreation types.
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	



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LGS18: Ridgewaye, Southborough Recreation Grounds

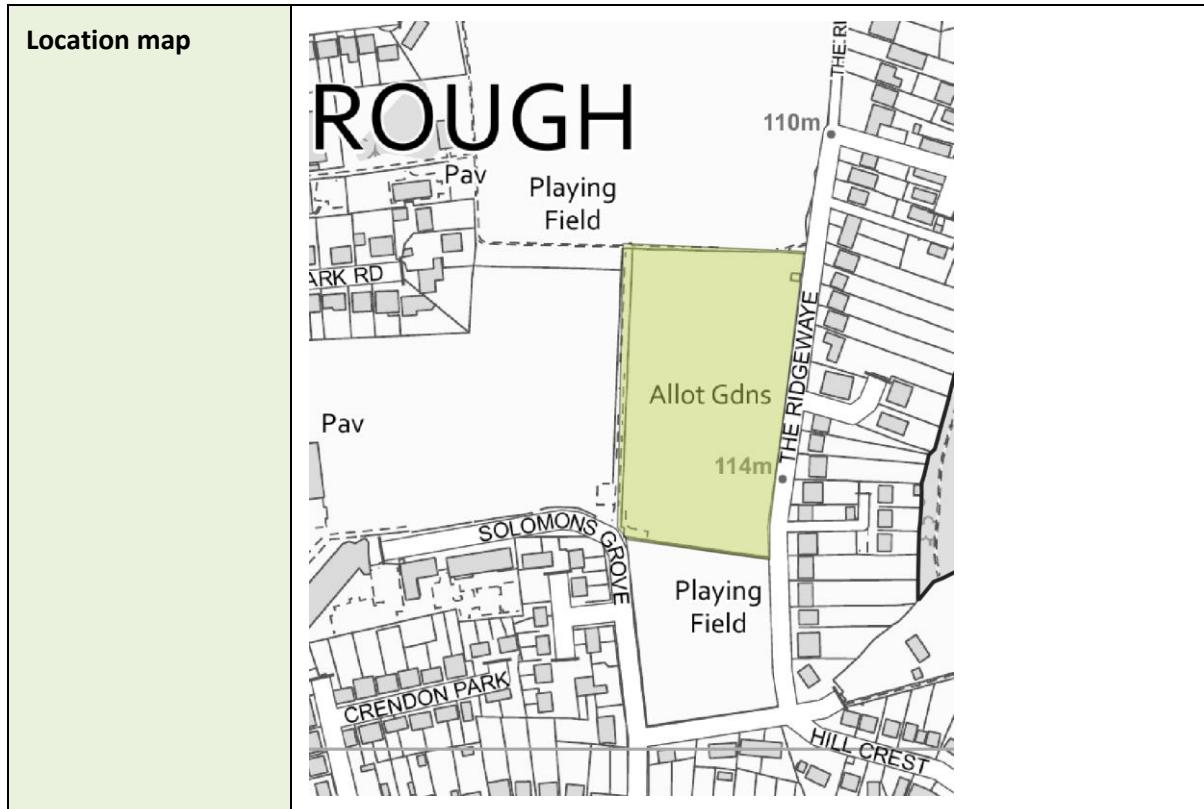
Name, Address and location	Salomons Grove and Ridgewaye.
Ownership details	STC.
Description and purpose / current use	Football grounds used by Southborough Football Club and Tunbridge Wells Youth Football Club, as well as the wider community.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Access is via Ridgewaye and Salomons Grove. The space is adjacent to Southborough Civic Centre and the Ridgemont Pavilion, Southborough Football Clubhouse, Southborough Scouts, Ridgewaye Allotments, Yew Tree Road Allotments, and the Hockey Club.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: This is a well-used, protected and appreciated asset of the Southborough /High Brooms Community. It hosts a range of facilities for outdoor activities and is at the heart of the community.
Local in character?	Yes

Photos	
Location map	

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LGS19: Yew Tree Allotments

Name, Address and location	Ridgewaye, off Yew Tree Road, adjacent to the hockey pitch.
Ownership details	STC.
Description and purpose / current use	Allotments.
Any designations	No

Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Accessed via Ridgewaye.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: These allotments are managed by STC. They provide an important social and community space for those wishing to grow their own plants/produce. Allotments are noted in national policy for their importance to local communities and their contribution to physical and mental health and wellbeing.
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	



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LGS20: Pennington Place off Pennington Road

Name, Address and location	Located off Pennington Road.
Ownership details	KCC.
Description and purpose / current use	A small area of green space with a formal path crossing it. It is used informally for dog walking, recreation and play.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The space is surrounded by residential dwellings.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: This is a substantial piece of publicly accessible land located within this residential part of the neighbourhood area. It is used by local

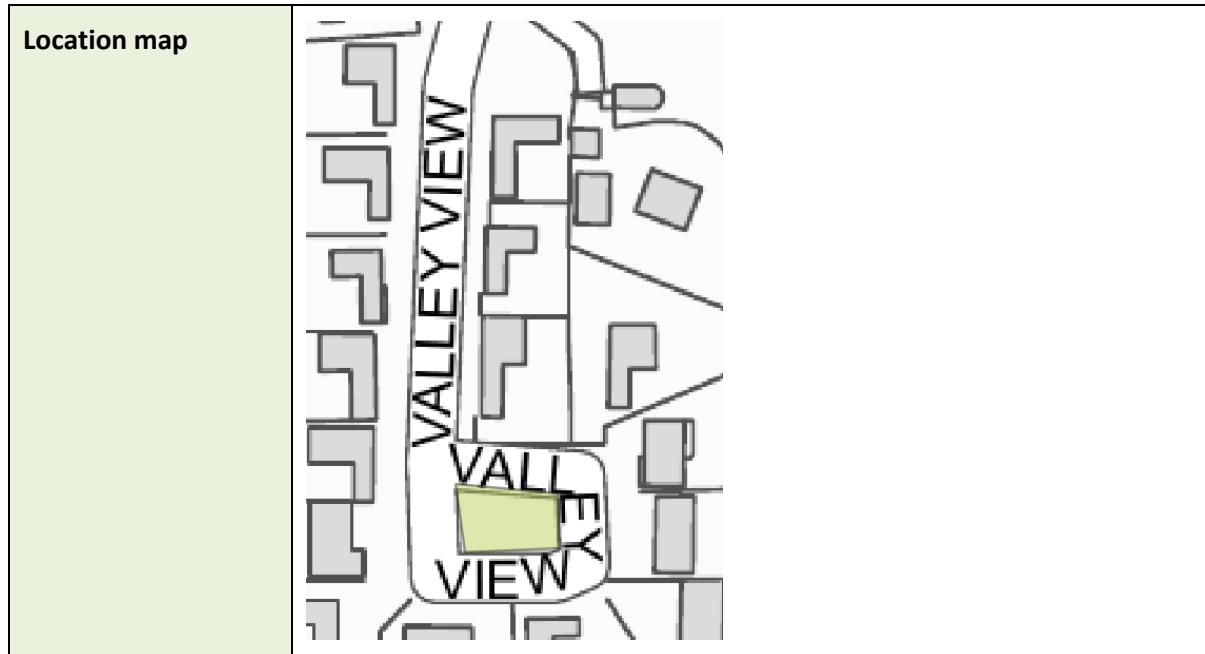
	people for informal recreation. There have been trees planted at the site recently.
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	
Location map	

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LGS21: Valley View

Name, Address and location	Valley View off Pennington Road
Ownership details	KCC
Description and purpose / current use	A small green space provided for the benefit of the local community.
Any designations	No

Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Access is from Valley View.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: The space is used for informal recreation by those living nearby. Wildlife: There are a number of trees on the space, which contribute to the attractiveness of the space as a place for informal recreation. It also provides a stepping stone to wildlife corridors running through the neighbourhood area.
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	



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LGS22: Garlinge Road

Name, Address and location	Garlinge Road and London Road Southborough
Ownership details	KCC
Description and purpose / current use	Corner Plot with Bench and Flower Beds. Used as a seating area and rest Area for Walkers.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	None
Planning permissions?	None
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Close and adjacent to residents property.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: This is a popular spot where residents like to sit and observe what's going on. It is also used for picnics.
Local in character?	Yes

Photos	
Location map	

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LGS23: Pennington Recreation Ground

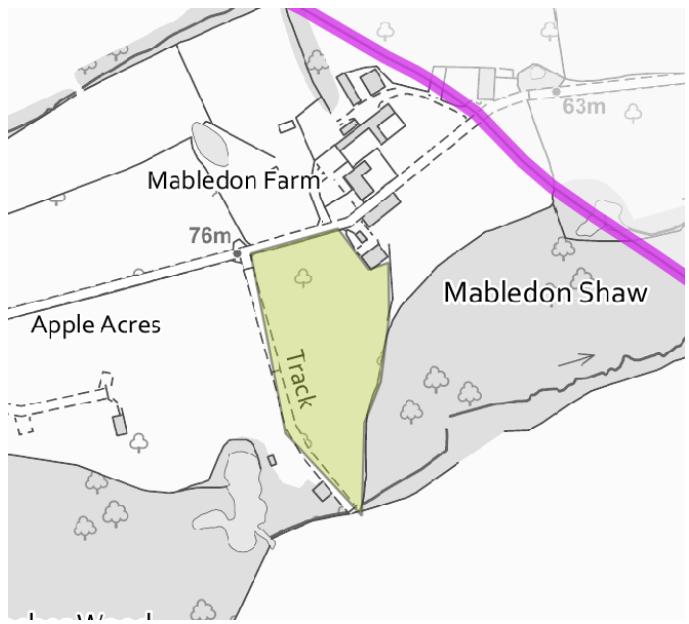
Name, Address and location	Pennington Road, opposite the Imperial Hotel and adjacent to St Thomas Church.
Ownership details	STC.
Description and purpose / current use	A sport and recreation park with facilities including basketball courts, tennis courts, a crazy golf area, table tennis tables, a climbing frame, football pitch, childrens' secure play area with sandpit and slides, swings, zip-wire and other recreational facilities. Toilets are also provided here.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No

Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	It is close to the Hotel, Pub and Church, residential properties and local shops.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: This is a very well-used space in this part of the area for a range of activities including tennis, football and other formal and informal activities.
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	
Location map	

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LGS24: Apple Orchard

Name, Address and location	Traditional Apple Orchard, Mabledon Farm, London Road, Southborough TN4 0QU
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	Location: Beside Public Footpath WS1 leading from London Road to Mabledon Farm, south-west of farmstead buildings Grid Ref TQ 58501 444555
Ownership details	Hadlow Estate
Description and purpose / current use	An historic traditional apple orchard of mature trees. No longer a productive commercial orchard - trees have declined and now provide priority habitat supporting biodiversity conservation.
Any designations	Green Belt, High Weald National Landscape. Adjacent to Ancient Woodlands and Local Wildlife Site. UK BAP Priority Habitat – Traditional Orchard. Identified in Natural England's Traditional Orchards HAP as in need of protection (ID: KENT 008)
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	No general public access, but can be partially viewed from public footpath at northern end of site. Access is permitted to visitors staying at the adjacent Caravan Park. Close to strip of housing along London Road and historic farmhouses and converted farm buildings. Also close to Tonbridge LBD and just over 1km from Southborough LBD.
Demonstrably Special?	Wildlife: Traditional orchard containing habitats important to wildlife, providing shelter and breeding sites for a range of species, including some threatened and significant species of fungi, insects, birds and small mammals. (See draft Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2024). Wildlife corridor between developed areas of a commercial caravan site and dwellings/businesses at Mabledon Farm. Historic: Culturally significant and contributes to character of parish. Orchard historically planted close to farmstead to provide supply of fruit for farming family. Public footpath WS1 (with the permitted path from Mabledon Farm to Vauxhall Lane forms part of circular walks in the area
Local in character?	Yes

Photos	
Location map	

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LGS25: Harland Way tree strip

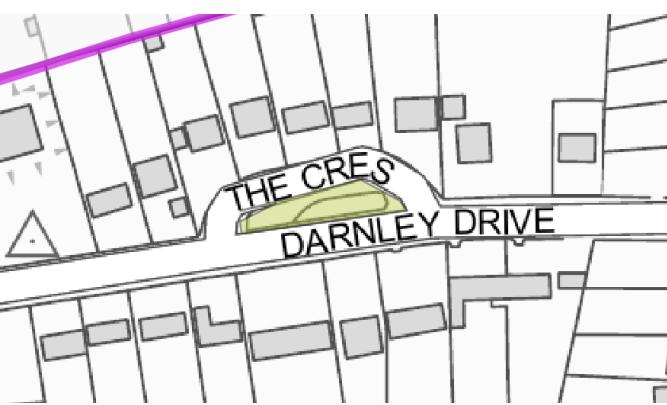
Address and location	Between Harland Way and the A26
Ownership details	KCC
Description and purpose / current use	A tree strip located between the residential areas of Harland Way and the A26.
Any designations	No

Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The space is located within an otherwise residential area and accessible to the public.
Demonstrably Special?	Wildlife: The space has been cited as an important tree strip by local residents. It is home to a series of mature trees and as such provides an important habitat and wildlife corridor in this part of the town. It acts as a buffer from the A26.
Local in character?	Yes
Photo	



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LGS26: The Crescent, Darnley Drive

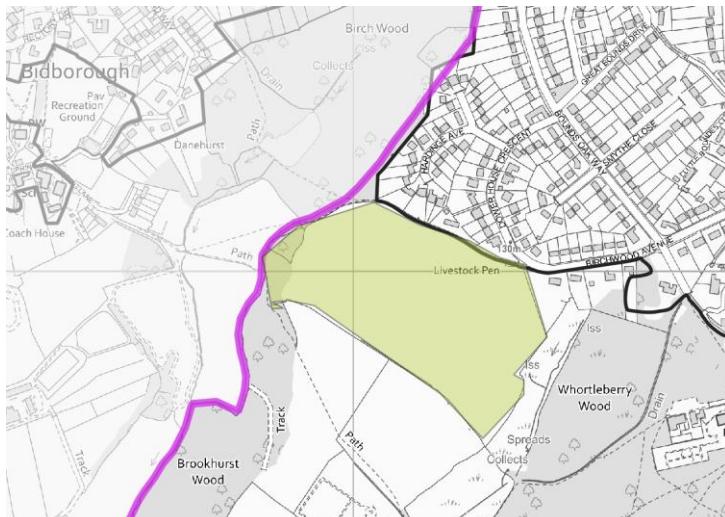
Address and location	The Crescent, Darnley Drive
Ownership details	KCC
Description and purpose / current use	A green space with a large hedge and laid to grass.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the	Surrounding by residential housing.

community it serves	
Demonstrably Special?	<p>Wildlife: The space includes a large array of trees and hedging, which provide an important habitat.</p> <p>Recreation: The grassed area is used by nearby residents for informal recreation. The space is located in part of the town where there are few public open spaces.</p>
Local in character?	Yes
Photo	 
Location map	

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LGS27: Camp Field

Address and location	Camp Field, Junction of Birchwood Avenue and Dower House Crescent. Public Footpath WS7 runs along northern edge.
Ownership details	Privately owned (John Foster)
Description and purpose / current use	Open, grassed field. Located in the High Weald National Landscape and Green Belt. Individual mature trees along northern edge separating field from public footpath. Mature trees and high hedging screen field from private houses/gardens that back onto public footpath. Bordered by Doctor's Field (LGS29) on eastern edge and by woodland and fields on western eastern and southern and eastern edges. Currently used for informal recreation including dog walking by both Southborough and Bidborough residents.
Any designations	High Weald National Landscape, Green Belt. Adjacent to Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Sites.
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Multiple access points from public footpath from Birchwood Avenue towards Bidborough Village. Adjacent to North Southborough 20 th century housing development on what was part of Great Bounds Estate, walking distance from Southborough Conservation Area and (via public footpath network) from Bidborough Village.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: Used extensively by residents of both Southborough and Bidborough Parishes for recreational walking and for exercising dogs. With excellent sightlines across the whole field, dogs can safely be allowed to run either on a long lead, or off-lead if suitably trained. Wildlife: Wildlife corridor between areas of Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Sites. In close proximity to Wildflower Meadow. Dark Skies despite nearby housing. Identified in recent draft Kent and Medway Local Nature Strategy as within an area that could become of importance to biodiversity. Tranquillity: Quiet location with only very limited local road traffic. Doctors Meadow (LGS29 in this document) on eastern border is actively managed as a haven for wildlife and peaceful and tranquil area for Southborough residents. Beauty: Strong rural aspect despite close proximity of 20 th century housing developments. As an open space located on a natural high point, allows appreciation of High Weald topography and long range views. Historic: Part of Great Bounds Estate established in early medieval period. Likely to be medieval assart fields with 20 th century agglomeration, it was

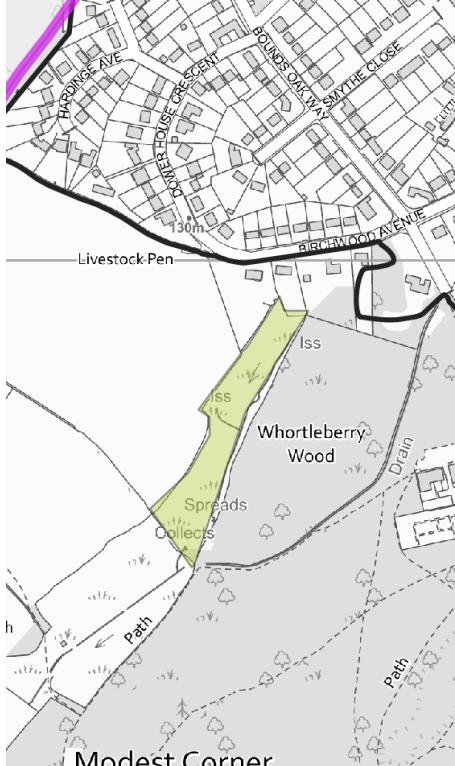
	<p>described as “valuable pastureland” when the Estate put up for sale in 1933. Sits within a typical High Weald medieval landscape. Public footpath follows an historic routeway that is part of the network of ancient drovedways, with a Livestock Pen marked on Ordnance Survey Maps in Camp Field.</p> <p>Local rumour has it that King Harold’s army camped here on journey to the Battle of Hastings.</p>
Local in character?	Yes
Photo	
Location map	

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LGS28: Doctor’s Meadow

Address and location	It is located along the western edge of the Common, opposite the slope on which the large beech trees grow, the other side of the stream.
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Ownership details	Southborough Society.
Description and purpose / current use	Left to wild, with woodland with typical woodland plants such as bluebells and bramble.
Any designations	Local Wildlife Site (Southborough Common); National Landscape, Green Belt, adjacent to ancient woodland (Whortleberry Wood)
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Accessible to the community via Southborough Common and Whortleberry Woods, which border the meadow.
Demonstrably Special?	<p>Historic: This piece of land was sold to the Southborough Society in 1980 by Mr and Mrs A. Pollock of Bentham Farm for the princely sum of £1. It appears that the couple wanted to protect the wider area from development and permanently safeguard it as a haven for wildlife. There were strict clauses in the legal document which meant that it could never be used for anything other than a nature reserve or be sold on to anyone other than an organisation with similar aims to the Southborough Society.</p> <p>Wildlife: The Local Wildlife Trust surveyed the area and found that it is a habitat for dormice, reptiles, amphibians and bats. Bluebells and brambles were recorded but with sensitive clearance of invasive species such as holly, sycamore, rhododendron and willow, more light would reach the ground and this could encourage much rarer wildflowers to emerge from the seedbank in the soil. The survey's author stressed that all dead wood and the many fallen trees should be left untouched as they provide an excellent habitat for insects and fungi.</p> <p>Recreation: The space is open to the community. The Society intends to build two or three bridges over the stream to make it easier for people to cross over and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of Doctor's Meadow.</p>
Local in character?	Yes

Photo	
Location map	

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LGS29: Woodland Area, near Holden Pond

Address and location	Woodland Area, north of Holden Pond off Holden Road
Ownership details	STC.
Description and purpose / current use	An area of rough woodland with a footpath running through it.
Any designations	Within setting of the National Landscape and within Southborough Conservation Area.

Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Close to residential properties in this part of the town. Access can be gained to the space from Holden Road.
Demonstrably Special?	<p>Wildlife: The space sits just outside the Common Land area. It is densely treed and provides an important part of the green infrastructure network.</p> <p>Tranquillity: It is a quiet woodland space, close to local homes.</p> <p>Recreation: The space is used informally including for walkers.</p>
Local in character?	Yes
Photo	



LGS30: Holden Pond

Address and location	Holden Pond, off Holden Corner
Ownership details	STC
Description and purpose / current use	The pond is owned and maintained by STC. It is a much-loved focal point in the community.
Any designations	The pond is located on Common Land and just beyond the National Landscape. Within HWNL, Green Belt, Southborough Conservation Area, Southborough Common (LWS)
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the	Located on the western edge of the town, but well-frequented by locals and much-valued.

community it serves	
Demonstrably Special?	<p>Recreation: The pond is a focal point for the community and provides a tranquil place.</p> <p>Wildlife: Ponds support a variety of species which all use the pond for different reasons whether it be for the food, water, a place to breed or as a stepping stone habitat. Water is a key importance of ponds as they are technically watering holes to various species such as foxes, hedgehogs, livestock and other small mammals.</p> <p>Although the space is located on Common Land, and therefore could be considered to be adequately protected, the designation as a Local Green Space would serve to recognise its particular value to the community.</p>
Local in character?	Yes
Photo	
Location map	

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LGS31: Crundwell Road Recreation Ground

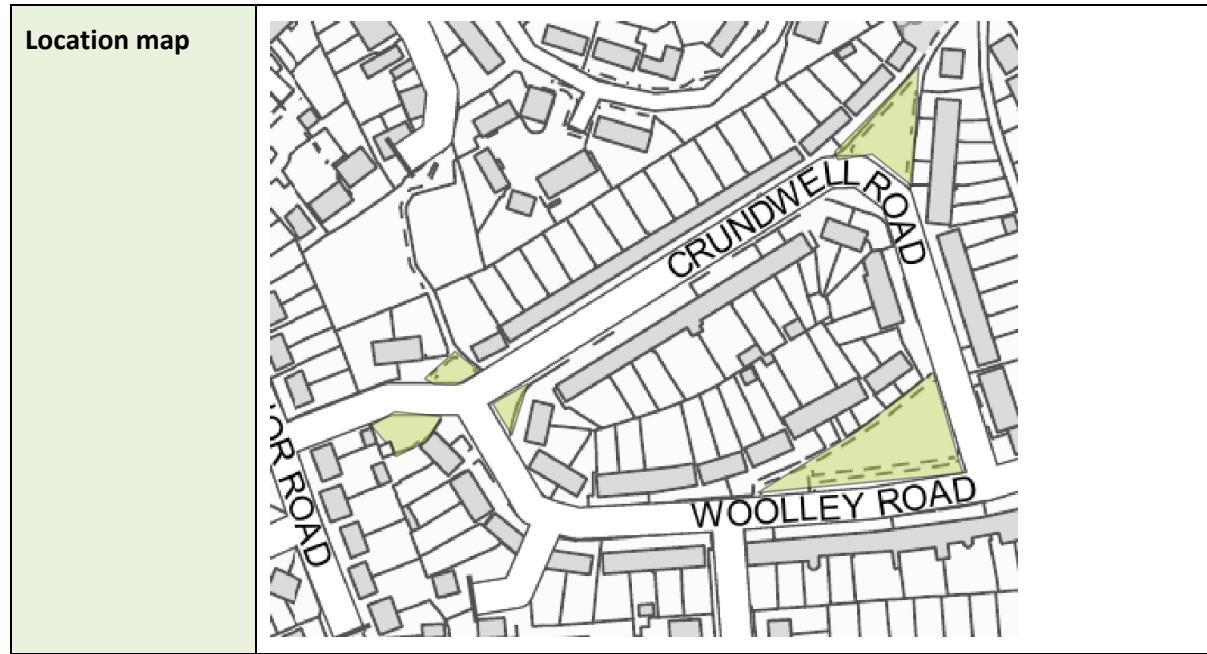
Address and location	Crundwell Road
Ownership details	STC

Description and purpose / current use	Grassy area with a childrens' playground
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The space is surrounded by homes on all sides.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: A well-used playground in the south-west part of the town.
Local in character?	Yes
Photo	
Location map	

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LGS32: Crundwell Road cluster

Address and location	Cluster of green spaces in the Crundwell Road area
Ownership details	KCC / TCHG
Description and purpose / current use	A series of grassed spaces laid to grass (mown).
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The spaces are located close to the community.
Demonstrably Special?	Historic: The spaces were designed into the housing when it was built and contribute to the overall character of this part of the town. Recreation: The spaces are used for informal recreation by those living nearby.
Local in character?	Yes
Photo	 <p>The table contains four photographs of the Crundwell Road cluster. The top-left photo shows a grassy area with a yellow trash bin and a black bench. The top-right photo shows a paved path leading through a grassy area with houses in the background. The bottom-left photo shows a brick house with a green lawn and a grey trash bin. The bottom-right photo shows a grassy area with houses and trees in the background.</p>



LGS33: Sir David's Park green space

Address and location	Sir David's Park
Ownership details	KCC
Description and purpose / current use	A pretty green space within on Sir David's Park with trees and grass.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The space is surrounded by housing and fully open to the public.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: The space is well used by local residents in the immediate area for informal recreation.

Local in character?	Yes
Photo	
Location map	

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LGS34: Green spaces at Keel Gardens

Address and location	Two spaces located off Keel Gardens
Ownership details	TWBC
Description and purpose / current use	Two small areas of green space laid to lawn and mown.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No

Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The space is surrounded on all sides by housing, accessible via a footpath.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: These two small areas of green space are set within the residential area and used informally by local residents. There is potential to improve the spaces with the inclusion of facilities for children.
Local in character?	Yes
Photo	
Location map	

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LGS35: Broomhill Park/Kibbles Lane/ Speldhurst Road cluster

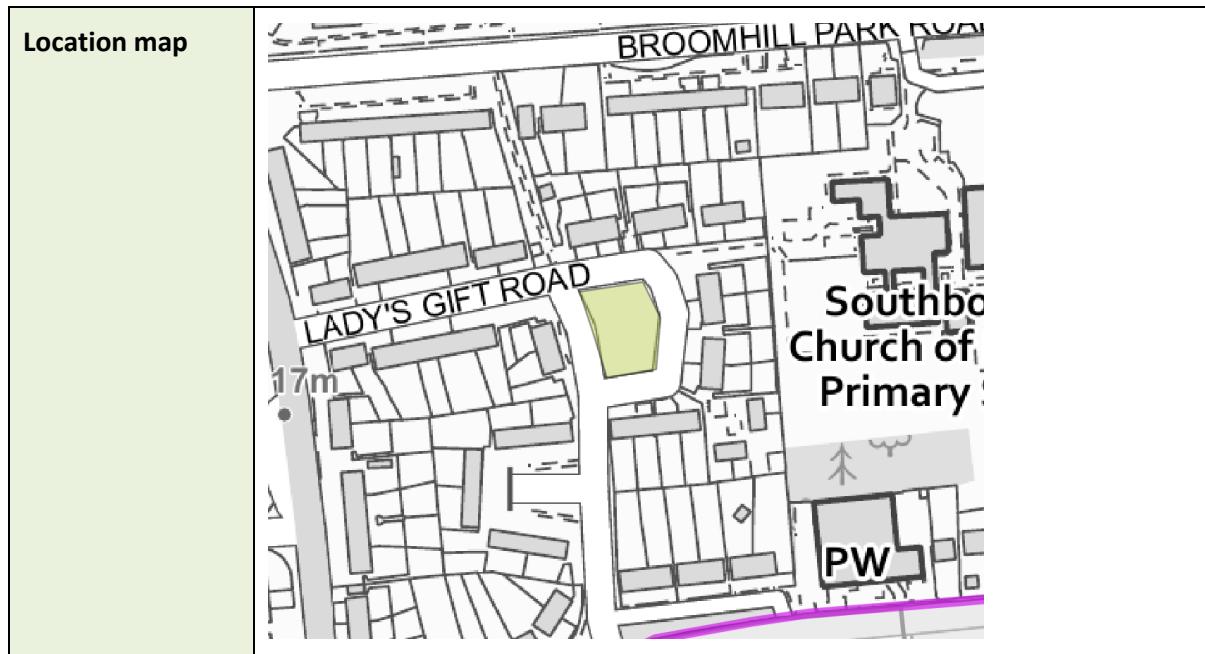
Address and location	A cluster of green spaces in Broomhill Park, Kibbles Lane and Speldhurst Road
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Ownership details	TCHG
Description and purpose / current use	These are green spaces within the residential area of this part of the town. They are not considered to be verges.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The spaces area located within the otherwise residential area
Demonstrably Special?	Historic: The spaces were designed into the housing when it was built and contribute to the overall character of this part of the town. Recreation: They are used informally by local residents.
Local in character?	Yes – these small spaces thread through the area
Photo	
Location map	

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LGS36: Grassy area, Lady's Gift Road

Address and location	Lady's Gift Road
Ownership details	TCHG
Description and purpose / current use	A large square grassy area.
Any designations	No
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The space is surrounded by residential properties.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: The space is largely laid to grass (mown) with some large trees. It is used for informal recreation as a play space for local children and for family picnics. It is also a tranquil spot within an otherwise built up area.
Local in character?	Yes
Photo	



LGS37: David Salomon's Estate (gardens)

Name, Address and location	David Salomon's Estate, Broomhill Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN3 0TG.
Ownership details	Privately owned by the Markerstudy Group
Description and purpose / current use	<p>36 acres of gardens. Venue for weddings, events, conferences, with accommodation. Self-catering cottages. Restaurant.</p> <p>The LGS designation would apply to the gardens only.</p>
Any designations	<p>Listed buildings. Tree Preservation Orders. Green belt.</p> <p>High Weald National Landscape</p> <p>KCC Historic Parks and Gardens proposed</p> <p>Potential archaeological site.</p>
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	Various previous permissions enabled on the site.
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	<p>Right of way WT72 to western boundary of site.</p> <p>Grounds are open to the public except on event days.</p> <p>Public roads on two sides. Outside but close to the urban area of Southborough.</p>
Demonstrably Special?	<p>Access at most times to grounds for public informal recreation.</p> <p>Local wildlife with variety of habitats.</p>

	<p>Tranquil formal and informal gardens with lake and mature woodland.</p> <p>Views of woodland and estate wall from outside the site.</p> <p>An historic estate comprising listed building group and grounds with lodges.</p>
Local in character?	Yes
Photos	
Location map	

APPENDIX D – LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT VIEWS

The following views have been identified as locally significant in Southborough and High Brooms parish. They are a culmination of suggestions from the Community Survey and Mapping Workshops

View 1 - View of Modest Corner from the Cemetery



Modest Corner is one of Southborough's most historic neighbourhoods, dating from the medieval era. This attractive hamlet huddles in the landscape on the western edge of Southborough Common. A number of the buildings are Grade II Listed, including The Beehive, a pair of 18th century cottages, that began operation as a public house in the mid-19th century following the establishment of a brewery nearby. It was a well-loved watering place until its closure in the 1990s and has now been converted back into 2 cottages in private ownership. With this spectacular view Southborough Cemetery is a haven of serenity and reflection, away from the bustle of the busy town of Southborough.

View 2 - View of Camp Field from Birchwood Avenue



Camp Field sits close to Southborough's border with the parish of Bidborough with long distance views towards Southborough Common and Bidborough Village. It is reputed to have been used by King Harold on his way to the Battle of Hastings in 1066. With both the Green Belt and High Weald National Landscape designations it is also adjacent to areas of Ancient Woodland and a Local Wildlife Site. The public footpath WS7, shown in the second photo, leads from Birchwood Avenue around the northern edge of the field to Bidborough Village. The footpath is regularly used by local residents for dog-walking. Camp Field is reputed to have been used by King Harold on his way to the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

View 3 - Looking down Church Road towards St Peter's Church



A delightful view towards the church past the war memorial and cricket pitch with the woods of Southborough Common on the right. The war memorial was built in 1921 to honour the 207 men from Southborough and High Brooms who died in World War I. An additional tablet now commemorates the 44 who died in World War II. This area sits within the Southborough Conservation area. St Peter's Church was built in 1930 by Decimus Burton and extended in 1883 by Ewan Christian. It is a Grade II listed building.

View 4 - View over Hilly Fields



These views are taken from Pennington Road, looking over the steeply sloping land, hence the name Hilly, towards the famous Colebrook Viaduct and the iron age fort at Castle Hill beyond. These are well loved local views and in recent years the land has been taken over by Southborough Town Council (STC). The author can remember his children tobogganing (dangerously) on Hilly Fields in the 1980s. This is a long-standing tradition which we believe continues today despite the safety risks!

View 5 - View over The Glen and towards Castle Hill



A delightful long-distance view north-east across “The Glen” towards Honnington Farm (Vauxhall Lane) with Castle Hill, an Iron Age fort, in the distance. The view takes in the historic High Weald National Landscape.

Views 6a, 6b and 6c - Views of Colebrook Viaduct



View 6a – From Powdermill Lane looking north along the side of the viaduct



View 6b – Broad span of viaduct arches from public footpath WS16 looking east



View 6c – Broad span of viaduct arches from public footpath WT192 looking west

The Colebrook Viaduct was built in 1845 as part of the development of a branch line from Tonbridge to Tunbridge Wells. Although the station at High Brooms (originally known as Southborough Station) did not open until 1893 this extension of the railway line played a major part in the development of both Southborough and High Broom, facilitating the transport of a wide variety of goods to London and beyond. The viaduct is built of red bricks with 26 arches of varying height according to the slope of ground, reaching 40-foot at its highest. It was listed in 1950 for its scenic qualities. Although well known in the Southborough and High Brooms community, its remote location and the embankments which lead to it, mean that those from outside the area, including daily commuters on the Hastings to London line, do not know of its existence. It is however familiar to walkers as the footpath beside it (WS3), shown in the first two photos, is part of the Tunbridge Wells Circular walk.

View 7 - View over the Ridgeway Playing Fields



View from Southborough Football Club looking east over the Ridgeway playing fields towards the residential houses in The Ridgeway. This is a special view for residents as it is can be seen from almost the centre of the town of Southborough yet affords a long distance view over this large green space. It affords impressive views of the sunrise.

Views 8a and 8b - Views over the High Weald from London Road in north Southborough



View 8a - This panoramic view is taken from the pavement on the east side of London Road (A26) in north Southborough, looking towards Capel village and Pembury. The road is located along a natural ridgeline and the long-distance views of High Weald National Landscape are stunning. The valley slopes steeply away from the roadside with oak trees and patches of green fields visible between the belts of ancient shaws and woodlands before rising again in the distance.

Sheep from local farms are grazed here now, however the twin cowls of the Oast in the left of the photo, now a private home, remind us of the history of hop-growing in this area. Also herds of wild deer are often seen grazing in these fields, harking back to the 16th century when the area was a royal hunting chase. Both the Tonbridge to Tunbridge Wells railway line and the A21 trunk road run through this area but are invisible in the landscape



View 8b: This view is taken from the pavement on the east side of London Road (A26) close to its junction with Vauxhall Lane, looking towards Hadlow in the neighbouring borough of Tonbridge. The road is located along a natural ridgeline and overall the vista is of trees and more trees. However the steep drop of the valley typical of the High Weald can be seen on the right side of the picture while Low Weald landscape is visible in the far distance. On a clear day it is possible to see the Hadlow Tower.

The untidy-looking land in the foreground of the picture is not currently actively farmed but provides a haven for wildlife. Despite the nearby road noise, kestrels can be seen hovering and swooping to catch their prey and sparrowhawks nest in the nearby trees.

View 9 - View of open space “South of France” towards the houses in Holden Road



A general view of the “South of France” area of Southborough Common looking towards the houses in Holden Road, a number of which are listed. This green area has on a number of occasions been used by Southborough Town Council to hold various town celebrations. An urban view at the edge of the Common, this is very distinctive of Southborough with a sudden transition between urban and rural. It sits on the downward slope of Sceptre Hill and is known locally as the South of France as it has its own ‘warm’ microclimate. As a sheltered spot and a suntrap it is particularly well-used on sunny days.

View 10 - View across Southborough Common from Sceptre Hill



These photos show the quintessential English village view that greets visitors to Southborough as they approach the town centre from the north – cricket on the village green, with an attractive historic church in the background. In fact, Southborough Common is a registered common with its own bye-laws and is covered by a number of designations. It sits within the High Weald National Landscape and the Green Belt while also forming part of the Southborough Conservation Area and a Local Wildlife Site. St Peter's Church is Grade II listed and was built by public subscription in 1830 to a design by the architect Decimus Burton. The trees that can be seen around the church include veteran beeches and oaks. And finally, not only has Southborough Common been home to the game of cricket for more than 200 years, but cricket ball manufacture was one of the local industries from the mid-1800s until the late 1970s.

Views 11a and 11b - Views within Southborough Common



View 11a – Views of Holden Pond



View 11b Woodland walks views

Southborough Common is a rare historic landscape surviving from the Saxon period and probably with its origins much earlier in the prehistoric period. The site comprises of semi natural ancient woodland, wood pasture and relic heathland. Holden Pond sits at the south western corner of the common. The photos above are simply examples of the many and varied pathways and routes through the extensive area of managed woodland. Majestic veteran oak and beech trees add a sense of timelessness and also of antiquity. This is a beautiful site for walkers as well as being a great natural playground for children to explore.

View 12 - View down Sceptre Hill in the Conservation Area



This photo is taken from outside the Hand and Sceptre public house. The roadway is the A26 that cuts through the centre of the town of Southborough. Its impact is softened here by the green land of the Common land to both the east and west sides, each with a very distinctive avenue of lime and plane trees.