23rd November 2017

Version 2

Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan

2015 – 2030

Qualifying Body
Bethersden Parish Council

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1. FOREWORD

This Plan is the result of a 3 year process which while enabled by the Parish Council has been the product of an extensive community effort involving 30-40 local people in 3 working groups meeting on a regular basis during this period.

The proposals reflect the particular issues that were identified from the 2014 Parish Survey and that have been subsequently amended following public response at interim exhibitions and from the comments received during the formal consultation period of the draft plan published in the Autumn of 2015.

The Plan focuses on 3 main aspects that will allow our community to prosper over the 15 year period until 2030.

These are presented as coloured sections within the document as follows:

The Orange Section of the Plan describes the process followed in its production and also identifies overall improvements to the drainage network serving the village which has always been the key element to be able to achieve an acceptable proposal.

Green Section which identifies the rural character of our environment and notes policies that will enable this character to be conserved.

Red Section which quantifies the local demand for housing and allocates sites that will provide the quality and appearance of suitable development.

Blue Section which is concerned with the local economy and road safety provisions to protect our future well being.

I do hope therefore that you will all welcome this Neighbourhood Plan and support its formal adoption as a future planning document for our community over the next 15 years.

Kind regards

Alastair Boyd

Chair Bethersden Parish Oct 2017

2. OUR COMMUNITY VISION







Our vision is for Bethersden to continue to thrive by meeting the changing needs of the community whilst preserving the distinctive character, landscape and setting of the Parish that has evolved over nine centuries

Each policy in the Neighbourhood Plan for Bethersden Parish has been tested to ensure it meets our Vision and accords with the responses and objectives of the local people and complements the Ashford Borough Council's Borough wide vision for rural areas.

3. Objectives

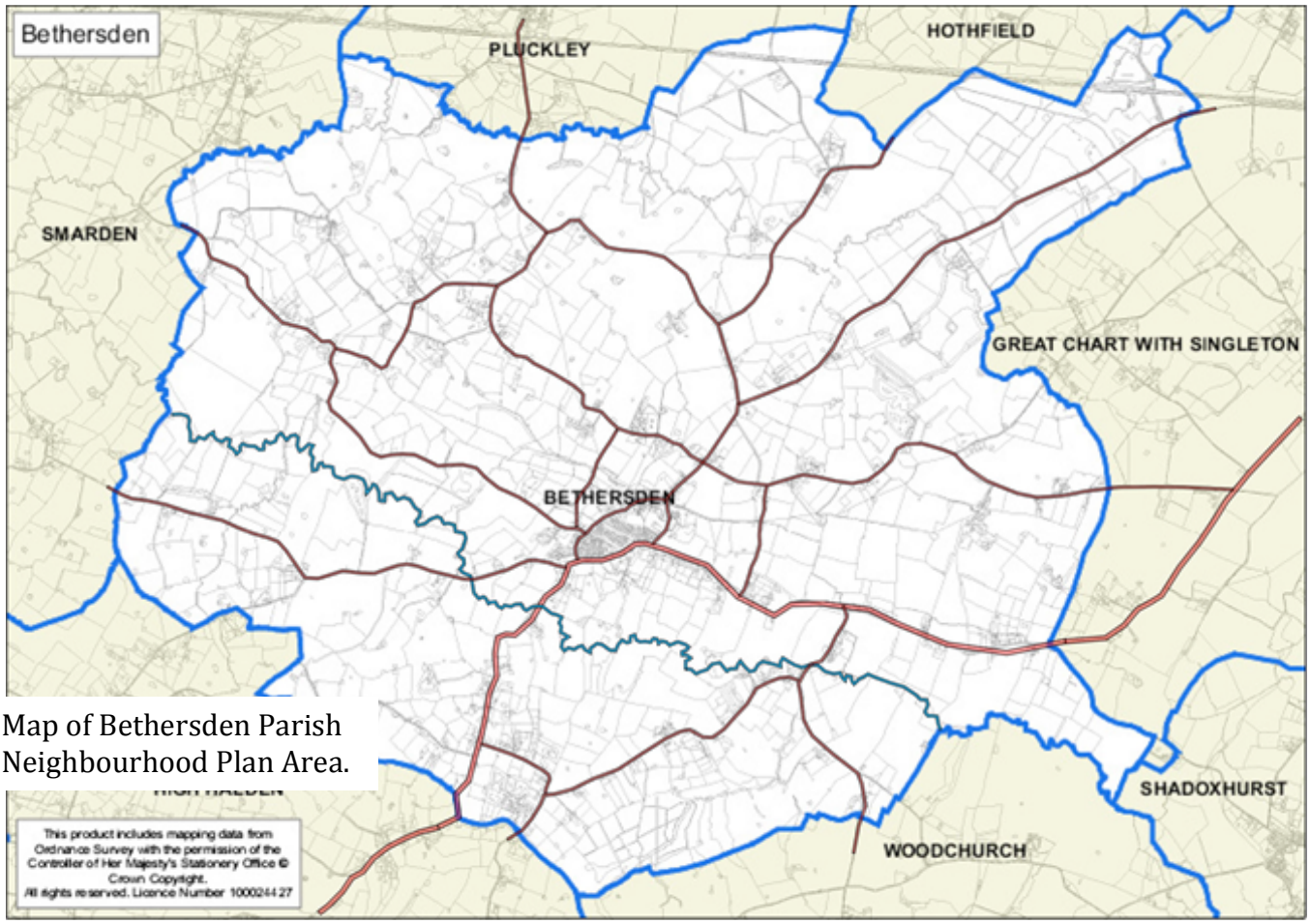
1. Preserve & protect the rural environment & local distinctive character.
2. Provide adaptable low-density housing development in keeping with the local area and appropriate to the needs of all its residents.
3. Provide recreational and leisure facilities for all age groups.
4. Promote the retention of local amenities.
5. Promote local employment opportunities.
6. Maintain a safe, caring and inclusive community.

Our Vision and objectives are the key element of the Plan and the reason for its production during the last 3 years.

4. Neighbourhood Plan Area

Following an application from the Bethersden Parish Council on 5th December 2013, the Ashford Borough Council Cabinet approved the designation of the Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan Area on the 13th February 2014. In this it formally confirmed that Bethersden Parish Council will be preparing the Neighbourhood Plan and are considered a relevant body under the Localism Act 2011. The Neighbourhood Plan Area is shown below.

Ashford Borough Council have confirmed the plan area is considered acceptable in planning terms and the Parish Council has followed due process in line with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations, Part 2, S.5(1). Area application and approval letters can be found on the ABC web site and in the Basic Conditions Statement.



Map of Bethersden Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area.

5. Introduction

5.1 About our Neighbourhood Plan.

The Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan Jan 2014 survey reflects community-wide opinion, comments, observations and concerns about its future, and surveys. It brings them together with Census information, strategic and statistical evidence into a document that is supported by robust analysis and community engagement and support that mirrors the community's overwhelming desire for Bethersden to continue to be a great place to live and work both now and for future generations.

The draft Neighbourhood Plan has been produced through a series of working groups, guided by a Steering Committee consisting of community volunteers, and members of the Parish Council. The Parish Council have played an active role in overseeing the Plan, making sure it has been produced in co-operation with Ashford Borough Council and ensuring adequate funds would be available to support the project.

Bethersden parish consists of a village where approximately half the inhabitants live. The remainder live in the more rural areas around the village, including in the hamlets of Wissenden & Tuesnoad to the north west, and Brissenden to the southeast.

5.2 History of Bethersden parish

The character of Bethersden today is based on nearly 1000 years of farming. In 1640, the population had grown to 400, rose to over 1120 by the 1850s, and is now around 1400. The 1908 Ordnance Survey map shows the village in two parts, the larger part along The Street, linked by a well-used footpath across open fields (now the George Field) to a smaller group of buildings including the Forge, at the point where Forge Hill meets the A28 at Forge Corner.

The Street was mainly residential but included shops, St. Margaret's church and the pub. Forge Corner was more commercial in character, with the blacksmith's forge and carpenters workshops, ideally placed on the main road from Ashford to Tenterden. Forge Corner is now mainly residential but The Street has changed only slightly in recent years.

The George Field, which historically separated the two areas of the village, is still there today, and apart from a small number of houses on its western boundary, is now a landscaped recreation area in the centre of the village, owned by the Parish Council which also owns the Recreation Ground in Mill Road, with a wide range of sports and playground facilities.

A thriving and viable Parish has to strike a balance between its traditional character and the demands of modern life and all that that implies. Agricultural employment has declined since the middle of the last century, but a surprising diversity of other businesses has evolved, covering retail, manufacturing and service industries based in and around the village, often in converted agricultural buildings.

History of Bethersden continued

However, the centre of the village is mainly residential in character and mostly built before the 1900s, although there has been significant development of both Council and private properties from the 1930s through the 1970s, with two smaller developments in the 1990s, and Millfields in 2015.

The current problem of high house prices, particularly for young local families, is being met by the new Millfields development including both Local Needs houses (mainly for rent to those with a link to the village) and also houses of various sizes to meet general demand.

The need to provide a framework for the future development of Bethersden, while retaining the essential elements of its character, led to the production of the Bethersden Parish Plan in 2003. The success of the Parish Plan has led to the current work on The Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan, which extends the principles of the Parish Plan but will provide for considerably greater influence on future developments in the parish.

5.3 Bethersden in relation to Ashford Town & environs

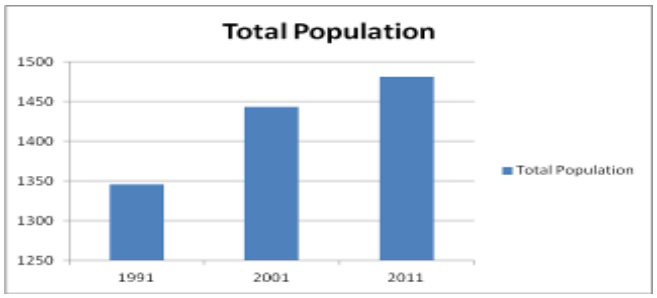
The village is on the A28 road, about six miles from the centre of Ashford, our Borough town. Ashford is an important communications centre as it is located on the M20 motorway, which provides high-speed access to the national road network to the west and to the channel ports to the east.

The international rail station provides high-speed services to London and the Continent via Channel Tunnel.
Regular bus services from the centre of the village provide an important link to local towns.

5.4 Data Snapshot and Socio-economic profile

Population

The 1991 census gave a population of 1346, 2001 as 1443 and 2011 as 1481. This represents a total increase of 10% over the 20 year period.

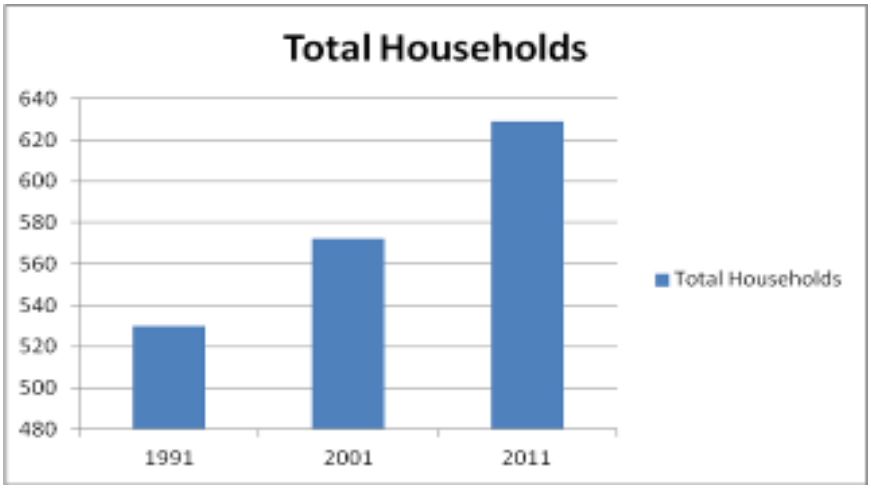


Should the population rise by a similar rate over the next 15 years, a population of between 1540 - 1600 can be anticipated.

These historic trends represent some particular characteristics, with relevance to this plan. In particular, there has been a significant rise in the number of people aged over 65 since 2001 from 261 - 364 people (+39%).

This was alongside a fall from 272 -247 (-9%) in the numbers of children.

Housing



From 1991 to 2011 there has been an 18.7% increase in households from 530 to 629. During this period there has been significant change in household characteristics, which reflected national trends. The most notable being:

a) A rise in single person households from 122 to 172

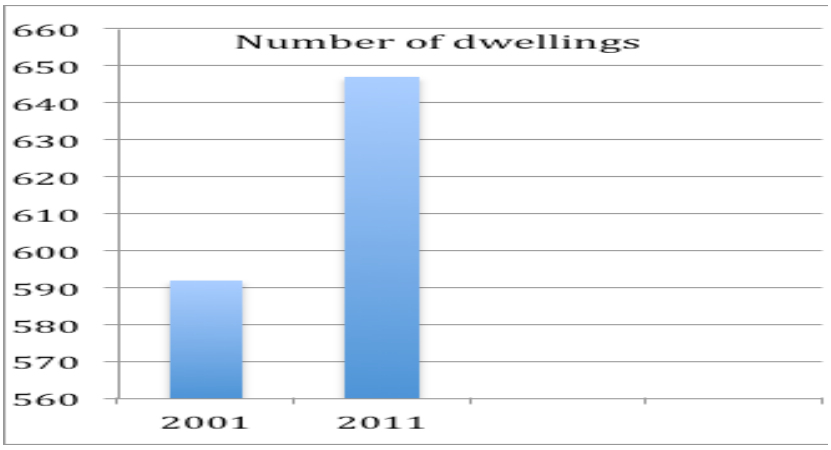
b) A rise in the number of lone parent households from 11 to 41)

c) A fall in the number with dependent children from 156 to 146 despite a rise in the total number of households.

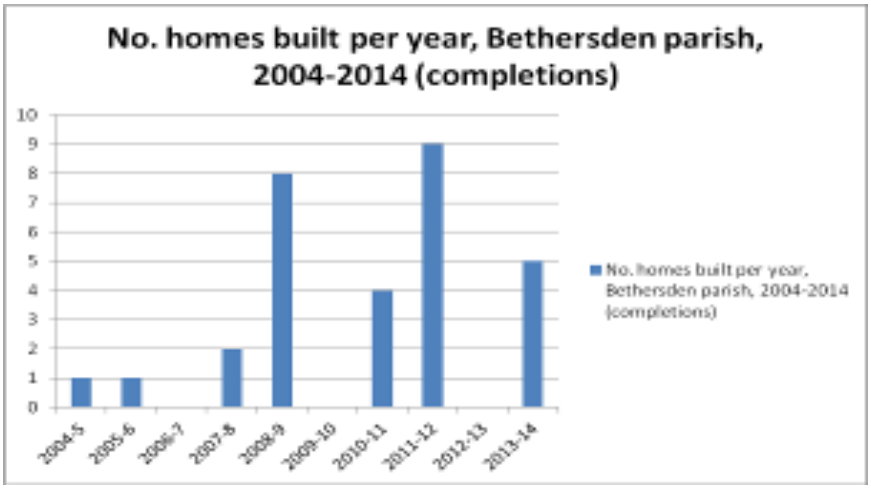
Should the number of households increase by a similar rate over the next 15 years, there would be between 680 - 710 households in the parish by 2030, or an additional 50 - 80 households. It is worth considering the trends in households outlined above, alongside the data regarding the number of permanent dwellings in the parish, also available from Census figures.

In 2001, 592 permanent dwellings were recorded in Bethersden, rising to 647 recorded in the 2011 Census.

This represents a rise of 9.3% during the 10 year period (or 55 additional dwellings), which is very consistent with household growth patterns given above.



Finally, for a different snapshot, we can look at data provided regarding the number of homes built per year (i.e. the number of completions) between 2004 - 2014, which shows 30 new homes being built in the parish during this period, more than 80% of which were windfall developments, i.e. not built on sites identified through Ashford BC's local plans:



Economic activity

Slightly more of the adult population were economically active (i.e. either in work, or seeking work) in 2011 compared to 2001 (rising from 57.9% - 60%), and fewer adults were looking after home and family (a fall from 7.8% - 3.8%). More people were self-employed (a rise from 15.9% - 18.2% of the adult population). Interestingly, there was a fall in the number of people working from home (from 12.8% to 9.1% of the adult population). Reflecting the population changes outlined above, there was a rise in the number and proportion of retired people (from 13.7% - 16.9% of the total 16+ population).

There was a small fall in the number and proportion of people aged over 16 with no qualifications at all (falling from 300 to 295 between 2001 - 2011, alongside a significant rise in the number, and proportion, of people aged over 16 with degree level qualifications or above (rising from 208 - 334 people, or from 17.7% of the total population aged over 16, to 27.1% of this group

Travel to work

The period between 2001 and 2011 saw a rise in the total number, of people who travelled to work by car from 411 - 453 people (+10%).

This was partly accounted for by households acquiring their first car and second car ownership. Among many factors, fewer rural bus services on secondary routes might be a significant cause. Travel to work by train showed no increase and there were only small increases in cycling and walking to work

Health

In the 2011 census 2.6% less people reported themselves permanently sick or disabled, compared to 2001.

In 2011 there was a reduction of 58% in the number of people reporting theselves as being in 'bad' or 'very bad' health compared to 2001 where people reported themselves as having health which was 'not good'. Census questions changed during this period, so it is difficult to compare the data. However, this would seem to be a positive trajectory.

Interestingly, the number of people reporting limiting long term illness increased significantly between 1991 and 2011 by +76% An increase not only in numbers, but in the proportion of the population (+7%) living with a limiting long term illness. Alongside this, the proportion of people providing unpaid care to a relative or friend actually fell between 2001 and 2011 by -0.4%.

In summary people are living longer but often not healthier lives. In housing terms, this could increase the demand for elderly accommodation. New housing developments need to ensure that this element of the population is catered for both with better facilities and availability of adaptable homes to provide independent living. This will avoid premature need for transfer to a care home.

5.5 Why we need a Neighbourhood Plan

Bethersden has always been a community that is enthusiastic about shaping its own future. It has produced a Parish Plan and a Design Statement both of which gained plaudits from the local authority for the quality of their content and presentation.

The Neighbourhood Plan is seen as a further opportunity to be involved in determining the future needs of the Parish of Bethersden. It also has the added advantage of bringing the community closer together in a joint enterprise.

This is particularly useful in helping to integrate newcomers to the parish, who bring new skills and ideas, thus giving a sense of shared responsibilities for the wellbeing of all who live and work in our parish.

We recognise that we live in a time where finding the right affordable housing for the young, and appropriate housing for an ageing population, have their challenges. As do transport, local amenities, health care etc. We believe that local communities are best placed to identify some of the solutions to these issues. A Neighbourhood Plan is seen as a vital element in successfully overcoming these challenges.

The statutory nature of the Neighbourhood Plan means it carries more weight than the old Parish Plans. The Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan includes elements of the Village Design Statement and The Parish Plan.

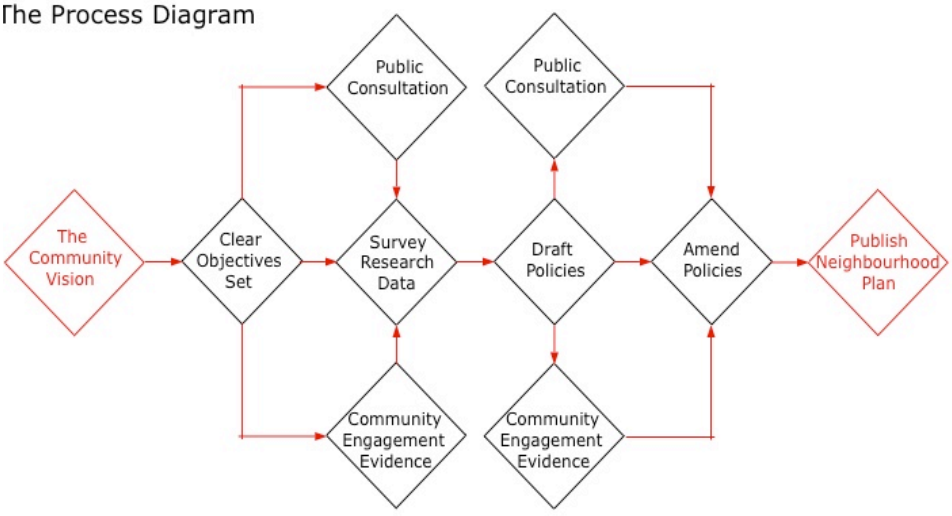
5.6 How the Plan Evolved

At the August 2013 Church Fete we put on an exhibition advertising the potential benefits of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. We asked people whether we should embark on this given the effort that would be involved. The overwhelming response was that we should take advantage of the opportunity to shape our future that this represented.

In January 2014 a Parish wide survey to each household was carried out and a 40% return achieved. A public meeting was held in February at which the findings of the survey were presented. 119 people attended and from them, 45 volunteers were recruited and a Steering Group and a series of Working Groups were formed. Further surveys were carried out on specific issues and from this a vision statement, objectives and policies emerged. Funds were provided by Locality for professional advice on the technical elements of the plan and the overall content and presentation.A number of public consultations and exhibitions were held throughout the period to test opinion and receive feedback on the ideas and recommendations being put forward by the various working groups. This iterative process was carried out continually up to and including the final Draft.

The Neighbourhood Plan derived its objectives, policies, actions and authority from the community. From the outset the Parish Council & Steering Group ensured residents and businesses were as fully consulted and involved as possible in the communication and consultation, in various forms, and played a key role in formulating the Plan.
The Consultation Statement documents the community's engagement and consultation in developing this Neighbourhood Plan. Throughout this Plan we highlight particular quotes from the community supporting particular elements. During the formation of the Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan public concern with the poor state of the drainage system became apparent. Resolving this became a priority for the Parish Council as it was felt until this was dealt with satisfactorily further housing development would not be supported.

The Process Diagram



5.7 Drainage

Over the last year progress has been made, Southern Water identified a number of faults with the foul water system and are carrying out the necessary repairs. This has already shown great improvements to the system. Southern Water have started an extensive pipe relining scheme and a continuous program of pipe cleaning. However additional sewerage infrastructure is likely to be required to serve the proposed developments. (see Policy H14) Each development will therefore be required to make a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network. Early liaison should take place with the service provider.

Surface water can under heavy rain conditions cause flooding in some areas. Although it does not threaten ingress into homes, the Parish Council nevertheless perceives this as a priority. The Parish is in discussion with Kent County Council, Ashford Borough Council & the Environment Agency to resolve this issue.

5.8 Relationship to national and local planning policy

The Neighbourhood Plan must:

- Have appropriate regard to national planning policy.
- Contribute to sustainable development.
- Be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the area, i.e. the Ashford Local Plan
- Be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.

The accompanying Basic Conditions Statement sets out how this Plan complies. The Consultation Statement provides details of how the community has shaped their plan.

5.9 Implementing the plan

The Parish of Bethersden is part of the Ashford Borough Council area, the local strategic context is set by the Ashford Borough current Local Plan.

The Bethersden Parish Council will be responsible for the implementation of the Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan, working closely with Ashford Borough Council, the Local Plan, and various professional agencies as required.

The Parish Council will also engage the support of the local community and carry out regular reviews to ensure the Plan is meeting the developing needs of the Parish.

5.10 Benefits

In return for allowing development to take place, there are a number of benefits, which residents in the village have identified as targets for future investment.

These include:

- General benefits which we would expect to see in order to enable any development to take place, e.g. Drainage (see developers site brief), footpaths to enable connection to the village and internet speed investment (see Policies H3 - H5), (also see Internet Policy);

- Specific benefits associated with particular allocated sites (see Policies H3, H4 & H5); and

- Other benefits in the Parish, which would be generated through financial investment through CIL contributions. It is proposed that local residents at various points could put forward proposals for the use of the CIL contributions received by the Parish in the lifetime of this Plan as needs and requirements evolve.

- Examples of the kinds of benefits which residents may wish to see are set out below:
  - Funding for general upgrade of public footpaths to include new signage, stiles/gates and general access.
  - Upkeep of the George Field public open space, after the initial 10 years has elapsed.
  - Revamp the play equipment in the Recreation Ground.
  - Improve/rebuild the Scout Hut (as required).
  - Reactive speed management signs on A28.
  - Improved signage and speed controls at Bateman's Corner (junction of Pluckley Road and Mill Road).

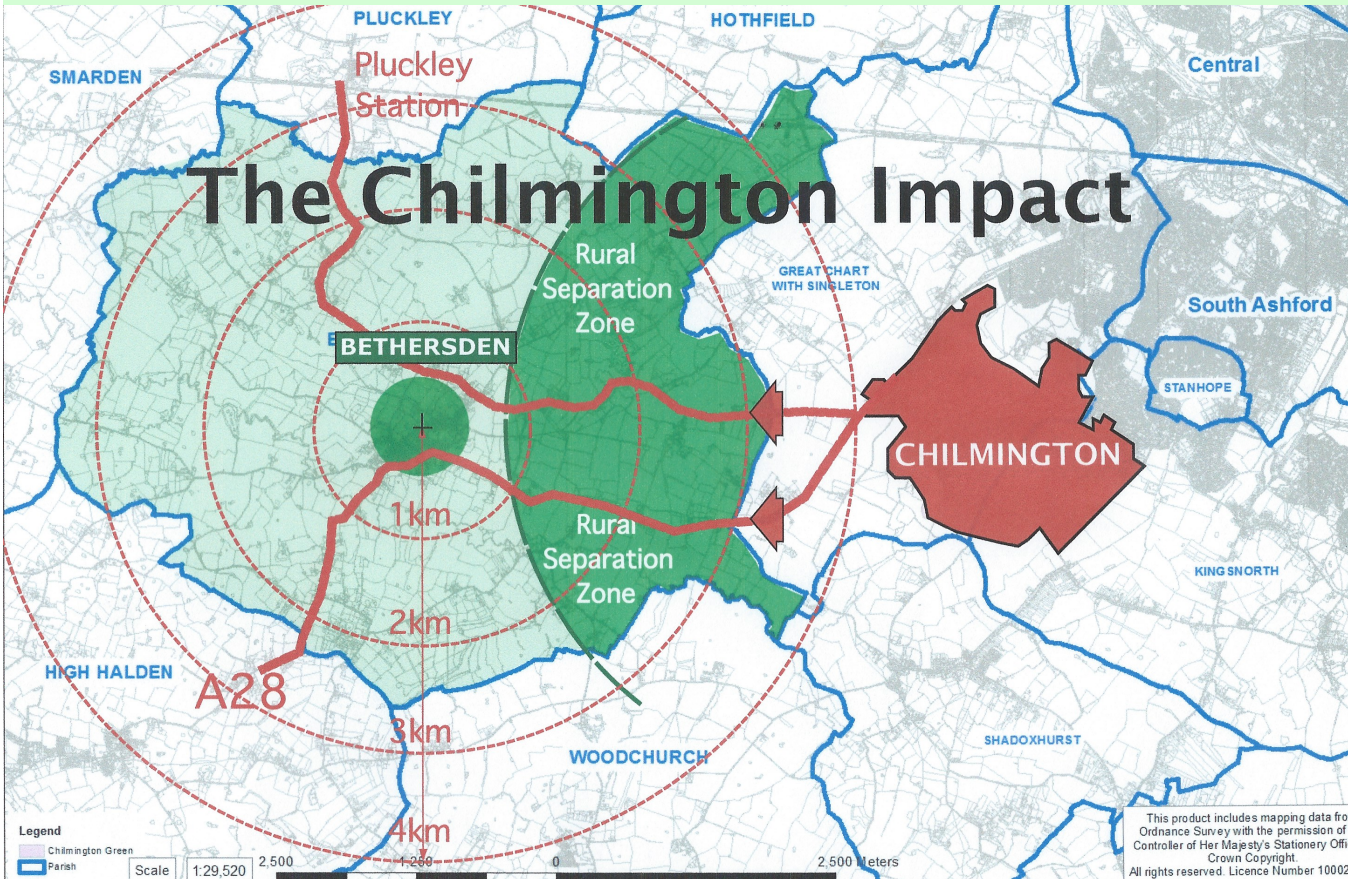
Resident engagement, as required in Policy H13, will enable any benefits to be agreed resulting from development depending on the circumstances and requirements of the Parish at the time.

6.0 Managing our rural environment.

The parish is made up of several important landscape areas (Ref Ashford Borough Council Jacobs Engineering report 2009) meriting protection and enhancement in their own right.

They provide a rural separation area between the distinctive village and parish setting and the urban expansion of Ashford. The policies in this plan encourage continued rural industries in these areas to ensure that the character and local distinctiveness of the Parish are maintained through preserving, among other things, the rural landscape surrounding the village and its hamlets that bring landscape value to the wider area.

Diagram illustrating the relative position of the 5750 houses planned at Chilmington Ashford with the 650 homes in the whole Parish of Bethersden



Snapshot of the community's comments from consultations

Comments gathered from consultations confirm there is a strong desire to ensure that the character and local distinctiveness of the Parish are maintained.

This includes preserving the rural setting of the Parish, which is made up of several important landscape areas, and the protection of a number of open spaces and views in the village.

Public footpaths and bridle paths, are valued very highly and need to be improved and developed further, as do amenities for jogging and cycling around the village.

Rural Look and Feel

The essential character of Bethersden is that of a small relatively self-contained rural village surrounded by a wooded and agricultural landscape.

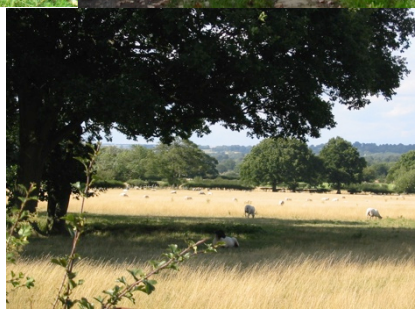
At several points the fields and hedgerows reach into the village centre, ensuring the village retains close visual links with its rural setting. Open spaces and vistas in the village reinforce its rural character and contribute to a general sense of openness throughout the village that the community wishes to preserve. The following photographs give a series of typical views.

















Community Needs

There's strong local support for the preservation of wildlife and the rural environment. Surveys show that if additional land were made available within the confines of the village open parkland type space would be the overwhelmingly most popular use.

The village supports a wide range of sports and leisure activities for all ages and the need to maintain and improve these facilities is seen as being particularly important for the development of youth activities.

Conservation is a priority and protection of the countryside and the environment has been considered when assessing potential development sites. See site evaluation summary page 25.

Objectives

The following objectives have been arrived at through surveys and community engagement throughout the Plan.

a) Preserve the individual character and setting of the village by retaining those open spaces that add to the distinctive open feel and reinforce the sense that you are in a village rather than an urban area;

b) Protect the rural countryside to preserve the rural setting, habitat and environment of the parish;

c) Support and allow for the expansion of the recreational needs and amenities of the community whilst preserving the rural setting of the village

d) Enhance the network of footpaths and define cycle routes to improve local communication within the parish.

e) Support industrial and commercial development at a scale that does not damage the environment and complements the existing quiet and tranquil setting and quality of rural life.

Local Requirements and Policies

National planning policy and practice guidance encourages local authorities to use Landscape Character Assessments to provide evidence to support a criteria-based policy approach, and to ensure that the decision making process is underpinned by a robust assessment of the landscape.

Policy Justification R 1: Protection of Village Views, Vista's & setting

The village identity and rural character emerges from several distinctive areas that support a wide range of agricultural activities and high value ecological sites.

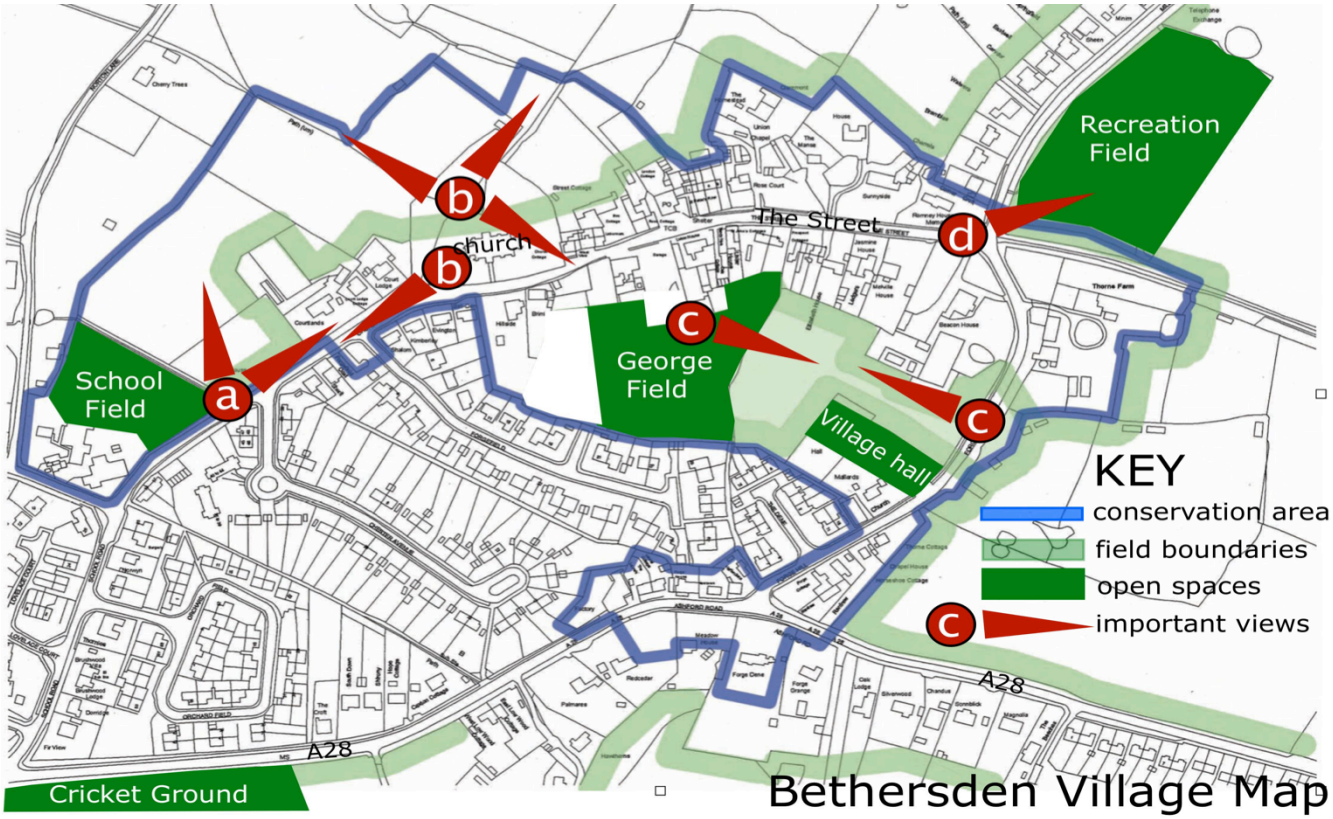
These areas are identified in the Ashford Borough Council Landscape Character SPD adopted in 2011 (see Basic Conditions Statement).

The way in which development fits within the landscape of the Parish must be determined by its relationship with the natural topography of the area. Particular landform features that contribute to the character must be protected, and views into and from a site should be a relevant factor in assessing the impact of a proposal.

The pattern and composition of woodlands and field boundaries constitute valuable features in the rural open landscape. They help define the character of the Parish and should be retained and protected

Policy R1 Protection of Views, Vistas & Setting

All development proposals shall protect the identified views important to the village setting, particularly those that create a link to the open countryside and reflect the historic character of the village.
a) Range of views around the church.
b) Across and into and out of the George Field.
c) View across the Recreation Ground.
See Map below.



Bethersden Village Map

Policy Justification R 2 Landscape Character Design

Bethersden is surrounded by a wooded and agricultural landscape of small fields with well-maintained hedgerows, many of which have oak and other native trees as a major feature.

The woodlands, fields, meadows, traditional orchards and many field ponds, some of which have been identified as needing conservation and greater protection, provide an ideal habitat for many forms of wildlife, including the endangered turtle dove, and great crested newt.

These rural habitats are important features in the village and wider parish and should be protected for the benefit of the community, as covered under Local Plan policy.

Design and Access Statements for new developments shall include such items as street scenes, impact on rural views and relationship to wider context and topography where appropriate in order to properly assess the impact of the proposal and its compliance with Local Policies.

The three sites allocated for housing development in the Plan were selected from those put forward via ABC's call for sites, and assessed by the Neighbourhood Plan group to maintain the rural character of the village & the sense of openness that the community wish to preserve in the Conservation Area.

Focusing development on designated sites discourages indiscriminate infill of open spaces disrupting the established grain, open space character and design of the village in key thoroughfares such as The Street e.g. the open spaces adjacent to the George Pub and those around Melville House & Beacon House. See Policy H9 Page 34.

The Bethersden Village Design Statement provides an assessment of local vernacular and styles, and other guidance on achieving a development that maintains the village special character.

All new housing developments in the Conservation Area shall be restricted to sites designated in the Neighbourhood Plan

Policy R2 Landscape, Character & design

Developments must protect and enhance the established local character and sit comfortably alongside existing development.

Policy Justification R 3 Conservation of Local Habitats, Landscapes & Character

Footpaths and bridle paths create a network of recreational routes that open up the countryside to residents, crisscross the local woodlands and fields.

These include a number of footpaths, which are of particular local importance because they are made of "Bethersden Marble", a type of palludina limestone formed millions of years ago, which was used for paths and also chimney pieces in houses and in Parish church walls.

Policy R3 Conservation of Local Habitats, Landscapes & Character

Developments in the Parish shall preserve & protect:

a) Ancient and semi-natural woodland and rural Lanes;
b) River corridors and tributaries;
c) Landscape, nature conservation of historic importance.
d) Biodiversity.

Policy Justification R 4 Public Rights of Way

Within the village centre, the network of public footpaths is seen as being very important to the community and needs to be improved and developed to give wider pedestrian access, with particular consideration given to pushchairs and wheelchairs. Any new development will be required to contribute to maintaining and improving these footpaths.

A network of cycle routes should be developed to complement an improved network of footpaths. This should include the village centre and extend to the wider reaches of the Parish to give residents greater cycling mobility.



Improvement and new construction shall create pleasant routes for walking and/or cycling, and where practically possible, access for wheelchairs and pushchairs are to be provided.



Policy R4 Public Rights of Way

Development in the Parish shall:

a) Protect and improve public rights of way.

b) Construct or provide proportionate contributions towards new rights of way or extensions to link development to the village centre

Policy Justification R5

The George Field is an important part of the existing character of Bethersden in particular; is readily appreciated by users of the footpath that crosses the area. It is a valuable central open space for informal activities, a thoroughfare and a key feature. Due to its value to the community it is designated as a Local Green Space within the remit of NPPF paragraphs 76 and 77:

Policy R5 – Local Green Space Designation

The George Field, shown as "C" on map page 22 is designated as "Local Green Space". Proposals for development in a designated Local Green Space will not be allowed, unless they are ancillary to the use of the land for a public recreational purpose or are required for a statutory utility infrastructure purpose.





Policy Justification R 6 Recreation Areas & Community Use

The Recreation Area, together with the agricultural land extending to Bateman's corner, combine to create an unrestricted vista along the eastern edge of the village.

Unless other overwhelming benefits to the village are found, this important open space should be maintained for the rural nature of the area.

In such circumstances any development proposals will need to comply with the criteria set out in NPPF para 74, which states the land must be surplus to requirements, or the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision, or development is for alternative sport or recreation provision, which clearly outweighs the loss.

Evidence from consultation with residents indicates that there is a need for the population of the village to be demographically well–balanced, with more families attracted to live in the village.

This will contribute to the sustainability of the many sports and leisure clubs, which already enjoy healthy support in the village.

Particular importance is placed on youth activities and using the conclusions of a consultation of residents regarding the recreation ground in 2012 many improvements were made to the games and children's play areas.

Policy R6 Recreation & Community Use Areas.

Retain & protect community Open Spaces.

a) Scout Hut
b) Bull Field Cricket Ground
c) George Field
d) Village Hall
e) The Recreation Ground
f) Any other open space acquired for public use with new developments.

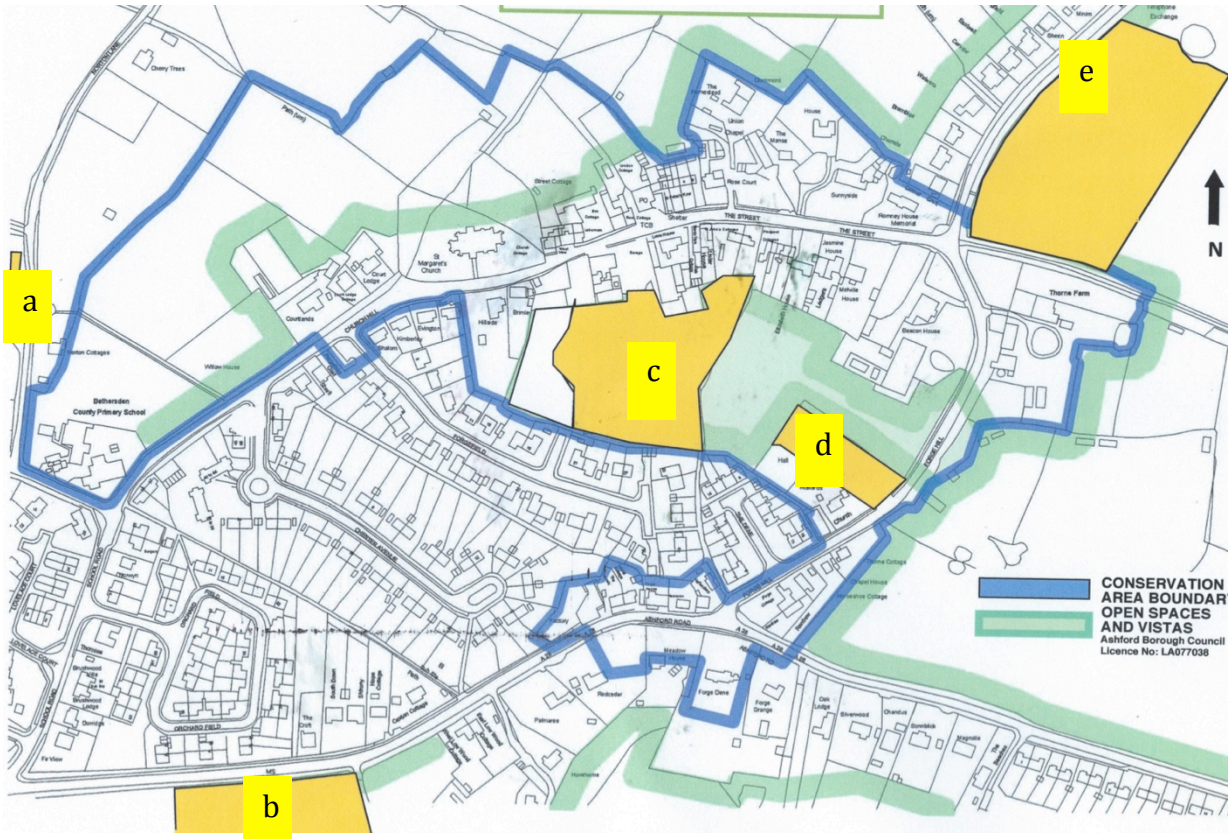
Development will be supported where it will result in the improved management and improvement of these spaces, where it would not damage the environmental quality, biodiversity or character of the area and where it is for:

a) Facilities ancillary to outdoor sport and recreation or other uses appropriate to the purpose of this policy; or

b) the limited extension of or alteration to existing buildings: or

c) in exceptional circumstances for example, to meet essential agriculture or forestry or utility infrastructure needs and no alternative site is available.

See map on page 22



Policy Justification R 7 Drainage & Water Management

The Bethersden waste and surface water drainage system is under considerable strain, which has resulted in sewage overflowing into gardens and internally from toilets. This has had a serious impact on the environment and people's lives.

This policy is designed to ensure the existing situation does not continue and the relevant authorities carry out regular inspections and maintenance.
The systems for surface, wastewater, and sewerage management should ensure that flooding does not occur. See Orange section para 5.7 on Drainage.

Policy R7 Drainage & Water Management

New developments in Bethersden parish will be supported where they meet the other requirements of this Plan and provide evidence of effective & sustainable surface water, wastewater and sewerage drainage management systems to the satisfaction of the relevant authorities. Opportunities should be taken to improve the local sewerage system in a proportionate manner, as relevant, in liaison with the statutory undertaker.

Policy Justification R 8 Technology and the Environment

This plan supports new technology in new domestic and commercial developments. These will require sources of power (including solar), telecommunications (including high speed internet, with provisions for upgrades) and similar infrastructure, which must be sensitively designed to avoid noise pollution and damage to the local environment. This is particularly important where commercial activities are close to housing.

Policy R8 Technology and the Environment

a) Energy efficient and local generation technology for new and existing development will be supported, where the siting, scale and design complements the existing quiet, tranquil and local rural character.
b) Evidence shall be provided to demonstrate the potential impact of such proposals and proper assessment made by a suitably qualified professional.

Policy Justification R 9 Community Benefits

This Plan recognises the benefits that can be obtained from environmentally sensitive new development. The provision of housing, jobs, new facilities and parish infrastructure which all benefit the community.

Policy R9 Community Benefits

Applications for new housing, commercial or industrial developments shall be required to contribute to and/or provide for such benefits to come to the community from developer contributions via S.106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). These shall be proportionate or provide proportionate benefits.

Examples of benefits

- General upgrade of public footpaths.
- Upkeep of the George Field
- Replace play equipment, Pavilion & improve drainage at the Recreation Ground.
- Improve/rebuild the Scout Hut.
- Reactive speed management signs on A28.
- Improved road safety and speed control

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7. Housing

Snapshot of the community's comments from consultations:

'Small scale housing to retain village character' 'need more affordable, starter and local needs homes' 'small sites, less traffic, safer for children' 'ensure a balance of age and social groups' "more houses for the elderly' 'beautiful countryside, open spaces and wildlife'

7.1 Incremental and Sustainable Growth

Census analysis since 1991 indicates a pattern of overall population growth within the village, within which certain key trends are evident. In particular, Bethersden has an ageing population, with strong growth in the 65+ age group (reflecting a widespread national and regional trend). There has been a decline in the number – and proportion – of children and families living in the village, and there has also been a significant increase in the number of single residents.

The Jan 2014 Parish Survey showed a 73% support for housing growth, which is desirable to ensure a sustainable future for Bethersden, and that this should be planned to support a mixed, prosperous, and well-balanced population. This will help sustain a healthy demand for local shops, services and businesses, and a thriving future for the primary school, as well as for the many voluntary, recreational, religious, and sports organisations and activities, which are currently supported by, and offer so much to, the residents of the village.

As set out in the Village Design Statement, Bethersden has grown and evolved over time, meeting the developing housing needs of the residents while retaining a rural, open and wooded feel. Incremental growth has ensured that the essential character of the village has been maintained. It is essential that this continues to be the case in Bethersden. The January 2014 Survey showed a 73% support from the community for high quality new homes that offer clear benefits, and meet the housing needs of the parish. A proportion of these homes need to be affordable to households on average incomes, available to individuals and families in housing need with a local connection to the parish. These homes should remain affordable in perpetuity on a Local Needs basis, in order to ensure that Bethersden remains an inclusive and family orientated community into the future.

7.2 A Health and Well Balanced Community

An ageing population is recognised as a positive development, both nationally and locally; people are living longer lives as a result of better health, and many of us will be able to benefit from years of healthy retirement. National evidence suggests that older people are particularly likely to benefit their community by volunteering, and by contributing to arts, recreation and other community activities, so an ageing population is likely to offer many opportunities and positive aspects to the parish of Bethersden.

At the same time, the growth in the number of older residents is likely to lead to an increase in the proportion of people in the parish living with the types of long term conditions which are particularly associated with later life, underlining the need for the promotion of health and wellbeing facilities.

Evidence from consultation with residents, suggests that there is a wish for the population of the parish to be well balanced, with more families attracted to live in the parish. This will contribute to the strength and sustainability of the village school, as well as other amenities such as the play school, the village hall, local businesses, and the many clubs and societies, which already enjoy healthy support in the parish. An increased number of children living in the parish will also support family-orientated activities such as parent and toddler groups, scouts and guides, and the annual Village Fete (to give some examples), all of which help to create a thriving, welcoming and friendly community for all.

7.3 Objective

A strong and sustainable community is an important priority. As a result of Community Consultation, a number of key objectives have been set out, which underpin the detailed policies which form the core of this section:

a) Provide new housing where it meets an identified need

b) Provide proportionate community benefit as a result of new housing development.

c) A range of new housing will be supported on suitable sites at appropriate lower densities as in the Developers Site Design Brief (See Appendix I Consultation Statement) to provide sufficient public open space, so that the built development retains a rural character and is not intrusive in the surrounding environment.

d) Provide housing that is adaptable (see Developers Brief) and in particular meets the needs of older people, and reflects local needs and is located within easy access to all local amenities.

7.4 Community Consultation & Feedback

Through analysis of surveys, census data, and population profile, we reached a conclusion that we should allocate sites to accommodate 34 new homes in Bethersden, to meet the requirements as outlined in Section 5.4. See diagram below.
The full evidence base statement for housing numbers is shown in Appendix M of the Consultation Statement.

Policy Justification H1

Assessment of housing provision

METHODOLOGY FOLLOWED IN DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY	SOURCE	DWELLING DEMAND	DWELLING PROVISION
1 A projection of housing numbers over the next 15 years was assessed by noting the pattern of natural growth over the previous 60 years	CENSUS	50 to 80 for population increase 60-100	
2 Analyse recent survey data on current housing demand and factor into the projection forecast	SURVEY	50% Family 25% Retirement 25% Starter	
3 Estimate pattern of new dwellings required from natural growth	CENSUS	45 to 80	
4 Assess desirability of additional developments to enable local planning gains to be achieved	SURVEY	39 13 Local Need 26 Open Market	
5 **Evaluate total number of houses "needed" to fulfil 1,2,3 & 4**	TRIANGULATED DATA	60 to 64	64
6 Estimate no of houses likely to be generated from "windfall development"	CENSUS	20 to 40	30
7 **Note number of new homes required to be allocated from 5 & 6**	COMBINED DATA	34	**34**
8 Recommend pattern / rate of development to be phased over period	COMBINED DATA		3 developments phased in 15yrs 14+10+10 units
9 Research housing type,size and density appropriate to meet demand	SURVEY		18 Family homes 8 Retirement 8 Starter units

Refer to "Number and style of housing" diagram for further development of the housing policy

Policy H1 New Residential Development

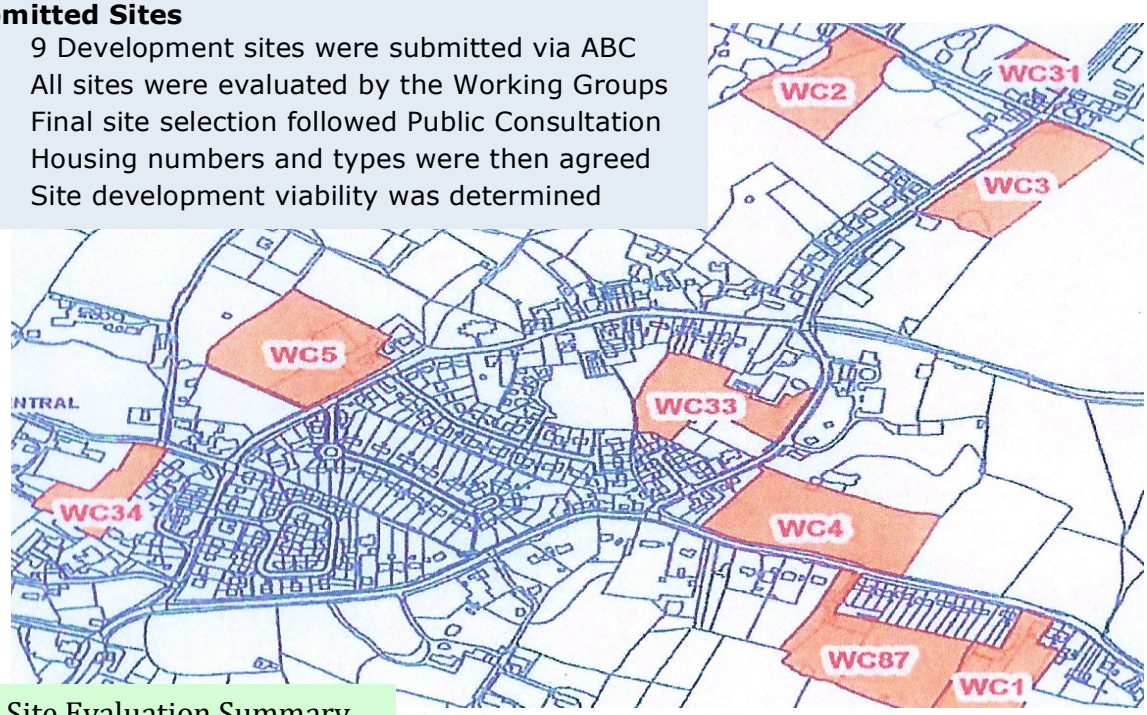
Up to 34 additional dwellings of mixed type shall be delivered on three identified sites within the central area of the village, and delivered in phases over the Plan period to 2030. The sites are shown in Policy H2.

Policy Justification: H 2 Housing Site Selection

The sites shown on the next page are from Ashford Borough Council's call for sites. The sites were assessed using methodology provided by Ashford Borough Council with locally detailed requirements tailored to the needs of Bethersden Parish (these can be found on the site evaluation form, Appendix K Consultation Statement)
and three sites were subsequently selected.

Submitted Sites

- 9 Development sites were submitted via ABC
- All sites were evaluated by the Working Groups
- Final site selection followed Public Consultation
- Housing numbers and types were then agreed
- Site development viability was determined



Site Evaluation Summary

ABC Ref	NP Ref	Good Access to services	Low impact neighbours	Low impact Enviroment and views	Safe Road Access	Flooding or drainage issues	Suitable for development
WC34	C	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
WC5	B	✔	✔	✔1	✔	x2	✔
WC2		x	x	x	✔	✔	x
WC31		x	✔	x	✔	✔	x
WC3		✔	x	x	x	✔	x
WC33	A	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
WC4		✔	✔	x	✔	x3	x
WC87		x	x	x	✔	✔	x
WC1		x	x	x	x	✔	x

✔1	Open space on this site increased to minimum of 50% (Ref Historical England)
x2	Development to be outside of Flood Zone 3 (Ref Environment Agency)
x3	Serious surface water flooding

The final shortlist of three sites was confirmed through a process of public engagement and consultation, now referred to as Sites A, B and C. Feedback and needs analysis identified a requirement for a mix of housing: starter homes, family homes, and homes suitable for older people, with a proportion of affordable (local needs) housing. Our final ratios are in line with ABC's current Local Plan. Local consultation also demonstrated strong support for the principle of retaining the green and open feel, characteristic of Bethersden. The latter principle underpins the requirement for protection of public open space

ASHFORD LOCAL PLAN OMISSION SITES. With the Neighbourhood Plan period extended to match the emerging Local Plan, 3 potential housing sites were noted as "omission sites" in response to public consultation on the Local Plan. An assessment summary of the development potential of these sites has therefore been included in **Appendix K** and detailed assessment sheets in **Appendix Q** of the Consultation Statement.

Policy H2 Housing site allocations

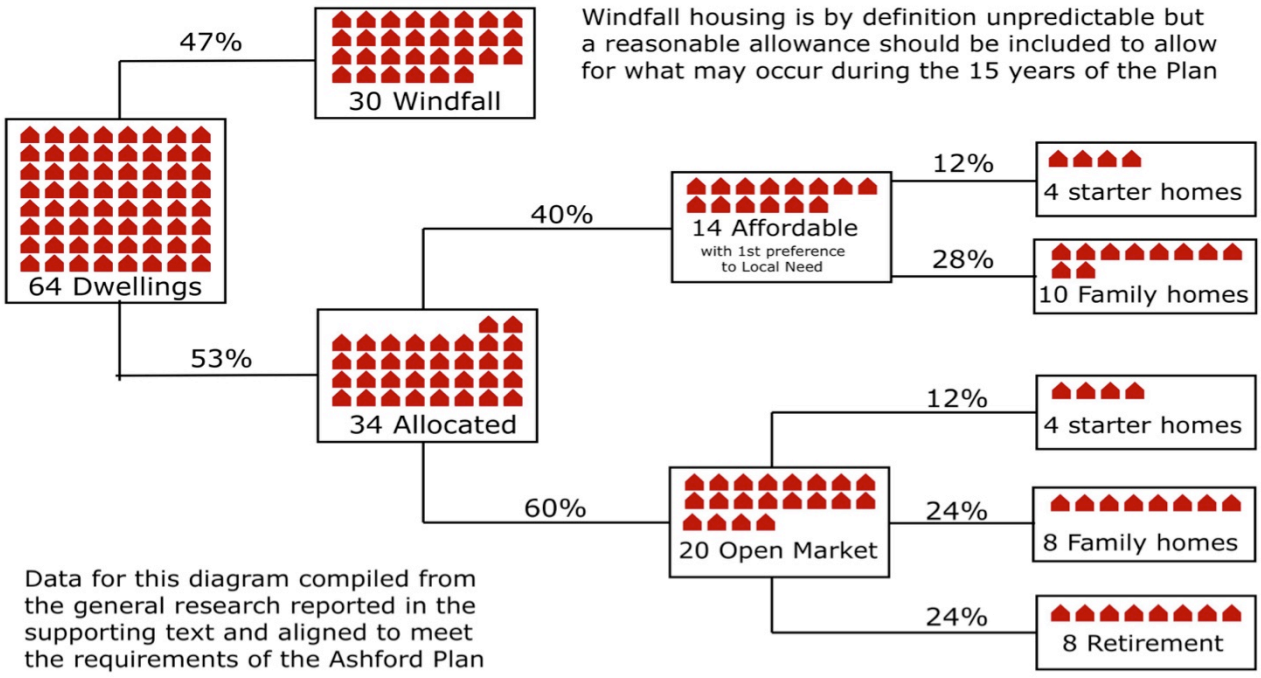
Only the sites noted below (see page 27) shall be allocated for housing development:

Submitted Site A (WC33): Up to 10 dwellings
Submitted Site B (WC5): Up to 14 dwellings
Submitted Site C (WC34): Up to 10 dwellings

Part of each site shall be permanent Public Open Space as per the ratio shown on the individual site diagrams.



Numbers and type of housing



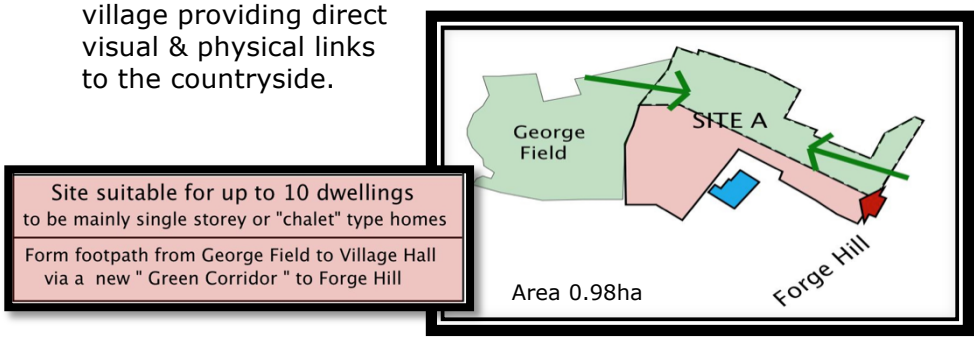
Windfall housing is by definition unpredictable but a reasonable allowance should be included to allow for what may occur during the 15 years of the Plan

Data for this diagram compiled from the general research reported in the supporting text and aligned to meet the requirements of the Ashford Plan

Policy Justification: H 3 Site A Next to the Village Hall

The housing mix on this site reflects the census analysis and local survey data, (see Section 5.4 and evidence statement in Appendix M Consultation Statement). On this site, the emphasis is towards housing suitable for active retirement/downsizing purposes, for which a significant need was identified, it is particularly suitable on this site due to its location near to the Village Hall and easily accessible to the centre of the village. Given site levels, and the need to protect vistas as set out in Policy R 1, particularly from the rear of the properties fronting the south side of The Street, development shall be low rise in nature (see Policy H8), taking account of local topography. The site is in the conservation area. It forms part of a large open area & is an important green gap in the village providing direct visual & physical links to the countryside.

Green Arrows indicate important site lines.



Policy H3 Site A Next to the Village Hall

Development proposals on this site shall be laid out to conserve the Conservation Area within which it is located and complement not detract from the setting of nearby listed buildings. Specific reference shall also be made to Policy R1 on page 18 of this Plan with regard to the protection of village views, vistas and setting.

Not less than 30% of the site shall be green public open space.(excl public parking)10 dwellings on this site shall have a mix of housing types and sizes to meet local need, informed by proportionate evidence of this need. For the full market sale properties, emphasis on housing suitable for active older retirement will be regarded favourably. Due to the topography of the site, the properties shall be low rise as per definition in Policy H8. A public footpath and cycle way shall be provided connecting the village hall to the George Field via this site.

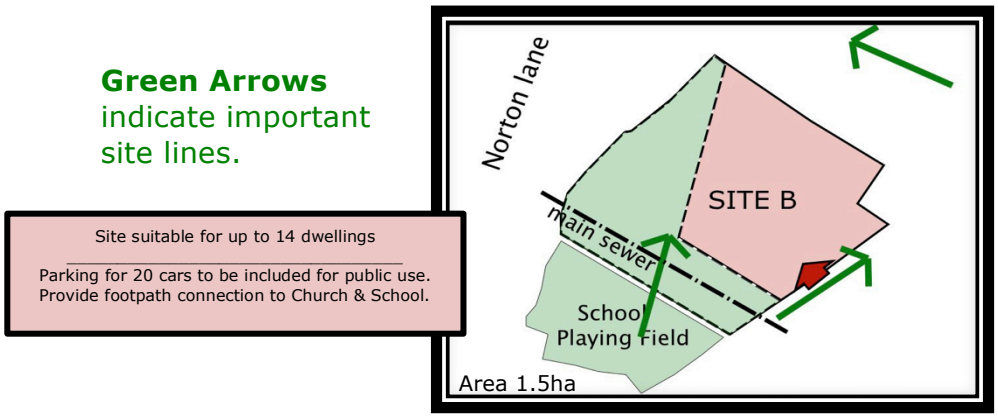
Benefits: Site A

A wheelchair accessible public footpath shall be provided connecting the village hall/site to the footpath in the George Field. A significant area of public open space will be provided as represented on the zone diagrams. S106 or CIL contributions (as is most appropriate) should be used to support the development of additional space (i.e. an extension) to the village hall, primarily to be used for the purpose of preventative healthcare and wellbeing promotion such as exercise classes, outreach/therapeutic interventions, and resources/support to prevent social isolation, particularly among vulnerable groups. This would be particularly beneficial, given the Village Hall's location next to an allocated site containing a greater concentration of older people's housing. This would support ABC's position favouring 'hub' approaches to the development of community infrastructure.

Policy Justification: H4 Site B Next to the Village School

The mix of housing reflects the census analysis and local survey data, (see Section 5.4 and Appendix M, Consultation Statement). The emphasis is towards family housing although the site will support a range of housing. The site is ideally located within easy walking distance of the school and village centre shops and buses. A public car park will reduce congestion along School Road at peak times providing a tangible community benefit for the school. Low rise housing and careful landscaping will limit the environmental impact as the development matures.

Green Arrows indicate important site lines.



Policy H4 Site B Next to the Village School.

Not less than 50% of the site shall be undeveloped. Up to 14 new dwellings on this site shall have a mix of housing types in line with the Ashford current Local Plan; 6 will be affordable, of which 3 will be Local Needs and 3 will be shared ownership; at least half of these should be family homes. The housing
Development here should enable views out to open countryside and through the site to the Conservation Area and nearby historic assets including the Grade I listed Church, an important heritage asset and a key feature in the landscape (ref Policy R1) and respect and reflect the wider landscape setting and the topography of the site. The scale and density of any development on this site must reflect its surroundings. Dwellings should be limited to two-storey in height to prevent a prominent visual edge to the village (ref Policy H8), and shall be adjacent to the existing built area. Existing hedging should be retained or enhanced to preserve the rural green character of the Bethersden Conservation Area.

An area of land in the south western part of the site falls within Flood Zone 3 and therefore a full flood risk assessment will need to be carried out in consultation with the Environment Agency.

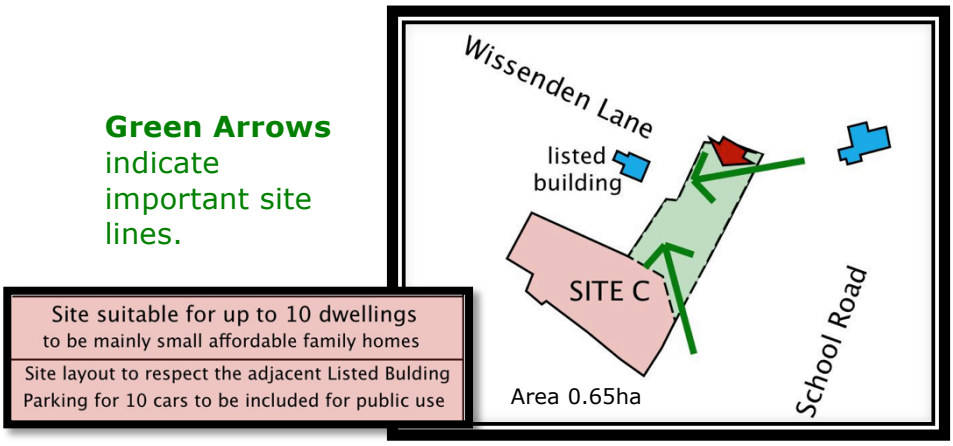
Benefits Site B

A car park for 20 cars for public use; this should be carefully designed to reflect the rural setting in which it is located, using sustainable/environmentally friendly permeable surface materials to promote water run off, biodiversity and minimise visual impact. A significant area of public open space will be provided, as represented on the zone diagram, which will be accessible to local community groups. A wheelchair accessible footpath on the school side of the road shall be provided e.g. church to school in the ABC current Local Plan.

Policy Justification: H5 Site C Next to Lovelace Court

This site lies outside the conservation area, is semi-rural in character and is adjacent to an existing housing development.

Green Arrows indicate important site lines.



Policy H5 Site C Next to Lovelace Court

Development proposals on this site shall clearly set out how the scale, layout, materials and design have been prepared to protect the setting of the adjacent listed buildings. Development will be expected to maintain a green frontage to Wissenden Lane in order to preserve the rural setting of Lovelace House and be restricted to the southern part of the site. Specific reference shall also be made to Policy R1 on page 18 of this Plan with regard to the protection of village views, vistas and setting.

Not less than 30% of the site shall be green public open space. (excl public parking) Up to 10 dwellings on this site shall have a mix of housing types in line with the Ashford current Local Plan; 2 homes on this site will be 'local needs' and 2 will be shared ownership (and at least two of the affordable element will comprise family homes). Provide 10 car parking spaces for public use.

Benefits Site C

Car parking for ten cars near the school.

Policy Justification: H6 Local Needs Housing

Evidence supports an identified need for local needs affordable housing; therefore in Bethersden, as per NPPF para 54, all of the homes for social rent will be additionally designated as local needs, cross subsidised by houses at full market price.

Policy H6 Affordable and Local Needs Housing Policy

40% of the homes built on allocated sites will be classified as affordable, of which 30% will be affordable homes for purchase/ownership, and the remainder divided equally between affordable social rent, and shared ownership. This would total as follows: 14 affordable homes, of which 7 would be designated as 'local needs', and 7 for shared ownership. As per Ashford's current Local Plan, *"the local need housing element is conditioned so that subsequent occupancy of the dwelling will be controlled by a binding agreement to ensure the property remains available to meet local needs in the future and does not only benefit the first occupier"*

Policy Justification: H7 Housing Design Standards

Where possible, all new housing in the parish should be adaptable, suitable for any age group including older people wishing to downsize. This does not necessarily mean smaller homes in every case, but homes which accommodate flexible living, taking account of accessibility and adaptability. New development incorporating ecological design, (including energy efficient and local generation technologies, as per Policy R8) are encouraged subject to impact on the rural nature of the area.

Policy H7 Interior Design Standards

Internal Spaces for all new dwellings should meet the Nationally Described Space Standards.

Policy Justification: H8

The attractiveness of Bethersden parish is created by the interplay of the open countryside and rural and village landscapes, as much as it is by the design of its buildings and structures. This policy seeks to encourage considered development that can respond successfully to the setting and considerate of neighbouring housing. Proposal for new schemes which reflect 21st century / contemporary design, whilst paying homage to Bethersden's local heritage and traditional styles, will be encouraged. As is stated in the Village Design Statement, preference will be given for design schemes which provide diversity and a variation of spacing between buildings and in relation to the road.

Policy H8 External Design Standards

All new housing should be designed to accord with the local character and distinctiveness. Where 'low rise' is preferred, this shall mean housing is single storey in height with, or without attic bedrooms.
Where parking is provided, the layout shall not be dominated by car access and parking facilities.

The following image illustrates a traditional home within the conservation area.

Examples of External Design



The following images show examples of new build developments which reference traditional building styles, but which have a more contemporary feel. The first two homes are located relatively locally. The second two images provide illustration of effective landscaping, as encouraged by the Building for Life Standards






The following images show examples of new build stand alone homes which are built in a contemporary style, while, once again, complementing their rural setting.




Policy Justification H9: Windfall Housing

Survey work indicated that the overall demand for housing in the Parish exceeds the number allocated on specific sites in the village. It is anticipated that the balance will be provided through Windfall Development.

Restricting development to designated sites prevents indiscriminate infill of open spaces disrupting the established grain, open space character and design of the village in key thoroughfares such as The Street e.g. the open spaces adjacent to the George Pub & those around Melville & Beacon House.

Policy H9 Windfall & Infill Housing Policy

Further 'infill' development (additional to the sites allocated in this plan) will not be supported within the conservation area (Ref Green Policy R2). However, windfall housing development outside of this area may be supported, especially where it replaces, extends or forms a acceptable annex to existing housing stock and remains legally part of the original building. Self-build proposals may also be supported.

The above applies, providing the new developments do not result in harm to or loss of important green spaces as defined in Policy R6 or gaps within the built up confines that contribute to the form and attractive character of the village. Development proposals must also avoid causing significant harm to nearby local heritage assets or neighbouring properties, and take into account environment, biodiversity and landscape considerations.

Policy Justification H10 Development of Residential Gardens

Much of the character and attractiveness of Bethersden village is derived from private garden areas. In particular, the substantial plots associated with older properties. There is local concern that the piecemeal development of residential garden land will lead to an erosion of local character and distinctiveness. Residential gardens provide important breaks in built up frontages and in overall built massing, play an important amenity role by providing private recreational space, important wildlife habitats and green networks particularly where the gardens are well established.

This Neighbourhood Plan identifies three sites within and adjoining the Conservation Area for development. It is considered that these sites provide the least disturbance to the established pattern of development within the Conservation Area. The subdivision of residential gardens for infill development in the Conservation Area is likely to undermine the coherence of the pattern and rhythm of development in the village, and will therefore be resisted.

NPPF Para 53 also supports 'providing a policy framework to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, although such an approach needs to be balanced against the objectives of sustainable development.'

Policy H10 Development of Residential Gardens

Proposals for development of residential gardens will be supported where the development.

a) Is appropriate to the surrounding area in terms of land use, size and scale;
b) Maintains or where possible, enhances the character and appearance of the area, reflecting local dwelling types;
c) Does not involve the inappropriate sub-division of existing curtilages to a size below that prevailing in the are, taking into account of the need to retain and enhance mature landscapes;
d) Presents frontage in keeping with the existing street scene or prevailing street layout in the area, including frontage width, building orientation, visual separation between buildings and distance from the road; and
e) Does not result in the loss of biodiversity

Policy Justification H11: Self/Custom Build

in tandem with the relevant ABC Local Plan position, the Parish will support the principle of Self and Custom Build development as an opportunity to bring choice to the housing market as well as enabling local people to design & build their own home that will meet their bespoke needs, while maintaining and enhancing the character & appearance of the area reflecting local dwelling & design types.

Policy H11 Self/Custom Build

Applications for self/custom build homes, either on one of the allocated sites set out in this Plan, or on windfall sites, will be supported subject to other policies in this Plan, and as per Ashford current Local Plan.

Policy Justification H12: Parking

Adequate parking, while being an essential component of any new development, is required to minimize the environmental and visual impact so that the rural feel is protected.

Policy H12 – Parking

Layout of housing developments shall not be dominated by car access or parking. It should also accord with the Building for Life Framework. Parking should incorporate soft landscaping where possible to maintain overall rural character.

Proposals for residential development shall achieve the following minimum parking standards:

1 Bed Flat or House	1 Spaces per unit
2 Bed Flat or House	2 Spaces per unit
3 Bed Dwellings	2 Spaces per unit
4 Bed House	3 Spaces per unit

Policy Justification H13: Community Engagement Ref 3.160 Local Plan

Securing community engagement, feedback and support for any new development will enable Bethersden residents to develop their understanding of any new plans, and contribute any ideas or concerns about the proposals, resulting in developments which are more in keeping with residents' priorities and aspirations. At the same time, this approach makes good business sense for developers, resulting in better design outcomes, fewer objections, greater sales, and ultimately, less cost.

Policy H13 Community Engagement

As recommended by Ashford's current Local Plan, site promoters shall involve the community and work with local people (via the Parish Council) to ensure full resident engagement in the process and ensure high design quality using the Building for Life Toolkit as a framework. Residents shall also be included in dialogue about the plans for on going maintenance of public open space (and the funding of this), and these proposals shall form part of any planning applications, which come forward. See example of benefits (Orange section para 5.10 Page 14).

Policy Justification H14: Drainage

Following the results of the drainage working group involving Southern Water, Environment Agency, KCC and ABC a comprehensive report was concluded. Southern Water's assessment has revealed that additional sewerage infrastructure would be required to serve the proposed developments.

Policy H14 Drainage System

Development in Bethersden Parish will be supported subject to meeting other policies in this Plan. Developers will therefore be required to make a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network. Early liaison should take place between the developer and the service provider.

Provision shall be made for onsite attenuation of surface water flow, to be approved by the relevant authorities.

Policy Justification H15: Open Spaces

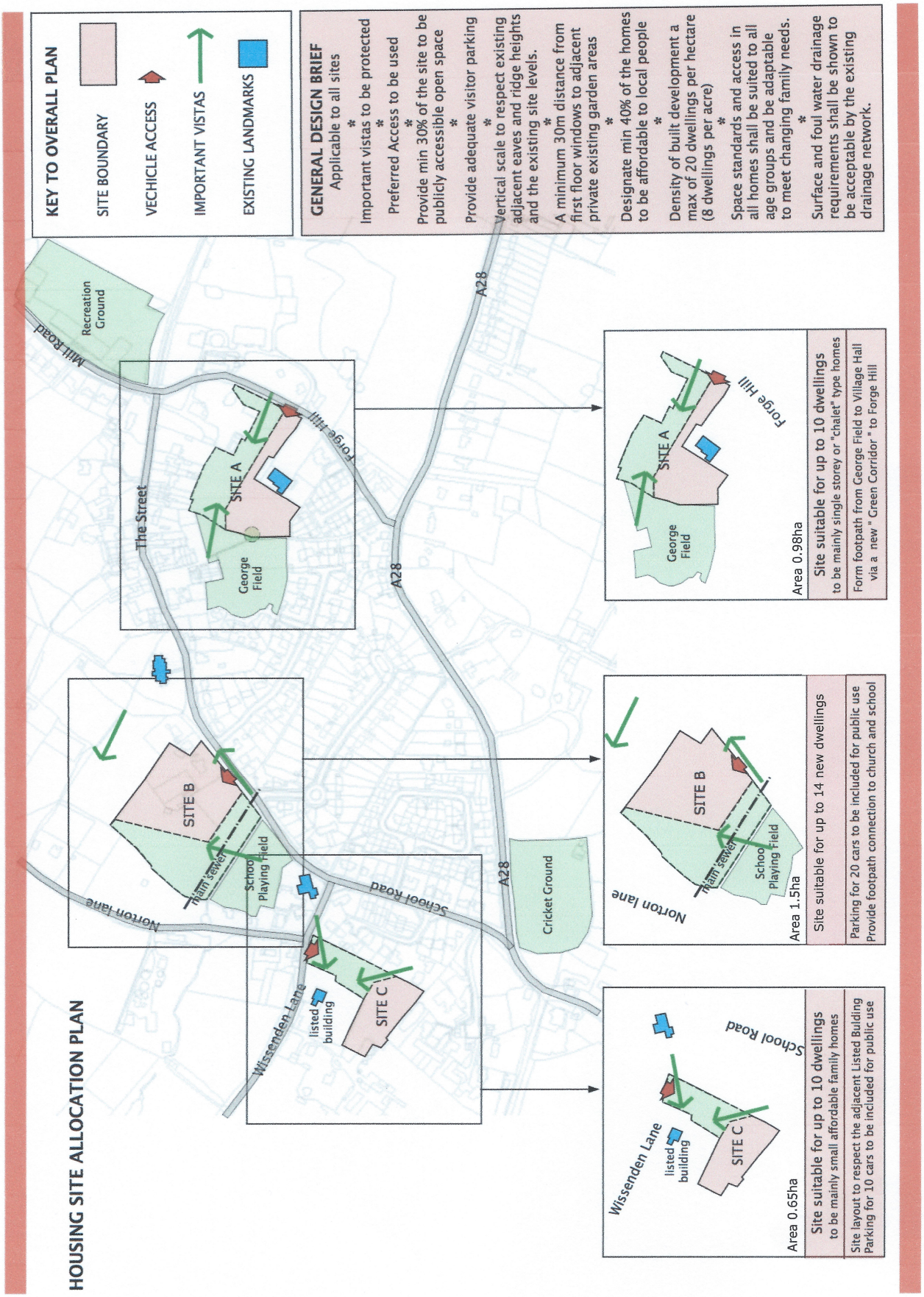
As per Ashford's current Local Plan, all schemes that deliver public open space /community space, must set out the specifications and details of the facilities to be delivered and how these will be managed and maintained. It is likely that the Parish Council would take on stewardship of the site. Again, as per the Local Plan, Developers will be expected to endow the Parish Council with both assets and cash (the exact requirements depending on local circumstances), the latter of which should be at a level at least equivalent to a ten year commuted payment period.

Policy H15 Maintenance of Public Open Space

a) Proposals that deliver substantial community space and facilities will be supported subject to meeting the other policies in this Plan. A viable management plan will need to be agreed with the Parish Council which sets out what facilities are to be delivered by whom and by when.

b) Where the Parish Council, or another not for profit community body, takes on an adoption role, financial contributions will be secured from the developer towards the maintenance of facilities for at least a ten year period.

Site Locations



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8. Economy Communication Transport and Infrastructure

Snapshot of comments:

"Improve broadband connections to encourage home working"

Local Economy

Bethersden is a rural Parish which historically relied on farming for the main source of its income and prosperity. The land continues to be farmed with a mixture of livestock and arable farming, though in line with development across the country mechanisation has considerably reduced employment and many farm buildings have been sold off or converted to different uses. Along with this the socioeconomic changes in the country as a whole and the increasing move from public to private transport have led to a move of population from rural employment to urban employment and a move of better-off people from town to country. The consequence of this is that many people who now live in the parish travel to work, either in nearby towns or commuting to London.

Low availability of workspace and jobs in rural communities can encourage local people of working age to leave the area, & prevent people of working age from moving in. A reduction in the working age population has both social and economic effects. When there is a daily exodus of people of working age the community often has difficulty maintaining many community services and facilities.

Bethersden, however, has managed to develop a large number of businesses within the parish utilizing converted rural buildings as well as purpose built premises.

Its diverse and sustainable local business community continues to grow and support the local economy, and includes commercial offices, small scale manufacturing and various kinds of workshops.

The Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan sets out to maintain and encourage the local economy in order to support the sustainability of the community. It will support the sustainable growth of all types of business and enterprise in the Parish, rural tourism and leisure facilities that benefit local businesses, residents and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside.

A survey of local businesses has been undertaken to ascertain how the Parish can further and better support the development of their activities within the Parish. This had a disappointingly low reply but the need for broadband and mobile communications was essential to business development and success, and that improvement was urgently required. The community sees the retention and expansion of existing services, facilities and public houses as key to the cohesion and well being of the community. The Parish will support opportunities to expand, enhance or maximise existing community uses, and will promote the shared use of community and educational facilities.

Objectives:

In particular this Plan will support the following types of business development, subject to traffic, environmental, amenity and landscape considerations and the other policies in the Plan. See **Appendix F** Consultation Statement for supporting evidence.

a) Development which encourages local employment particularly where it is located adjacent to or within existing commercial zones.

b) Conversion of existing buildings, especially underused agricultural buildings, and the small-scale expansion of existing employment premises across the Parish.

c) Services provided which support home working and commercial developments e.g. good high speed internet coverage.

d) New commercial developments shall not inhibit the free flow of traffic, which include speed management, traffic calming and good vehicle access.

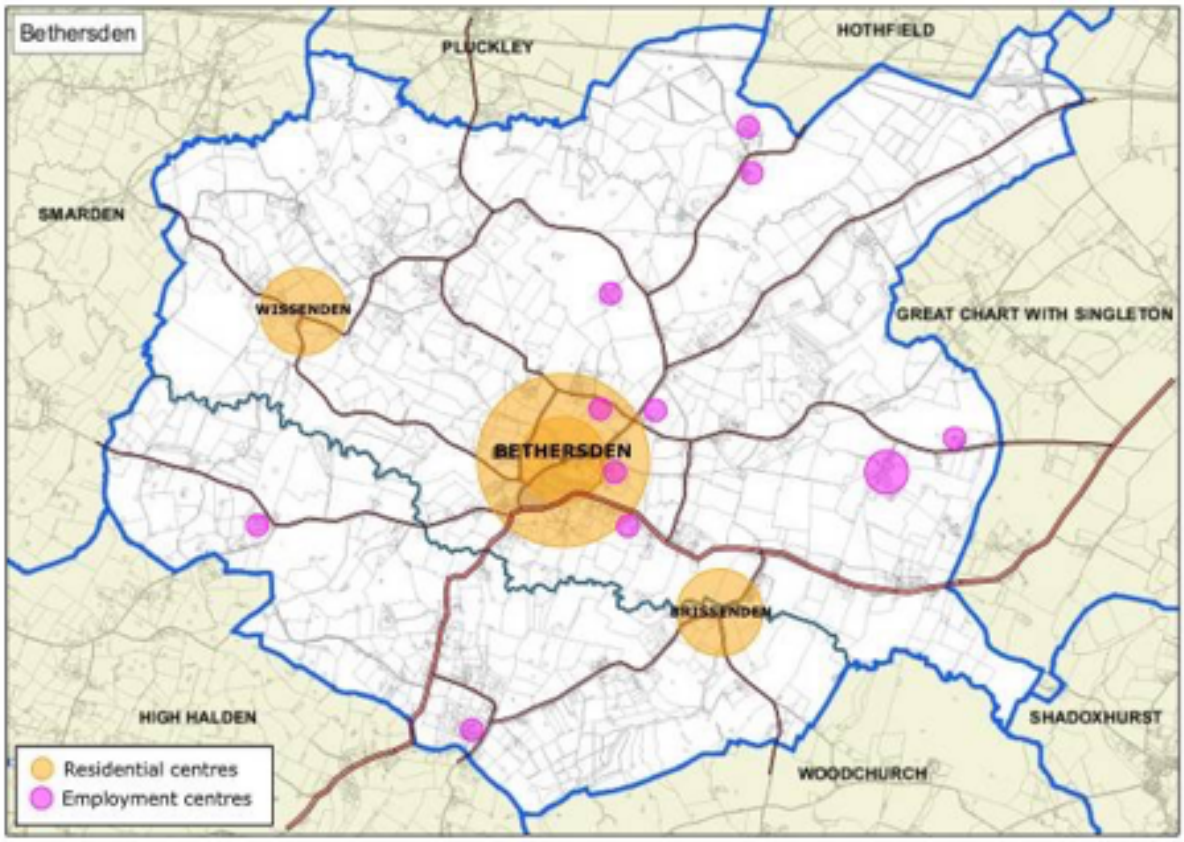
e) Services provided to support commercial developments e.g. adequate power & waste disposal.

f) Development that supports the vibrancy and vitality of Bethersden Parish by diversifying and enhancing the range of local shops and related commercial services for the local community.

g) Development including external lighting which manages to reduce energy usage, impact on biodiversity, visual impact, light pollution and any potential harm to local residents and to the local character of the area. Where this is in doubt, applications should be accompanied by a formal lighting assessment to ensure it complies with national and local authority requirements in our rural area.

h) New developments which do not create noise pollution particularly when close to residential areas.

GENERAL RESIDENTIAL AND EMPLOYMENT ZONING DIAGRAM



Policy Justification CT1 Business/Commercial development

All new commercial development shall respect the character of its surroundings by way of scale and design, not harm the surrounding landscape, and safeguard residential amenity and road safety.

Development or redevelopment must be beneficial in its widest sense, particularly to prevent loss of employment opportunities and income. The loss of shops and related commercial services for the local community will be resisted. Industrial activity will be opposed where excessive noise impacts the local environment.

Policy CT 1 Business or Commercial Development

Proposals for business or commercial development will be supported where they:

a) Provide local employment and/or add to local services and the range of shops.

b) Comply with other policies in this Plan.

Policy Justification C2 Maintenance of local service centre

The village itself includes the following facilities:

Post Office/General Store, Butcher, Hairdresser, other small retailers, 2 pubs, (The George and The Bull Inn) legal financial services and small scale manufacturers.

These facilities perform a vital function in the economic and social well being of this community and are greatly valued. ~~P~~olicy CT 2 will help to protect these services and encourage new ones where appropriate.

Policy CT 2 particularly protects public houses, wine bars & other drinking establishments (but not night clubs) from a change of use for another purpose, where planning consent is required, to ensure that the vitality and viability of the village as a parish service and tourism centre is maintained. For public houses in particular, the NPPF supports their contribution to local life and provides for their designation as a community asset.

Policy: CT2 Maintenance of local service centre

a) Proposals to create new shop units within the built up area boundary will be supported where there is demonstrable benefit to the retail activity.

b) Loss of shop units as a result of proposals for redevelopment or for a change of use where planning permission is required is not supported.

c) The Neighbourhood Plan will support proposals to create new café and restaurant units in the village, other than by a change of use of a shop unit.

d) Proposals to improve the facilities of the public houses in the village and wider parish will be supported where this is demonstrated to benefit the business. Proposals that involve change of use, will not be supported, where the change adversely affects local residents.

Policy Justification: CT3 Services

Internet – Good quality Internet services are important for business operations and high speed fibre based systems are becoming essential as the volume of data increases. Home working is increasingly important to individuals working away from corporate offices, or working on their own projects, e.g. business start-ups, authors etc. Basic internet speeds of 24 Mbps are proposed by BT Openreach for new developments. Fibre based systems should provide not less than 80 Mbps.

General Infrastructure Services

Existing commercial and industrial businesses, particularly near the village centre, are users of the relatively limited infrastructure services available in the rural parish, such as electricity, telecoms/internet, gas and particularly drainage where large parts of the systems are near to or over capacity.

Policy CT3 Services

a) Development of existing internet services towards higher speeds, to support businesses and home working etc. shall be encouraged.

b) Any new commercial or industrial development application shall demonstrate for current locally available Internet Speeds of not less than 24Mbps, without detriment to the services available to existing users. It shall also show how facilities can be updated as the technology develops e.g. high-speed fibre Internet. Competent professional connectivity statement shall be submitted with any planning applications.

c) Commercial developments on new sites & expansion of existing sites, shall ensure that additional power, communications, connectivity, drainage and other essential services as appropriate, are available to fully meet the completed site requirements, without detriment to existing users in the parish.

Policy Justification CT4 & CT5 Transport and Infrastructure

Roads - Bethersden Parish is situated on either side of the A28 Ashford to Tenterden road, which is single carriageway and has a large number of bends. The roads through the village/parish community are B roads, and many are narrow lanes with consequent difficulties for free flowing traffic. Furthermore many of the lanes that connect the village with other villages in the area are also narrow B roads and generally unsuitable for large vehicles as two-way traffic is difficult and often requires the use of un-adopted passing places, or running over grass verges.





The Bus Service through the village between Ashford & Tenterden runs hourly. Discussions with the local bus companies do not hold out any realistic prospect of these services being increased in the future without some significant financial subsidy from the Ashford BC or Kent CC.

Therefore it is likely that the use of private cars will continue to be the primary means of transport and continue to grow.

Rail Services to London are provided via Pluckley Station, some 3 miles from the village, at 70 minutes, and via Headcorn at some 8.5 miles distance, 63 minutes. Both stations are only accessible by car.

Ashford International station, is 8 miles distance and offers fast HS1 services to & from London St Pancras Station at 37 minutes, and access to Eurostar for travel to the continent.

Parking, Congestion and speeding
Bethersden Primary School is located on junction/corner at the western end of the main road through the village. Associated parking on adjacent roads by parents and some school staff results in the road becoming very congested, and presents a dangerous situation for all users particularly at the beginning and end of each school day.







Top pictures show the sharp bend from both approaches to the Bethersden Primary School outside start and finish times.

The bottom picture shows typical parking for school start and finish.

It is important to maintain and improve communications and transport links. Where appropriate, traffic management measures will be encouraged and supported where there is evidence of a need to improve highway safety.

With the proposal for extensive development at Chilmington Green (Western fringes of Ashford) now approved by the Ashford Borough Council it is likely that additional traffic will be generated in the area, which will exacerbate existing congestion and safety issues. Evidence from the Bethersden Speed & Community Safety Group report dated 2nd December 2016 demonstrates the increasing problem, of Bethersden's narrow lanes being used as "rat runs" for traffic off the A28 making for Pluckley & Headcorn railway stations and the A20.

Policy CT4 Heavy goods traffic – new facilities

Any proposal requiring planning permission to change the use of land in the Parish to General Industrial Use or distribution and storage uses, or other uses, which would generate heavy goods traffic, shall provide a Transport Statement from a competent professional demonstrating that the proposal will not have an unacceptable traffic impact within the Parish including road safety aspects.

Policy Justification CT 5 Traffic Flow and Highway safety

There is considerable disquiet about perceived excessive speed in roads around the parish. A Speed Watch campaign has been set up in the Parish and several survey sites have been identified and approved by the authorities as suitable for this.

A number of parishioners have also been trained in the correct and safe use of the equipment. In the first week of monitoring, more than 100 drivers were noted exceeding the 30mph speed limit, with some travelling at speeds of up to 50mph.

In addition to the school, the village shops and services also attract traffic from the hamlets around Bethersden, leading to congestion and occasional parking problems in the village centre.

Residents of the village have expressed concern about traffic congestion, inappropriate access by HGVs and speeding along the roads in the parish

Traffic moving between the A28 and the A20/M20 also use Bethersden as a short cut.

There is also concern about the increase in traffic congestion and related damage to the small roads and lanes from entertainment events, which appear to be increasing in number.

Policy CT 5 Traffic Flow and Highway safety

a) Proposals which will increase the number of site to road access points or which would increase traffic generation shall demonstrate in the interests of highway safety that they do not inhibit the free flow of traffic or exacerbate congestion.

b) Business developments intending to start or expand entertainment events shall be required to implement formal event management arrangements to cover safe traffic flows to and from the site.

Taken in 30mph limit area



Glossary of terms - Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan 6th September 2017

ADOPTION	The final confirmation of a development plan by a local planning authority.
AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEFINITION	**Affordable housing:** housing that is provided for sale or rent to those whose needs are not met by the market (this can include housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership), and which meets the criteria for one of the models set out below. **Social rented and affordable rented housing:** eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. **Social rented housing** is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the Government's rent policy. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency. **Affordable rented housing** is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable). **Starter homes** is housing as defined in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any subsequent secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute at the time of plan-preparation or decision-taking. Local planning authorities should also include income restrictions which limit a person's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those who have maximum household incomes of £80,000 a year or less (or £90,000 a year or less in Greater London). **Discounted market sales housing** is housing that is sold at a discount of at least 20 per cent below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. It should include provisions to remain at a discount for future eligible households. **Affordable private rent housing** is housing that is made available for rent at a level which is at least 20 per cent below local market rent. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provision should be made to ensure that affordable private rent housing remains available for rent at a discount for future eligible households or for alternative affordable housing provision to be made if the discount is withdrawn. Affordable private rented housing is particularly suited to the provision of affordable housing as part of Build to Rent Schemes. **Intermediate housing** is discount market sales and affordable private rent housing and other housing that meets the following criteria: housing that is provided for sale and rent at a cost above social rent, but below market levels. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. It should also include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement. These can include Shared Ownership, equity loans, other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent (including Rent to Buy housing).
BIODIVERSITY	The degree of variation of life forms within a particular ecosystem. Biodiversity is a measure of the health of an ecosystem. Human activity generally tends to reduce biodiversity, so special measures often need to be taken to offset the impact of development on natural habitats.

BNP	Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan
BROWNFIELD LAND	Previously developed land.
BUILDING FOR LIFE	A technique for assessing the quality of housing proposals using 20 criteria; including sustainability, urban design social and community factors.
BUSINESS AREA	An area covered by a neighbourhood plan, which is wholly, or predominantly business in nature. The designation of a business area allows businesses to vote in the referendum, in addition to those living in the area.
COMMUNITY	A group of people that who hold something in common. They could share a common place, a common interest, a common identity, or a common need.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT	Involving the local community in decision making.
COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)	Allows local authorities to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects in their areas. Money can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure such as transport schemes, schools and leisure centres.
COMMUNITY PROFILING	Gathering statistical data on the community, e.g. population size, income, which helps build up a 'social profile' of the community.
CONSERVATION AREA	An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character & appearance of which are preserved and enhanced by local planning policies.
CONSULTATION	A communication process with the local community that informs planning decision-making.
CORE STRATEGY	A development plan document forming part of a local authority's Local Plan, which sets out a vision and core policies for the development of an area.
DELIVERY PLAN	The means of making things happen. It could refer to a partnership or a community development trust or other arrangement designed to make projects happen.
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT	A short report accompanying a planning permission application. Describes design principles of a development such as layout, townscape characteristics, scale, landscape design and appearance.
DEVELOPMENT	The carrying out of building, mining, engineering or other operations in, on, under or over land, & the making of any material change in the use of buildings or other land.
DEVELOPERS SITE BRIEF	Guidance on how a site or area should be developed in terms of uses, design, linkages, conservation, etc.

DUTY TO COOPERATE	A requirement introduced by the Localism Act 2011 for local authorities to work together in dealing with cross-boundary issues such as public transport, housing allocations or large retail parks.
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	Evaluates the likely environmental impacts of the development, together with an assessment of how these impacts could be reduced.
EVIDENCE BASE	The evidence upon which a development plan is based, principally the background facts and statistics about an area, and the views of stakeholders.
FLOOD PLAIN	An area prone to flooding.
GREEN SPACE	Those parts of an area which are occupied by natural, designed or agricultural landscape as opposed to built development; open space, parkland, woodland, sports fields, gardens & allotments.
HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS	Not-for-profit organisations providing homes mainly to those in housing need.
INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION	An examination of a proposed NHP, carried out by an independent person, set up to consider whether a NHP meets the basic conditions required.
INFRASTRUCTURE	Basic services necessary for development to take place e.g. roads, electricity, water, education and health facilities.
INFILL	There's no formal definition of what makes an infill plot, although one frequently adopted by councils for countryside locations is 'the infilling of a small gap within an otherwise built-up frontage or group of houses.'
LEGISLATION	The Acts of Parliament, regulations, and statutory instruments which provide the legal framework within which public law is administered.
LISTED BUILDINGS	Any building or structure which is included in the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.
LOCALISM	Moving power from central government control to local level. Making services more locally accountable, devolving more power to local communities, individuals & councils.
LOCAL AUTHORITY	The administrative body that governs local services such as education, planning and social services.
LOCAL PLAN	The name for the collection of documents prepared by your local planning authority for the use and development of land and for changes to the transport system. Can contain documents such as development plans and statements of community involvement.
LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY	Local government body responsible for formulating planning policies and controlling development; a district council, a county council, a unitary authority or national park authority.

LOCAL NEEDS HOUSING	See Ashford Borough Council Website, Housing Needs Survey final report 2005.
LOCAL REFERENDUM	A direct vote in which communities will be asked to either accept or reject a particular proposal.
NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK	The government policy document adopted in March 2012 intended to make national planning policy and guidance less complex and more accessible. The national Planning Policy Framework introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It gives five guiding principles of sustainable development: living within the planet's means; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly.
NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA	The local area in which a neighbourhood plan or Neighbourhood Development Order can be introduced.
NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT ORDER	An order introduced by a parish or town council, or a neighbourhood forum, as part of the neighbourhood planning process, which grants planning permission for a specific development or type of development that will fulfill the vision and policies of the neighbourhood plan for the neighbourhood area.
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN	A planning document created by a parish or town council or a neighbourhood forum, which sets out vision for the neighbourhood area, and contains policies for the development and use of land in the area. Neighbourhood plans must be subjected to an independent examination to confirm that they meet legal requirements, and then to a local referendum. If approved by a majority vote of those voting of the local community, the neighbourhood plan will then form part of the statutory development plan.
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING	A community-initiated process in which people get together through a local forum or parish or town council and produce a plan for their neighbourhood setting out policies and proposals for the development they wish to see in their area.
PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT	Certain minor building works that don't need planning permission e.g. a boundary wall below a certain height.
POLICY	A concise statement of the principles that a particular kind of development proposal should satisfy in order to obtain planning permission
PARISH PLAN	A plan produced by a parish council that sets out a vision for the future of a parish community and outlines how that can be achieved in an action plan.
PARKING STANDARDS	The requirements of a local authority in respect of the level of car parking provided for different kinds of development

PLANNING OBLIGATION	Planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, secured by a local planning authority through negotiations with a developer to offset the public cost of permitting a development proposal. Sometimes developers can self impose obligations to pre-empt objections to planning permission being granted. They cover things like highway improvements or open space provision.
PLANNING PERMISSION	Formal approval granted by a council allowing a proposed development to proceed.
PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT .	The concept introduced in 2012 by the UK government with the National Planning Policy Framework to be the 'golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking'. The NPPF gives five guiding principles of sustainable development: living within the planet's means; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly.
PUBLIC OPEN SPACE	Open space to which the public has free access.
QUALIFYING BODY	Either a parish/town council or neighbourhood forum, which can initiate the process of neighbourhood planning
REFERENDUM	A vote by the eligible population of an electoral area may decide on a matter of public policy. Neighbourhood plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders are made by a referendum of the eligible voters within a neighbourhood area.
RURAL	Areas of land which are generally not urbanised; usually with low population densities and a high proportion of land devoted to agriculture
SECTION 106	See Planning Obligation.
SETTING	The immediate context in which a building is situated, for example, the setting of a listed building could include neighbouring land or development with which it is historically associated, or the surrounding townscape of which it forms a part. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
SITE ALLOCATION PLAN	A plan accompanying a planning policy document or statement which identifies sites within the plan area on which certain kinds of development are proposed, e.g. residential or retail development.
SPACE STANDARDS	Quantified dimensions set down by a local planning authority to determine whether a particular development proposal provides enough space around it so as not to affect the amenity of existing neighbouring developments. Space standards can also apply to garden areas.
STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	A formal statement of the process of community consultation undertaken in the preparation of a statutory plan

STRATEGIC ENVIROMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	Environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. Has been in place since the European SEA directive (2001/42/EC).
SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL	An assessment of the environmental, social and economic impactsof a Local Plan from the outset of the preparation process to check that the plan accords with the principles of sustainable development.
STRATEGIC PLANNING	The overall vision and policies for the planning system in an area. Lays out what an area wants development to accomplish.
STRATEGIC POLICY	A policy that is essential for the delivery of a strategy, forexample, the overall scale and distribution of housing and employment in an area.
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT	Provides detailed thematic or site-specific guidance explaining or supporting the policies in the Local Plan.
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	An approach to development that aims to allow economic growth without damaging the environment or natural resources. It is Development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990	Currently the main planning legislation for England and Wales is consolidated in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990; this is regarded as the 'principal act'.
TREE PRESERVATION ORDER	An order made by a local planning authority to protect a specific tree, group of trees or woodland. TPOs prevent the felling, lopping, topping, uprooting or deliberate damage of trees without permission of the local planning authority.
URBAN	Having the characteristics of a town or a city; dominated by built development.
VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT	The Village Design Statement identifies and defines the distinctive characteristics of a locality. It provides design guidance to influence future development and improve the physical qualities of the area. Can be a supplementary Planning Document
WINDFALL HOUSING	Not all future housing land is allocated in forward planning documents such as local plans. 'Windfall' sites will come forward on an ad hoc basis as unforeseen circumstances arise. These sites are assessed against planning policies at that time. They normally comprise previously developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.