

# BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



## DRAFT POLICIES FOR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

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## DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

The purpose of our Neighbourhood Plan is to influence development in the Parish, in order to safeguard what we value about where we live and to seek further improvement. As part of this, we need to set out our approach to, and priorities for, various development issues.

This document summarises the draft policies that have been developed by the Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. It takes account of the results of the Parish Plan Survey 2017 (PPS) and consultations with the community through the Neighbourhood Plan Visioning Events (VE), Design Forum (DF) and other meetings.

The draft policies are set out in six sections.

- Access and Movement (pages 3 - 4)
- Business and Employment (pages 4 - 6)
- Community, Leisure and Recreation (pages 6 - 8)
- Design Quality (pages 8 - 10)
- Housing (pages 10 - 14)
- Landscape and Environment. (pages 14 - 16)

In each section the policy statements are followed by a brief explanation and indication of the evidence supporting them. These paragraphs will be further expanded at a later stage.

Policies have by no means been decided. We are looking for your comments on this draft and for other ideas, to inform further work on the Neighbourhood Plan (NP). You can offer your views in several ways: at the meeting on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November in Brenchley Memorial Hall; at the displays in Matfield Pavilion on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November, when you will be able to discuss your ideas with Steering Group members; or by going to our Facebook page, to the website [www.bandmnp.com](http://www.bandmnp.com) or emailing [bandmnp@gmail.com](mailto:bandmnp@gmail.com).

Following the current consultation, the Steering Group will develop the ideas in this draft, taking account of your comments and suggestions, and do more work on the case for (or against) them. A draft Neighbourhood Plan will then be prepared and will be the subject of further consultation.

***What do you think of these draft policies? Have we missed anything? What more should we be saying? Which policies are most important to you?***

**PLEASE PLAY YOUR PART TO MAKE SURE THAT OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REFLECTS WHAT THE COMMUNITY WANTS – EVERYONE COUNTS!**

## ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

Access and Movement policies in the Neighbourhood Plan have a limited ability to address traffic issues that arise outside the Parish. Nevertheless, they can pursue localised actions, for example that address vehicle speeds and encourage non-motorised transport. The policies will provide a framework to support engagement with KCC Highways.

### Overall Objectives

1. **Reduce traffic speed:** Fund measures to reduce the speed of vehicular transport in the Parish to improve safety [AM1].
2. **Encourage non-vehicular travel:** Fund measures to improve non-vehicular transport options within the parish, encouraging leisure activities and reducing the need for private car use [AM2, AM3].
3. **Improve parking:** To provide appropriate, sensitive parking options within new developments and near non-domestic premises within the Parish [AM4].
4. **Improve public transport:** To provide public transport options appropriate to the Parish's needs [AM5].

### Proposed Policies

#### AM1 Contributions will be sought from proposed developments to fund road safety.

Over the past three years, there have been several clusters of traffic incidents involving injuries within the Parish. These include the junction near the Poet, Horsmonden Road near the Fairmans Lane junction, and Crook Road. Other areas of concern are the Maidstone Road near Kings Toll, Gedges Hill and near both All Saints Church and St. Luke's Church. Improvements in road safety that help limit vehicle speeds would make the parish a safer environment for residents and help to reduce traffic-related incidents.

Measures that could be funded by contributions from developers include:

1. The extension of 30 mph speed limits to cover road incident clusters within the parish and the introduction of 30 mph limits in Petteridge and Crook Road. Additionally, 20 mph limits could be introduced in village centres to further reduce traffic speed, making key crossing points safer and more convenient.
2. Installing additional vehicle activated signs (VAS) in the parish to deter speeding. Subject to consultation, speed cameras could also be installed with appropriate signage.
3. New developments could replace central white lines with cross-hatching at either side of new junctions to improve road safety (improved visibility of junctions).
4. Other appropriate and allowable speed calming measures, including speed-tables and speed-bumps.

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF, Crashmap.co.uk.*

#### AM2 Contributions will be sought from proposed developments to fund measures to encourage non-motorised traffic.

Measures that could be funded by developer contributions include:

1. Enhancing the safety and convenience of public rights-of-way by improving all-weather

capability in key sections (e.g. hard-core surfaces in muddy areas). Accessibility of public rights-of-way could also be improved by replacing stiles with gates where appropriate (See also BE3, CLR4).

2. Extending existing rights-of-way and pavements (footways alongside carriageways), especially those that could ultimately provide non-vehicular links between the villages and hamlets.

3. Safe and appropriate crossing points, subject to feasibility studies and consultation. This could include lit crossings, courtesy crossings with signage, traffic islands, and white cross hatching rather than central white lines.

*Evidence: PPS, VE & DF.*

### **AM3 Contributions will be sought from proposed developments to fund wide, safe footways with green buffer zones and provide safe access to Local Green Spaces and public rights-of-way.**

Ensuring footways (pavements) in new developments are wide with appropriate wildflower buffer-verges to houses. This would improve non-vehicular safety, biodiversity and the quality of life of parishioners (See also BE3, CLR4, LE3).

New developments, where possible, should provide safe, non-vehicular access to green spaces and nearby public rights-of-way.

*Evidence: PPS, VE & DF.*

### **AM4 New developments will be required to include adequate, appropriate and sensitive parking options.**

Developments should offer adequate and sensitive off-street parking for residents. This should be well-screened and, if possible, positioned behind houses to avoid spoiling public views. (See also DQ4)

Contributions will also be sought to fund new or improved parking options near the parish's non-domestic properties (including retail and commercial premises, schools/nurseries, halls, and churches). This would support local businesses and encourage use of other local community assets.

*Evidence: PPS.*

### **AM5 Contributions will be sought from proposed developments to fund improved public transport options.**

Contributions will be sought for new scheduled bus services or for new community transport ventures within the parish. This would help improve quality of life for parishioners and limit pollution. It would also provide necessary transport for parishioners unwilling or unable to drive (See also BE3, CLR6).

*Evidence: PPS, VE & DF.*

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## **BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT**

The parish needs to be a place to live and work, to maintain its economic base, and to minimize outward commuting. Robust policies for supporting, enhancing, and promoting local business and employment are essential to achieving those aims.

## Overall Objectives

1. Support and strengthen the local economy.
  - a. Protect and enhance existing employment sites [BE1].
  - b. Improve infrastructure [BE2, BE3].
  - c. Seek a range of new employment spaces that reflect modern modes of working [BE2].
2. Promote a diversity of business enterprise.
  - a. Develop professional networks, to grow business-to-business entrepreneurship [BE2, BE4].
  - b. Encourage diversification in agriculture and land-based enterprise [BE5].
  - c. Support inward investment through tourism [BE6].

## Proposed Policies

### **BE1 Development which seeks to protect and enhance existing employment sites, either as a whole or in part, will be supported.**

In recent years a number of shops, pubs, and cafes have been lost to the parish, while a rising number of agricultural buildings have been converted to residential use, as have some workshops and light industrial units.

There may be opportunities to develop new employment spaces through the conversion of older facilities, such as has happened at the former Bull public house in Brenchley, and the former Inn Store in Matfield.

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF and TWBC's 'Role and Function' studies to support the Draft Local Plan.*

### **BE2 Development that provides a range of new employment spaces which reflect modern modes of working will be supported.**

Home-working, hot-desking, and co-worker facilities are increasingly becoming embedded practices, especially for young entrepreneurs.

New industrial sectors, such as the digital economy and lifestyle service-providers, require different types of facilities and supply-chain arrangements.

*Evidence: PPS, VE and DF [plus relevant market information]*

### **BE3 Developer contributions will be sought towards significant improvements to key infrastructure, including high-speed broadband and mobile connectivity, logistics and public rights-of-way.**

Reliable fibre-optic connectivity is essential to modern business practices – without it, productivity and competitiveness are undermined.

There needs to be better signage on the local road network, to improve logistics for agriculture and land-based industries, and the upgrading of some routes is required (see also AM1 & AM4). The network of footpaths and bridleways is an enabler for tourism; it needs to be better managed and, in some places, requires upgrading to improve accessibility (see also AM2, AM3, CLR4,).

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF, extant traffic surveys and market reports.*

#### **BE4 Proposals to secure a Business and Enterprise Hub for the parish, to facilitate professional networking as a driver to grow business-to-business entrepreneurship, will be supported.**

Professional networking is recognized as a key enabler for start-ups, supply-chains, and securing investment. A hub would be a means of co-ordinating support for business activity, reducing duplication, and pooling resources for marketing.

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF and market reports.*

#### **BE5 Diversification in agriculture and land-based enterprises will be encouraged through restricting the loss of sites and facilities to non-productive uses.**

A diverse and broad-based agricultural sector is essential to the rural economy and community. Purposeful land-management is one of the main drivers for maintaining the landscape character of the area. However, the needs of farming and other land-based enterprises must be balanced with the need to conserve and enhance the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting (AONB).

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF, High Weald AONB Management Plan.*

#### **BE6 Inward investment in tourism will be supported, including by engaging in partnership-working.**

There is the potential to be part of a borough-wide initiative to promote tourism in rural areas, through a vehicle similar to the 'Business Improvement District' that is being established for the urban economy. Given that it is likely that most development in the borough will take place in the north-east quadrant, which includes Brenchley and Matfield, there would be an opportunity for the five local councils to develop a local initiative.

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF, TWBC Economic Development Strategy, TWBC Destination Management Plan.*

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## **COMMUNITY, LEISURE AND RECREATION**

**The parish needs to be a place that provides a good range of high-quality facilities to support the well-being of our communities. Robust policies are required to ensure that those facilities are located in the right places, catering for diverse needs, and are supported by a broad community consensus.**

### **Overall Objectives**

1. Maintain and improve education, health and care services in the Parish [CLR1].
2. Improve the quality of life for older and less mobile residents [CLR1, CLR3, CLR6].
3. Improve community well-being through a wide range of sports and social activities [CLR2, CLR3, CLR4, CLR5].

## Proposed Policies

**CLR1 Development proposals that would enhance community services in education, health and care, leisure and recreation will be supported if there is a convincing case on the need for them and they comply with relevant policies in this Neighbourhood Plan on issues such as access, parking, housing and design.**

- Maintenance and improvement of education, health and social care facilities and services are of the highest priority to the community. These include:
- Primary education, where there are emerging proposals for rebuilding the school on a new site, financed by a large housing development. Issues of need for a new School and acceptability of the housing development need further consideration, including through more community consultation.
- Day care, pre-school and nursery facilities, where there is already a shortage of capacity, including for before and after school and during holidays.
- GP and dental services. GP services are already stretched, with limited possibilities for expansion. Significant housing development, not only in the parish but also in Horsmonden, could significantly worsen the problem leading to a shrinking of the catchment area and the risk of poorer services.
- Social Care. The Parish has an ageing population, which will lead to an increasing need for Social Care, other forms of support and appropriate housing, especially for those with limited mobility. All Saints', Brenchley and St. Luke's, Matfield each organise a Ready Call transport service, which provides a valuable local facility, but other activities are needed, especially for those who may be lonely or have restricted mobility.

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF and subsequent interviews. Data on usage of existing facilities and demographic data on population trends.*

**CLR2 Contributions will be sought from proposed developments to fund an improved playground at Brenchley, a new playground at Matfield and improved play facilities at Petteridge.**

Safe and inviting playground facilities are important for young families. Proposals are already being developed for improvement of the existing playground in Brenchley, while the idea of a playground in Matfield has attracted significant support, subject to finding an appropriate site. Play facilities in Petteridge are limited and consultation with the community is needed to identify what may be required.

*Evidence: PPS.*

**CLR3 Contributions will be sought from proposed developments to help maintain, extend or improve facilities for sports, exercise and leisure, especially for children, young people and older residents.**

The health and quality of life of the community are enhanced by the existence of sports, exercise and leisure facilities. This is especially important for children, young people and older residents. The Parish currently has a good range of activities and facilities, mainly based at the Brenchley Memorial Hall and Matfield Village Hall but also at the Brenchley Scout Hut and Matfield Pavilion. Continued maintenance and, as needs are identified, improvement of these facilities over the period of the Plan will be important. Some of the activities are commercial but many, as with other community activities, depend on volunteers; the continuation of such activities will only be possible to the extent that the community itself, alongside any financing that may be available, is prepared to volunteer.

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF and subsequent interviews.*

#### **CLR4 Contributions will be sought from proposed developments to facilitate greater use of footpaths, bridle paths and cycle paths for exercise and recreation.**

The Parish has a network of footpaths and more limited bridle paths, which are well-used by the community. Leisure usage would be further encouraged by further extensions and by improvements such as substituting gates for stiles, ensuring vegetation is controlled and improved surfacing and signs/information. (See also AM2, AM3, BE3, LE3)

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF.*

#### **CLR5 Existing allotments will be retained and contributions will be sought for new sites from new developments insofar as there is increasing and unsatisfied demand for them.**

Allotments provide a healthy leisure activity for those who do not have sufficiently large gardens. At present, the Parish has one allotment site, on Brenchley Road in Matfield, which is almost full. In the interests of enabling anyone who wishes to have an allotment to have access to one, contributions will be sought from developers to help meet any unsatisfied demand.

*Evidence: Parish Council.*

#### **CLR6 Provision of a community bus will be supported and contributions sought from proposed developments, subject to confirmation of feasibility and sustainability.**

Limited mobility is an important cause of social isolation and poor quality of life. Bus services have declined and do not meet the needs of those with significant mobility problems. In some rural areas bus services are being supplemented by a Community Bus, with wheelchair access. This does not compete with such scheduled services as exist but organises trips to local towns and is available for hire by community groups. This can provide a valuable service for those with limited mobility and for existing community groups as well as a stimulus for new community activities (see also AM5).

*Evidence: Proposal from the community and experience of Community Bus services in other parishes.*

#### **CLR7 Proposals for community renewable energy schemes which offer benefits in terms of the environment, economic viability and services valued by the community will be supported provided that they do not have an unacceptable impact on the landscape and heritage of the Parish.**

Ideas have been put forward for community energy schemes such as small scale renewable energy generation and charging points. Inclusion of these in development proposals or through contributions to community schemes will be encouraged.

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## **DESIGN QUALITY**

**In any new development, the parish must benefit from buildings of the highest quality, to create a new legacy that stands alongside a proud heritage. Our historic settlements must be enhanced by the careful blending of the old with the new, classic vernacular with creative contemporary design, and by encouraging sustainable practices in the design and construction of developments.**

### **Overall Objectives**

1. To ensure quality development that meets the needs of local people [DQ1, DQ6].
2. To offer clarity about what the NP defines as 'quality' [DQ1, DQ6].
3. To prevent development that is not in keeping with the rural character of the villages [DQ1].
4. To ensure development meets the highest standards of social, economic and environmental sustainability [DQ2, DQ3, DQ4, DQ5, DQ6].

## Proposed Policies

**DQ1 New builds, whether housing, community resources or places of employment, should be constructed of sustainably-sourced and locally-sensitive materials respecting the local vernacular while allowing for imaginative contemporary architecture and incorporating features that ensure sustainability for the future.**

Though the villages of Brenchley and Matfield have evolved over the centuries and are made up of many types and styles of housing, there is a local vernacular reflected in many of these that uses weather boarding or half tiling, has consistently well angled roofs with overhangs and avoids strong colours in the external paintwork. Attendees at the Design Forum laid heavy emphasis on generous fenestration and held positive views about contemporary design as long as it is aesthetically compatible and sits comfortably with the local vernacular. Using creative design and appropriate materials and having areas of open space helps to improve the health and well-being of populations.

Given the changing needs of many families and the down-sizing required by older people who wish to remain in the villages, new constructions will be encouraged to follow Lifetime Homes Standards and be constructed to allow flexible use of internal space as needs change (See also H9).

The use where possible of locally sourced materials would help protect local employment, reduce transport needs and help ensure a local character.

*Evidence: DF, Lifetime Homes Standards, High Weald AONB Management Plan, KCC's Kent Design Guide, Locality UK: Good Design in Neighbourhood Planning, Department for Communities and Local Government 2009: Guidance on building a local sense of belonging.*

**DQ2 New developments should work creatively with the topography and landscape features and should seek to maximise alternative energy sourcing, water and recycling efficiency and to minimise adverse visual impact.**

Much of the Parish is built on hills, and the creative use of the topography in the planning of a new development, including the orientation of housing, could enhance energy efficiency which would provide energy efficient homes, ensure good surface water drainage, prevent flooding, enable the reuse of grey water as well as minimise any adverse visual impact. Planting using native species can support good drainage as well as ensuring a compatibility with the rural character of the parish and sharing the benefits of the natural environment. All developments will be expected to incorporate such sustainability features including the provision of effective waste disposal (See also H3, H4).

In addition, any lighting in public spaces needs to offer safety but minimise light pollution in what is essentially a rural environment and one that enjoys the rare feature of dark skies.

*Evidence: DF, High Weald AONB Management Plan, TWBC Sustainability Policy, Design Council's CABE Guide to Sustainable Design, BfL12 (Creating a Place).*

**DQ3 Developments must provide adequate, easily accessible but well landscaped parking areas. This will allow streets to be safe for all and operate as good social spaces.**

There are examples of new developments that model creative ways of building in garages underground or in shared areas to minimise the visual impact of cars from the houses and street, for example by positioning parking behind houses. Such approaches would be encouraged. They

also allow pavements and green spaces to be used more safely by children and the elderly and to be greened more readily with planting that enhances the environment, such as wild flower verges. (See also AM4)

Alternatives to the car will be strongly encouraged, with good connections to existing pedestrian and cycling routes and the creation of new ones wherever possible.

*Evidence: DF, Kent Design guide, Locality UK: Good Design in Neighbourhood Planning, DfL12 (Creating a Place and Street and Home).*

#### **DQ4 Sites of more than 10 units will be expected to include at least 10% of houses with a higher standard/degree of eco-build or zero-carbon homes (Level 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes).**

Given the growing concern about climate change and the requirements of Building Regulations to ensure a certain level of sustainability, some attention will be paid to these important features in all new build, but eco build and zero carbon homes exceed these basic requirements and should be encouraged. Such a view was explored in the Design Forum and met with support (See also H4).

*Evidence: DF, Green spec.co.uk, Designingbuildings.co.uk/Zero Carbon Homes.*

#### **DQ5 Sites of more than 10 units will be expected to make 10% provision for self-build.**

Self-build is one way for families to build affordable housing.

*Evidence: Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 as amended, teignbridge.gov.uk/selfbuild, Cherwell District Council/Graven Hill site.*

#### **DQ6 All new developments should have regard to the Neighbourhood Design Guidance and to the AONB characteristics of the parish.**

This links the Design Policies to the Housing Policies (see also H4). It covers such issues as: connected layouts; access for all modes of travel, appropriate building heights; appropriate form and massing; appropriate density based on site context; boundary treatments; landscape treatment; materials and details informed by the local vernacular

*Evidence: High Weald AONB Management Plan including the AONB's Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development.*

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## **HOUSING**

The parish must embrace the need for an increase in the number, type, and affordability of residential stock. It is the only way to secure the long-term viability of our settlements, by seeking to retain young people, attract more families, and ensuring there is accommodation to support an ageing population – including housing for the key-workers necessary to support and maintain the local community. While the TWBC Local Plan will determine the scale and location of development, the Neighbourhood Plan can have an important influence on the nature and design of developments through site-specific policies.

## Overall Objectives

1. Constrain new development in Brenchley and Matfield within the revised Limit of Built Development (H1, H13).
2. Retain and enhance the character of villages (H1).
3. New development should range in capacity from 10-35 units (H2).
4. Prevent coalescence of the villages (H1).
5. Ensure high quality design (H3, H4).
6. Priority for smaller units to meet the identified shortfall (H5).
7. Delivery of a range of Affordable homes with priority for local people with family or work connections (H6, H7, H8, H11).
8. Meet the housing needs of older residents (H9).
9. Meet the needs of small business (H10).

## Proposed Policies

### **H1 Significant developments must be within the revised Limits of Built Development unless on a Brownfield site, concentrating new build in the villages with high density, green landscaping and generous open spaces.**

A clear view has been expressed in PPS and NP consultations that the distinctive villages of Brenchley and Matfield should be maintained and not allowed to lose identity through ribbon development. Limiting development to the two villages will help to conserve and enhance the AONB and will contribute to a more sustainable community in the Parish.

TWBC anticipate revising the LBD to take account of changes since it was last updated, but minimal change is expected given the nature of the surrounding countryside. The intention is to constrain development as far as possible within the LBD while providing adequate housing for a growing population. The advantages of concentrating new developments to sites within the villages are that it allows for better connections to the main public transport routes; easy pedestrian access to the village facilities; and reduces car use thus helping to build more robust village communities. It also respects the rural character of the parish, protecting agricultural land, the AONB and its setting and views of surrounding countryside and a green. (LE7)

*Evidence: PPS, Department of Housing, Communities & Local Government: Planning Practice Guidance, Building for Life 12 [BfL12] (Integrating into the Neighbourhood and Creating a Place), High Weald AONB Management Plan, TWBC Local Plan 2006, KCC's Kent Design Guide.*

### **H2 All developments in the parish should be between 10-35 housing units.**

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) is charged with delivering approximately 14,000 new homes across the Borough during the Plan Period 2013-2033. The allocation of sites considered suitable for development during the planning period 2013-2033 will be made by TWBC and will be set out in its Local Plan. TWBC has the in-house expertise, technical ability and the financial resources to appoint third party consultants and experts so that the analysis and selection may be considered robust. Decisions on the allocation of sites and the revised LBD will however be influenced by local knowledge from the parish (H1, LE7).

The Parish Plan Survey showed a clear preference for small developments of up to 10 units. Given the number of houses likely to be required, however, this approach would imply a large number of separate developments. A trade-off is needed between the number of sites and the size of individual developments.

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF.*

### **H3 Developers will have regard to all Site-specific Policies for Allocated Sites.**

Site-specific policies will be drawn up for each Allocated Site. These will be guided by the TWBC Housing Needs Survey 2018 (HNS). (see also H4).

*Evidence: PPS, HNS.*

### **H4 All proposals for developments of housing will comply with the NP Design Quality Policies.**

This policy seeks to link the Housing Policies to the Design Quality Policies.

### **H5 At least 70% of new homes on developments of 9 or more units will comprise 1 bed, 2 bed or 3 bed units unless provided otherwise in a Site-specific Policy.**

Evidence from the community consultations and Housing Needs Study indicate both the need and desire for smaller properties to meet the needs of young people, first time buyers and older down-sizers. The policy seeks to address the housing imbalance in the Parish by advocating smaller and therefore more affordable units which would be suitable for starter homes, downsizing, Affordable Housing and private rented accommodation. There is a lower priority for larger properties of 4 or more bedrooms.

Although TWBC has said that it is not intending to make provision for discounted Starter Homes, the possibility of this will be actively explored given recent Government policy announcements in favour of local schemes.

Historically many properties in the village have been extended, thereby making them less affordable for many. It is therefore judged important to both develop and maintain a more mixed offer of housing size for the long-term future. A diverse range of housing will help to encourage a healthier demographic mix and sustain a community that can cater for a range of economic circumstances and support a school and other essential facilities.

There is potential to strengthen the policy by restricting by covenant extensions of new houses.

*Evidence: PPS, DF, HNS, National Planning Policy Framework 'NPPF'.*

### **H6 All new developments must comply with the TWBC Affordable Housing requirement of [35%] or 100% on a Rural Exception Site. All developments will provide for a minimum of 25% Intermediate Housing (Shared Ownership).**

Residents of both villages have expressed a desire to see Affordable Housing to meet local needs. This would include housing for rental, shared ownership and if possible for sale. The beneficiaries of this policy would be existing residents and their families, or those with a local connection through family or employment in the villages. The HNS identified that in the rural parishes there is currently a 32.5% Social Rented provision and a 67.5% Intermediate provision. An increase is required in both sections, but a greater emphasis should be on the rental element.

These homes should have gardens and shared open space.

*Evidence: HNS. KCC's Kent Forum Housing Strategy, NPPF.*

### **H7 A fully-evidenced local connection will be an essential qualification for all potential Affordable Homes allocation.**

Residents wish to ensure that priority is given to those with a local need and connection before units are offered to TWBC applicants. The pricing of units should reflect the financial circumstances of those in greatest need, with rents that are no more than 80% of market value.

The criteria could be that applicants must have lived in the Parish for 5 years or longer or applicants whose parents are currently living in the Parish and have done so for more than 3 years, or applicants who have worked in Parish for a minimum of 2 years or applicants who have lived or worked in Tunbridge Wells Borough for 5 years or longer.

*Evidence: PPS, DE, HNS.*

### **H8 Affordable Homes in a Rural Exception Site will be generally supported if they meet the overall policies of the NP.**

There is a need for affordable homes in all parts of the parish. Guidelines will include that the houses are close to the LBD or contiguous with one of the smaller settlements, that they meet an identified local need and that the rented homes should be Affordable in perpetuity.

*Evidence: PPS, DF, HNS, NPPF.*

### **H9 Developments will be supported that provide different types of accommodation for older people. At least 30% of all units in developments of 9 units or more will conform to the current Lifetime Homes Standards.**

Specific accommodation for the elderly could include an over-55s development, bungalows, Sheltered Housing and accommodation with full support on site.

*Evidence: PPS, HNS, Lifetime Homes Standard, DfL 12 (Integrating into the Neighbourhood), KCC's Kent Forum Housing Strategy.*

### **H10 Proposals for residential development on Brownfield Sites will need to demonstrate both a need for housing and, if in employment use, that an element of employment use can be maintained to meet the needs of small local businesses.**

There is a need to protect and improve many of the employment areas in the parish which will help the sustainability of local communities (BE1, BE2, BE4). Any development on a Brownfield Site should be used as an opportunity to remedy any historic contamination.

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF.*

### **H11 All development proposals should provide on submission a Landscape and Visual Impact Study, an Environment Impact Assessment and an Ecological Survey.**

A large percentage of the parish is within the AONB including all the sites submitted for possible development. It is important therefore to protect landscape views and vistas. As the area is mostly rural, the protection of at-risk species that may need protection should be central to all planning proposals (DQ2, DQ3, LE1, LE4).

*Evidence: VE, DF*

### **H12 Any proposals to build houses on the current School site as part of the project for rebuilding the School will be subject to the same NP housing and design policies as other development proposals.**

Although the current School site has not been allocated for reuse as housing, TWBC has said the site will be safeguarded, that is reserved, in case the rebuild of the School proceeds. (CLR 1). Any housing proposals that come forward will need to meet NP policies and standards.

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF*

**H13 Applications, within the LBD or the settlements of Petteridge and Castle Hill, for small scale infill development or redevelopment will be supported provided the proposals meet the other policies of the NP and the Planning policies of TWBC.**

The TWBC Local Plan will anticipate that the some of the supply of new houses in the Borough will be from small windfall sites. To conform to this policy, windfall sites, other than brownfield sites, should be limited to the main areas of settlement within the parish.

*Evidence: PPS, DF*

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## LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT

**The parish should seek to preserve the defining characteristics of its rural location, landscape, history, and heritage, alongside addressing the need for new development.**

### Overall Objectives

1. Protection of historic landscape views and vistas [LE1].
2. Retention and enhancement of public open spaces, nature reserves, and public rights-of-way [LE2, LE3].
3. Preservation and replanting of trees and hedges [LE4, LE5].
4. Preservation of dark skies [LE6].
5. Preservation of the distinctiveness of each settlement [LE7].
6. Control of advertisements and signage affecting the AONB and its setting [LE8].

### Proposed Policies

**LE1 Planning applications for development will be required to incorporate a visual impact assessment including Winter and Summer views. Particular attention will be paid to preserving locally valued views, from roads and public rights-of-way both within settlements and over the rural landscape.**

The intended outcome is that, with new developments, locally valued views within settlements and over the rural landscape will not be impeded (H11).

Priority sites are listed in LE Appendix 1 (page 18).

*Evidence: PPS, TWBC Landscape Character Assessment, High Weald AONB Management Plan.*

**LE2 Provision of new local green spaces in new developments will be required. Where possible, these will be designated as a Village Green, failing which they will be designated as Local Green Spaces.**

Local Green Space designation in the NPPF is ‘a way to give a high level of protection to green areas or open spaces against development where they are of particular importance to local communities’. The designation of land as Local Green Space through a Neighbourhood Plan allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance. The parish has three sites of Common Land and Ancient Woodland, which are protected without having to be designated as Green Spaces. The Parish will seek to ensure that all public green spaces, including

some wide highway verges, which are important in the landscape or life of the settlements in the Parish, gain protection and remain accessible to the public.

A Local Green Space 'needs to be in 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.'

The sites for designation as Local Green Space are in LE Appendix 2 (page 19).

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF, NPPF, TWBC Local Plan 2006, TWBC Local Green Space Designation Methodology 2018, High Weald AONB, Kent Wildlife Trust, Kent High Weald Partnership, Ashdown Forest mitigation.*

[Residents are invited to comment on and/or add to the list which will be available at the November evening meetings.]

### **LE3 Proposals for new development will be required to demonstrate how they will conserve and enhance habitat corridors between habitat areas and along historic routeways.**

There is a need to protect and enhance ecologically rich verges on historic routeways and to increase the biodiversity of other highway verges in the parish, including new highways and public rights of way in new developments; protect and enhance coppiced woodland; protect and enhance rare remaining areas of semi-improved grassland and lowland heathland. Wildlife and native plant life corridors will be enhanced rather than disrupted by new development. Traditional and valued landscapes will be preserved and enhanced to support resilience to climate change (See also AM3, CLR4).

*Evidence: PPS, TWBC Landscape Character Assessment, The Parish of Brenchley: Historic Landscape Characterisation, High Weald AONB Management Plan, Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre, [www.magic.defra.gov.uk](http://www.magic.defra.gov.uk).*

### **LE4 In any new development, existing mature trees that make a positive contribution to the landscape will be protected. All new residential development will be required to plant and maintain a minimum of one native species or fruit tree for every new dwelling or building, either in gardens or in a communal area.**

There is a need to preserve the existing mature trees in the parish which make a positive contribution to the landscape and to provide a new legacy for the future. Planting more trees will reduce run-off and flooding and enhance biodiversity and air quality, which will be beneficial to the community. Such a legacy will conserve the traditional High Weald landscape. Biodiversity is a key element of the parish's rural character which parishioners wish to preserve (H11).

*Evidence: PPS, VE, TWBC Landscape Character Assessment, The Parish of Brenchley: Historic Landscape Characterisation, High Weald AONB.*

### **LE5 Developments will be supported that use native species for landscape proposals and specifically excludes non-native species. Property boundaries in new development should consist of native species hedging, set back at least 1 metre from any footway, public right of way or (where there is no footway) carriageway.**

This policy will promote biodiversity, help preserve the parish's rural character and provide room for the hedge to grow without impeding pedestrians or other traffic. Where necessary for security or to constrain movement of children or animals, the hedges may be reinforced on the side away from the road or public right of way by fencing which should be unobtrusive and where possible constructed using materials from coppiced woodland.

In the Visioning and Design Forum events the public expressed a desire to limit/reduce the amount of leylandii in the villages, which in several locations has been allowed to grow unchecked or is poorly maintained by close cropping, after which the tree quickly dies.

This Policy needs the support of TWBC who will need to insert the conditions in all planning permissions.

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF, High Weald AONB Management Plan.*

**LE6 All proposals for development will be required to demonstrate how all forms of lighting in the development will be controlled and minimised.**

Dark skies are an important part of the rural nature of the Parish. This policy seeks to preserve this, for the benefit of residents and wildlife. It covers street lighting, security lighting, sports field lighting, illuminated signage and advertisements and light spillage from windows. Reduced lighting cuts energy consumption, costs less money, can affect human health, helps wild life and does not necessarily compromise safety or increase crime.

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF, High Weald Management Plan, [www.southdowns.gov.uk](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk).*

**LE7 Open countryside will be retained between settlements in the Parish and those in adjoining parishes. Development must not compromise the remote and undeveloped character of the southeast of the parish.**

The rural character of the parish needs protecting. Sporadic development/ribbon development in the rural areas of the parish needs to be avoided. This policy covers all of the following: the villages of Matfield and Brenchley, the hamlets of Petteridge, Castle Hill, Keys Green and Mile Oak and the dispersed farmsteads. Open countryside will also be retained between the villages and hamlets in this parish and those in adjoining parishes. The southeast of parish should remain relatively remote and undeveloped (H1).

*Evidence: PPS, VE, DF, High Weald AONB, TWBC Landscape Character Assessment, The Parish of Brenchley: Historic Landscape Characterisation.*

**LE8 Developments involving advertisements or signage will be required to demonstrate that they will not detract from the character of the village or rural landscape or from road or pedestrian safety.**

There is a need to retain the character of the parish in its AONB setting so that it is not defaced by inappropriate or repeated advertisements. Verges and footways need to be kept clear for highway users. The cumulative effect of advertisements will be taken into account.

*Evidence: PPS.*

## LE Appendix 1: Views to be protected

- View over Memorial Ground at Brenchley to distant hills (Siegfried Sassoon's writings and locals)
- Views of tower of All Saints Brenchley from
- Memorial Ground
- Public Footpaths WT 282 (leading from Palmers Green Lane) and WT301(Gatehouse Farm)
- View of historic buildings on either side of Brenchley High Street from War memorial
- View of orchard and Oast House behind Brenchley Manor from public footpath WT275
- View from Viewpoint on Crook Road
- View over valley from FP WT278 and BR WT317 (off Crook Road)
- View over Medway valley from FP WT277 (off Crook Road)
- View to Horsmonden from FP WT282 running through Hononton Farm
- View of Furnace Pond and mill race from Public Footpath WT282
- Views from FPs WT268 and WT275, Matfield (Prall's Wood)
- View over open countryside from public Footpaths WT 283 and WT 284, Matfield
- View of Matfield Oast from Chestnut Lane
- View of Matfield Green from Maidstone Road near Village Hall entrance

**Any others? Please add or comment**

## LE Appendix 2: Local Greenspaces

- Brenchley Memorial Hall sports grounds (history, recreation, Sassoon, landscape)
- Brenchley Recreation ground (“Scout field”)(recreation, landscape, children’s playground)
- War memorial greens (history, landscape)
- Oak tree green, centre of Brenchley (village centre and gathering point)
- Jack Verrall Memorial garden (recreation, setting of listed buildings, village landscape)
- Green area outside Wheelwright’s (landscape, visual approach to Matfield Green)
- Green area and pond on left of Maidstone Road, approaching from Paddock Wood, before Coppers Lane (landscape approach to village)
- Verges beside road at entrance to Broad Oak, and roundabout at end of Broad Oak (village landscape)
- Grass verges along Brenchley High Street (village landscape, setting of historic buildings, rural character)
- Wide Grass verge along Maidstone Road in centre of Matfield (outside Baptist chapel, Webb’s Orchard etc.) (ditto)
- Cinderhill Centenary Community Woodland, including football pitch (Roundabout Magazine archive 19?? To May 2018; PC minutes; biodiversity: High Weald AONB, KHWP and KWT web pages)
- Petteridge Recreation Ground (recreation)
- Green area in centre of Church Close, Brenchley (village character and landscape)
- All Saints churchyard (history, landscape, listed tombs and lychgates, 400 year old yew trees, biodiversity)
- St Luke’s churchyard (history, landscape, listed tombs and lychgates, biodiversity)
- Castle Hill Cricket Ground (recreation)
- Verge on the Eastern side at Mile Oak

**Any others? Please add or comment**