

# Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031



*Looking towards the South Downs*

**Published by Woodmancote Parish Council for Consultation under the  
Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and in accordance with EU  
Directive  
2001/42.**

**March 2017**



# **Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031**

**March 2017**

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## **Foreword**

### **From the Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

Dear Residents

Welcome to the Woodmancote Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031.

The Localism Act 2011 gave communities the opportunity to shape their own future whereas prior to the Act, decisions were taken by a local authority, in our case, Horsham District Council.

Having taken the decision to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and thereby allowing residents of Woodmancote to influence the future of the Parish, the Parish Council began the task of appointing advisors and raising the funds to cover the costs.

The procedure for preparing a NP is set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 which came into force on 6th April 2012.

The next step was to distribute questionnaires, hold public meetings and debates, and conduct surveys in order to establish an overview of the Parish needs from the residents' point of view. A pattern emerged from the responses that indicated a clear desire to protect the rural nature of Woodmancote and control development to a level that provides for the needs of the Parish without intruding on the environment and tranquil nature of the area.

A call for sites initiative was arranged where several sites were put forward, discussed and examined. However, we were advised that none of the sites were in compliance with Policy 4 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

Hence, the approach to planning positively for development will be to encourage and support modest windfall proposals that can be satisfactorily accommodated without undermining the quality of life for local people. Our policy expects the countryside policies of the Horsham District Planning Framework and the National Planning Framework will continue to apply significant policy constraint.

The surveys and public meetings indicated a modest need for older residents to downsize and remain in the Parish, for affordable accommodation for younger residents and support for business opportunities.

This Plan will now be submitted to HDC for a decision on suitability for Independent Examination.

The Independent Examiner will decide if this Plan is suitable for a referendum by residents in the Parish. A return of more than 50% of votes to accept the Plan will mean the Plan is adopted by HDC and referred to for Parish development until 2031.

The Parish Council proposes to review formally the WPNP on a five year cycle or to coincide with the review of the HDPF if this cycle differs. The review will assess the performance of the WPNP in influencing the design, quality and housing type as a result of windfall development, in managing development generally, and in bringing forward other proposed infrastructure improvements.

I urge all residents to support the Plan and vote at the referendum so that our Plan can protect the rural nature, wildlife and environment of Woodmancote.

On behalf of the committees and Parish Council, I offer my thanks for the continued support from residents and the guidance from Action in Rural Sussex and rCOH for their valuable advice.

David Austin  
Chair Woodmancote Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

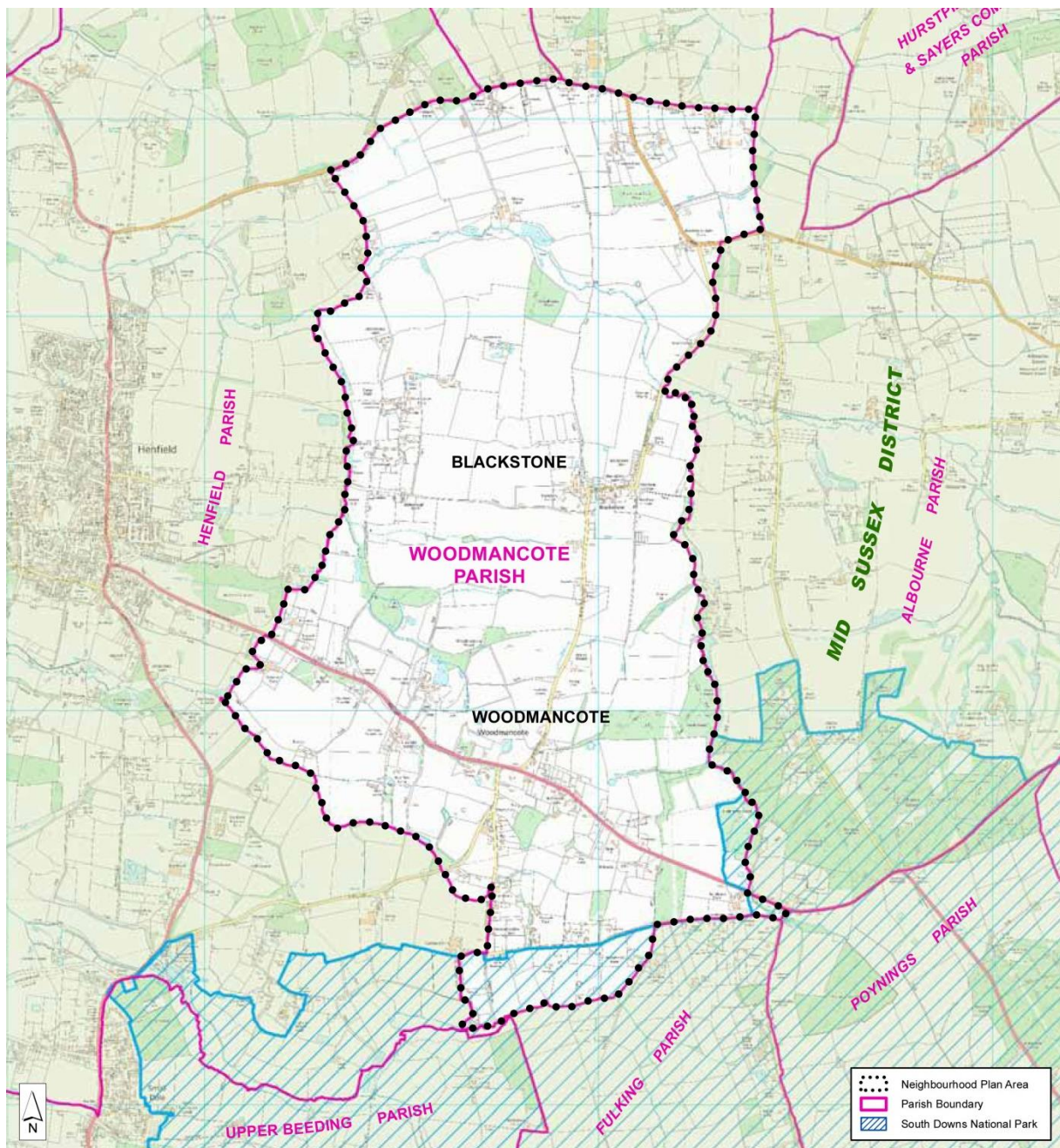
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# 1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Woodmancote Parish Council (WPC) has prepared the Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Plan for the area designated by the local planning authorities; Horsham District Council (HDC) and the South Downs National Park Authority, under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The designated area is shown in Plan A below.



Plan A: The Designated Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Area

- 1.2 The purpose of the Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Plan (WPNP) is to make planning policies that can be used to determine planning applications in the area, alongside other relevant policies in the development plan. Its policies will aim to protect the special character of the Parish to encourage development proposals for the benefit of the local community.
- 1.3 Neighbourhood Plans provide local communities with the chance to shape the future development of their area. Once approved at a referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan becomes a statutory part of the development plan for the area and will carry weight in how planning applications are decided.
- 1.4 Neighbourhood Plans can therefore only contain land use planning policies that can be used for this purpose. This often means that there are more important issues of interest to the local community that cannot be addressed in a Neighbourhood Plan if they are not directly related to planning.
- 1.5 Although there is considerable scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, Neighbourhood Plans must meet some 'basic conditions'. These are:
- Is the Plan consistent with the national planning policy?
  - Is the Plan consistent with local planning policy?
  - Does the Plan promote the principles of sustainable development?
  - Has the process of making of the Plan met the requirements of the European environmental standards and the Human Rights Act?
- 1.6 In addition WPC must be able to show that it has properly consulted local people and other relevant organisations during the process of making its Neighbourhood Plan and has followed the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.
- 1.7 These requirements will be tested by an independent examiner once the Neighbourhood Plan is finalised. If satisfied, the examiner will recommend to HDC that the plan goes to referendum of the local electorate. If a majority of the turnout votes for the Plan, then it becomes adopted as formal planning policy for the area.

### **The Plan Preparation Process**

- 1.8 The plan preparation process has been led by Woodmancote Parish Council, as a 'relevant body' under the Regulations, with decisions delegated to a Neighbourhood Planning Team (Steering Group).
- WPNP Vision Note, November 2014 which established the vision and objectives that the Plan should seek to achieve



- Community Evidence Report of July 2015 that summarised all the evidence on which the WPNP is based
  - Pre-Submission WPNP – the draft version of the plan of January 2016 comprising the vision, objectives, land use policies, implementation proposals and Policies Maps
  - Submission WPNP – this final version of the plan which takes into account the representations received on the draft plan during the public consultation period and has been amended as necessary for submission to HDC and the SDNPA
  - WPNP Basic Conditions Statement – setting out how the conditions set out in paragraph 1.5 above have been met
- 1.9 The WPC requested a screening determination from HDC in respect of the need for WPNP to prepare a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) under the EU directives 42/2001 and the 2004 Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations. HDC’s screening opinion concluded that there was no requirement for an assessment given the Neighbourhood Plan did not intend to allocate land for housing and the contents of the Plan were unlikely to lead to any significant environmental effects.
- 1.10 Upon submission, the WPNP will be subject to independent examination and, if successful, will be put to a local referendum. A majority vote will lead to the WPNP becoming part of the development plan for the parish to inform future development decisions alongside the Horsham District Planning Framework and the Horsham District Core Strategy and General Development Control Policies 2007 (in respect of the SDNPA) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Consultation**

- 1.11 The Parish Council has consulted the local community extensively since the project commenced. Groups of local residents have been established to review and agree which issues should be addressed by the plan. There have also been community surveys to obtain the fullest view of local community concerns, needs and wants from the WPNP.
- 1.12 The Pre-Submission WPNP was published by the Parish Council for public consultation for a six-week period commencing on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2016 and ending on Sunday, 3 April 2016. The full details of all the formal and informal consultations are provided in the accompanying Consultation Statement.
- 1.13 The Woodmancote Parish Council website contains all the necessary background information on the Woodmancote Neighbourhood Plan. The web address is: [www.woodmancoteparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.woodmancoteparishcouncil.co.uk).

## 2. The Neighbourhood Area



*Chess Stream*

- 2.1 The Parish of Woodmancote is located in the south eastern portion of Horsham District in West Sussex, its eastern flank bordering the Parish of Albourne in Mid Sussex, the western flank bordering Henfield in Horsham District. The Parish contains two settlements, Woodmancote which is located in the south of the parish adjacent to the A281 and Blackstone, lying at the geographical centre of the Parish on Blackstone Lane, which runs directly north from Woodmancote. Blackstone is designated as a conservation area. The Parish is divided by the A281.
- 2.2 Woodmancote is a rural Parish covering an area of some 849 hectares (2090 acres) and borders Henfield to the west and Albourne to the east. A single main A-road, the A281 runs east-to-west through the southern third of the parish area, connecting the parish to Henfield which provides retail and other services, and also links to Horsham. The A281 also runs eastwards towards the A23 where it meets Pyecombe. The B2116 road runs along the north of Woodmancote Parish linking to the village of Albourne to the east, and further eastwards to Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks and onwards to Lewes.
- 2.3 There is no railway station in the Parish, the nearest located 6 miles to the east at Hassocks, with the larger station of Burgess Hill located 8 miles to the north east. Both of these stations provide access to the main rail service which connects Brighton to London via Gatwick Airport. This line provides regular services to destinations in the north and the south.

- 2.4 The Parish is sparsely populated having a population of just 545 (0.6 people per ha) with 59% of working age and 215 households (2011 census). It has limited services consisting of a Parish Church, a Parish Hall and a public house/restaurant. A number of businesses are located in the Parish, however many of these are not retailers but are service providers or associated with manufacturing.
- 2.5 To the south of the A281 lies the South Downs National Park. Whilst to the north east of the B2116 is Firland Park Industrial Estate, a 5 hectare multi-let business park, comprising a number of old and new industrial units, workshops and open storage compounds.
- 2.6 Sections of the north and central sections of the parish are areas of Entry Level Environmental Stewardship and a small section surrounding Woodmancote Place is Organic Entry Level Stewardship. Environmental Stewardship is a land management scheme that provides funding to deliver effective environmental management on their land. (see Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre website [sxbr.org.uk](http://sxbr.org.uk)).
- 2.7 The lifeline to the success of wildlife in the Parish is the Chess Stream and Cutlers Brook that spans the width of the Parish; entering to the east of Blackstone Lane and exiting at Park Farm. This is a feature of the Parish that should be preserved due to the habitats and flood plains it provides. The river regularly floods which would restrict development nearby.
- 2.8 Woodmancote has a sports ground whose facilities include cricket, football, stoolball and a pavilion open to all. There is also a children's playground. These facilities are freely open to all residents and are excellent facilities for the community. There are a selection of various rural enterprises on the B2116.



*Sports ground, Blackstone*

### **3. Planning Policy Context**

3.1 The Parish lies within Horsham District Council (HDC) in the County of West Sussex.

3.2 The National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) published by the Government in 2012 is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans. The WPNP must demonstrate that it is consistent with the provisions of the NPPF. The following paragraphs of the NPPF are especially relevant to the WPNP:

- Supporting a prosperous rural economy (paragraph 28)
- Good Design (paragraph 58)
- Protecting healthy communities (paragraph 70)
- Protecting local green spaces (paragraph 76)
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (paragraph 109)
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paragraph 126)
- Neighbourhood planning (paragraph 185)

3.3 HDC has planning policies that are helping to shape strategy and policies of the WPNP. The WPNP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan as required by the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

#### **The Horsham District Planning Framework 2011-2031 (HDPF)**

3.4 The HDPF was adopted on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and contains a number of strategic and development management policies that provide an insight into the direction of future local planning policy, for the WPNP to consider.

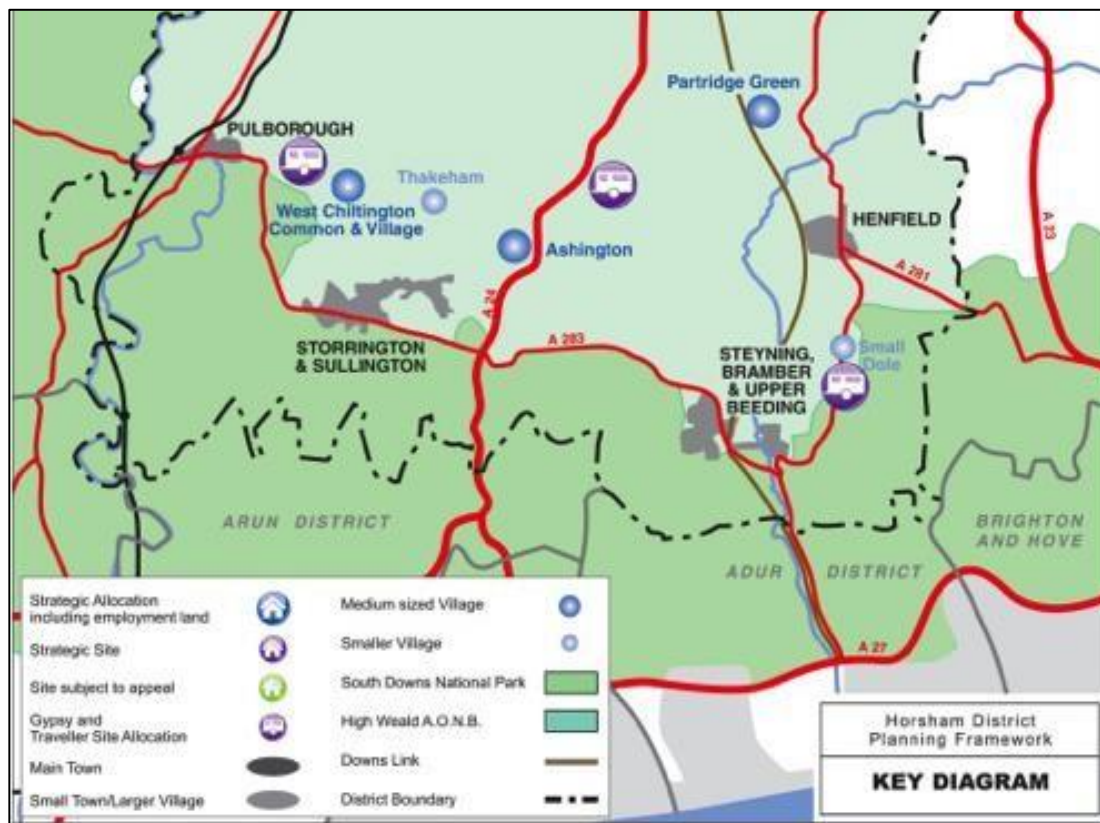
3.5 The policies below are some of the most relevant to be considered by the WPNP:

- P1 Sustainable Development
- P2 Strategic Development
- P3 Development Hierarchy
- P4 Settlement Expansion
- P9 Employment Development
- P10 Rural Economic Development
- P15 Housing Provision
- P16 Meeting Local Housing Needs
- P17 Exceptions Housing Schemes
- P20 Rural Workers Accommodation
- P24 Environmental Protection

- P25 District Character and the Natural Environment
- P26 Countryside Protection
- P27 Settlement Coalescence
- P28 Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside
- P31 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- P33 Development principles
- P34 Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment
- P37 Sustainable Design and Construction
- P38 Flooding
- P39 Infrastructure Provision
- P40 Sustainable Transport
- P43 Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

- 3.6 Whilst the HDPF has only very recently been adopted (27 November 2015), the WPNP anticipated its strategic policy framework. Importantly, the Inspector's Interim Report of his examination of the HDPF, which proposed the suspension of the examination until summer 2015, found its spatial strategy and other non-housing policies sound. This strategy identified a clear role for neighbourhood planning in the district contributing to meeting local housing need. Whilst the total number of new homes needed in the district to 2031 will have to increase, their spatial distribution is not likely to change.
- 3.7 With the exception of land within the South Downs National Park, the HDPF replaces the policies contained in the Horsham District Core Strategy and General Development Control Policies which were both adopted in 2007.
- 3.8 The HDPF sets out the planning strategy for the years up to 2031 to deliver the social, economic and environmental needs for the district (outside the South Downs National Park). The HDPF acknowledges the important, complementary role of the Neighbourhood Plans in forming the Development Plan for the District. It states that "many local needs and objectives will be identified and met through Neighbourhood Plans and this will include the identification of locally specific issues and requirements (including) the allocation of sites ..." (para. 2.11, p7).
- 3.9 In this respect, Policy 3 setting out the settlement hierarchy of the District and Policy 4 settlement expansion is relevant to the response to housing by the WPNP. Woodmancote only has 'unidentified settlements' in the hierarchy with no built up area boundaries and therefore the Parish is considered to be in the 'countryside' where development "*will be more strictly controlled*". This means that there is no expectation on the WPNP to allocate sites for new homes, notwithstanding the desire of the WPNP Steering Group to consider potential sites for low cost housing to meet local needs.

3.10 In November 2015, Horsham DC published an updated Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment for the Parish (see Annex B). This confirms there are no currently developable housing sites identified in the Parish.



*Plan B: Horsham District Council Preferred Strategy 2013- Key Diagram*

3.11 In November 2014 the Government issued a ministerial statement setting out proposed changes to the National Policy which will impact upon application of existing affordable housing Districts in England. The statement required only sites of 11 or more dwellings to deliver affordable housing, but was subsequently withdrawn following a High Court challenge. However, the judgement was subsequently overturned in May 2016 in the Court of Appeal but it is considered that it provides flexibility in how the policy may be applied locally. HDC have confirmed that in the interim their existing policy will apply. Therefore the affordable housing thresholds remain as set out in the HDPF:

- Development 0-4 dwellings- no requirement for affordable homes
- Development 5-14 dwellings- min 20% affordable homes required
- Development 15+ dwellings- min 35% affordable homes

### **South Downs National Park Development Plan**

- 3.12 Only a very small part to the south of the parish is covered by the South Downs National Park (SDNP). The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is in the process of preparing its first Local Plan since its inception in 2011 and the plan is due to be adopted in 2017. Should any of the WPNP policies cover the area of the SDNP, Horsham District Core Strategy and General Development Control Policies which were both adopted in 2007 will apply and the WPNP will need to ensure its conformity with its strategic policies and the national planning policy as set out below.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Circular 2010**

- 3.13 Government policy relating to National Parks is set out in English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Circular and NPPF confirm that National Parks have the highest status of protection and the NPPF states at paragraph 115 that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in the National Parks and that the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations and should also be given great weight in National Parks.
- 3.14 The two statutory purposes of the SDNP designation are:
- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of their areas;
  - To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of their areas.
- 3.15 If there is a conflict between these two purposes, conservation takes precedence. There is also a duty to foster the economic and social well being of the local community in pursuit of these purposes.
- 3.16 The 2007 Horsham Core Strategy contains a range of strategic policies, although it could not have anticipated the advent of neighbourhood planning. The following policies of the HDC Gen Dev Ctrl & Core Strat (2007) which apply in the SDNP are of most relevance to the WPNP:
- Policy CP1: Landscape & Townscape Character – protecting, conserving and enhancing landscape and townscape character and biodiversity
  - Policy CP3: Improving the Quality of New Development – expecting proposals to meet high design standards and to be informed by adopted design statements
  - Policy CP8: Small Scale Greenfield Sites – allowing for small scale extensions to the smaller villages to meet local housing needs
  - Policy CP9: Managing the Release of Housing Land – managing the release of land for housing for delivery over the whole plan period



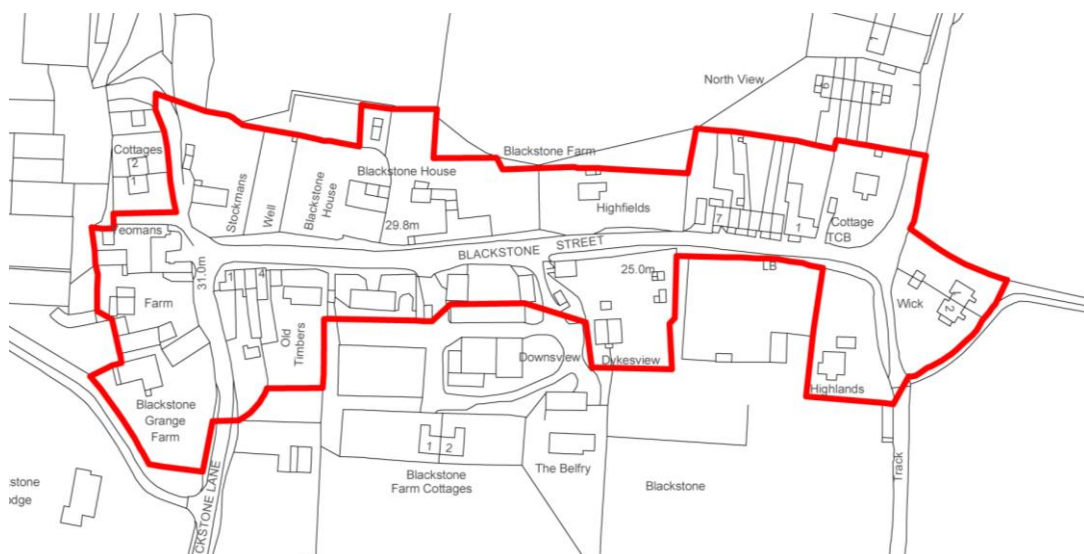
- Policy CP11: Employment Sites & Premises – encouraging the use of existing sites and protecting them from unnecessary loss
- Policy CP12: Meeting Housing Needs – setting affordable housing provision on sites of 15 dwellings or more at 40%
- Policy CP14: Protection & Enhancement of Community Facilities & Services – encouraging proposals for new facilities and protecting existing facilities including open spaces
- Policy CP15: Rural Strategy – encouraging rural economic development in defined settlements
- Policy CP17: Vitality & Viability of Existing Centres – defining retail frontages in Steyning to encourage new retail development and to protect existing units from unnecessary loss

3.17 The **South Downs National Park** Preferred Options Local Plan Policy SD22 identifies the proposed development strategy for the National Park and the settlements within which the principle of development within settlement boundaries will be supported. Clause 5 of Policy SD22 confirms that small sites with the potential for development within the National Park, but on the edge of settlements outside the National Park will only be allocated for development where they comply with other 'relevant policies'.

3.18 The Plan, however, fails to be specific on what these relevant policies are, and contains no position or guidance on how to assess potential development on the edge of the National Park. Policy SD23 and the evidence base indicates no specific provision will be made for that part of the Park in the WPNP area.

### **Conservation Areas**

3.19 The Parish has one conservation area which covers most of the settlement of Blackstone, however there is no conservation area appraisal.



- 3.20 Future development should respect the setting and views into, and out of, the Conservation Area to sustain the character of the village.



*Blackstone Street*

## 4. Community Views on Planning Issues

- 4.1 The Parish Council has consulted with the local community during the course of the Plan preparation process, and the WPNP is based upon the results of these consultations, which have included meetings, open days and community surveys.
- 4.2 **Initial Questionnaire:** In early December 2013, Christmas cards together with separate response cards were hand delivered to all households with 3 key questions relating to residents' feelings about living within the Parish and their hopes and aspirations for the Parish in the years ahead. The stamped addressed response cards had a return address to a councillor's home who then collated the responses in readiness to present to a council meeting in January. The replies helped the steering group formulate the main NDP questionnaire at a later stage.
- 4.3 **NDP First Public Meeting:** In February, a door to door leaflet exercise was carried out asking for residents who were interested in the neighbourhood plan to attend a public meeting. On the 8th of March 2014, a successful "meet and greet" session was held between a number of Parish Councillors and residents within the parish. A general discussion was held at which time it was put across to the residents the Parish Councils desire and need to obtain help from within the community in preparing our Neighbourhood Plan. There was a positive reaction to help from all those who attended and contact details were obtained in order that the volunteers could be kept abreast of any developments.
- 4.4 **Parish Annual Meeting:** A Neighbourhood Plan discussion at the Annual Parish Meeting on the 8th April 2014
- 4.5 **Neighbourhood Plan Public Meeting:** A special inaugural meeting took place prior to the usual monthly Parish Council meeting in October. The meeting was well publicised on Parish notice boards and on the Parish website inviting all members of the Parish community to attend and if able to offer their time and help by being part of the Neighbourhood Plan process. Its purpose was to establish a Steering Group for the (WPNP) Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Plan. A number of people put their names forward and the Steering Group was duly formed.
- 4.6 **Topic Groups:** Three working groups were established to cover the following topics: Environment and Biodiversity, Transport and Infrastructure, Housing and Development.
- 4.7 **Visioning Workshop:** The Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Plan (WPNP) steering group held a three hour visioning workshop at the Sports Pavilion, the home of the Cricket Club, with their consultants on 3rd

November 2014. This session was to help both steering group members and their consultants to understand Woodmancote as a place in terms of its planning context and constraints, any development pressures, spatial structure and its character and assets.

### **Key findings of the vision workshop**

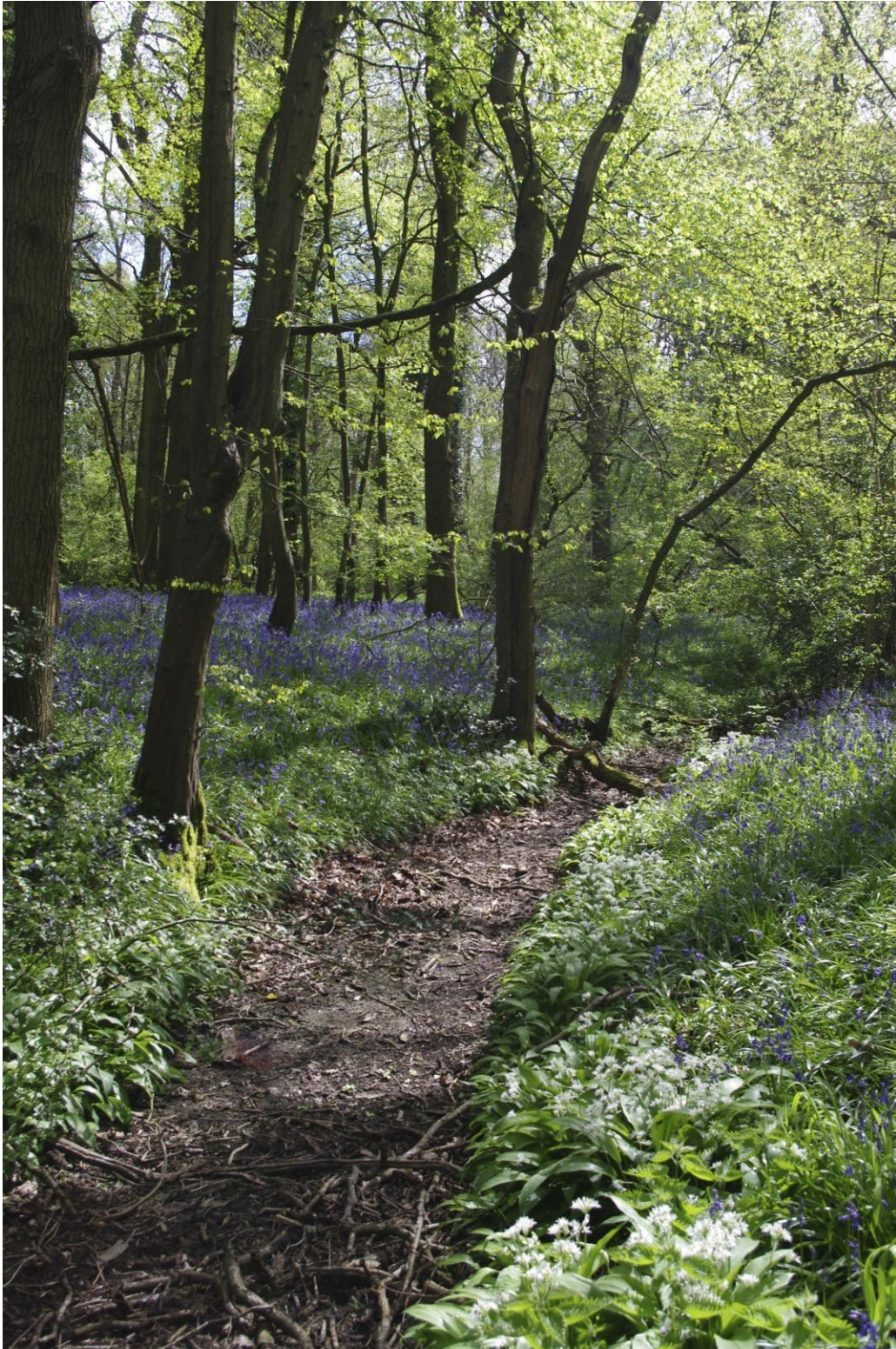
- 4.8 The Parish is designated as unclassified in the Horsham Settlement Hierarchy with few or no facilities or social networks and limited accessibility, being reliant on other villages/towns to meet its needs. It has no built-up area boundaries and is therefore considered to be in countryside, hence development will be strictly controlled. It is made up of a number of settlement areas that have grown up around the network of roads and lanes within the parish. These are:
- The southern part of the Parish; with the main residential concentration along the A281 and a more mixed layout, which includes offices, employment uses, Woodmancote Church, Parish Hall and a mobile homes park, along Bramlands Lane.
  - Blackstone; around a dogleg in Blackstone Lane and around 1 mile to the north of the A281. Predominantly residential with some other uses related to agricultural operations and businesses.
  - The northern edge of the parish bounded by the B2116 Wheatsheaf Road, which is relatively undeveloped and includes residential properties, a pub/restaurant, business and employment uses and a commercial garden.
  - The western side of the parish, a network of lanes running south of the B2116 Wheatsheaf Road with connecting clusters of agricultural and historic residential buildings.
- 4.9 **Call for Sites:** Engagement with landowners and agents working on behalf of landowners through a three week call for sites publicity on website, notice boards and via emails from November to December 2nd 2014.
- 4.10 **Neighbourhood Plan Survey:** Between November and December 2014, a neighbourhood plan survey was hand delivered to every household in the parish accompanied by publicity and reminders to complete and return. As part of the process of consulting with residents over the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Steering Group developed and undertook the survey in order to gather opinions and views on the issues which the document should prioritise. The survey was conducted using a questionnaire consisting of both closed and open-ended questions. This mix allows questions to focus on obtaining specific pieces of information tailored at responding to certain issues or themes (closed questions), whilst allowing a degree of freedom in the responses which people provide (open questions). A total of 77 questionnaires were returned. A response rate of 32.8% with a total of 2983 comments.

4.11 Protecting and preserving the character of Woodmancote was identified as the highest priority (88%) in the Neighbourhood Plan survey of November 2014. The additional headlines from the survey questions were:

- Small scale affordable housing
- Provision of new facilities, e.g. shops
- Maintenance and improvements to pavements, verges and Public Rights of Way
- Road maintenance and drainage
- Excessive speeding and road signage
- Better bus services
- Faster and more reliable broadband



## 5. Vision, Objectives & Land Use Policies



*Woodhouse Wood*

## **Vision**

### 5.1 The vision for Woodmancote Parish in 2031 is:

*“Woodmancote will have remained an attractive Parish in its Sussex setting and preserved its distinctive rural character. All of the settlement areas that make up the Parish will have retained their own distinctive character and will have remained separate with the quality of the landscape spaces between them continuing to define their identity.*

*The Parish will enjoy a positive relationship with the South Downs National Park which will be more accessible for recreation and leisure by the local community and there will be a shared ambition to protect the setting and views.*

*There will have been a modest growth in housing numbers through the provision of new homes, purpose designed to meet local needs including elderly downsizers. Any future development will not detract from the character and setting of the Parish.*

*The parish will have continued to support local employment business and facilitated new employment opportunities within the Parish for local people and to support the services within the parish.”*

## **Objectives**

### 5.2 To achieve this vision a number of key objectives have been identified as follows:

- To protect the character, qualities and identity of the landscape setting to manage the impacts of any future growth on the best and most versatile agricultural land and maintain the spatial and qualitative relationships between the areas.
- To provide additional community amenities if needed to support a wider range of Parish needs and reinforce a shared identity and purpose.
- Windfall housing to meet local needs, in particular for elderly downsizers, that are more sympathetic to the scale, topography and character of the parish and that will not have a detrimental impact on the setting.
- To sustain the significance of the Conservation Area, Listed Buildings and other heritage assets and their settings.
- To secure the future of the existing rural and other employment uses within the parish and plan for their growth to serve the parish needs.
- To plan for increased public access to, and enjoyment of the SDNP as a recreation and leisure amenity.

## **Monitoring & Review Policies**



- 5.3 The WPNP will be monitored by Horsham District Council and the Parish Council using data collected in planning monitoring reports. The objectives will form the core of the monitoring activity but other data collected and reported at a Parish level relevant to the Plan may also be included. It is proposed that the WPNP will be formally reviewed on a five-year cycle or to coincide with the development and review of the Horsham District Development Plan if this cycle is different.

### **Land Use Planning Policies**



*Annual event in the Parish*

- 5.4 The planning policy context and the community engagement work already undertaken have raised a number of issues for the Neighbourhood Plan to address:
- What are the most important characteristics of the Parish that any new development should respect?
  - What community facilities would be on the list of those to be protected from change of use?
- 5.5 Land use policies are used to determine planning applications made for development proposals. They can establish the principles for retaining or changing the use of land in settlements and in the countryside. They can also set out the conditions against which development proposals will be judged in terms of their design, access etc.
- 5.6 The purpose of these policies is to either encourage planning applications to be made for things the local community wants to see happen or to discourage applications for developments that they do not want to happen. Policies must be clearly written so they can be easily applied when considering planning applications.
- 5.7 The plan deliberately avoids repeating existing national or local planning policies. The proposed policies therefore focus on a relatively small number of key development issues in the area. For all other planning matters, the national and local policies of

other planning documents - The National Planning Policy Framework and the policies of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) - will continue to be used.

- 5.8 Set out below are the proposed policies of the Plan. Each policy has a number and title and the policy itself is written in bold italics for ease of reference. There is also a short statement explaining the intention of the policy and any other relevant background information.

**Policy 1: A Spatial Plan for the Parish**

***Development proposals within the Parish will be supported and the re-use of previously-developed sites will be encouraged provided they accord with other provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan and development plan; that the proposals are of high quality design and appropriate in scale, massing and character; where appropriate they preserve the significance of the Blackstone Conservation Area; and, they will not undermine the landscape and character of the Parish nor the setting of the South Downs National Park.***

- 5.9 This policy sets out the spatial plan for the WPNP and its main intentions for development. Due to the rural character and the absence of 'identified settlements' in the Parish, the development plan for Horsham District does not expect any planned housing growth to be allocated through the WPNP. However, the WPNP is intended to protect the area from harmful intrusion whilst providing for local housing needs, and wherever possible, stimulating employment for its community.
- 5.10 This policy is in line with HDPF Policy 3 'Development Hierarchy', defining the settlements of the Parish as 'Unclassified Settlements' with no built-up area boundaries. The whole of the WPNP area is therefore considered in policy terms to be in the 'Countryside' where development is more strictly controlled.
- 5.11 HDPF Policy 4 'Settlement Expansion' supports expansion of settlements outside the built-up area boundaries through a NP which is appropriate to scale and identifies local housing/employment need. Such development must be contained within defensible boundaries and where character features are maintained and enhanced. Whilst a 'call for sites' and site assessment exercise has been undertaken which identified sites, it has not been possible to allocate these due to their failure to conform to Policy 4.
- 5.12 Over the last ten years, 8 dwellings (new and replacement) have been consented within the Parish including one keyworker and one agricultural worker dwelling. Over the fifteen-year period of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is expected that further windfall sites will come forward to expand the housing stock which it is hoped will help to meet local housing need.

- 5.13 The HDPF Policy 15 sets out housing provision of at least 1500 homes to be provided in 2011-2031 through allocations in Neighbourhood Plans, with a further 750 windfall units. The reason for supporting development of new homes (as stated in Policy 3) is to provide for the local housing needs in neighbourhood areas.
- 5.14 Hence, the approach to planning positively for development will be to encourage and support modest windfall proposals that can be satisfactorily accommodated without undermining the quality and character of the Parish nor the quality of life for local people. The policy expects the countryside policies of the HDPF, the Horsham District Core Strategy and General Development Control Policies and the NPPF to continue to apply significant policy constraints, including NPPF paragraph 115 and 116 in relation to development in the South Downs National Park.

### **Policy 2: Housing Windfall Sites**

***Development proposals for small scale housing development of 5 or fewer dwellings on infill and previously developed sites within the Parish will be supported subject to the proposals being well designed and meeting all relevant requirements in other policies in the neighbourhood plan, and where such development:***

- i. preserves the essential open character of the parish and does not lead to the subdivision of larger sites of a unified character;***
- ii. the proposal delivers, wherever feasible and viable, on-site affordable homes in accordance with the development plan policy in force at the time of application, and implements the adopted Horsham Housing Register and Nominations Policy in respect of the allocation of some homes to those households with a local connection;***
- iii. is appropriately contained and avoids harming the amenities of adjoining residential properties nor results in unsuitable access;***
- iii. where the site lies within or adjoins a designated Green Link defined in Policy 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan and indicated on the policy map, the layout and landscape scheme contributes to maintaining and improving the Green Link;***
- iv. respects and where possible enhances the natural, built and historic environment including where appropriate the landscape setting of the South Downs National Park.***

- 5.15 The existing policy framework provides few opportunities for housing development due to the general policy of countryside restraint that applies in the parish. In response to the parish survey the majority of residents indicated they wished to see greenfield land protected from development including extensions. This policy will allow consideration for housing development proposals of no more than 5 dwellings and especially those designed to suit local need. To conserve the rural setting of

Woodmancote and to protect the surrounding countryside from unnecessary encroaching development, the policy supports proposals on infill sites defined for the purpose of the policy as both previously used land and greenfield land where this is appropriately contained. Proposals for rural 'exception' housing schemes may be acceptable provided they meet the criteria of other development plan policies most notably Policy 17 'Exception Housing Schemes' of the HDPF.

- 5.16 As stated previously, there will continue to be 'windfall' opportunities arising on previously developed land. Of the windfall housing schemes considered in the area since 2004, none have exceeded this scale of development. The preference for small sites is that they will be distributed across the Parish and over the full plan period. This will enable the impacts of development on the local environment and on the local roads to be manageable.
- 5.17 The policy also makes clear that proposals for greater than 5 new homes will be resisted. This will extend to include attempts to subdivide larger sites of a unified character, which will not be supported.
- 5.18 It is important that as many affordable homes are delivered as possible in the parish, in line with development plan policy on windfall sites and on rural exception sites, so that the level of housing need, as well as need that emerges throughout the plan period, is met.
- 5.19 The policy requires all such windfall site proposals to deliver those homes on-site rather than meet the need through financial contributions for provision elsewhere in the area or wider District. It accepts that the requirement must enable feasible and viable development proposals and will expect evidence to be provided if this cannot be achieved before off-site contributions are considered. In any event, the policy supports the use of the adopted Horsham Nominations Policy to favour households with a local connection in the allocation of affordable homes on the first and subsequent tenancies. Rural exception sites may be another effective means of achieving this objective.
- 5.20 In all cases, the policy requires proposals to reflect the key characteristics and setting of the parish and to adhere to WPNP Policy 3 – 'Design'. It also requires that the design of the layout and landscape schemes of proposals on sites within or adjoining a designated Green Link in Policy 6 do not undermine the visual, physical or ecological integrity of the Link and should improve those features of the Link wherever possible.
- 5.21 During the pre-submission consultation it was brought to our attention by Horsham District Council of the possible redevelopment of the Blackstone Rise garage site in Blackstone. The site is owned by the District Council. This Policy would support development proposals intending to secure the long term benefit of this site as long as the existing parking facilities are retained or increased at the site.

### **Policy 3: Design**

***The scale, density, massing, height, landscape design, layout and materials of all development proposals, including alterations to existing buildings, will be required to reflect the architectural and historic character and scale of the surrounding buildings, and is appropriate to the plot size. In the areas adjoining the South Downs National Park, proposals will be supported that avoid any detrimental effect on its landscape and scenic beauty.***

***Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate they accord with the following provisions:***

- i. the use of high quality, local vernacular building materials and finishes;***
- ii. adequate off-road car parking spaces in line with the WSCC residential parking standards and the amount and method of parking provision should not adversely affect road safety, or result in unacceptable levels of on-road parking demand;***
- iii. The landscape scheme retaining existing trees and hedges with any removed trees and hedges to be replaced with suitable species;***
- iv. The scheme layout maintains an appropriate distance between houses to avoid cramped development and to avoid harming the amenities of adjoining residential properties, and;***
- v. The development should provide a connection to the sewerage and water distribution networks at the nearest points of adequate capacity.***



*Woodmancote church*



- 5.22 This policy requires all development proposals to deliver high quality schemes that reflect the distinct character of the Parish and accord with the countryside policies of the development plan. It also acknowledges that part of the Parish lies within the South Downs National Park and therefore in this area the design of any development must be appropriate to the SDNP setting.
- 5.23 Protecting and preserving the character of Woodmancote was identified as the highest priority (88%) in the Neighbourhood Plan survey of November 2014. The policy is in line with HDPF Policy 33 Development Principles and P34 Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment.

#### **Policy 4: Community Facilities**

***Proposals to improve the viability of an established community use of the following building and facility, as shown on the policies map, by way of the partial or complete redevelopment of existing buildings will be supported, provided that an alternative facility of equivalent or better quality to meet community needs is provided.***

***The design of the scheme is appropriate and any resulting increase in use will not harm the amenities of adjoining residential properties:***

- **Woodmancote Parish Hall**



*Parish Hall*

- 5.24 This policy supports development proposals intended to secure the long term benefit of the Woodmancote Parish Hall (0.44ha). This is a facility that is important to the local community and remaining viable will require investment in updating it.
- 5.25 It comprises a range of buildings and associated land, all of which may be capable of being extended or redeveloped in ways that are suitable to a rural location. However, the policy requires that proposals avoid increasing the use of community facilities to the extent that they may harm the amenities of adjoining residential properties, for example through traffic movements, on-street parking and noise or light pollution.
- 5.26 It is widely agreed with parishioners that the Parish Hall site would benefit from future development in order to finance the redevelopment of the hall and safeguard its future.
- 5.27 This policy is in line with HDPF Policy 43 Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation, and Policy 11 Tourism and Cultural Facilities in enhancing and promoting local cultural facilities on a scale appropriate to its location.

### **Policy 5: Local Employment**

***Proposals that result in the loss of an existing employment or business use, as shown on the policies map, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that its continued use is no longer viable. Proposals to expand an existing employment or business use will be supported, provided any adverse impact on flood risk, local amenity, traffic, noise and landscape can demonstrate proven and deliverable mitigation.***



*Sussex Prairie Gardens*



- 5.28 The Parish is predominantly farming and agriculture with a scattering of small business interests. The Parish has a garden centre of international standing and a large industrial park indicating a thriving area that is seen as attractive to developers. The policy attempts to protect the area from harmful intrusion whilst providing stimulating employment and business opportunities where possible.
- 5.29 The policy is in line with Policy 9 of HDPF Employment Development in terms of demonstrating the need and/or viability of the employment use and Policy 10 Rural Economic Development in terms of maintaining the diverse and sustainable enterprises and contributing to the wider rural community.

**Policy 6: 'Green Links' throughout the Parish**

***The Neighbourhood Plan proposes the preservation of the Woodmancote 'Green Link' network within the parish of Woodmancote as shown on the policies map.***

***The network comprises footpaths/bridleways linking housing, community facilities, employment and a variety of green infrastructure assets including the South Downs National Park.***

***Development proposals on land within or adjoining the 'green link' network will be required to align their amenity space requirements with its objectives, so that they may contribute to its successful formation, maintenance and signage.***



*Footpath crossing Cutlers Brook*

- 5.30 One of the WPNP objectives is to increase public access to, and enjoyment of the SDNP as a recreation and leisure amenity. This policy seeks to improve the access throughout the Parish by means other than the car or public transport by improving walking links throughout the Parish. The 'green links' network comprises a series of interlinking footpaths providing access throughout the Parish and to maintaining a 'green gateway' to the South Downs National Park. The access to the SDNP is encouraged to improve the local tourism economy and the healthy enjoyment of natural assets.
- 5.31 The policy is in line with HDPF Policy 11 Tourism and Cultural Facilities, in enhancing and promoting local cultural facilities, tourism and recreational activities on a scale appropriate to its location. The policy further respects and encourages a closer relationship with the surrounding countryside and the SDNP. It takes account of Policy 25 'District Character and Natural Environment, Policy 26 Countryside Protection, Policy 30 Protected Landscapes and Policy 31 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity.
- 5.32 The Parish of Woodmancote has an abundance of footpaths which are clearly signed. The majority of the styles are well maintained. Close to the hamlet of Blackstone the paths have been associated with means of communication between neighbouring Henfield and Hurstpierpoint / Hassocks. Today they are used by parishioners for personal exercise -many of them with accompanying animals. The footpaths south of the A281 appear to have had the purpose of linking the Parish to Henfield in the west and Fulking in the South.
- 5.33 The countryside north of the A281 is open and expansive whereas to the south one gains a greater awareness of the gentle contours which ripple the landscape. There are four obstacles\* on the paths which require attention but they do not detract from the pleasure gained from walking in the Parish. It is not an area which immediately attracts the walking fraternity, although walkers from further afield are able to traverse the Parish by the footpath network.
- 5.34 Parish Council led activity is replacing some styles with oak gates in the Parish. And the following further improvements are necessary:
- Footpath Blackstone to Henfield - long stretch of path floods badly. 400 yards east of Blackstone. A review of drainage should be undertaken to eliminate the problem.
  - Footpath leading northward near to Blackstone Gate Wood completely overgrown by brambles. These need to be cleared and the footpath reconstituted.
  - Fallen tree obliterated style and path way south of Turners Hill Farm. A section of the tree needs to be removed to allow the pathway to be reconstituted and the signpost to be resurrected.

## **Policy 7: Broadband**

***Proposals to provide access to a super-fast broadband network to the Parish, and outlying properties in the countryside, and to improve the speed of existing services, will be supported, provided the location and design of any above-ground network installations does not harm the character of the local area.***

***Proposals for housing and employment must provide appropriate ducting suited to fibre communications technologies that is either connected to the public highway; through satellite broadband; a community led local access network; or to another location that can be justified.***

- 5.35 This policy supports the improvement of access to super-fast (fibre and copper based) broadband infrastructure and services across this very rural parish. In doing so, the policy is supportive of above-ground installations requiring planning consent, provided they are sited and designated to accord with rural location.
- 5.36 The NP survey confirmed that those who work from home indicated that improved internet access (high speed broadband) would support improved business efficiency. There has been a market failure to provide good connectivity in rural areas resulting in a number of government backed initiatives to remedy this situation. This failure extends to the Parish. The ability of these initiatives to deliver good connectivity to all existing and new developments is, as yet, unknown.

## **6. Implementation**

- 6.1 The Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Plan (WPNP) will be implemented through a combination of the local planning authority's consideration and determination of planning applications for development in the parish, and through steering public and private investment into a series of infrastructure proposals contained in the Plan.

### **Development Management**

- 6.2 Most of the policies contained in the WPNP will be delivered by landowners and developers. In preparing the WPNP, care has been taken to ensure, as far as possible, that the policies are achievable.
- 6.3 Whilst the local planning authority will be responsible for development management, the Parish Council will also use the WPNP to frame its representations on submitted planning applications. It will also work with the District Council to monitor the progress of sites coming forward for development.

### **Infrastructure**

- 6.4 The Neighbourhood Plan will enable funding to be secured by HDC from planning obligations and from the Horsham Community Infrastructure Levy in order to make financial contributions to a number of infrastructure projects during the life of the plan.
- 6.5 The Parish Council will wish to see sufficient infrastructure payments made by developers to fund local schools, health and utility services as a matter of course. However, it would like to express some preferences about contributions and spending in relation to other matters in the Parish, including:
1. Footpath maintenance including those matters set out in 5.35
  2. Pavement maintenance
  3. Maintenance of information boards, signage, etc.
  4. Future traffic calming on the A281 and B2116
  5. Improving community transport links
  6. Improvements to off street parking within the Parish
- 6.6 The prioritisation and timing of these projects will be based on an assessment by the Parish Council of community need, viability and affordability and long-term community benefit and urgency.

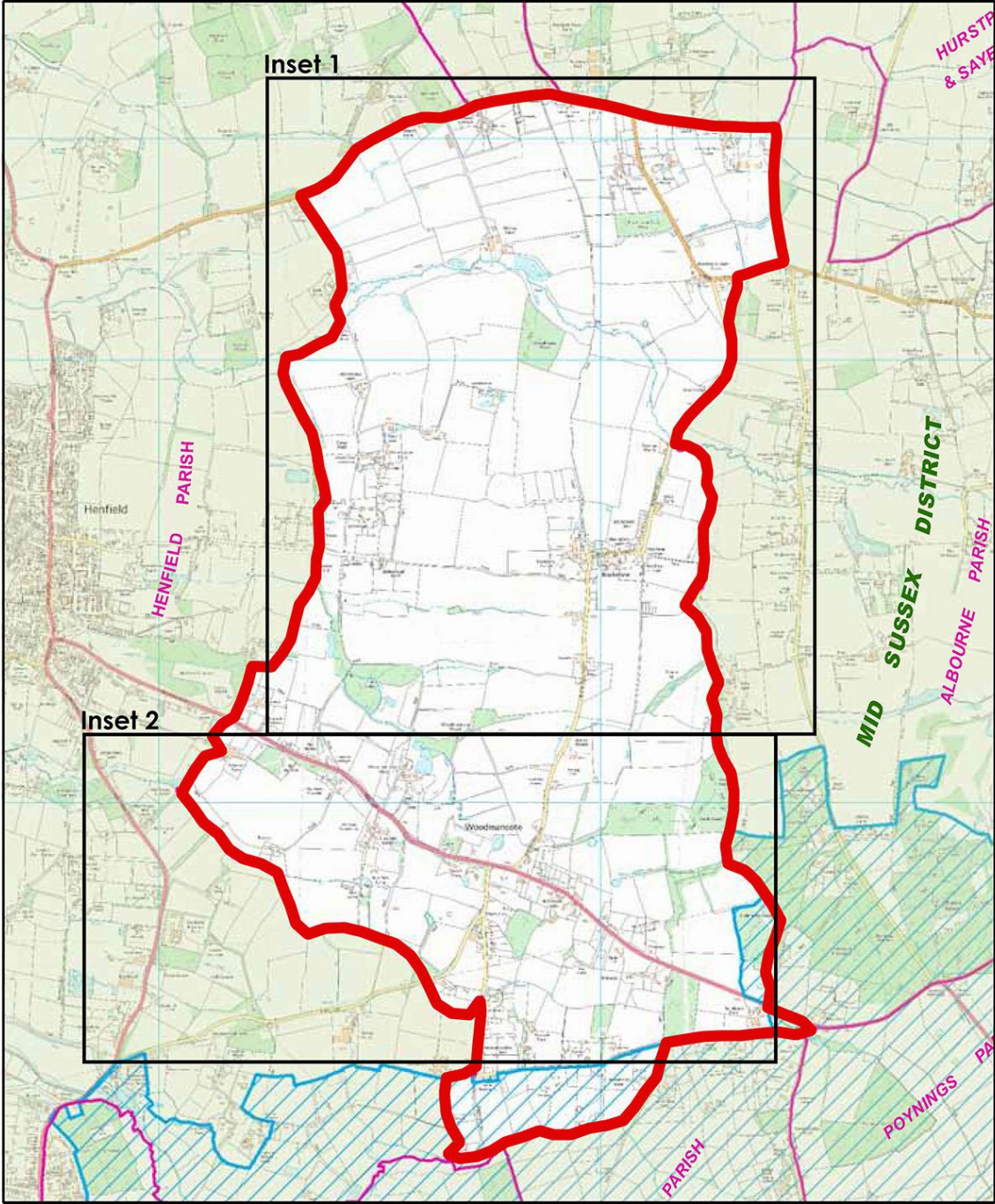
- 6.7 This series of local infrastructure projects will be prioritized for investment from Section 106 agreements and, if implemented in the future, Horsham District Council Community Infrastructure Levy Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (May 2014). A minimum of 25% of the levy collected from development in the Parish will be passed to the Parish Council for investment in the Parish. This provides the local community with an indication of the priorities for investing the fund to improve local infrastructure as a result of new development in the Parish.
- 6.8 In addition, other policies of the Neighbourhood Plan require some planning obligations to be entered into as part of planning consents to finance and deliver specific infrastructure projects relating to the development scheme in order to make the scheme satisfactory in line with paragraphs 173 and 204 of the Nation Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).



*Rural event in Blackstone*



Policies Maps



**Woodmancote Neighbourhood Plan**  
Policies Map, Submission Plan  
May 2016

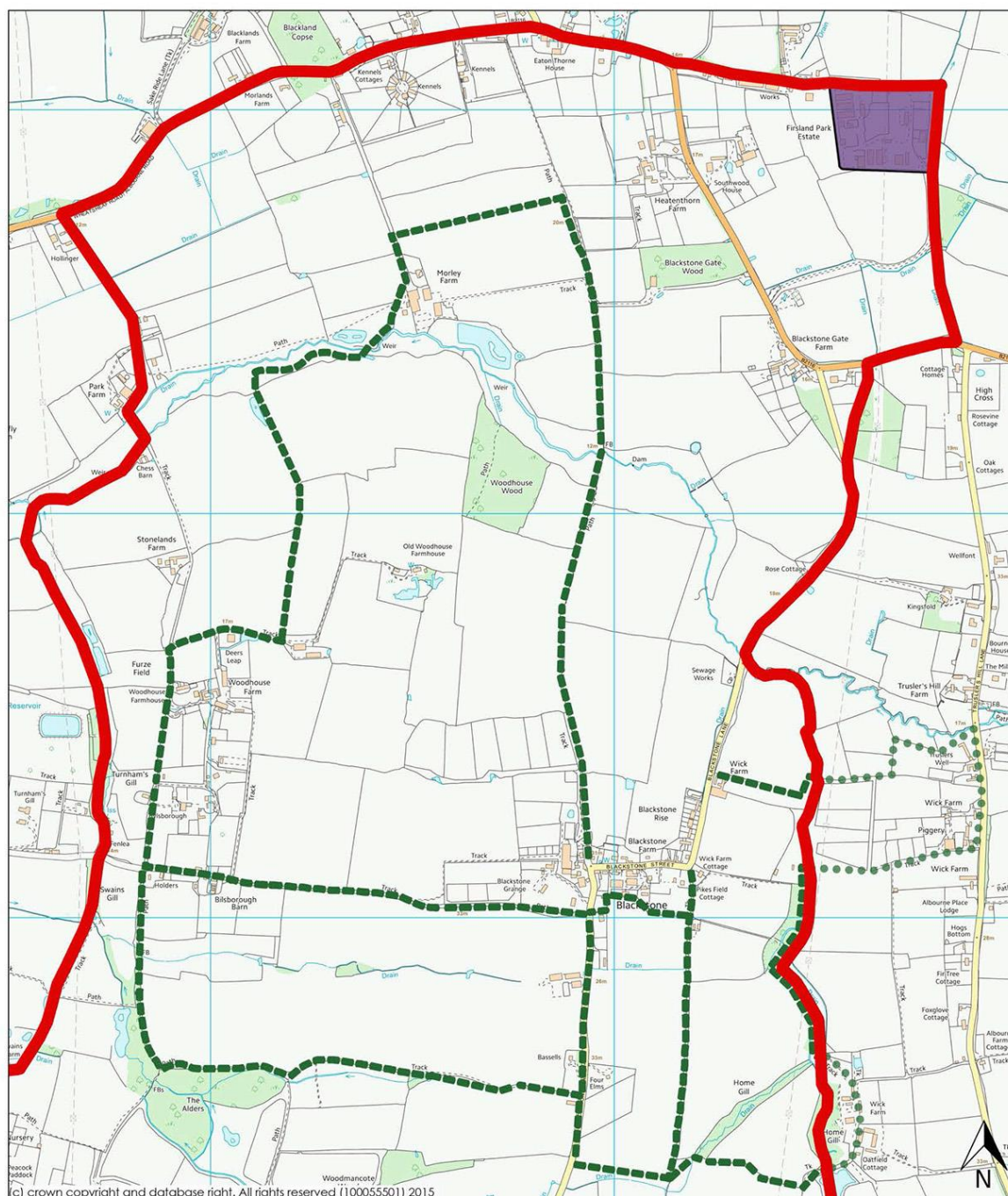
**Key**

 Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

 Insets 1 & 2



### **Inset Map 1**



# Woodmancote Neighbourhood Plan

### Inset 1, Submission Plan

May 2016

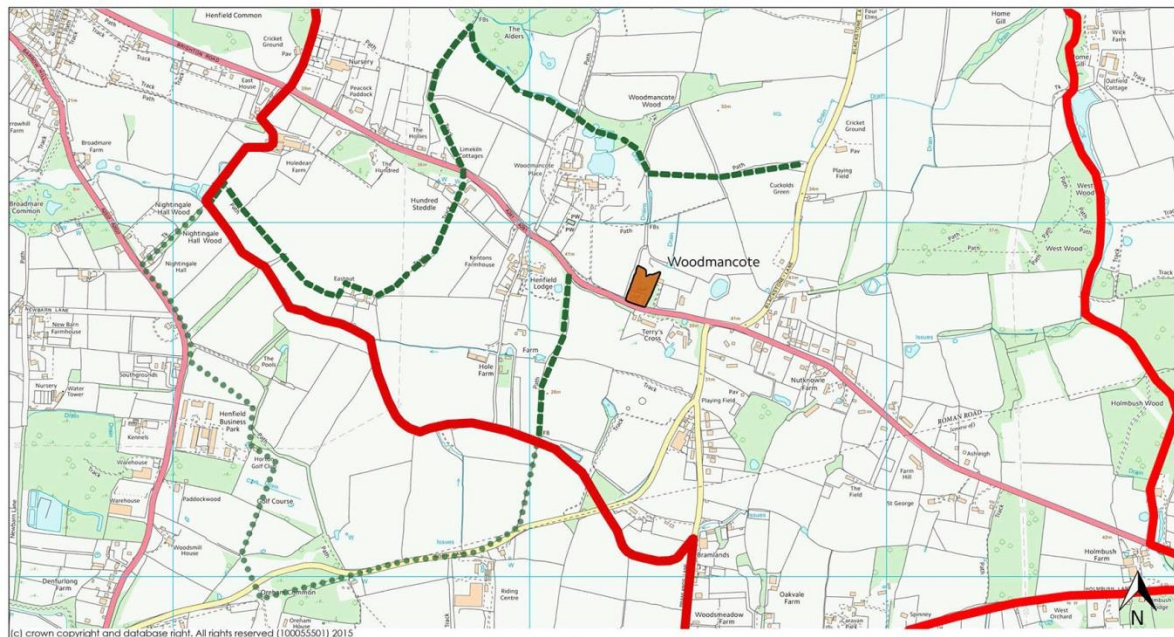
### Key

-  **Neighbourhood Plan Boundary**
  -  **Policy 5:**  
Local Employment

- 
- Policy 6:**  
Green Links



## Inset Map 2



### Woodmancote Neighbourhood Plan

#### Inset 2, Submission Plan

May 2016

#### Key

 Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

 Policy 4: Community Facilities

 Policy 6: Green Links

## Annex A – Evidence Base

The list below contains all those documents collected and reviewed in the process of preparing this report. All are available to view via the Woodmancote Parish Council website's neighbourhood plan pages.

WPNP Community Evidence Paper: July 2015
WPNP Vision Paper: November 2014
Focus Group Reports on housing, infrastructure and environment
Call for sites initiative
Call for sites questionnaire
Parish questionnaire 2013 & results
Parish questionnaire 2014 & results
Comments raised by the public meeting at Call for Sites open meeting on 20/1/2015
Consultation letter to statutory stakeholders 19/12/2014
Strategic Environmental Assessments Screening Request and scoping report to statutory
How to shape where you live – a guide to Neighbourhood Planning published by NALC
National Policy Planning Framework and Guidance
Horsham District Planning Framework November 2015
Horsham District Planning Framework 2015 Evidence base
Horsham District Core Strategy and General Development Control Policies 2007
English National Parks and the Broads Circular; DEFRA 2010

## Annex B – Horsham DC SHELAA Map of Parish (Nov 2015)

