Awbridge Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Referendum Plan 2025 – 2042

V.11 AUGUST 2026

Prepared by Awbridge Parish Steering Group
on behalf of the Parish Council

In conjunction with
Bluestone Planning LLP



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The Plan's Appendices can be accessed on the Parish Council website via the Neighbourhood Plan dropdown menu, alongside the Character Appraisal and Design Code, which are available as separate documents.

Foreword

Awbridge Parish Council decided to produce a Neighbourhood development plan around 5 years ago and a lot of hard work was put in by Kerry Daley and Vickey Madison which is the basis for a lot of the current plan. In 2021 David Coggan took over the role of chair followed by Gordon Piper and under their leadership the working party progressed the document to its current form.

A big thank you to all those who have contributed to the NDP and to the current working group, named below, and to Sharon De Bru from Bluestone Planning who supported and guided the development process.

Jo Lees
Sara Kenyon
Louise Preget
Bridget Davis
Lindy Prescott
Pat Warrener
Charlotte Wheatstone
Fred Tucker
Sharon De Bru / Erin Scarsbrook – Bluestone Planning for supporting and guiding us through the process.

In addition, thanks are offered to the wider community of Awbridge for their interest and enthusiasm for the project.

Sources

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https://www.parish-online.co.uk/map-data
Natural England https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england
Historic England https://historicengland.org.uk/
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1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Neighbourhood Plan Status

1.1.1 The Localism Act 2011, supplemented by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, introduced Neighbourhood Planning into the spatial planning hierarchy of England, giving communities the right to influence future development at a local level.

1.1.2 Once approved at a referendum a Neighbourhood Plan becomes a statutory part of the development plan, which will be incorporated into the district planning framework and used by Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) in the determination of planning applications. It supports the delivery of the strategic policies in the development plan and contains policies for the use of land and development. Wider community aspirations do not form part of the statutory development plan but are referred to separately in each relevant section.

1.2 Submitting Body

1.2.1 The Parish Council is the qualifying body responsible for preparing the Neighbourhood Plan and therefore are in charge of submitting the Plan to the District Council for examination. The term 'qualifying body' is defined by the Localism Act 2011, meaning it is the body with responsibility for neighbourhood planning in the designated neighbourhood area.

1.3 Neighbourhood Plan Area

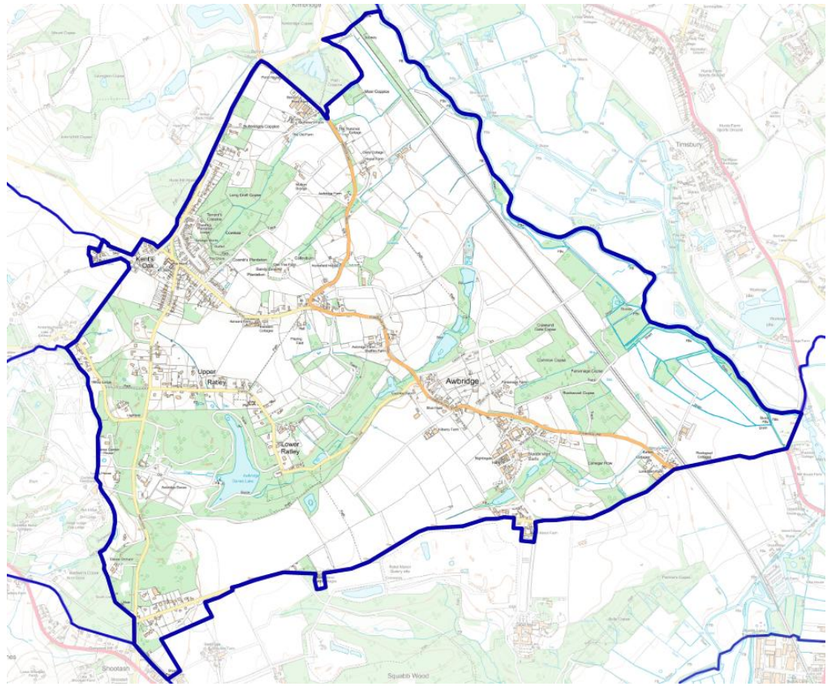


Figure 1. Neighbourhood Plan Area

1.3.1 Awbridge Parish Council established a Steering Group to produce the Neighbourhood Plan in 2018. In accordance with Regulation 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, Awbridge Parish Council submitted an application for the designation of a neighbourhood area on 22nd February 2018. The specified area follows the parish boundary and as per Regulation 5A of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the neighbourhood area was designated following a consultation that ran from 23rd March to 11th May 2018. The designated neighbourhood area can be seen in Figure 1.

1.4 Basic Conditions

1.4.1 Neighbourhood Plans must comply with what are known as 'Basic Conditions'. These Basic Conditions are defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and comprise:

- Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the order (or Neighbourhood Plan).
- The making of the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- The making of the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Development Plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).
- The making of the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations as incorporated into UK law.
- The making of the order (or Neighbourhood Plan) does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, which set out the habitat regulation assessment process for land use plans, including consideration of the effect on habitats sites.

1.4.2 Schedule 4B (8(6)) also indicates that it is necessary to consider whether the Neighbourhood Plan is *"compatible with the Convention rights"*. The interpretation section (s.17) in Schedule 4B confirms that *"the Convention rights"* has the same meaning as in the Human Rights Act 1998.

1.5 Plan Period, Monitoring and Review

1.5.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been produced to cover the period up to 2042, which in the future will correspond with the plan period for the Test Valley Local Plan Review (currently under consultation).

1.5.2 It should be noted that this plan will change over time to reflect current needs and requirements. Through ongoing review processes, we aim to keep it adaptable to changing needs. The Parish Council, in collaboration with the community, will review the Plan every year at the Parish AGM.

Measuring Impact

1.5.3 We are committed to monitoring the effectiveness of the policies in the Plan. An annual review will assess their timeliness and identify areas for improvement. This commitment to continuous evaluation ensures the Plan's effectiveness in shaping a vibrant future for the future of the parish.

2 Planning Policy Context

2.1 National Planning Policy

2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published by the government in 2018 and revised in February 2025, is an important guide in the preparation of Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. It sets out the Government's policy in relation to land use planning matters.

2.1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan must demonstrate that it has had regard to, and is consistent with, the provisions of the NPPF. The relevant paragraphs of the current NPPF are set out alongside the policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan in Section 5.

2.1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines three key objectives for sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. This Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) aims to address these objectives within the context of Awbridge Parish.

2.1.4 Economically, the NDP seeks to foster a thriving rural economy. Through consultations with businesses and residents, the Plan identifies future needs and aims to implement policies that nurture existing businesses and encourage responsible growth.

2.1.5 Socially, the individual settlements areas are distinctly different, but the Plan recognises and celebrates its strong community spirit. It prioritises the creation of safe and accessible infrastructure connecting the various communities. Additionally, the Plan focuses on maintaining and enhancing essential services and amenities for all residents.

2.1.6 Environmentally, being close to a number of international ecological designations, results in the Plan prioritising the protection and improvement of its natural environment. The NDP integrates biodiversity conservation as a core principle and seeks to implement initiatives that safeguard and enhance the rich ecological landscape.

2.2 Test Valley Local Plan

2.2.1 The Test Valley Borough Local Plan Review (TVBLPR) 2011-2029[1] is the Adopted Development Plan for Awbridge Parish. This plan remains in effect until the emerging Test Valley Local Plan 2040 is adopted. At the time of writing, the 2040 plan[2] undertook public consultation on the draft Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Stage 2 between 6th February 2024 and 2nd April 2024. However, since then the announcement of the Government's reforms and consultation on draft changes to the NPPF, which propose a significant increase to housing need and transitional arrangements, mean that TVBC cannot take forward the draft Local Plan in its current form.

2.2.2 It's important to note that under existing adopted policy, Awbridge Parish is not designated for significant housing or employment growth.

[1] Test Valley Borough Council. (2024) *Revised Local Plan (DPD).* Accessed at: https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpolicy/local-development-framework/dpd

2.3 The Minerals and Waste Local Plan

2.3.1 The Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan was adopted in 2013 and runs to 2030. An initial review was undertaken in 2018, with a detailed review in 2020. A partial update was identified as being required and work is ongoing.

3 The Neighbourhood Plan Area

3.1 Overview of the Parish



Figure 2. Awbridge and Surrounding Parishes

3.1.1 The parish consists of a number of individual settlement areas: Awbridge, Kent's Oak, Upper and Lower Ratley and with a recent boundary change, the area of Stanbridge Earls. Parts of Newtown and Shootash also fall within the parish.

[2] Test Valley Borough Council. (2024) Draft Local Plan 2040. Accessed at: https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/planning-services/planningpolicy/local-development-framework/draft-local-plan-2040?chapter=2

3.2 Historical Development

3.2.1 One of the earliest references to Awbridge (pronounced "*Aybridge*"), can be found in the Domesday Book. This register of assets was commissioned in December 1085 by William the Conqueror to assess the extent of the land and resources in England. In the first draft completed in 1086, Awbridge was listed as "*Abedric*". By 1207 the name had changed to "*Abberugge*", "*Abbederugge*" in 1218 and "*Abbederigge*" by 1238. This transition reflected the Norman influence on the original Celtic name. Much later in 1849 the name was spelt "*Awebridge*", as can still be seen on the inscription within the northerly wall of the original chapel near Stanbridge Earls.

3.2.2 To read more about the history of Awbridge Parish, see Appendix II.

3.3 Parish Profile

3.3.1 Awbridge is one of the Test Valley's fifty-nine parishes. The parish profile (see Appendix III) was produced in 2021 by Test Valley Borough Council prior to the alteration of the parish boundary. While it is acknowledged that including Stanbridge Earls would significantly impact the figures, no updated profile is currently available. However, it should be noted that the addition of the 155-property retirement village (primarily consisting of apartments) has already considerably altered the demographic landscape.

3.3.2 As a result, only the original data has been considered, with the understanding that this will differ significantly when compared to revised data, which will reflect adjustments in the population aged over 55, as well as changes in the number, average value and types of properties.

3.3.3 To read more about the Parish Profile, see Appendix III.

4 Issues and Opportunities

4.1 Overview of Land Use Issues

4.1.1 To understand the needs of the parish over the Neighbourhood Plan period, public consultation has been undertaken, including an online survey and online and in-person community event (for full details, please see the Consultation Statement document). The results of the consultation have been highlighted below and made available on the parish website.

4.1.2 The following list of issues has been summarised from the responses as being of key importance for inclusion within the Neighbourhood Plan:

- the design and location of any new development and its relationship to the character of the local area,
- the protection and enhancement of the landscape,
- the protection of local wildlife habitats,
- the importance of protecting the local heritage,
- the preservation of the local character,
- retaining the separate identity of settlements by keeping appropriate gaps between each settlement area,
- the protection of dark night skies, and
- the accessibility between settlements via paths and public rights of way (PRoW).

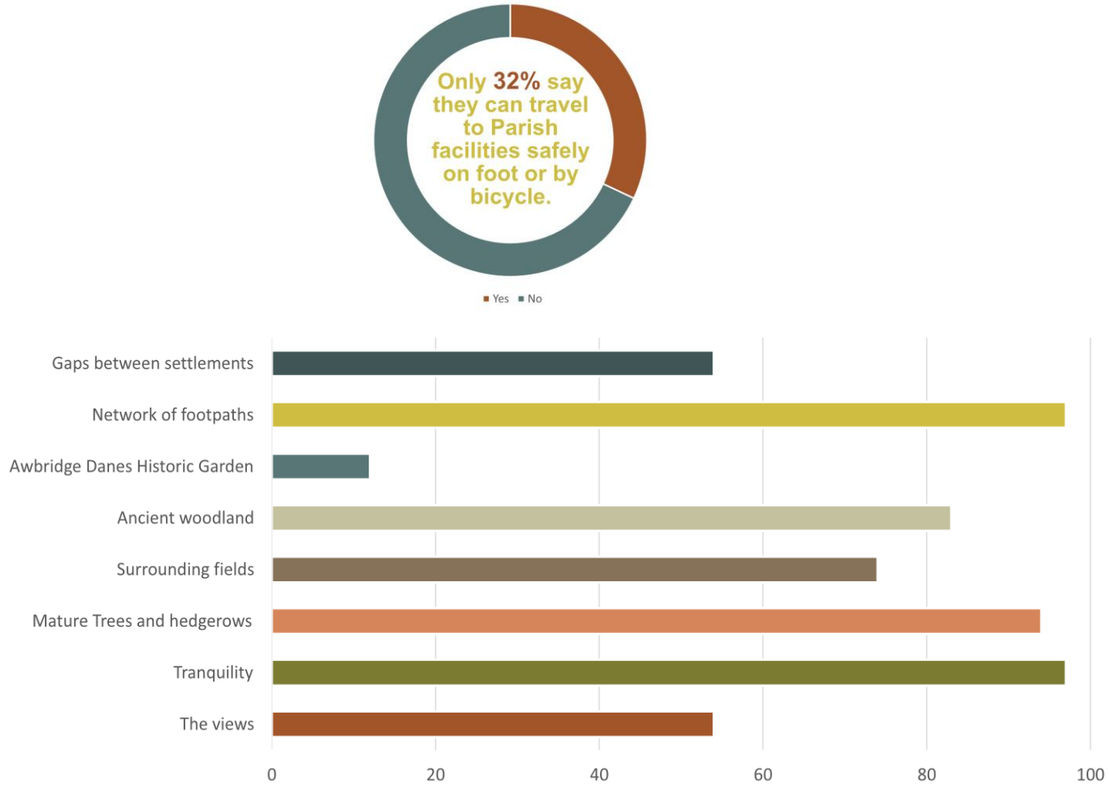


Figure 3. List of Land Use Issues to Include in the Neighbourhood Plan, as Identified in the Community Consultation

4.2 Overview of Non-Land Use Issues

4.2.1 Neighbourhood Plans are concerned with land use planning policies, relating specifically to the development of land. This often means that important issues of interest to the local community that do not directly relate to planning are not addressed by Neighbourhood Plans. Nevertheless, the Steering Group recognises the importance residents place on certain issues beyond the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan. To address these, 'Community Aspirations' have been included, with the aim of pursuing them through the Parish Council or other relevant bodies. These non-land use issues include:

- speeding and the volume of traffic along narrow rural lanes,
- congestion around the Awbridge Primary School during school pick up and drop off times,
- improving accessibility to Awbridge Primary School and Awbridge Village Hall, and
- protecting existing services and facilities.

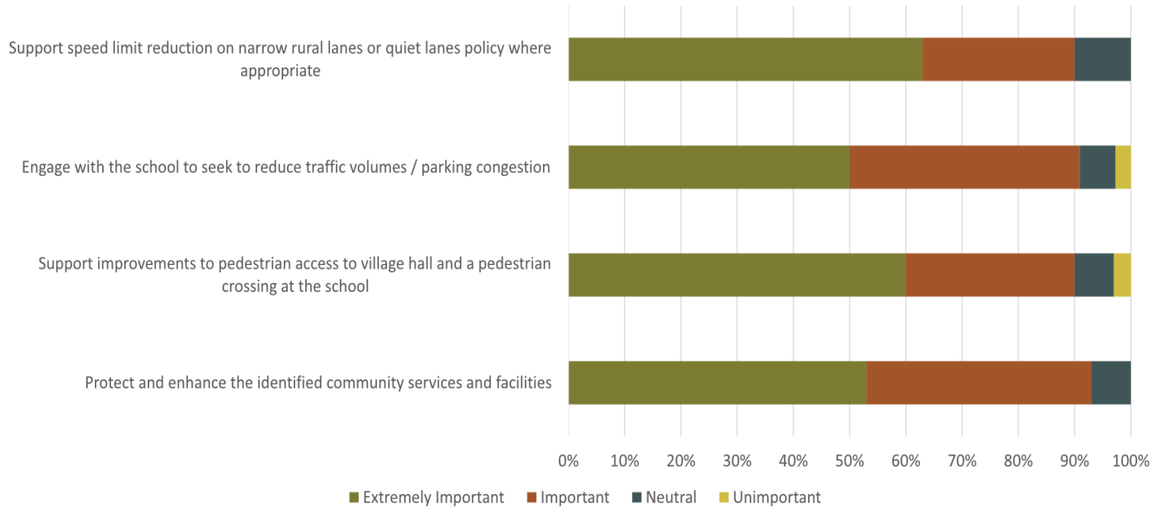


Figure 4. List of Non-Land Use Issues to Include in the Neighbourhood Plan, as Identified in the Community Consultation

4.3 Vision and Objectives

4.3.1 The vision statement below has been consulted upon in community consultations, specifically survey and event work, and refined based on comments made by the community. Every effort has been made to ensure that it reflects the views expressed.

4.3.2 The following objectives have also been derived from community consultations, notably the community survey.

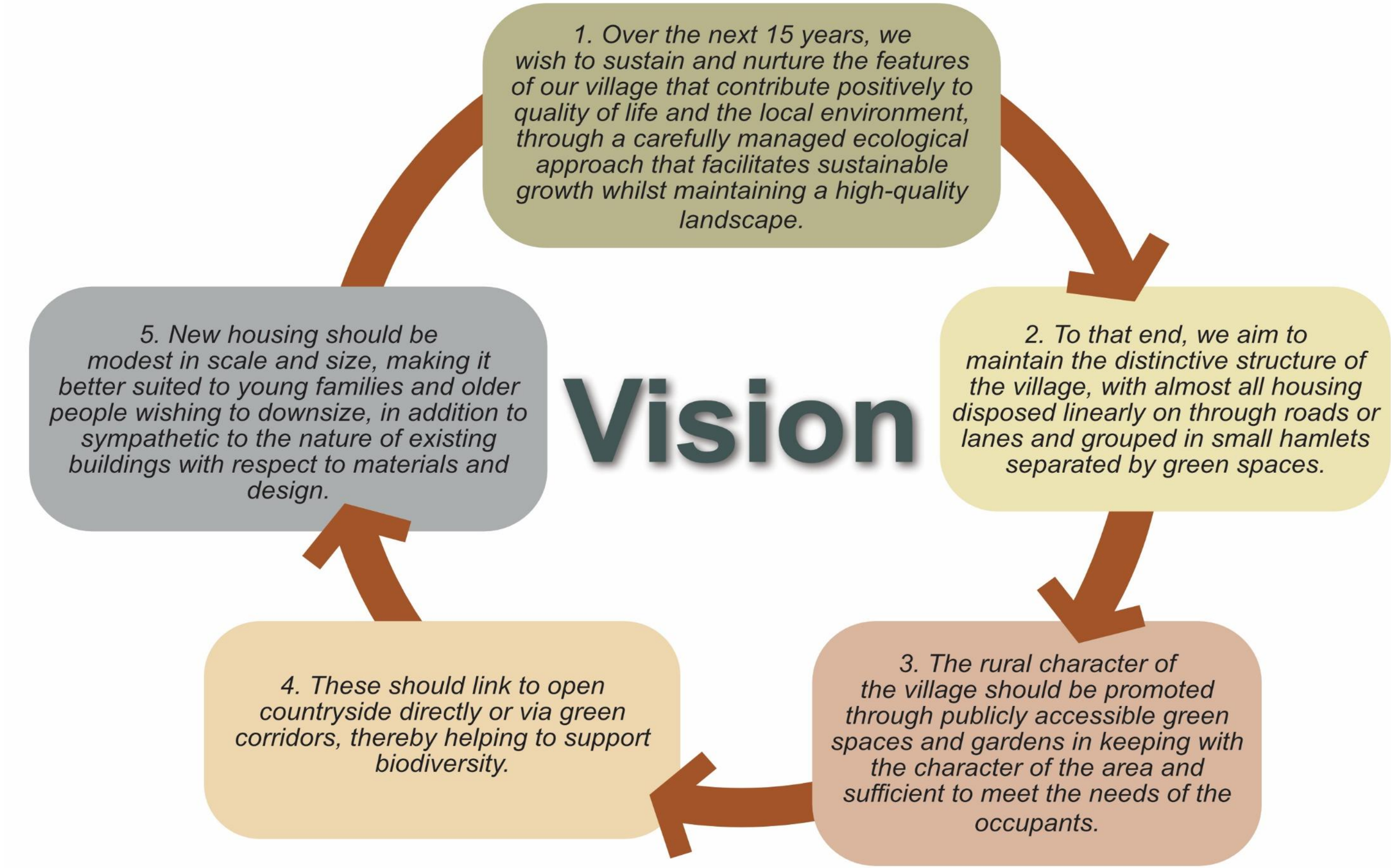


Figure 5. Awbridge Parish Neighbourhood Plan Vision

1. Identify and protect important local wildlife habitats and species.
2. Enhance existing habitats and create wildlife corridors, particularly in relation to Biodiversity Opportunity Area mapping.
3. Protect the Mottisfont Bats foraging zone from loss of trees and hedgerows as well as inappropriate lighting.
4. To highlight areas either subject to existing flooding issues or unsuitable geology whereby development proposals should ensure run-off from private drainage systems will be satisfactory.
5. Encourage use of appropriate renewable energy and sustainable materials on new development through a Design Code.
6. Maintain and enhance the distinctive structure of the settlement areas. In particular to maintain the primarily linear form of development along the rural roads and lanes.
7. Retain the individual dispersed small hamlets which are distributed across the Parish and separated by green gaps.
8. Protect the dark night skies.
9. Enhance the Public Rights of Way and green infrastructure.
10. Ensure new development respects the identified character of the area and follows the Design Code with appropriate densities, plots sizes, layout, mass and appearance etc.
11. Protect and enhance the identified community services and facilities.
12. New dwellings should be located such that occupiers can access public green spaces and contain sufficient private amenity space (Design Code).
13. Support improvements to pedestrian access to the village hall and a pedestrian crossing at the school.
14. Engage with the school to seek to reduce traffic volumes/parking congestion.
15. Support speed limit reduction on narrow rural lanes (including Danes Rd/Saunders La/Romsey Rd) or a quiet lanes policy where appropriate.

Figure 6. Awbridge Parish Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

5 Land Use Policies

5.1 Background

5.1.1 The following policies have been devised in response to the vision and objectives, which include the parish surveys/consultations that have taken place to date.

5.2 List of Policies

5.2.1 The following policy options and topics relate to those elements and issues raised in consultation. Some matters cannot be addressed by a Neighbourhood Plan and where this is the case, we will instead highlight this as a community aspiration.

Policy Number and Title	Topic Area
Policy A1: Landscape Character	Natural Environment
Policy A2: Important Views and Vistas	
Policy A3: Local Green Spaces	
Policy A4.1: Biodiversity and Habitats **Policy A4.2: The Solent Region International Sites** **Policy A4.3: Mottisfont Bats** **Policy A4.4: New Forest Special Protection Area**	
Policy A5: Dark Night Skies	
Policy A6: Setting of the Dispersed Settlements	
Policy A7: Housing	Housing
Policy A8: Non-Designated Heritage Assets	Heritage and Design
Policy A9: Design	
Policy A10: Flooding and Drainage	Infrastructure
Policy A11: Accessibility, Public Rights of Way and Highway Safety	
Policy A12: Community Facilities	
Policy A13: Small Scale Employment Uses	

6 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVES

i) Identify and protect important local wildlife habitats and species.
ii) Enhance existing habitats and create wildlife corridors, particularly in relating to biodiversity opportunity area mapping.
iii) Protect the Mottisfont Bats foraging zone from loss of trees and hedgerows as well as inappropriate lighting.
iv) Maintain and enhance the distinctive structure of the settlement areas. In particular, the primarily linear form of development along the rural roads and lanes.
v) Retain the individual dispersed small hamlets which are distributed across the parish and separated by open rural space.
vi) Enhance the public rights of way and green infrastructure.

6.1 Landscape Character

Test Valley Landscape Character Assessment

6.1.1 The Test Valley Landscape Character Assessment (TLCA)[3] was updated in 2018 based on work undertaken in 2004. It is a detailed study outlining the different types of landscapes found within the Test Valley borough. It describes the unique characteristics of each landscape, including its topography, geology, land cover, historical features and cultural significance.

6.1.2 The assessment divides the borough into distinct areas, each with its own unique character and sense of place. This helps planners and developers understand the specific qualities and sensitivities of each area when making decisions about land use and development.

6.1.3 The Parish covers 595 hectares and falls within the following landscape character areas (LCAs) as shown in Figure 7:

- 2A Embley Wood and Heathland,
- 3B Melchet and Awbridge Wooded Farmland, and
- 5B Middle Test Valley Floor.

6.1.4 The LCA: 2A Embley Wood and Heathland within the Parish contains the settlements of Upper and Lower Ratley as well as Shootash. The heathland planting here is very apparent and is obviously different to other parts of the Parish.

6.1.5 Of particular prominence is Awbridge Danes Listed Park and Garden. The house itself is Listed Grade II* by Historic England, which reflects its architectural and historical importance as a Neo-Gothic style mansion built in 1825 by William Garbett and set in a 57-hectare site sloping eastward towards the River Test.

6.1.6 The property is located along the valley of a tributary of the Test and contains formally designed gardens and pleasure grounds which include an early 20th century brick terrace leading to a lawn, a pergola at the northern end and a brick-built alcove to the south.

6.1.7 In addition, Awbridge Danes Listed Park and Garden have experienced some erosion and loss of its formal, native landscape features.

6.1.8 The LCA3B Melchet and Awbridge Wooded Farmland within the Parish is focused upon Kent's Oak, Awbridge Hill (in part) and Stanbridge Earls. This is an area of mixed fields and woodland with many old native hedgerows, some of which support protected and rare species.

6.1.9 There is a small pocket of LCA 5B the Middle Test Valley Floor, which runs along the parish boundary with the River Test. This includes some flood plain grazing marsh close to Timsbury Bridge. Much of the River Test in Awbridge is publicly inaccessible, with private fishing and access rights.

6.1.10 A very small area to the southwest of the parish, which includes two individual properties, also falls within the Mixed Farmland and Woodland LCA.

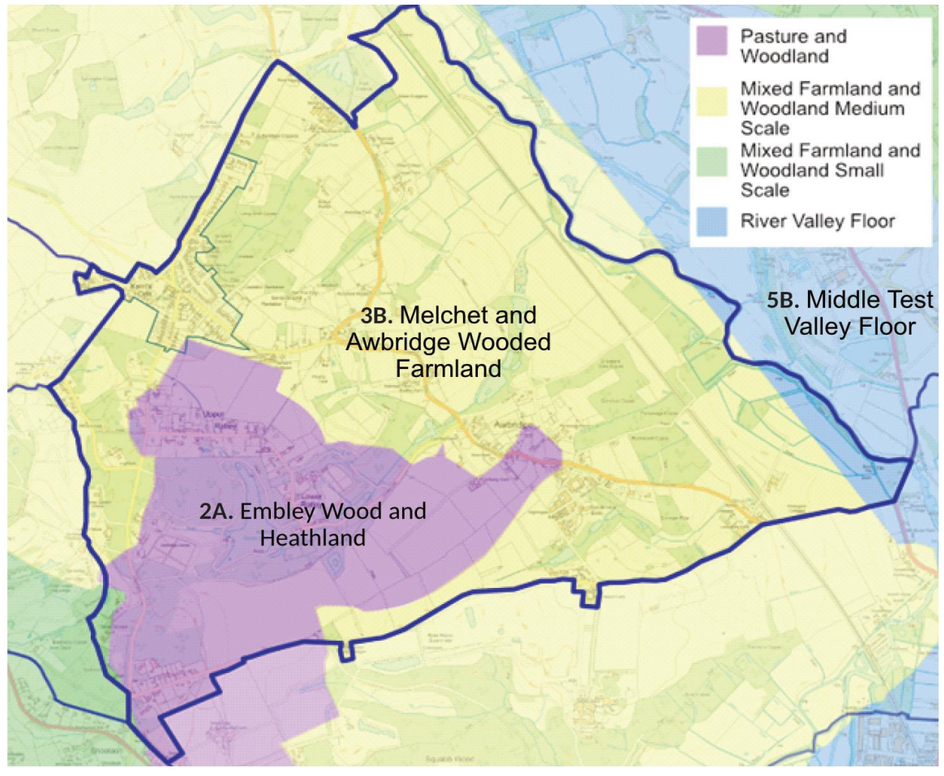


Figure 7. Test Valley Landscape Character Assessment of Awbridge Parish

[3] Test Valley Borough Council. (2024) *Test Valley Borough Landscape Character Assessment.* Accessed at: https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/planning-services/landscape/landscape-character-assessment-documents



Figure 8. View across the Landscape from Public Right of Way alongside Daneswood towards Newtown Road

6.1.11 The key features of the parish are the extensive areas of woodland, particularly in association with parkland, which contributes to a strong sense of enclosure. There are a number of valleys and tributaries with lakes leading down to the River Test.

6.1.12 Oak and birch are abundant in the parish (particularly LCA3B), while other species such as ash, rowan, holly, whitebeam and field maple are also represented. There are areas of sweet chestnut and hazel which has often been historically managed by coppicing, although this has somewhat fallen into neglect.

6.1.13 Settlements are associated with large country houses such as Awbridge Danes, in addition to scattered farmsteads, including surviving traditional farmsteads – which are set largely within a pattern of small parliamentary fields. Assorted fields and woodland positively contribute to the rural character and sense of history.

6.1.14 Small linear arrangements of Victorian development (and later) have often led out from the small settlements or infilled previous gaps.

6.1.15 On the whole, the older settlements and areas of individual dwellings are well integrated within the landscape, maintaining a sense of seclusion. However, those areas of linear, more modern development are usually less well landscaped and create the perception of a higher density of development. This results in the sense of remoteness becoming reduced.

6.1.16 Located between the settlements are rural shaded leafy lanes and windy country roads. There are numerous historic routes and footpaths including the Test Way.

6.1.17 Views are often short, mostly to the next field boundary or woodland edge, except for some within the parish which are from higher ground adjacent to open areas where views are longer ranging. There are also smaller and more intimate views across open water of lakes and adjacent small pasture fields enclosed by woodland.

6.1.18 In general, the parish is valued for its quiet rural character - in contrast to Romsey and Southampton.

6.1.19 The parkland around Awbridge Danes and Stanbridge Earls contain many features such as lodges, garden structures and designed landscapes.



Figure 9. View through the Green Lung in the Centre of the Parish looking east from Danes Road



Figure 10. View of the Landscape from the Permissive Path within the Awbridge Private Nature Reserve



Figure 11. View of the River Valley Floor in the south-eastern corner of the Parish looking north-westwards to the Rising Topography



Figure 12. View along the River Test on the Parish Boundary (Land within the Parish to the Left of the Photo)

6.1.20 The main issues and potential solutions within each area are summarised below. More detail can be found in Appendix IV.

Area 2A: Embley Wood and Heathland

i. Habitat fragmentation - loss of heathland;
ii. physical barriers of roads and railway infrastructure dissect the landscape, disrupting ecological and visual connections;
iii. unsustainable visitor numbers to the wider area;
iv. loss of common land and rights, reduced amount of grazing land (not equestrian); and
v. the introduction of non-native plants and the spread of invasive species such as rhododendron and bracken.

Area 3B: Melchet and Awbridge Wooded Farmland

i. Landscape fragmentation where extensive arable farming has led to a lack of distinctiveness and cohesion;
ii. fragmented vulnerable pockets of woodland, which need to be enhanced and strengthened;
iii. loss of historic parkland elements and declining coppice management weaken the historical and ecological context of the area;
iv. removal of hedgerows through intensification of agriculture;
v. inappropriate development in the rural landscape, with visual intrusion from new and expanding structures that don't respect traditional building materials and styles;
vi. light pollution: increased artificial light (see Policy A5);
vii. declining tranquillity from traffic and rail noise;
viii. loss of rural character through suburban expansion; and
ix. increased recreational pressure, such as from equestrian activities, has led to the subdivision of agricultural land, improper fencing, the use of mobile field shelters on skids and paraphernalia such as jumps — all of which contribute to landscape degradation.

Area 5B: Middle Test Valley Floor

i. Threats to river habitat and water quality from pollution via intensive agricultural runoff, sewage discharge and other sources including recreation;
ii. encroachment of development through suburban expansion; and
iii. recreational pressures from unsustainable visitor numbers that lead to increased recreational activities like boating, fishing and dog walking, which can disturb sensitive riverbank habitats and wildlife.

Policy A1 – Landscape Character

Where relevant to its character and location, development proposals should have regard for the distinct rural character of the settlements and wider landscape by:

i. Ensuring that the dispersed small hamlets which are distributed across the Parish do not coalesce and lose their individual identity, as set out in Policy A6 of this Plan.
ii. Minimising the impact of any intensive uses on the landscape, such as large-scale pig farming, poultry farming and equestrian uses.
iii. Minimising the impact of recreational activities, such as equestrian use, which lead to the subdivision of agricultural land and the accumulation of paraphernalia that contributes to land degradation.

6.2 Important Views and Vistas

6.2.1 This policy identifies a selection of views within the parish, established through extensive consultations with residents using parish surveys and community events. The community expressed that views should be maintained to retain the historic landscape features which include specimen trees and far-reaching views over the local hills and some towards the New Forest National Park.

6.2.2 The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following important views:

- **View 1:** Long ranging views in an easterly direction from one end of the village to the other with an open aspect across fields which contain crops in the summer. The open aspect demonstrates the extent of the village and variety of habitat.
- **View 2:** This southerly view, also available from the footpath across the field, is a hillside view of an unspoilt meadow which has remained unchanged for many years despite development around. It separates the main part of the village from the hamlet of Newtown.
- **View 3:** This northerly view, also available from the footpath across the field, is a hillside view of an unspoilt meadow which has remained unchanged for many years despite development around. This view leads up to the centre of the village from the hamlet of Newtown.
- **View 4:** This view looks northwest towards the village hall along the public footpath which links the main hubs of Awbridge Village Hall and All Saints Church.
- **View 5:** This view is opposite to View 6 and looks southeast along the footpath towards All Saints Church.
- **View 6:** Looking east out of the village, this view demonstrates the rural heritage of the village with numerous farms and converted farm buildings now used for residential purposes.
- **View 7:** This is another high point looking northwest with a view falling away towards the Test Valley and the world-renowned chalk streams. This is intersected by the railway line to Romsey and then on to Southampton.
- **View 8:** Looks due east and has spectacular views over the Test Valley showing the many threads of the Test as it winds its way through the flat bottom of the Valley. This is an important link between the village and the River Test itself.
- **View 9:** Long distance view looking southwest from a public footpath towards woodland behind Danes Road. Awbridge Danes Listed Park and Garden is visible in the centre and to the right of the picture.
- **View 10:** Looking northeast from a public footpath towards a junction with the Test Way. Given the topography here there is also a long-distance view beyond the immediate hedge line towards the River Test.
- **View 11:** Long distance view northwest along the Test Way. Parts of the grounds for the Listed Stanbridge Earls are visible as well as the edge of settlement at Awbridge Hill.
- **View 12:** Long distance view across fields looking west from the Test Way.
- **View 13:** Looking north towards the Listed Awbridge Danes grounds along Test Way from Old Salisbury Lane.
- **View 14:** Looking southwest across the vineyard with further views southwards on downward facing slopes.

6.2.3 These views are drawn from the Parish Character Appraisal and Design Code (see Appendix VIII) and have been deemed significant as a result of their contribution to:

- **Character:** Preserving the unique character of individual settlements within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- **Landscape Connection:** Maintaining the strong connection between settlements and the surrounding landscape (including the New Forest National Park).
- **Heritage Assets:** Recognising the proximity to designated heritage assets.
- **Visual Amenity:** Protecting the aesthetic value of the landscape setting and views from elevated points.

6.2.4 When considering development proposals within the Plan area, careful consideration must be given to the potential impact on the following identified significant views.

6.2.5 This policy does not seek to prevent any development within the view but to ensure that the scale, massing and height of proposals do not result in the integrity of the view being undermined. Further information on the important views and the reasons for their inclusion can be found in the Appendix VIII.

Map of Important Views

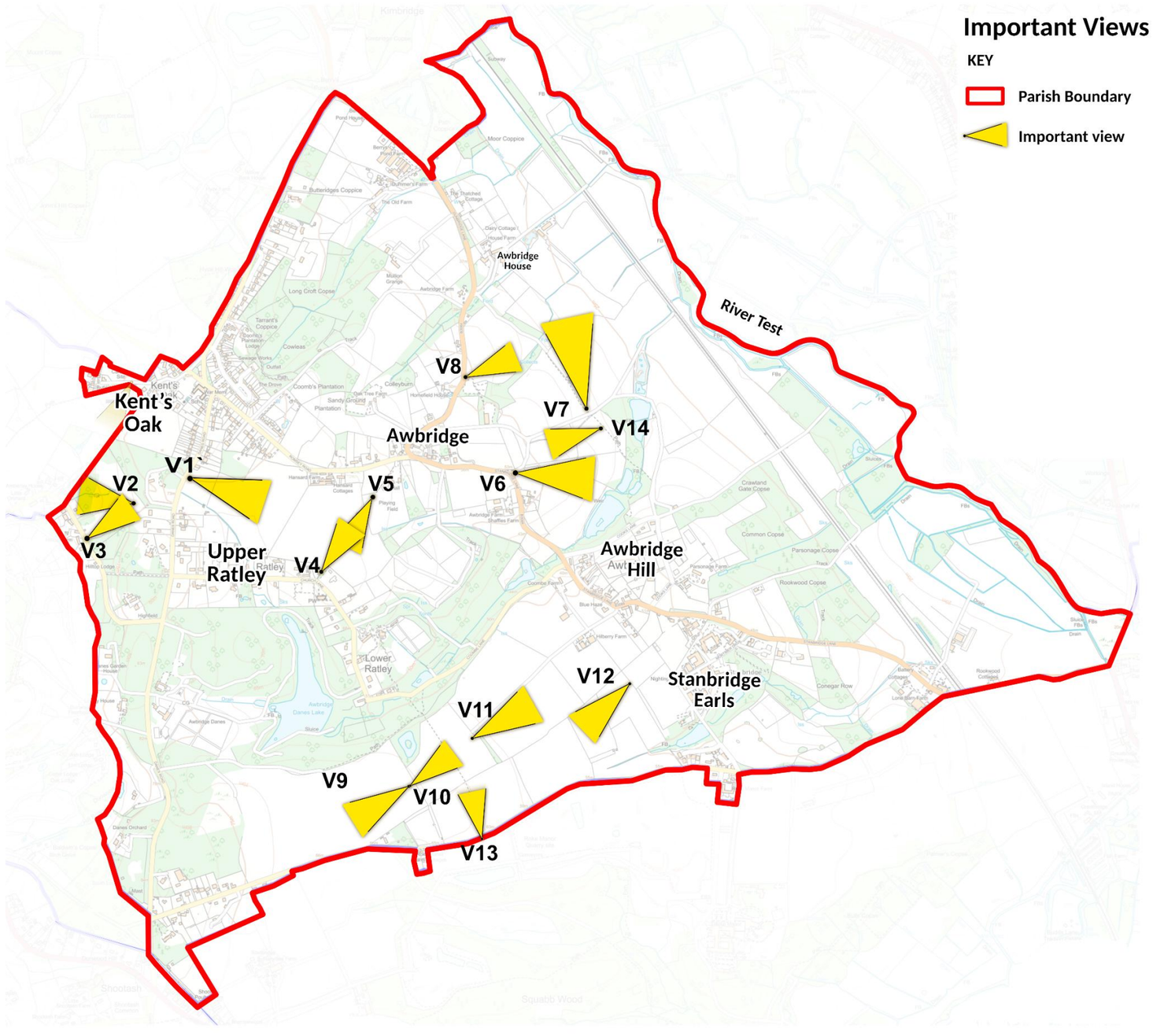


Figure 13. Map of Important Views

Important Views in the Parish



View through the green lung of the Parish between Kent's Oak and Upper Ratley.



View from the public right of way alongside Daneswood which opens out onto a medium scale view of rolling grassland enclosed by mature woodland and specimen trees.



The reverse of View 3, looking back up the public right of way.



View northwards through the green lung of the Parish from Upper Ratley to Awbridge. The view can be expansive but depends on crop height.



View southwards through the green lung of the Parish from Awbridge towards the Church at Upper Ratley. The view can be expansive but depends on crop height.



Long distance view eastwards over rolling farmland and woods towards the River Test.



Long distance view northwest along The Test Way.



Long distance view eastwards towards the River Test.

Important Views in the Parish



Long distance view looking southwest from a public footpath towards woodland behind Danes Road. Awbridge Danes Listed Park and Garden is visible in the centre and to the right of the picture.



Long distance view across fields looking west from The Test Way.



Looking northeast from a public footpath towards a junction with The Test Way. Given the topography here there is also a long-distance view beyond the immediate hedge line towards the River Test.



Looking north towards the Listed Awbridge Danes grounds along Test Way from Old Salisbury Lane.



Long distance view northwest along The Test Way. Parts of the grounds for the Listed Stanbridge Earls are visible as well as the edge of settlement at Awbridge Hill.



Looking southwest across the vineyard with further views southwards on downward facing slopes.

Policy A2 – Important Views and Vistas

Development proposals will need to demonstrate that they will not have an adverse impact on the important views set out below and on Figure 13.

i. View 1: View between Kent's Oak and Upper Ratley.
ii. View 2: View from PRoW alongside Daneswood.
iii. View 3: View from Newtown Road.
iv. View 4: View northwards of the parish from Upper Ratley to Awbridge.
v. View 5: View southwards of the parish from Awbridge towards the Church at Upper Ratley.
vi. View 6: Long distance view from Stanbridge Lane, eastwards towards the River Test.
vii. View 7: Long distance view northwest along The Test Way.
viii. View 8: Long distance view from Dunbridge Lane, eastwards towards the River Test.
ix. View 9: Long distance view looking southwest towards Danes Road.
x. View 10: View northeast towards a junction with The Test Way.
xi. View 11: View northeast facing View 12.
xii. View 12: Long distance view looking west from The Test Way.
xiii. View 13: View facing north towards the Listed Awbridge Danes grounds, along Test Way from Old Salisbury Lane.
xiv. View 14: View facing southwest towards Awbridge Farm.

6.3 Local Green Spaces

6.3.1 This policy proposes 10 Local Green Spaces (LGS') which are important green areas within the community. These are to be protected from development by their designation as Local Green Spaces in accordance with Paragraphs 106 and 107 of the NPPF. The resulting policy of managing any future development proposals in such space is akin to that of Green Belt policy.

6.3.2 The initially considered spaces are as a result of survey and public consultation exercises, where the public were asked to nominate important green spaces and the reasons for which they should be protected.

6.3.3 Some sites are fully or partially noted as a biodiversity network improvement area (see Figure 27) and have potential for enhancement, such as for additional tree or wildflower planting. These sites are denoted with 'BOA' after their name.

6.3.4 Each space has been individually assessed in accordance with the NPPF Criteria and found to play a key part in the enjoyment of the parish and are therefore special to the local community. A full description of each site and the justification for its designation can be found in Appendix V.

Map of Local Green Spaces

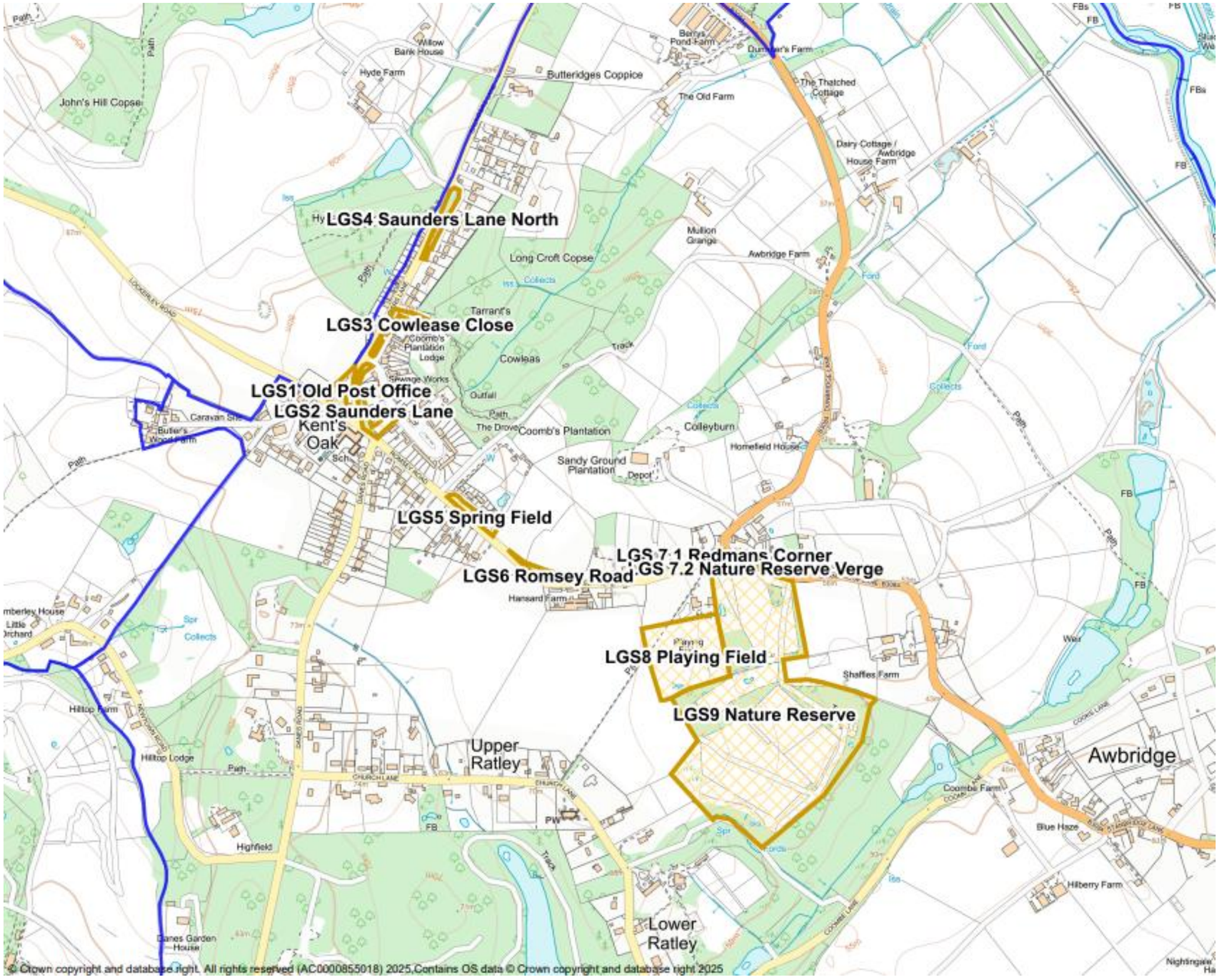


Figure 14. Map of Local Green Spaces



Figure 15. LGS1 Inset Map



Figure 16. LGS2 Inset Map

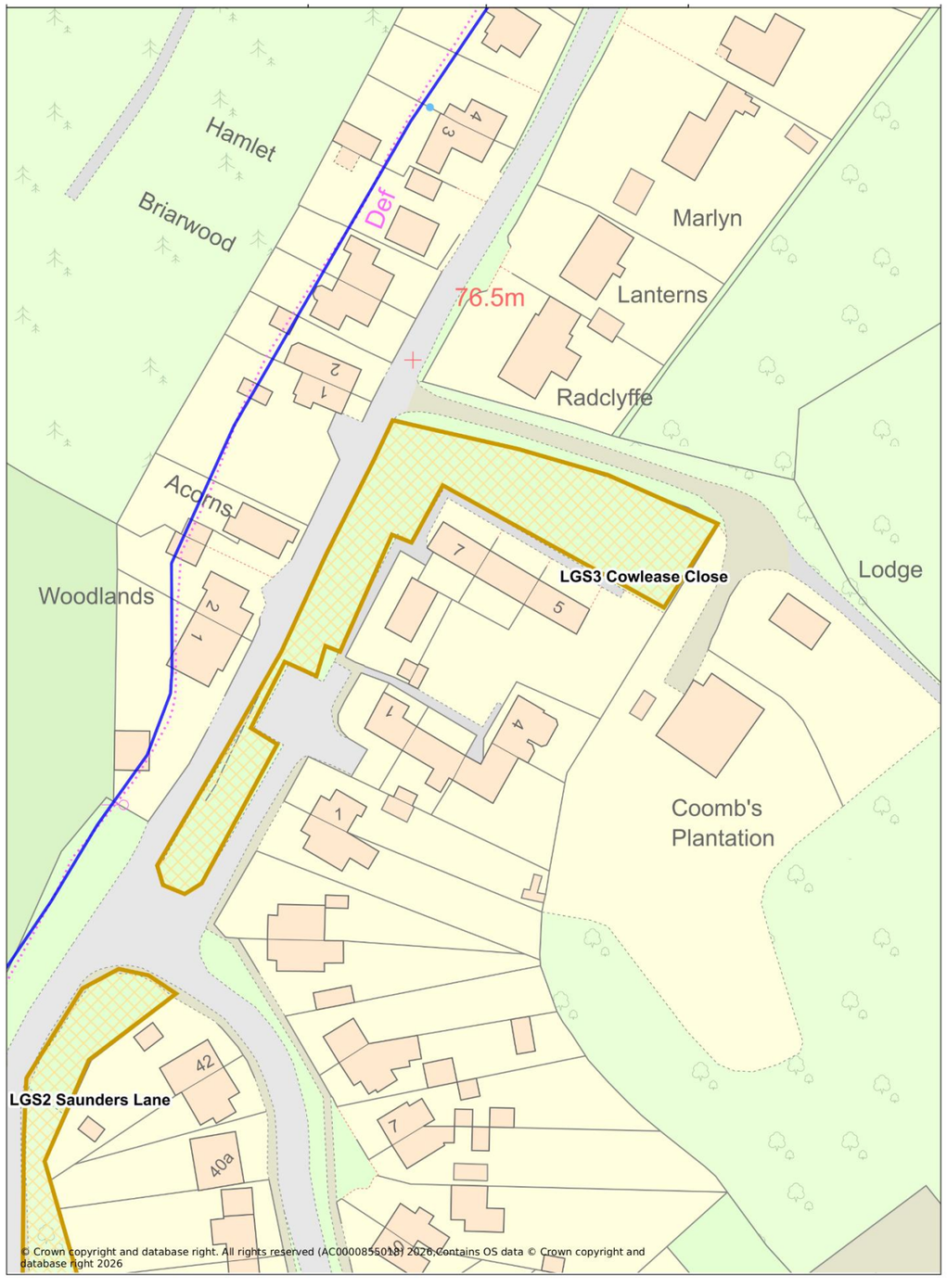


Figure 17. LGS3 Inset Map

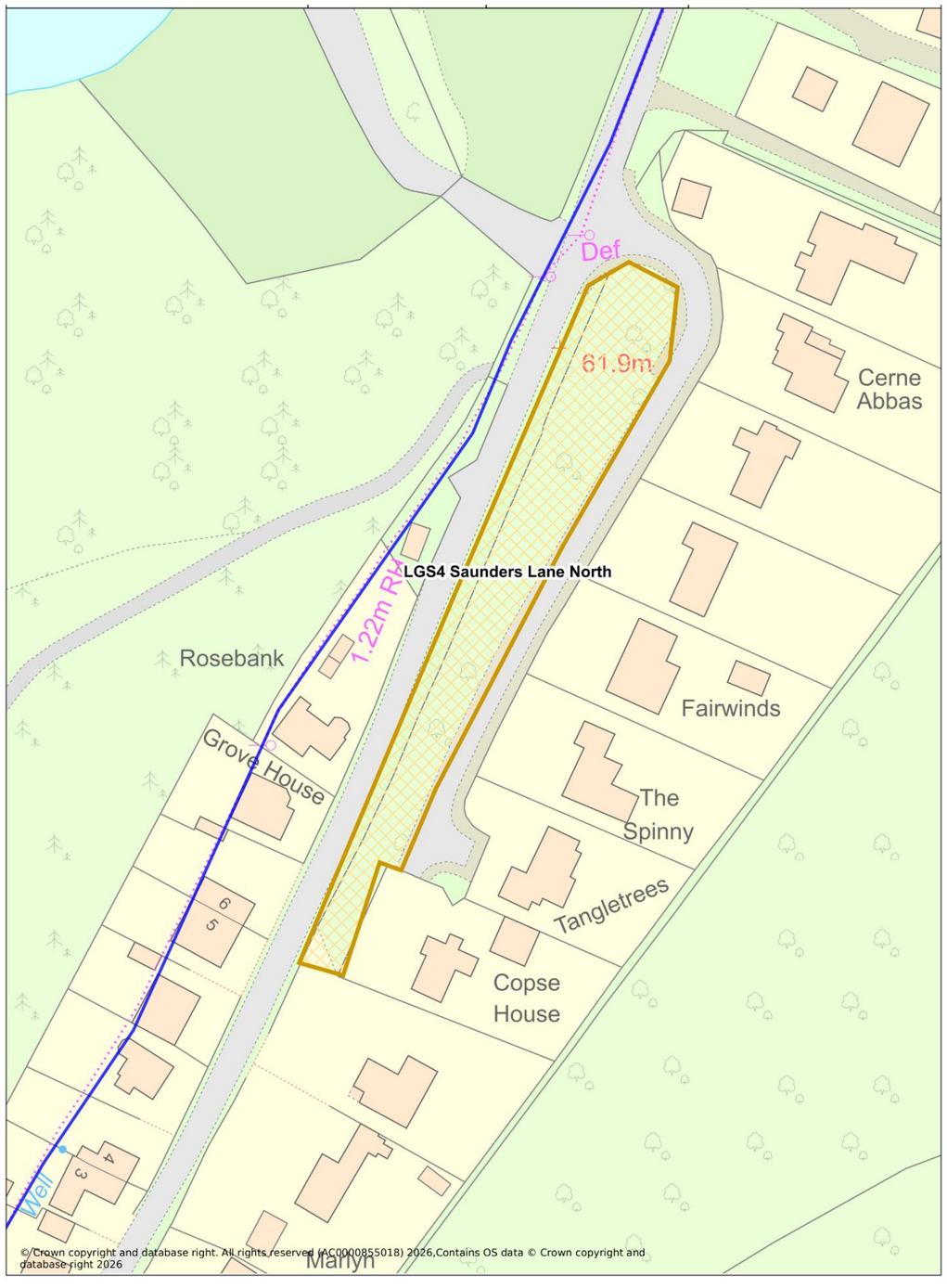


Figure 18. LGS4 Inset Map

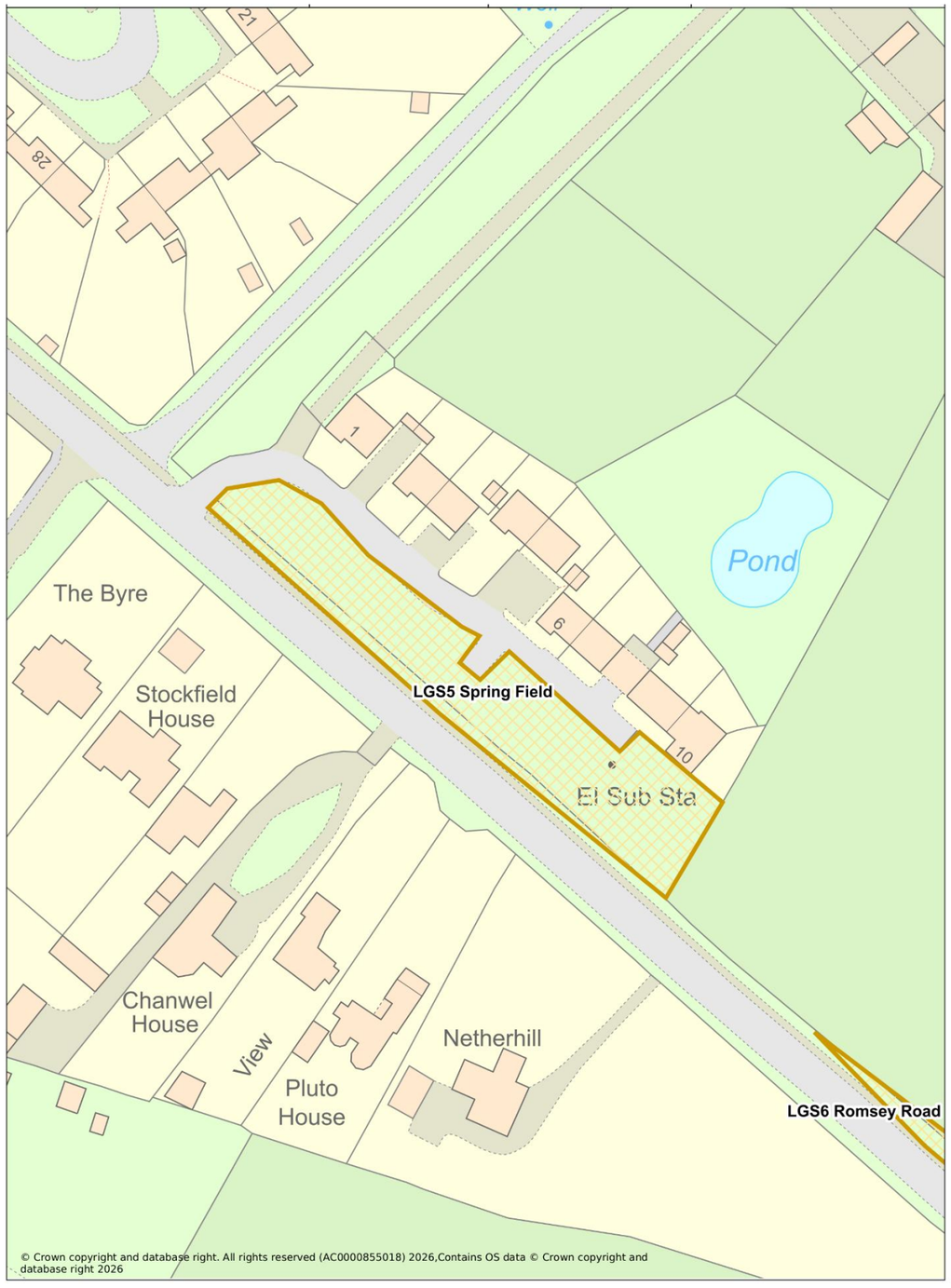


Figure 19. LGS5 Inset Map

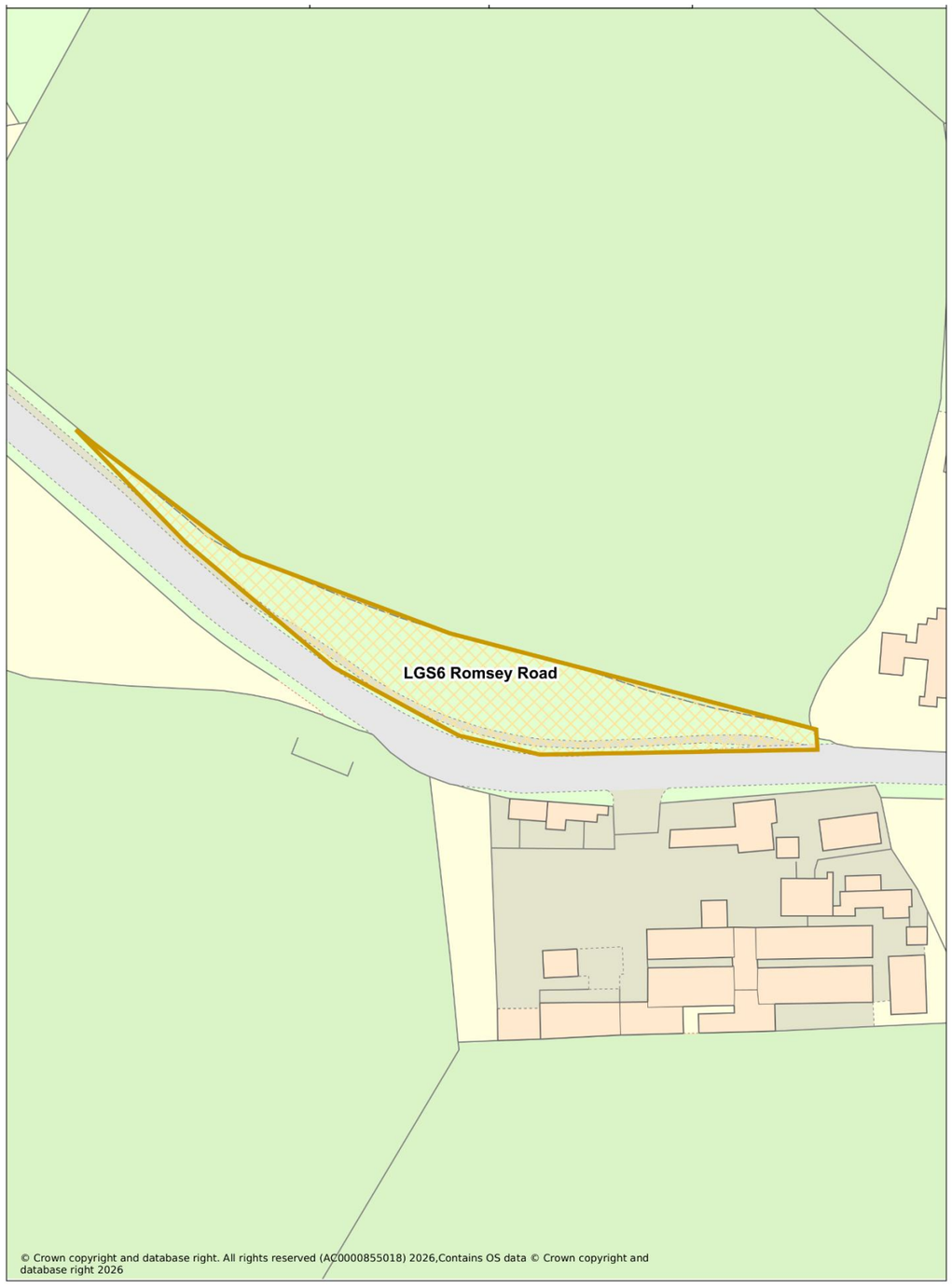


Figure 20. LGS6 Inset Map

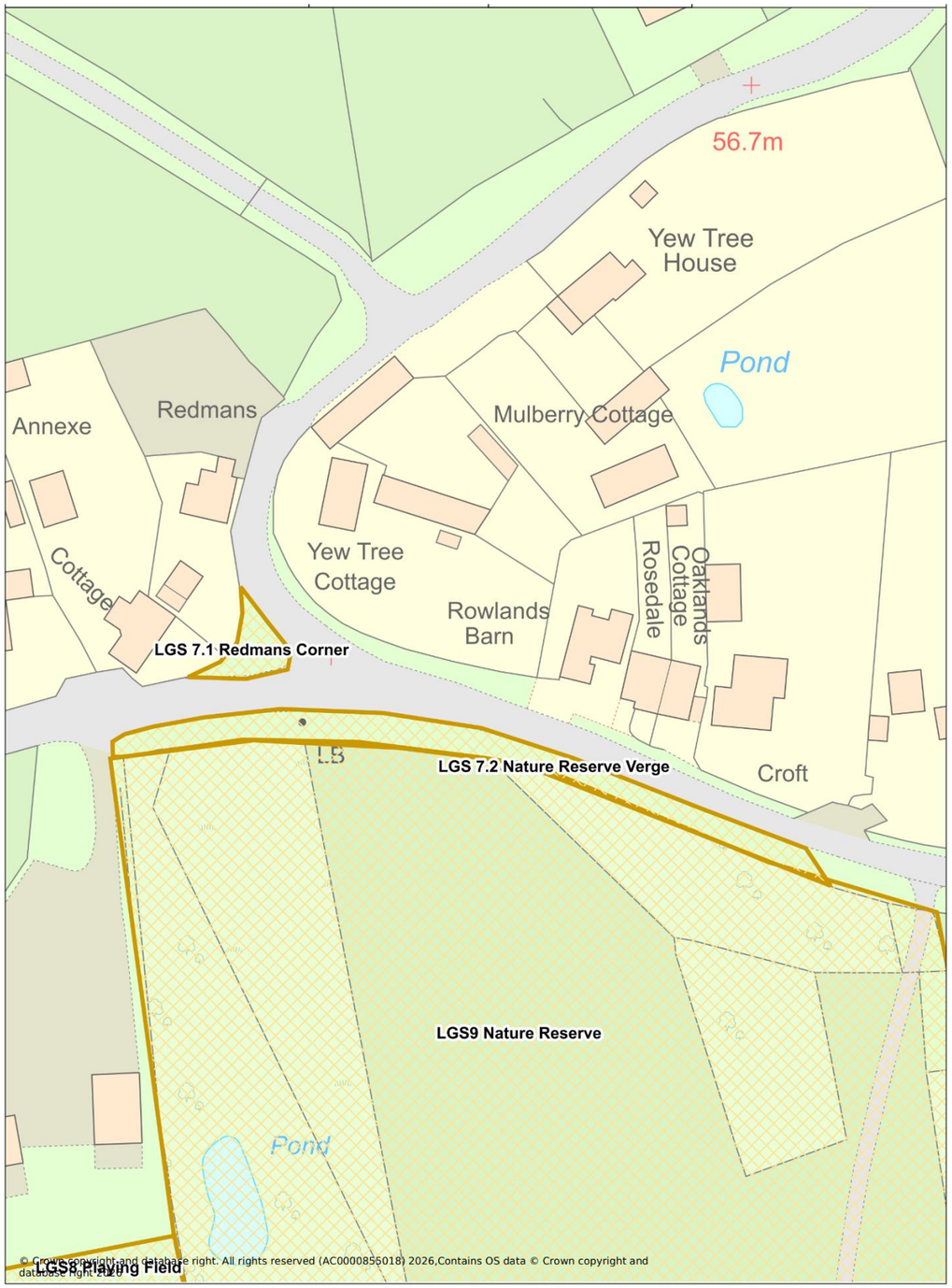


Figure 21. LGS7.1 and LGS7.2 Inset Map

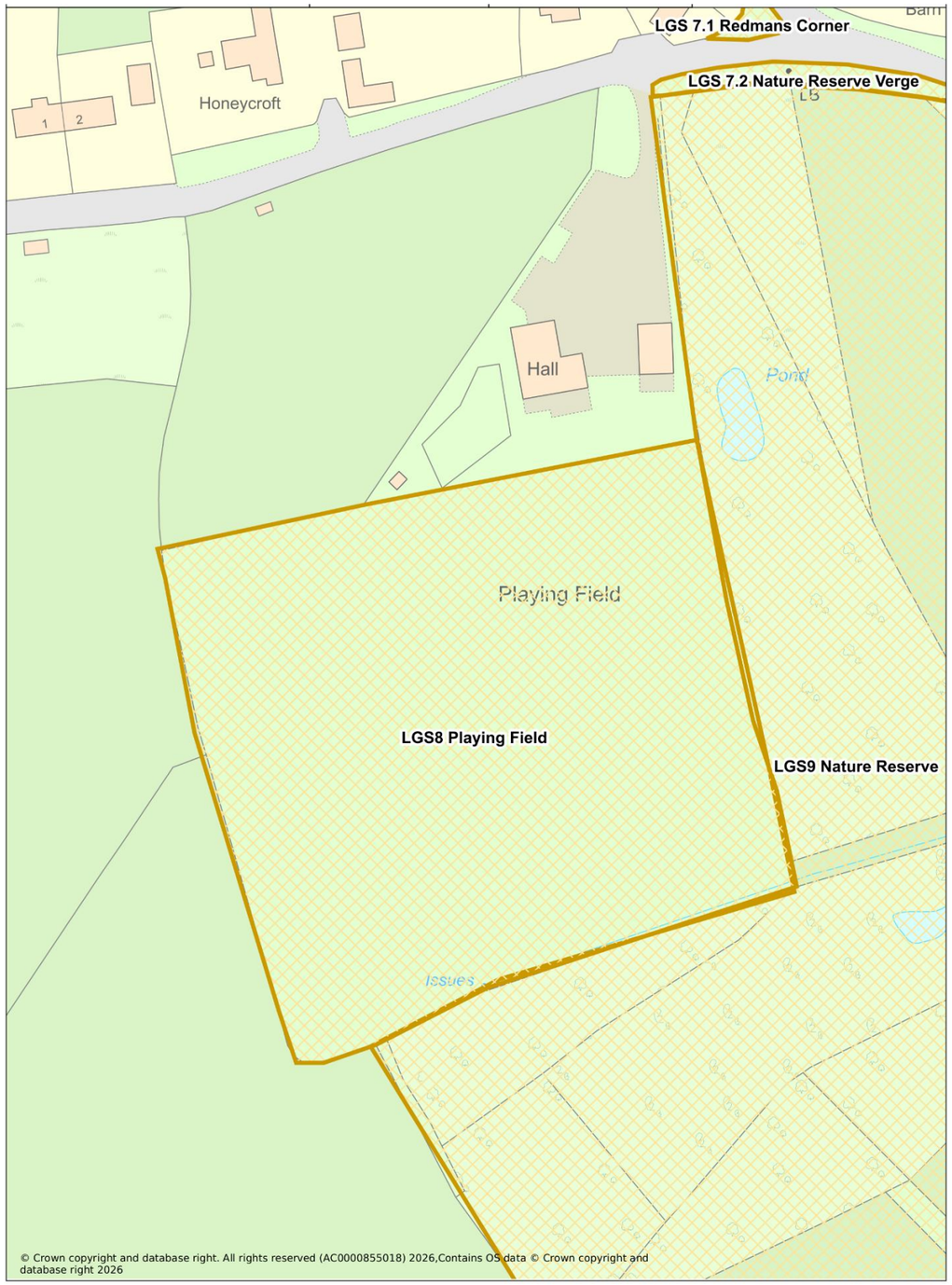


Figure 22. LGS8 Inset Map

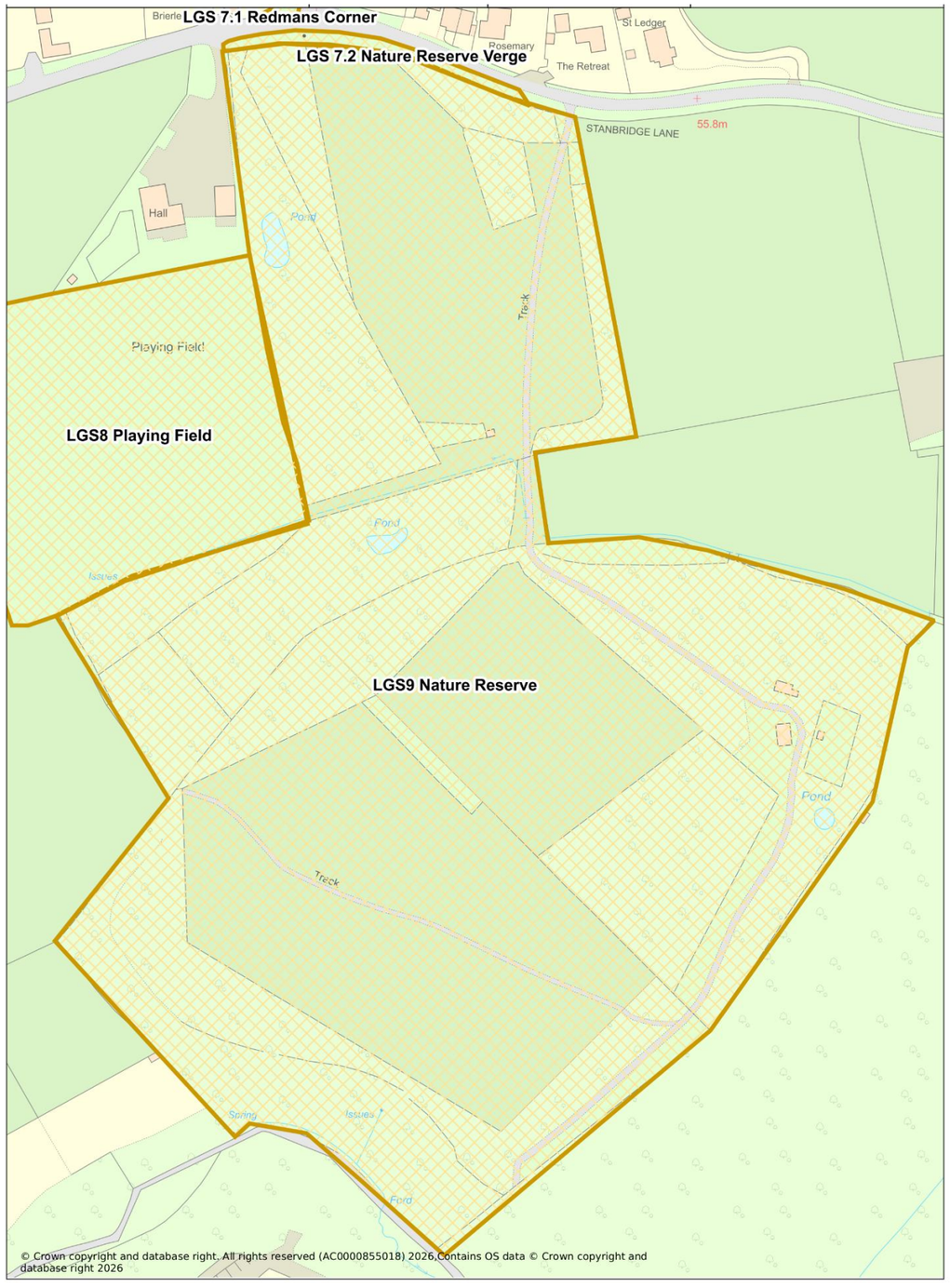


Figure 23. LGS9 Inset Map

Local Green Spaces in the Parish



Post Office Triangle - this is a small area of woodland and footpath (former historical route) which provides a safe link between Kents Oak and Saunders Lane and is the boundary with Mottisfont and Lockerley.



Saunders Lane Corner – maintained by the Parish Council who planted replacement trees. Daffodils have also been planted by the school children to provide spring colour. Within this green space is a bench sited next to the war memorial and the grassed area is often used for dog walking.



An area of grass, trees and planting alongside Saunders Lane and wrapping around the rear of Cowlease Close, which acts as an important green buffer to properties in Cowlease Close.



Barley Hill Corner- this provides much needed green relief to a narrow lane for pedestrians along Saunders Lane, which is otherwise a dangerous route.



Spring Fields – An area of green space to the front of properties, which enhances a busy and developed road. Mature oak trees bound this space and give an impressive backdrop.



Large grass verge on the bend of Romsey road providing safety sightlines to dangerous and busy parts of the road and safe refuge for pedestrians whilst providing wildflower areas in the spring.



Grass verge at the north of the Romsey road-Stanbridge Lane Junction proving sightline , refuge for pedestrians and wildflowers in the spring. There is a bench which allows people to rest and provides a marker for the school bus stop.



Grass verge on Stanbridge Lane at the junction with Romsey Road which provides refuge for pedestrians, enhances sight lines and provides wildflowers in the spring.



The playing fields- hub of the village accessible by footpaths on all sides and utilised for recreation, dog walking and village events such as the village fete. The playing fields boast a zip-wire, fitness trail and several benches for relaxation and there are picnic benches adjacent to the village hall for use by all.



Wildlife Sanctuary- owned and lovingly maintained by a local parishioner who promotes the wildlife in this area by careful management. He generously opens the area to the village to promote the appreciation of nature and the changing seasons. The area encourages biodiversity in the village and is an area of contemplation and mindfulness.

Policy A3 – Local Green Spaces

The Local Green Spaces are shown on the 'Map of Local Green Spaces' (Figure 14) and listed below. These spaces will be protected for the benefit of the community. Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.

- LGS1: Post Office Triangle.
- LGS2: Saunders Lane/War Memorial.
- LGS3: Cowlease Close.
- LGS4: Barley Hill/Saunders Lane North (*BOA).
- LGS5: Spring Fields.
- LGS6: Large grass verge on the bend of Romsey Road.
- LGS7.1: Grass verge at the north of the Romsey Road.
- LGS7.2: Grass verge to the east of Stanbridge lane at the junction with Romsey Road.
- LGS8: The playing fields.
- LGS9: Wildlife Sanctuary (*BOA).

6.4 Biodiversity and Habitats

6.4.1 The parish contains a variety of statutory and non-statutory designated sites as shown in Figures 25, 26, and 27. These range from local wildlife sites, registered gardens and sites of special scientific interests (SSSI) relating to the River Test.

6.4.2 A variety of priority habitats are found within the parish including unimproved neutral grassland at Daneswood Meadow, whilst semi-improved neutral grassland occurs at Hilltop Meadows in Newtown and at All Saints, in Church Lane.









Figure 24. Field West of Danes Road (Top Left), Awbridge Park (Top Right), the River Test (Bottom Left) and Stream near Romsey Road (Bottom Right)

6.4.3 There are large areas of deciduous woodland adjacent to Kent's Oak (including Ancient Woodland), surrounding Awbridge Danes and to the north and south of Stanbridge Earls (including Ancient Woodland). These woods are crisscrossed with streams, ponds and lakes - the majority of which are all naturally fed.

6.4.4 The River Test forms the edge of the parish and the riparian environment here, including the adjacent floodplain grazing marsh priority habitat, is of key importance. The River Test is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is a nationally important habitat.

6.4.5 It is renowned as a chalk stream, known for its exceptional water quality, clean gravel beds and diverse ecosystems. The river supports a remarkable variety of flora and fauna, including:

- over 100 species of flowering plants along the banks, contributing to the vibrant riverside environment;
- being home to an impressive 232 species of invertebrates within the river itself, playing a vital role in the aquatic food web; and
- breeding populations of wetland birds such as kingfishers, grey wagtails and little grebes, adding to the ecological value and visual appeal of the River Test.

6.4.6 The Environment Act 2021 requires certain planning permissions to be subject to a condition requiring details of how a net gain of 10% in biodiversity can be achieved (on the site or elsewhere). More generally, when assessing planning applications which might impact on biodiversity and other natural

assets, the local planning authority will have regard in particular to TVLP Policy E5, which seeks to conserve, and where possible restore and/or enhance these features, while setting out the circumstances where loss or harm to them would not be permitted.

6.4.7 The policy objectives are:

- to protect and enhance the biodiversity value of the River Test and other habitats within the parish; and
- to encourage the creation of new wildlife corridors to connect fragmented habitats and facilitate the movement of species.

6.4.8 It is a community aspiration to promote sustainable practices and education that minimise the negative impact of development on biodiversity. The Plan seeks to support initiatives that raise awareness and encourage community involvement in biodiversity conservation.

Map of Proximity of the Plan Area to International Designated Sites

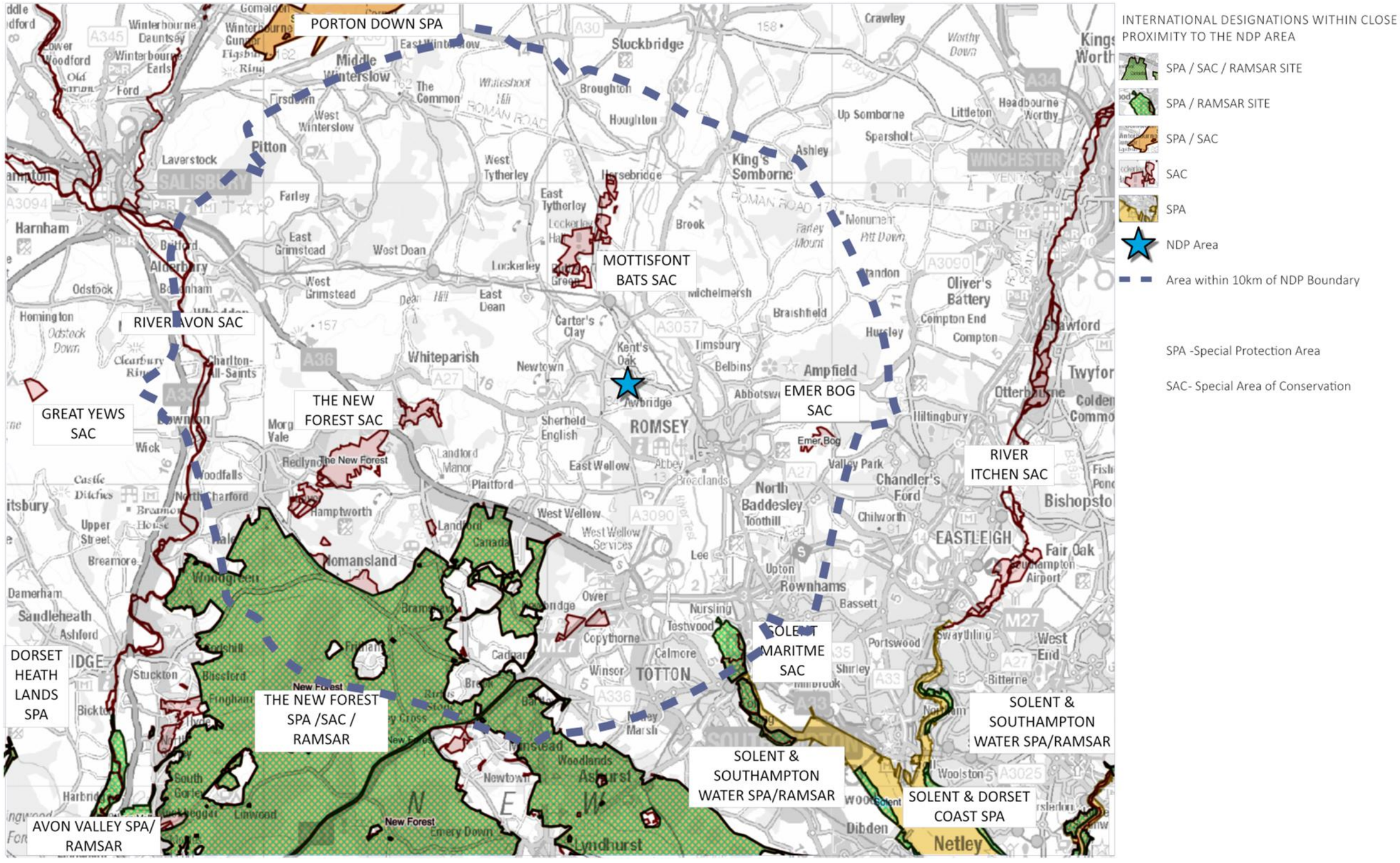


Figure 25. Proximity of the Plan Area to the various International Designated Sites including The New Forest, Mottisfont Bats, Emer Bog and The Solent

Map of Biodiversity Assets and Designations in Plan Area

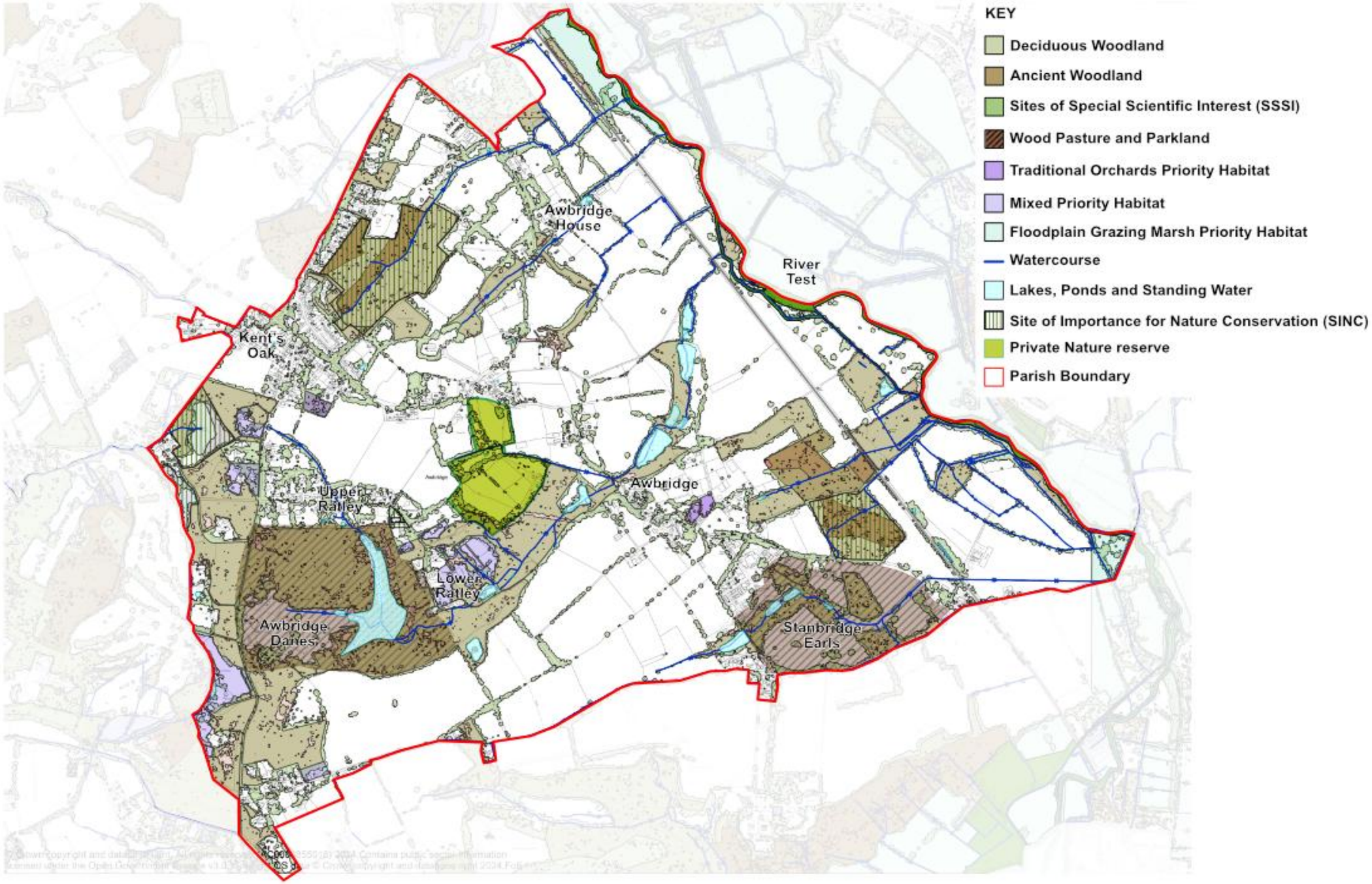


Figure 26. Biodiversity Assets and Designations in Awbridge Parish

Map of Existing Biodiversity Sites and Biodiversity Network Opportunity Areas

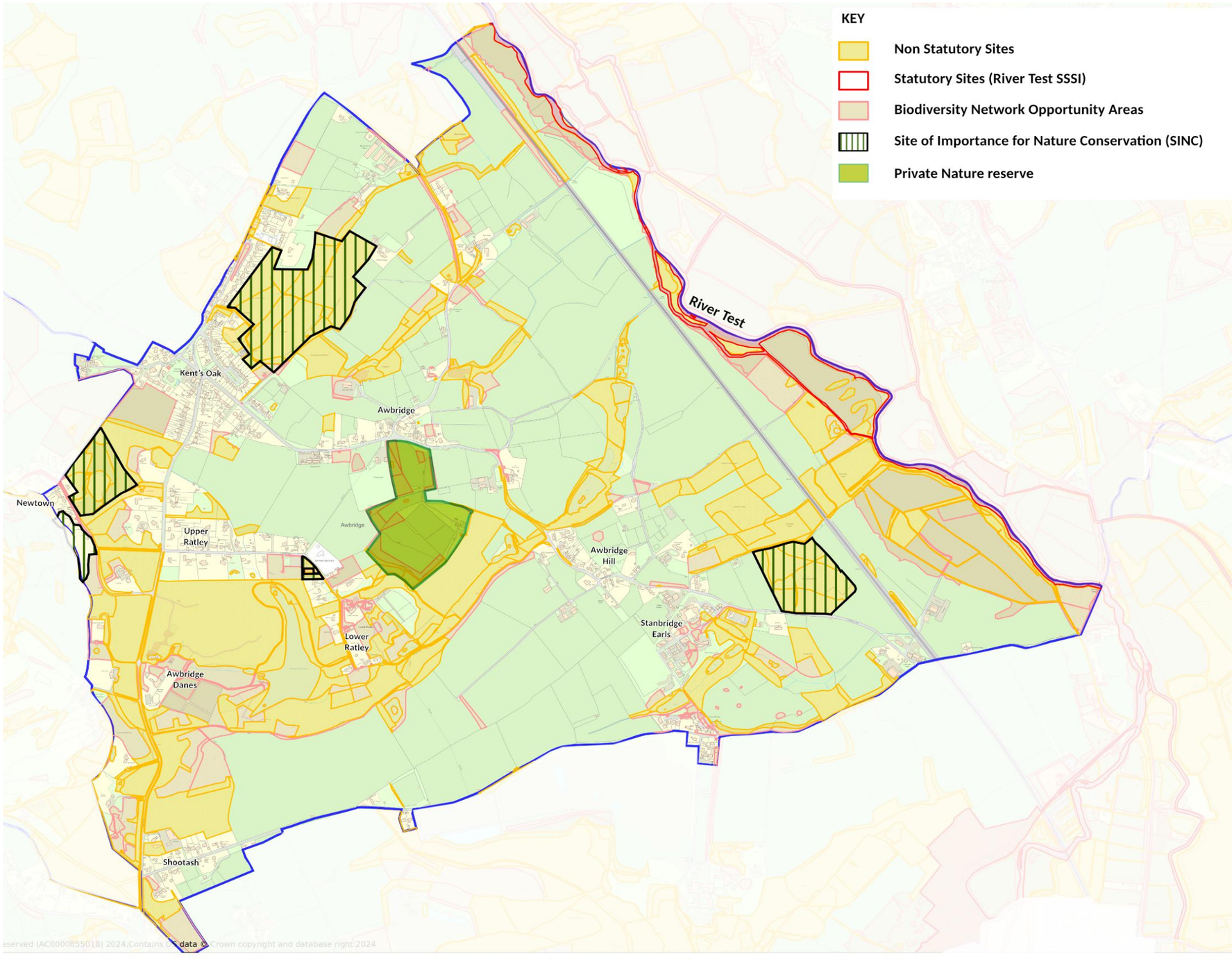


Figure 27. Existing Biodiversity Sites and Biodiversity Network Opportunity Areas (as per information from the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre)

Map of Potential Wildlife Corridors Linking Existing Biodiversity Sites

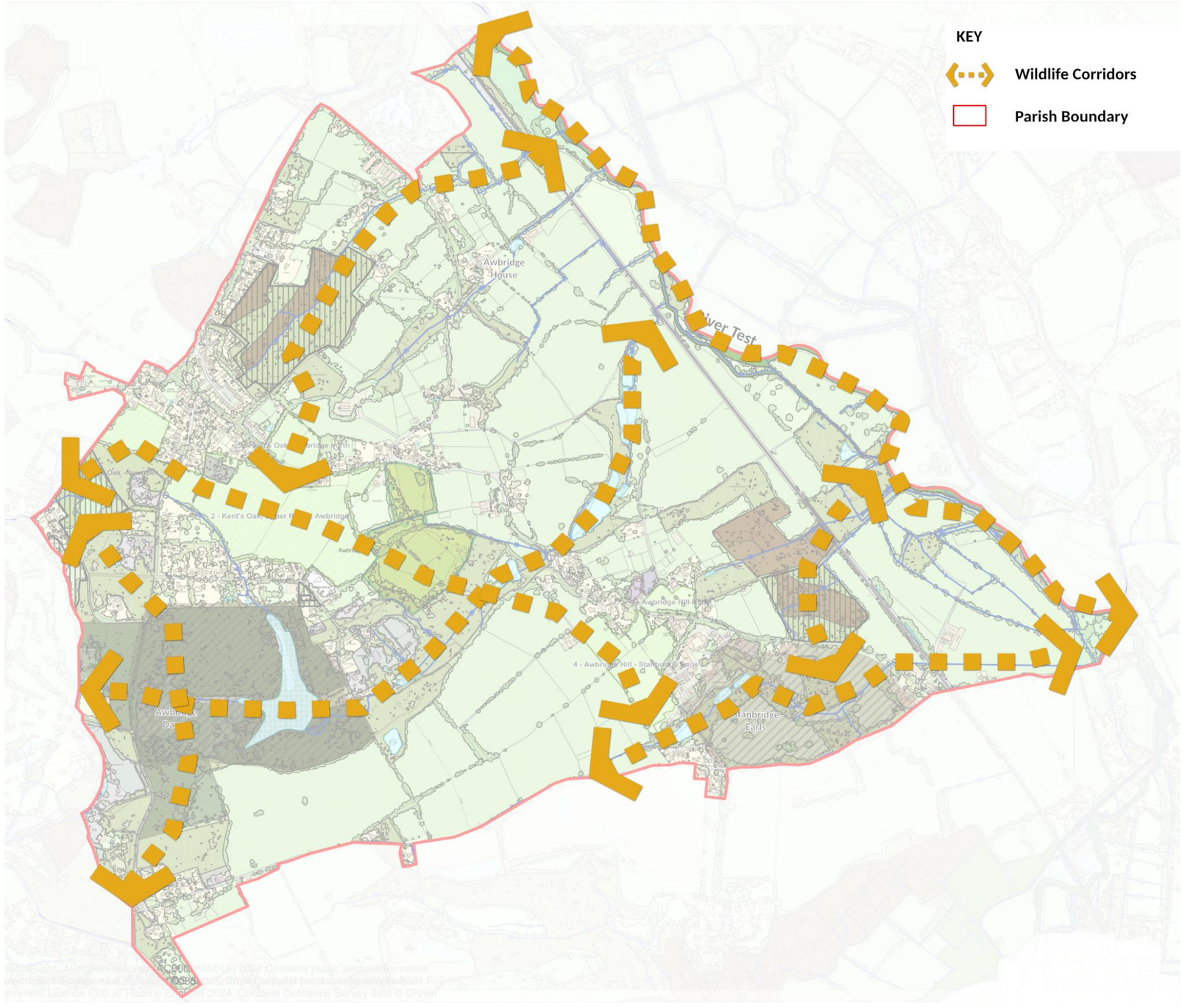


Figure 28. Map of Potential Wildlife Corridors linking Existing Biodiversity Sites

Policy A4.1 – Biodiversity and Habitats

In line with statutory requirements, new development will be required where appropriate to provide a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%. Development proposals will be required to have regard to TVLP Policies E2 and E5. Where relevant, proposals must:

i. protect, or mitigate any impact on, the Ancient Woodlands shown on Figure 26;

ii. protect the international and national designations (including Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest etc.) as shown in Figures 25, 26 and 27; and

iii. avoid the loss of significant trees and hedges and, where possible, improve the linkage between existing wildlife corridors, as shown on Figure 28. Where the loss of a mature tree or hedgerow is unavoidable, the proposals must make provision on site for replacements that are of a similar type to those lost and be native species, in accordance with those listed in the Design Code.

In addition, proposals must protect and, if appropriate to their scale and nature, enhance biodiversity sites of local value to the Plan area (e.g. Awbridge Hill Nature Sanctuary), as well as the non-statutory sites and the biodiversity opportunity areas shown on Figure 27 and the individual types of local priority habitats shown on Figure 26. Where appropriate and feasible, new development must also take the opportunity to provide bat boxes, bird boxes (including swift boxes), hedgehog houses and highways through fences.

6.4.9 The whole of the Plan area lies within the river catchment area which flows into the Solent and Southampton Water where wildlife of marine, tidal and intertidal areas are protected by a number of international designations.

6.4.10 Natural England has advised that these designations are being adversely affected by the nutrients associated with sewage and agricultural runoff and that the restoration of these sites partly depends on ensuring new development does not generate any additional nutrient inputs. Natural England is placing particular emphasis on nitrogen as this is considered to have an overriding impact in these saltwater habitats. Consequently, all development proposals in the Plan area will need to demonstrate that they are nitrogen neutral in accordance with Natural England guidance.

6.4.11 Test Valley Borough Council will carry out the necessary assessment of the impacts of development on water quality under the Habitats Regulations. Mitigation schemes are available, allowing developers to purchase nitrogen credits equivalent to the nitrogen increase their developments are projected to generate.

Policy A4.2 – The Solent Region International Sites

Applications for development that will result in a net increase in nitrogen reaching the Solent Region International Sites, e.g. through additional units of overnight accommodation, will be required to confirm the nitrogen budget and set out specific and appropriately located mitigation measures that will be implemented in order to ensure development is nutrient neutral from the start of its operational phase. Such mitigation measures must be secured for the duration of the development's effects.

6.4.12 The Bechstein's bat is one of the rarest species of bats in the UK. These are tree roosting species, where they roost in cracks and crevices as well as holes available in trees.

6.4.13 It should be noted that the Mottisfont Bats Special Area of Conservation lies outside the Plan area; however, the Plan's policies seek to protect and enhance habitats within Awbridge that may support the Barbastelle bat and other species associated with the SAC.

6.4.14 Of further note is the potential for the Plan Area to support Barbastelle bats. This rare species breeds in woodlands near Mottisfont which are protected through the designation of the Mottisfont Bats Special Area of Conservation. It is one of only six known maternity sites in the UK and therefore extremely important. This species makes use of a much wider area around the designated site and could potentially be foraging and breeding at satellite sites in the Plan area.



Figure 29. Image of a Pipistrelle Bat, one 18 protected species of bat in the UK and found locally

6.4.15 All bat species are protected in Britain and many different species have been found locally. Consequently, new development will need to demonstrate that it has taken bats and the rarer species in particular into account, identifying whether these bats may be using a development site and if so, the measures that will be put in place to protect and enhance their habitat.

6.4.16 The below information will be required to enable the planning authority to assess planning applications under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (or any subsequent amendments) and confirm there is no reasonable scientific doubt of any adverse effects to the SAC.

Policy A4.3 – Mottisfont Bats

Where direct or indirect impacts on suitable roosting, foraging and commuting habitats for Barbastelle bats are considered likely to occur, such impacts must be fully assessed, avoided and where required, appropriately mitigated to prevent any adverse impacts on this internationally protected site at the planning application stage. This should be in full accordance with relevant best practice guidelines and must fully adhere to any updates to the guidance issued following the making [adoption] of this Plan.

Planning applications for development shall be supported by an appropriate level of ecological survey undertaken in accordance with best practise survey guidelines. This will establish the ecological baseline in respect of bats and thereby determine the need for and inform the formulation of any avoidance, mitigation and where required as a last resort, compensation measures necessary as part of the project design, to ensure no adverse effect on the integrity of the Mottisfont Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) over the lifetime of the proposed development and to promote the conservation of bats generally.

Exterior lighting affecting roosting, foraging and/or commuting habitat for bats will need to conform with the latest best practice guidelines outlined by the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institute of Lighting Professionals (current guidelines being Guidance note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK) due to the proximity to the Mottisfont Bats SAC.

6.4.17 There is also a requirement to provide mitigation in accordance with Policy E5: Biodiversity of the Test Valley Local Plan 2011-2029 and the New Forest SPA Mitigation – Interim Framework 2014 (or any subsequent updates of these documents), where development is proposed within 13.8km of the New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites (i.e. within the Parish).

6.4.18 The New Forest Special Protection Area has been designated to protect certain bird species which occur frequently in the New Forest area but are otherwise rare or declining. Several of these species are however susceptible to recreational pressure. Consequently, the National Park Authority is working with authorities on its boundaries to address the impacts from walkers and dog walkers who arrive as day visitors and staying tourists. All development coming forward in the Plan area has the potential to increase the number of day visitors to the New Forest The surrounding local councils are therefore addressing this through their own recreation mitigation strategies. Residential and tourism developments will therefore be required to contribute to the relevant authority's strategy through the Community Infrastructure Levy or Section 106 Agreements as set out in the policy below.

Policy A4.4 – New Forest Special Protection Area

New residential development and overnight accommodation (including seasonal workers accommodation and temporary campsites) within the identified New Forest SPA 13.8km 'zone of influence' – which covers the whole of the Neighbourhood Area – will need to mitigate against the recreation pressure on the New Forest Special Protection Area.

This could be in the form of a financial contribution towards an agreed package of mitigation measures within and outside the designated sites, including the provision of alternative natural green space for recreational use to the standard in force at the time of the application. Such mitigation measures must be secured for the duration of the development's effects and must fully adhere to any updates to the guidance issued following the approval of this Plan.

6.5 Dark Night Skies

6.5.1 Light pollution was raised as a concern during community consultations. There is a particular worry that the proximity of Romsey and its planned future growth will worsen the existing light pollution in Awbridge, especially in the southern part of the parish. As shown in Figure 30 below, this area has already experienced a significant increase in lighting levels. As a result, whilst there are some streetlights, further new lights are generally not supported by the community.

6.5.2 The policy is designed to guide decisions on new and replacement lighting and help private householders and businesses make informed choices. From discussions with residents, many had little knowledge of the potential adverse impact on wildlife, notably bat species. This is incredibly significant given the proximity of the parish to the Mottisfont Bats SPA and the associated foraging area, which crosses the parish.

6.5.3 It is therefore deemed essential that development proposals take the following factors into account when assessing their suitability: the type of artificial lighting, its location, hours of operation, the number of lights proposed, brightness, and the control and direction of the beam. Where lighting is considered essential, appropriate mitigation and control measures should be secured through planning conditions to prevent unnecessary light pollution, including:

- limiting the hours of operation through the use of automatic timers and nighttime dimming;
- ensuring that lights have incorporated or additional shielding or hoods which angle the beam downwards to a level below that of horizontal;
- using different surface types to reduce the amount of reflectivity;
- appropriate planting to limit the extent of any light spill; and
- reflecting the latest best practise guidance on light types in terms of lumens, wattage, angle, height, colour, warmth etc.

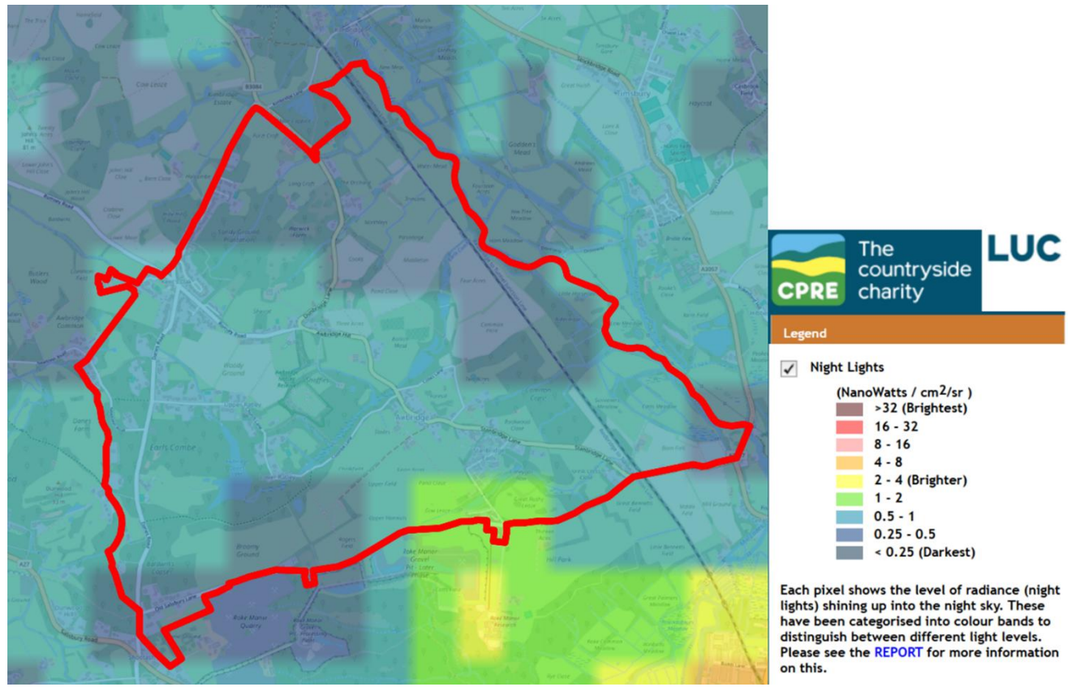


Figure 30. CPRE Dark Skies Mapping for Awbridge Parish

Policy A5 – Dark Night Skies

Applications for development that respond to light pollution and dark night skies by conserving and enhancing the tranquillity of the area in addition to complying with other relevant policies will be permitted.

Development proposals should seek to:

i. Maintain or enhance the measured pre-development dark sky quality of the surrounding area as shown in Figure 30;

ii. Limit light pollution that can potentially be created from extensive street and exterior lighting associated with new development, particularly in prominent areas, such as around Awbridge Village Hall;

iii. Meet or exceed the current guidelines established for rural areas by the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP); and

iv. Employ energy efficient forms of lighting that also reduce light spill, particularly uplighting.

Proposals for new street lighting will only be supported in principle where there is a strong case for it on highway and pedestrian safety grounds.

6.6 Setting of the Dispersed Settlements

6.6.1 Support for retaining the individual settlement areas and preventing development creep into the open countryside was overwhelmingly supported in public consultation.

6.6.2 This plan as a whole therefore seeks to support modest and proportionate development to meet local need within these small, dispersed rural hamlets, whilst safeguarding the countryside and rural character of each settlement.

6.6.3 Many members of the community expressed concern with regard to the level and type of development in the parish in recent years.

6.6.4 From a review of such development to date it was concluded that (in line with that issues identified in the Landscape Character Assessment) many of these modern in-depth developments have led to suburbanisation in some parts of the parish. As a result, there are areas which are at significant risk of coalescence with neighbouring settlements. This is either through piecemeal or cumulative development creeping along the roadside frontage or in depth to the rear.

6.6.5 In response, it has been proposed that the setting and spaces between the settlements contain only the amount of land necessary to preserve the open rural space between the dispersed settlement areas.

6.6.6 Setting 1 has been devised to separate Kent's Oak and Newtown. The land surrounding Daneswood and Linton Woods along Danes Road towards the parish boundary (west) and Roslyn on Newtown Road and up to the more recent development of The Croftons to the north, should be retained as an important separation between settlements and areas of a different character.

6.6.7 Whilst small spaces in the frontage may be the most obvious location for the setting of the dispersed settlements policy, such as between Woodside in Kent's Oak and Daneswood, this would be insufficient to meet the aims and objectives of the policy, which come from detailed community consultation.

6.6.8 The northern area of Danes Road within Kent's Oak is a much denser and developed area than the area south of Daneswood. There is a clear building line with properties much closer together and sited closer to the road. It is an obvious built-up area unlike the properties situated within Upper Ratley to the south.

6.6.9 In the Upper Ratley area and along Newtown Road within the parish, large, detached dwellings predominate, situated deep within substantial plots that follow a less clearly defined linear form. These plots often include additional paddock areas. Over time, large gardens and associated land can be incrementally developed with domestic outbuildings and recreational structures, which can sometimes be used to justify the siting of new dwellings or larger developments.

6.6.10 Setting 2 has been drawn to separate the southern part of Kent's Oak and Upper Ratley to the south. As above, there is an obvious frontage space along the eastern side of Danes Road between Halfcote and The Hollies. There is similarly a real risk that properties could develop deeper into the open rural space and could cumulatively reduce the tranquil rural landscape character. It should also be noted that this area is subject to an important view (IV2) from Danes Road eastwards.

6.6.11 Setting 3 is formed by the land between Awbridge Hill and Stanbridge Earls. Stanbridge Earls was constructed as a medium-sized country house and lived in from the 1300s onwards until its use as a school in the mid-20th Century. It is a Grade II* listed building, which is now a retirement village following the grant of planning permission in 2016.

6.6.12 The setting contains part of the formal grounds and the historic house, which leads northwards to Hillberry Farm. This was highlighted in the historic landscape analysis undertaken to accompany 16/02968/LBWS for the redevelopment of the site which stated that the southern part of the proposed setting was appropriate for the house and should be retained. The open rural space between the Hillberry Farm Frontage and between Tollgate and Chapel Mead provide views through to the formal parkland. Given the level of development on the Tollgate Estate and at Stanbridge Earls, the quiet, historic and rural hamlet of Awbridge Hill could easily by subsumed by modern development.

6.6.13 More information on the individual character of each settlement can be found in the Character Appraisal (Appendix VIII).

6.6.14 It should be noted that proposals for the extension of agricultural and forestry-related buildings and minor extensions to existing dwellings will be supported where they accord with the Design Code (see Appendix VIII) and avoid unnecessary harm to key views in Policy A2 and accord with Policy A5 on avoiding night-time coalescence through light pollution.

Policy A6 – Setting of the Dispersed Settlements

Development proposals will be required to safeguard the separateness and distinctive character of the different settlements within the Parish, principally Awbridge, Kent's Oak, Upper Ratley, Awbridge Hill and Stanbridge Earls. Proposals which individually or cumulatively might result in the merging of these settlements will not be supported.

7 HOUSING

7.1 Housing Requirements

Local Housing Needs – Test Valley Borough

7.1.1 The adopted TVBRLP (2011-2029) outlines the housing requirement for the borough is a minimum of 10,584 homes. However, the Local Plan does not provide a specific housing needs figure for Awbridge Parish.

7.1.2 Policy COM2 outlines the Settlement Hierarchy and defines Awbridge settlement as a Rural Village in 'Northern Test Valley'. TVBC's 2024 Housing Implementation Strategy outlines that 'Northern Test Valley' has a minimum housing requirement of 7,092 for the period up to 2029.[4]

7.1.3 Awbridge Parish is classified as open countryside (with the exception of Kent's Oak) and could support the following types of housing development under the Adopted Local Plan:

- replacement dwellings,
- community-led developments,
- rural affordable housing, and
- the re-use of buildings.

7.1.4 However, the village of Kent's Oak is subject to a settlement boundary (shown in yellow in Figure 31) which, in addition to those types of development listed above, also currently allows for infill development and redevelopment within the boundary.

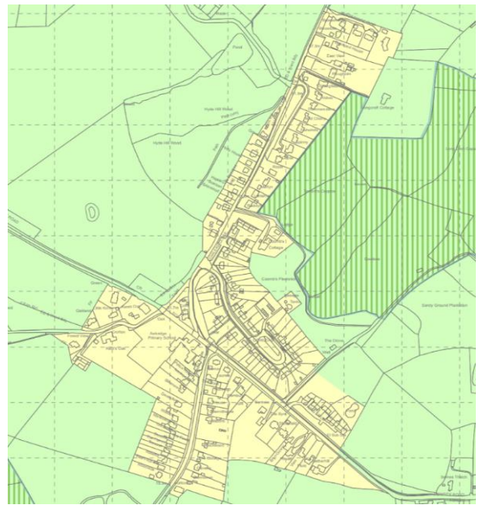


Figure 31. Extract from the Adopted TVBC Local Plan 2016 Showing the Current Settlement Boundary for Kent's Oak

[4] Test Valley Borough Council. (2024) *Housing Implementation Strategy.* Accessed at: https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/assets/attach/20043/Housing-Implementation-Strategy-April-2023.pdf

Emerging Local Plan – Test Valley Borough

7.1.5 In the latest stage of the Regulation 18 (Part 2) process, the Council produced detailed policies which were consulted on between 6th February 2024 and 2nd April 2024. The emerging plan sets out that Awbridge is a Tier 3 settlement, where similar to now, allows for:

- windfalls,
- rural affordable housing sites,
- replacement dwellings,
- community-led development,
- small business uses,
- re-use of buildings, and
- renewable energy development.

7.1.6 Although not formally listed, Kent's Oak appears to have the same settlement boundary as the 2016 Adopted Plan.

7.1.7 The emerging revised Regulation 18 Local Plan also seeks to ensure that Neighbourhood Plan areas:

"provide a minimum requirement of 10 new homes over the plan period. This figure will ensure that affordable housing can be provided in these rural areas. This minimum figure should be delivered through the Neighbourhood Plan and supplemented with local evidence, such as a housing needs survey, to ensure that the right type and size of new homes are delivered in the designated areas".

7.1.8 However, it must be noted that because these policies have not yet undergone examination, they do not currently hold any weight.

7.1.9 Moreover, this current approach may yet still be subject to change as TVBC has recently revised the draft Local Plan in its current form following the announcement of the Government's reforms and consultation on changes to the NPPF, specifically the significant increase to housing need and transitional arrangements.

7.1.10 As a result, the revised draft Regulation 18 wording has been considered within this Neighbourhood Plan and been reflected in the policy wording below.

7.1.11 It should be acknowledged that the current adopted Local Plan does not consider the parish suitable for large scale development due to its lack of facilities and poor public transport links in comparison to other areas in the borough.

Housing Need

7.1.12 It is considered that the current Adopted Local Plan policy is sufficiently permissive to allow for an appropriate affordable housing scheme to be brought forward, as per the development at Spring Field (see Figure 32) or an appropriate community led housing scheme.

7.1.13 As a result, this Plan does not allocate any specific housing sites but instead supports the principle of an affordable or community led housing development within the parish. The latter would have to be subject to community consultation and deliver benefits for the wider community. At present, it is understood that there is a desire for:

- A pre-school to link into the Primary School;
- A community car park whereby a suitable walking bus route should be provided or existing route improved (as agreed by travel plan) to enable parents to walk their children to school from an agreed location without dominating surrounding roads;
- A play area for younger children;
- Contributions to the upgrading of or improvements to the village hall; and
- Improved accessible links to the village hall for pedestrians and cyclists.



Figure 32. High-Quality Affordable Housing at Spring Field

7.1.14 It is believed that both the Adopted and Emerging Local Plans are sufficiently permissive to allow small organic growth within the parish over the Plan period without the need for a specific housing allocation policy. Should however the revised Local Plan require a specified site, this should be through community consultation to bring forward an appropriate community led scheme, which delivers benefits as described in paragraph 7.13.

7.1.15 It should be noted that residents' perception of housing need, as gained from community consultation (see Figure 33) demonstrated the highest support for:

- affordable housing at a permanent discount (of at least 30%),
- affordable housing for shared ownership,
- affordable housing for rent (at a discount of at least 20%), and
- housing for first time buyers.

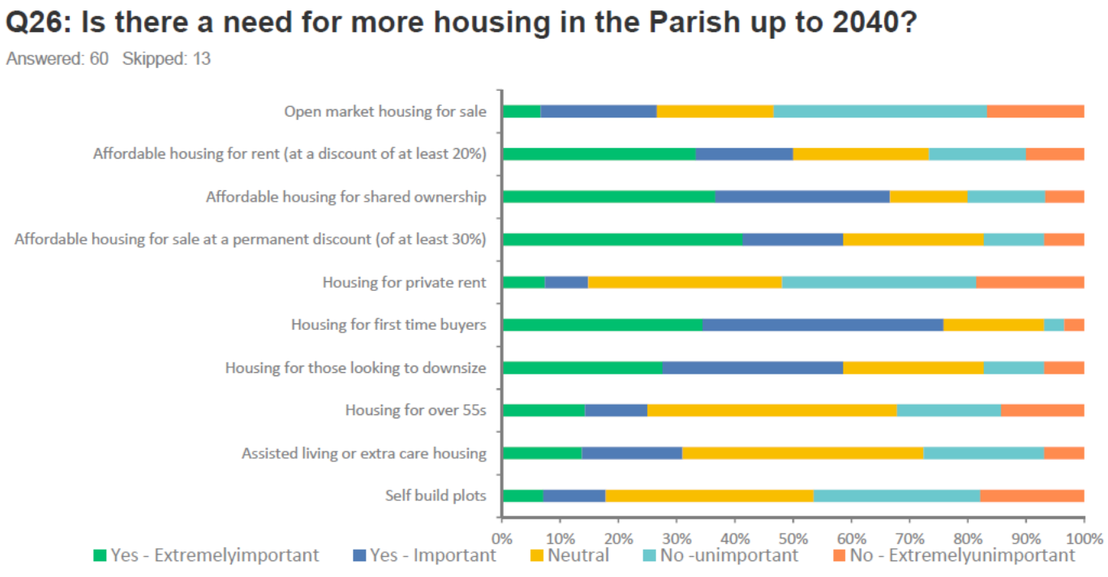


Figure 33. Community Consultation Results for Housing Needs in the Parish

7.1.16 When looking at the results of community consultation with regard to the provision of housing (see Figure 34), smaller family homes of 1 to 3 bedrooms were preferred over larger executive and family homes.

7.1.17 Residents also expressed a desire for more single-storey housing, highlighting the need for homes that accommodate downsizing.

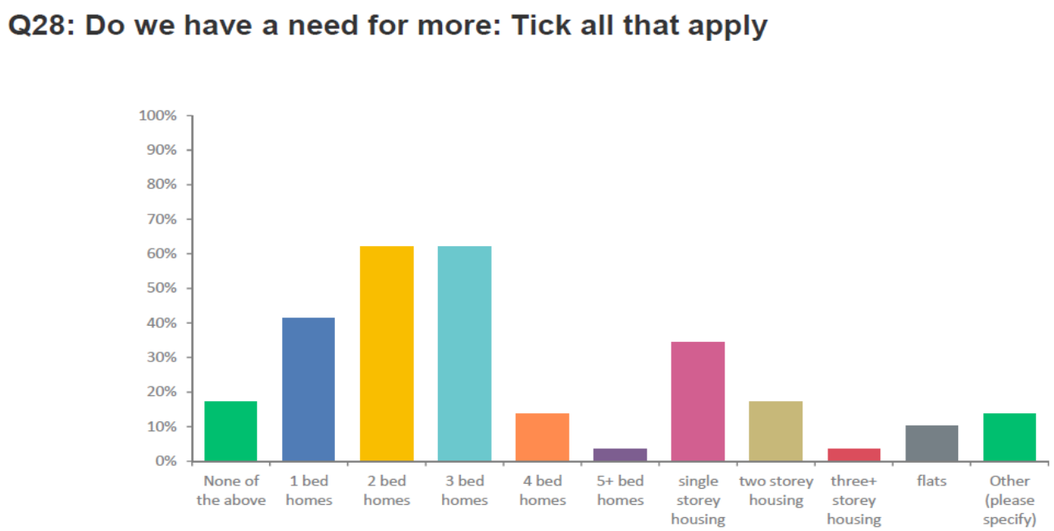


Figure 34. Community Consultation Results to Housing Need (Bedrooms) in the Parish

7.1.18 There is a concern over the trend of replacing smaller dwellings (2 bed) with substantially larger 5+ bedroom homes and subdividing such plots. Equally, those already in larger, under occupied dwellings are finding it difficult to downsize into appropriate properties, as supported by Figure 34.

7.1.19 All of these problems do little to support those looking to get onto the property ladder, nor do they encourage young families to reside in the area. This leaves the parish with an aging population, resulting in a market where local people have to move outside of the area to purchase more affordable properties elsewhere.

7.1.20 As of 1st March 2024, 9 households are registered on Test Valley Borough Council's Housing Register and have a local connection to Awbridge. When consulted, the community expressed that they would support a small affordable housing site and were keen to see a development of high quality, such as Spring Field (see Figure 32).

7.1.21 The identified housing need in Awbridge is identified by assessed bed need as shown in the table below:

Assessed bed need	Total
1 Bed	8
2 Bed	0
3 Bed	1
4+ Bed	0
Total	**9**

7.1.22 Although no site has been put forward for designation or agreed upon by the community, it is an aspiration of this Plan to take this forward with the Parish Council. Such a site would have to accord with the other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan. In regard to the former, a suitable site would need to respect the issues raised in the landscape section and comply with requirements in the Character Appraisal and Design Code.

7.1.23 The following policy adds more locally specific information to the adopted Local Plan Policy COM7-COM9 for the type of development that would be expected in the parish.

Infill Development in Kent's Oak

7.1.24 With regard to 'infill' development, whilst TVBC provide no formal definition, this tends to refer to the development of a small gap within an otherwise built-up street frontage.

7.1.25 Each site will be evaluated based on its individual merits. However, an infill site would typically not have extensive boundaries adjoining open land, nor would any development extend significantly beyond the depth of existing properties. Further guidance on appropriate infill development is provided in the Design Code.

Replacement Dwellings and Extensions to Dwellings

7.1.26 Proposals for the replacement and extensions of dwellings will need to accord with the Design Code. To summarise, these should reflect the character and appearance of the area as highlighted in the Character Appraisal.

7.1.27 They should also be positioned within the same location as the original property (unless otherwise justified – usually for amenity reasons or to continue an existing building line).

7.1.28 It is clear from community consultations that there is a concern amongst residents that some replacement buildings are overly large for their plots and out of keeping with neighbouring dwellings. Each replacement or extended dwelling should therefore be proportionate to the size of the plot and in keeping with the character of surrounding properties in terms of scale and mass. Replacement dwellings or extensions should allow sufficient space for local native planting along the boundary to soften the development in keeping with the sylvan character of the wider area.

7.1.29 It is considered that the privacy of existing residents is paramount and that adequate gaps and existing native trees and planting should be retained.

7.1.30 Where the dwelling is a non-designated heritage asset, its demolition would not normally be supported unless there is adequate justification provided.

7.1.31 With regard to garage conversions for properties built since 1990, these would not normally be supported unless additional parking is guaranteed within the development curtilage.

Conversion of Buildings into Dwellings

7.1.32 Proposals for the conversion of agricultural and commercial facilities or buildings to dwellings will need to accord with the Design Code. There are many circumstances where such work does not require full planning permission. In this regard, it is suggested that the information in the Design Code is used as best practice guidance.

Policy A7 – Housing

Proposals for an affordable housing site or community led site (with an element of affordable housing to meet local need) would be supported in principle. Schemes will be expected to have regard to the requirements of Local Plan Policy E1, which seeks high quality design in the Borough; Local Plan Policy E2, which aims to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape character of the Borough; Local Plan Policies COM8 and COM9, which govern rural exception affordable housing and community-led schemes respectively); other relevant policies in this Neighbourhood Plan (in particular policies A2, A3, A4.1 and A9); and the detailed considerations set out in the Parish-wide Design Code.

8 HERITAGE AND DESIGN

8.1 Historic Environment

8.1.1 Spread throughout the parish there are 15 listed buildings and 1 registered park/garden. Details of each can be found in Appendix VI. Understanding the heritage of a settlement is key to its successful future. Ensuring that owners and neighbours understand the significance of a listed building and its setting is critical to their maintenance and upkeep. A greater knowledge also allows the building's special architecture and historic interest to be celebrated and acknowledged in future development in the parish.

8.1.2 While the designation of non-designated heritage assets carries less weight than that of designated heritage assets, they remain significant nonetheless. The NPPF mandates that the significance of a non-designated heritage asset be considered when evaluating an application that affects such an asset. Any harm to or loss of the asset will necessitate a balanced judgment based on the severity of the harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

8.1.3 Policy A8 aims to safeguard the significance of locally important assets and their settings, as appropriate.

8.1.4 Significance, as defined by the NPPF, refers *to "the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest"*. This interest can be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historical. It may also encompass the asset's setting, particularly if it was and continues to be historically significant. Historic England defines conservation as *"the process of maintaining and managing change to heritage assets".*

8.1.5 Further buildings have been identified and are considered by residents of the parish to be of local importance due to their value relating to age, appearance and/or historic association. Further information on these locally listed buildings can be found in the Appendix VII.



Figure 35. A Selection of Listed Buildings and Structures in the Parish

Map of Designated Heritage Assets

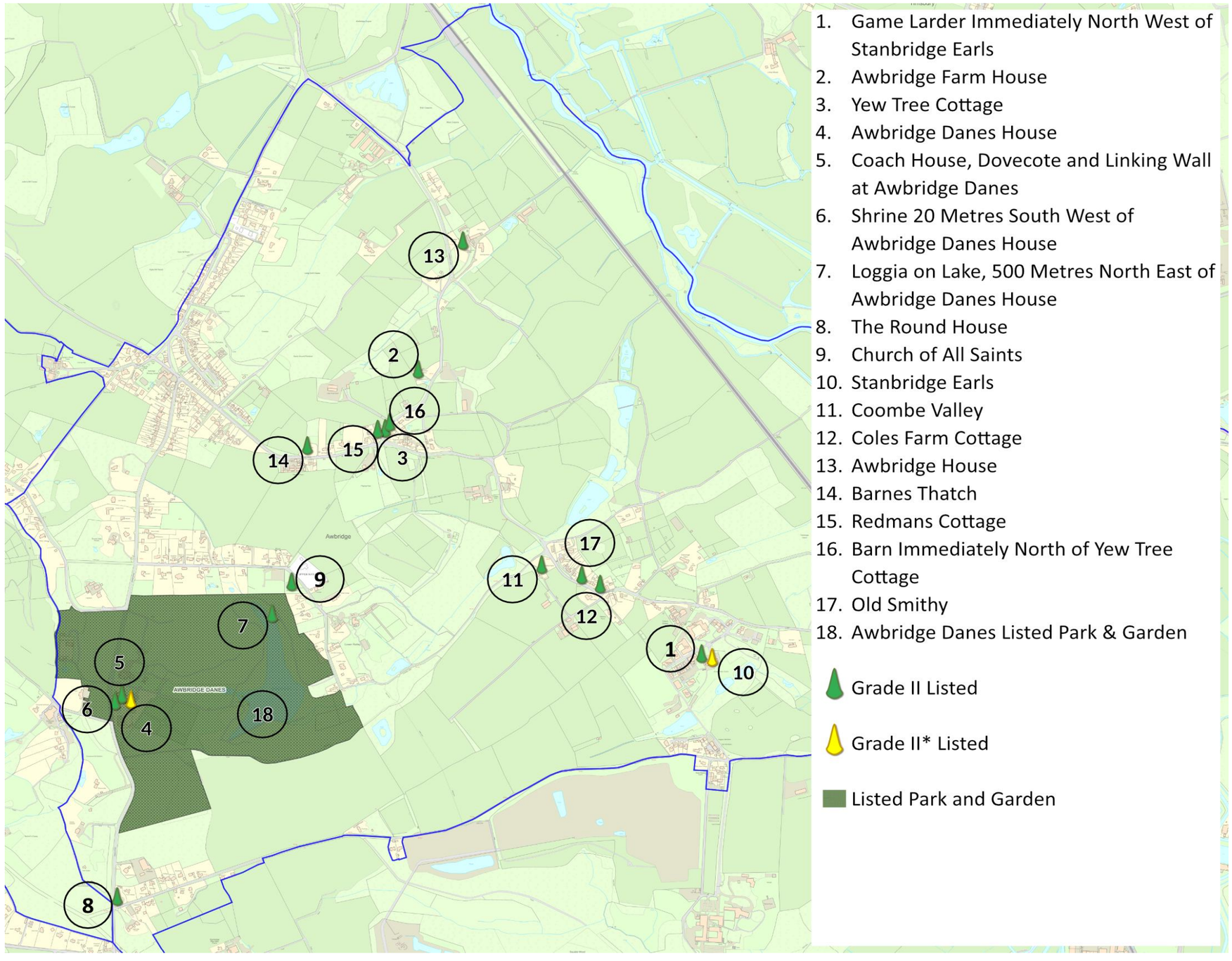


Figure 36. Listed Buildings, Parks Gardens and Scheduled Monuments

Potential Non-Designated Heritage Assets



01	Awbridge Primary School
02	Kent's Oak
03	War Memorial
04	White Cottage
05	Coombe End
06	Ratley Grange
07	Erles Coombe
08	Coombe Cottage
09	Coombe Corner
10	Fiddlers Green
11	Hilltop Farm
12	Danesmede
13	Damans Cottage
14	Halfcote

Figure 37. Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Policy A8 – Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Development proposals should demonstrate how they will preserve and, where appropriate and practicable, enhance non-designated heritage assets within their setting and historical value.

The non-designated heritage assets are identified below:

i. Awbridge Primary School.
ii. The War Memorial.
iii. Kent's Oak.
iv. White Cottage, Church Lane.
v. Coombe End, Church Lane.
vi. Ratley Grange, Church Lane.
vii. Erles Coombe, Church Lane.
viii. Coombe Cottage, Church Lane.
ix. Coombe Corner, Church Lane.
x. Fiddlers Green, Church Lane.
xi. Hilltop Farm, Newtown Road.
xii. Danesmede, Danes Road.
xiii. Damans Cottage, Old Salisbury Lane.
xiv. Halfcote, Danes Road.

8.2 Design

8.2.1 The NPPF states the following at Paragraph 139:

"Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or

b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings".

8.2.2 The Awbridge Parish Design Code complements the Neighbourhood Plan and forms part of Policy A9 by providing specific guidance for each character area within the parish (summarised in Appendix VIII).

8.2.3 The Design Code should be read in conjunction with the Character Appraisal element of the document which looks at both the landscape and built form within the parish. The analysis is based on the National Design Guide which was published in 2019 and sets out the characteristics of well-designed places. It demonstrates what good design means in principle and in practice. It supports the NPPF Section 12 on achieving well-designed places and is referred to in the previous sections as well a sitting alongside the NPPG in regard to design process and tools.

8.2.4 It is intended to be used by local authorities, applicants and local communities to establish the design expectations of the Government. It identifies ten characteristics which underpin good design:

- Context – enhances the surroundings.
- Identity – attractive and distinctive.
- Built form – a coherent pattern of development.
- Movement – accessible and easy to move around.
- Nature – enhanced and optimised.
- Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive.
- Uses – mixed and integrated.
- Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable.
- Resources – efficient and resilient.
- Lifespan – made to last.

8.2.5 The National Model Design Code (NMDC) was produced in June 2021 and forms part of the Government's planning practice guidance. It is intended to be read alongside the NPPF, NPPG and the National Design Guide. The NMDC highlights ten example area types of which this Plan area falls into the 'Villages' and 'Rural Settlements' categories which possess their own distinctive character in an informal layout with a mix of rural buildings.

8.2.6 The parish Design Code subdivides the parish into distinct character areas, as depicted overleaf.

8.2.7 New development should refer to the Design Code to determine the appropriate design for any site. Where development does not require planning permission, any landowner or householder is encouraged to read the document for locally specific information and good practice.

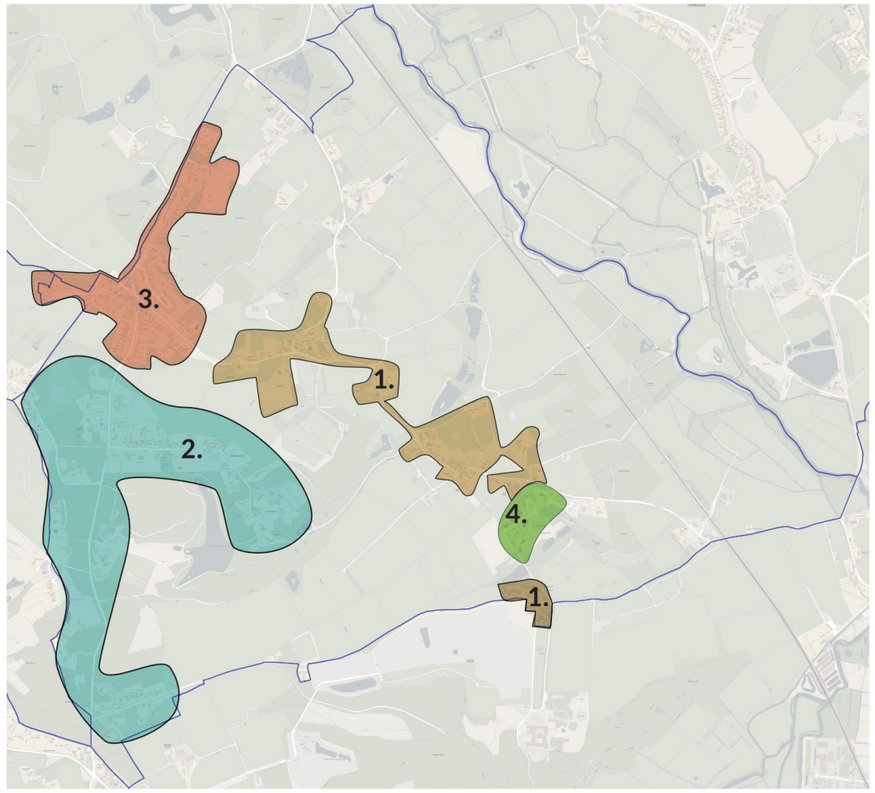
8.2.8 The Design Code will address appropriate scale, bulk, height, density, plot coverage and massing, while also preserving views in and out of the settlement and ensuring adequate space between buildings. It will safeguard the amenities of local residents, including protecting privacy and access to daylight and sunlight. The Code will also include requirements for suitably sized front and rear gardens, as well as appropriate landscaping works, such as boundary treatments.

8.3 Sustainable Construction

8.3.1 Design proposals should also seek the use of sustainable construction techniques and materials to mitigate the effects of climate change.

8.3.2 Proposals for individual renewable energy will be supported, provided they comply with the relevant development and Neighbourhood Plan policies. The overarching principle, however, is that new development must also contribute to the vitality and viability of the parish as a whole. Further details are provided in the Design Code.

Parish Character Areas



1- Awbridge and Awbridge Hill & Roke Manor Farm

2- Upper and Lower Ratley and other sylvan areas

3- Kent's Oak

4- Stanbridge Earls & Awbridge Hill

5- Open Countryside

Figure 38. Summary of Findings of the Character Appraisal

1- Awbridge, Awbridge Hill & Roke Manor



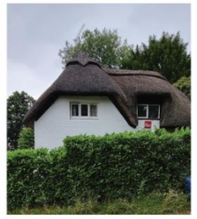






Building Typology	Agricultural/related farmhouses, cottages and farm buildings. Some former agricultural buildings converted to employment uses. Mixed single storey, 1.5 and 2 storey detached dwellings. Village Hall
Siting and Layout	Linear, loose knit, set deep into the plot. Often designed in relation to farming needs. Interspersed with farm buildings set in typical courtyards.
Density	Very low – less than 15 dph.
Gardens and Plot sizes / coverage	Land holding equates to status of building with farmhouses having extensive gardens. Cottages also have substantial gardens befitting the rural setting and often ability to be more self-sufficient in terms of growing food.
Scale, Height and Massing	Large dwellings over 4 beds up to 2 storeys in height. Smaller detached dwellings are often simple 1.5 to 2 storey cottages and modern bungalows. More imposing, large scale farmhouses up to 2 storeys. Medium-large scale farm buildings.
Green Spaces and gaps	Substantial gaps between buildings and green space around each – all privately owned. Each property has own deep and well enclosed front garden area.
Enclosure	High degree of informal landscape enclosure. Mixed area – semi-detached dwellings. Open or low level boundary walls and fences with formal garden planting. Modern detached often formal garden planting. Older properties with native hedgerow and tree cover enclosing the space.

2- Upper and Lower Ratley and other sylvan






Building Typology	Mixed single storey, 1.5 and 2 storey detached dwellings largely older cottages and country houses with modern infill. Often new, large-scale replacement dwellings.
Siting and Layout	Linear, loose knit and set deep in their plots. Often do not conform to building line.
Density	Very low – less than 5 dph.
Gardens and Plot sizes / coverage	Very low plot coverage usually between 5 to 20%. Extensive gardens often over 1 acre (0.2 ha).
Scale, Height and Massing	Large dwellings over 4 beds up to 2 storeys in height. Smaller detached dwellings are often simple 1.5 to 2 storey cottages and modern bungalows. More imposing, large scale farmhouses up to 2 storeys Medium to large scale farm buildings.
Green Spaces and gaps	Substantial gaps between buildings and green space around each – all privately owned. Each property has own deep and well enclosed front garden area.
Enclosure	High degree of informal landscape enclosure. Mixed area – semi-detached dwellings. Open or low level boundary walls and fences with formal garden planting. Modern detached often formal garden planting. Older properties with native hedgerow and tree cover enclosing the space.

3 - Kent's Oak















Building Typology	Mixed area of 2 storey Victorian villas and Cottages with modern contemporary infill. Semi-detached and terraced Council houses from 1960s onwards. Modern small scale 2 storey, traditional affordable housing scheme. Areas of new small scale 'executive' housing estates. Village Primary School. Often new large-scale replacement dwellings.
Siting and Layout	Linear, loose knit, set back facing the road. In depth dwellings are usually a result of conversions. The semi-detached properties are laid out formally, whereas the remainder are loose knit
Density	Very low – less than 15 dph.
Gardens and Plot sizes/ coverage	Generally Low plot coverage usually between 15 to 30%. Mixed area – semi-detached dwellings – garden sizes range but at least 15m in depth.
Scale, Height and Massing	Large dwellings over 4 beds up to 2 storeys in height. Smaller detached dwellings are often simple 1.5 to 2 storey cottages and modern bungalows. More imposing, Victorian and Edwardian villas up to 2 storeys
Green Spaces and gaps	A range of different sized gaps increasingly larger between buildings, depending on whether detached, semi-detached or terraced.
Enclosure	Largely well integrated with the landscape. Significant tree coverage and important mature specimen trees which are of great amenity value. Some later 1950s to 1970s buildings with open frontages

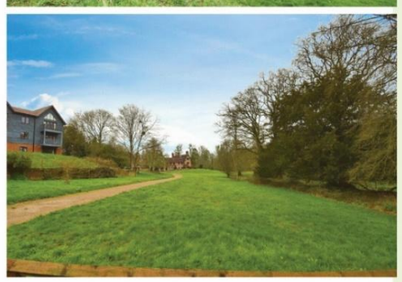
4 - Stanbridge Earls & Awbridge Hill











Building Typology	Purpose built retirement village centred around the country house known as Stanbridge Earls. A mix of converted buildings and new build apartments.
Siting and Layout	Linear, loose knit and set deep in their plots. Often do not conform to building line.
Density	Medium density development of 155 apartments. Although the grounds are more extensive.
Gardens and Plot sizes/ coverage	32 acres of communal grounds. Apartments have balconies and small terraces. Other community facilities such as swimming pool etc.
Scale, Height and Massing	Apartment buildings 3 to 3.5 storeys. Smaller converted buildings.
Green Spaces and gaps	Formal landscaped grounds. Each block and converted building sited within close proximity with views to the open countryside and extensive grounds beyond. Historic parkland features retained to the south and southwest.
Enclosure	Formal landscape design with an open parkland. No individual enclosure around properties. The grounds contain mature boundary and individual specimen planting, but otherwise open and a sense of extensive open space.

Policy A9 – Design

New development will be expected to demonstrate how consideration has been given both to the Character Appraisal of the Plan area (as highlighted in Figure 38) and relevant parts of the Parish-wide Design Code. Elements which are likely to be of particular importance include:

i. Size, scale (height), mass and enclosure which reflects those that have been identified in each character area in the Character Appraisal;

ii. Densities which are appropriate for the Character Area;

iii. Adequate garden sizes for the intended size/number of occupants/capacity of the dwelling;

iv. The settlement pattern respects the character of the area and the largely linear nature of existing built form;

v. Extensions, replacement dwellings or new buildings preserve the residential amenity of existing occupiers;

vi. The materials should complement those in the local area, as outlined in the Awbridge Character Appraisal and Design Code;

vii. Appropriate boundary treatments and entrance features which do not urbanise the area;

viii. The use of native landscaping to enhance biodiversity and the largely sylvan character of the parish; and

ix. Addressing climate change through design to optimise site layout and potential, including passive solar gain, shading, construction methods, materials and renewable energy solutions.

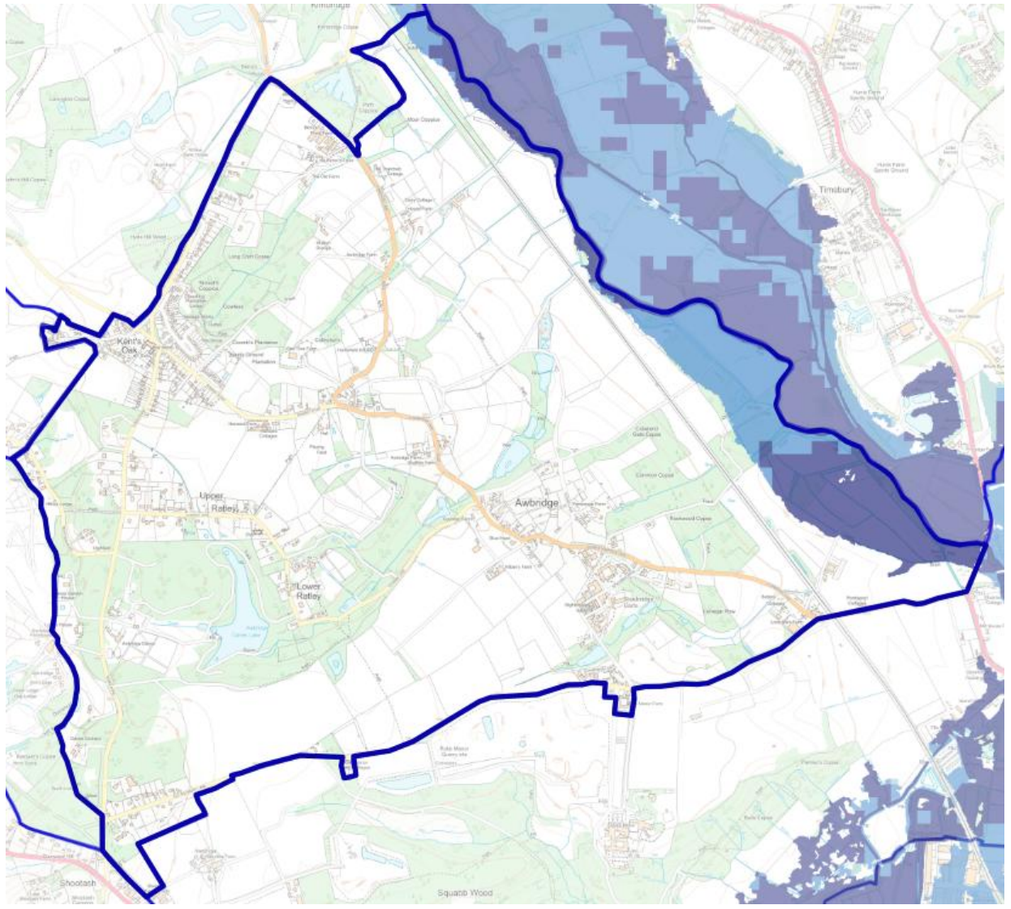


Figure 39. Map of Flood Zones 2 (Light Blue) and 3 (Dark Blue) within Awbridge Parish

9 INFRASTRUCTURE

9.1 Flooding and Drainage

9.1.1 While Adopted Local Plan Policy focuses on water management and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guides development to areas with minimal flood risk, the following policy aims to identify flood-prone areas within the parish, regardless of whether the flooding originates from rivers or surface runoff.

9.1.2 Applicants should assess soil and geological conditions to determine the suitability of implementing a Sustainable Drainage Scheme (SuDS).

9.1.3 As illustrated in Figure 39 below, several areas within the parish are susceptible to surface water flooding - a potential concern that may not be readily apparent to those proposing new developments. In locations prone to flooding, any new development should be designed to avoid exacerbating existing drainage challenges.

9.1.4 The flood zone maps show the areas within the parish that are at risk of flooding from rivers or surface water and are as follows:

- Flood Zone 1: This zone has a low probability of flooding. This means that in any given year, there is less than a 0.1% chance of flooding from rivers or the sea.
- Flood Zone 2: This zone has a medium probability of flooding. This means that in any given year, there is a 1% to 0.1% chance of flooding from rivers.
- Flood Zone 3: This zone has a high probability of flooding. This means that in any given year, there is a 1% or more chance of flooding from rivers.

9.1.5 The main flood zones within the parish are alongside the River Test and its tributaries.

9.1.6 In addition to the flood zones visible in Figures 39 and 40 shows the areas within the parish that are at risk of flooding from surface water.

- Low Risk: the area has a 0.1% to 1% chance of flooding from surface water each year.
- Medium Risk: the area has a 1% to 3.3% chance of flooding from surface water each year.
- High Risk: the area has a greater than 3.3% chance of flooding from surface water each year.

9.1.7 In this instance the geology of the area is extremely important. To date, there have been a number of applications where developers have encountered issues when attempting to secure adequate drainage solutions.

9.1.8 There are many areas which are underlain by clay as shown on Figure 40 overleaf. Clay is relatively impermeable, meaning water has difficulty soaking through it. Unlike sandy soils that allow water to filter down, clay acts more like a slab, causing surface water to pool instead of draining naturally.

9.1.9 Figure 40 below highlights where there are specific problems caused by clay (areas marked as A, Ai, B, Bi, Bii) and surface water issues.

9.1.10 New developments generally involve an increase in hard surfaces such as paved areas, roads and driveways, as well as the building footprint itself. This reduces the natural space for water to soak into the ground. When rain falls on these surfaces, it runs off quickly, overwhelming drainage systems and causing flooding on the clay below.

9.1.11 Combining the two factors, the clay prevents water from soaking in and the built areas/paved surfaces increase runoff. This extra water has nowhere to go and ends up flooding low-lying areas and/or straining the existing drainage system.

9.1.12 Where clay is present, the options when developing are often to build deeper foundations and to provide large soakaways, shallow dig tanks or deeper underground storage tanks for example.

9.1.13 Further issues have also been caused when additional water is discharged into surrounding ditches and watercourses, which may not be suitable for the additional flow or lack onward connectivity. It should be noted that there are many ditches within the parish which are not flowing and do not discharge storm water adequately. Figure 40 highlights the ditches and watercourse which flow into lakes, ponds or other larger watercourses.

Geology, Topography and Surface Water Flooding

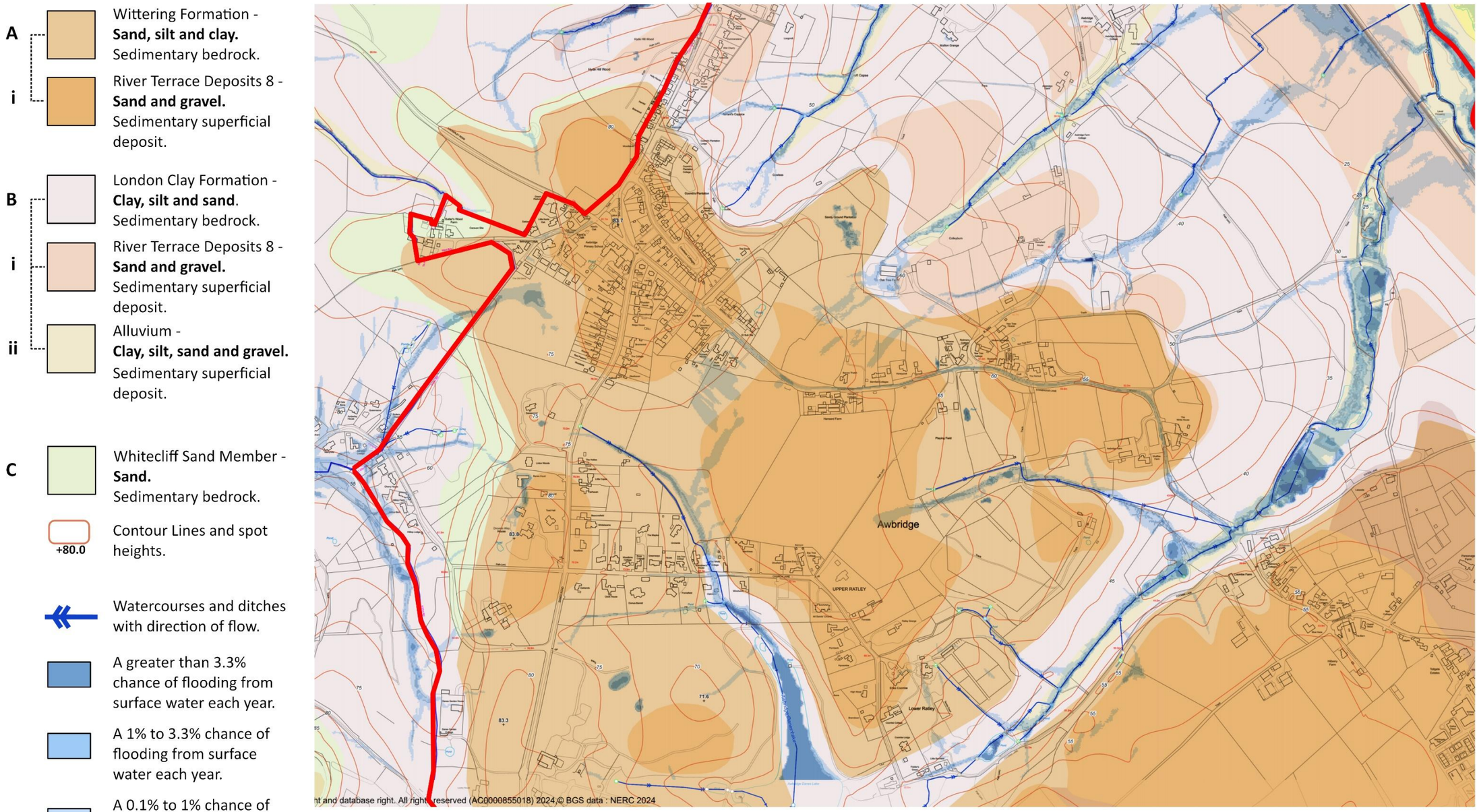


Figure 40. Geology, Topography and Surface Water Flooding Map

Policy A10 – Flooding and Drainage

Development proposals should:

i. Demonstrate that new developments will not increase the risk of flooding, particularly in those areas highlighted on Figures 39 and 40;

ii. Contain sufficient information to demonstrate that both fluvial and surface water flood risk, in addition to geological conditions on site, have been examined to ascertain infiltration rates;

iii. Provide an appropriate foul and surface water drainage strategy to accompany a development proposals when located within areas A, Ai, B, Bi, or Bii as shown on Figure 40;

iv. Within all areas, adopt appropriate and maintainable sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) suitable for infiltration rates as part of new developments;

v. Be accompanied by sufficient information to demonstrate that arrangements for run-off from private drainage systems will be satisfactory prior to commencement of development (particularly within areas subject to flooding or in areas A, Ai, B, Bi, or Bii as shown on Figure 40);

vi. Ensure that where it is proposed to discharge additional water into a nearby ditch, that such proposals should demonstrate that the ditch connects into an identified watercourse as highlighted on Figure 40;

vii. Ensure that new development in close proximity to the River Test SSSI adopts best practise SuDS to ensure the protection of the water supply; and

viii. Within all areas, highlight how water efficiency, the use of green roofs, porous paving, rainwater harvesting methods and greywater recycling has been considered and incorporated as appropriate.

9.2 Accessibility and Highway Safety

9.2.1 Survey results during a community consultation indicated that a large proportion of respondents had concerns over road related issues (see Figure 41). Whilst many relate to problems that currently exist, there is also a concern that development proposals have not always included the most appropriate mitigation measures or levels of accessibility.

9.2.2 A high proportion of respondents to the survey said that they had concerns over road safety issues in the parish, specifically in relation to speeding, dangerous junctions, conflict between HGVs and pedestrian and cyclists and general lack of accessibility.

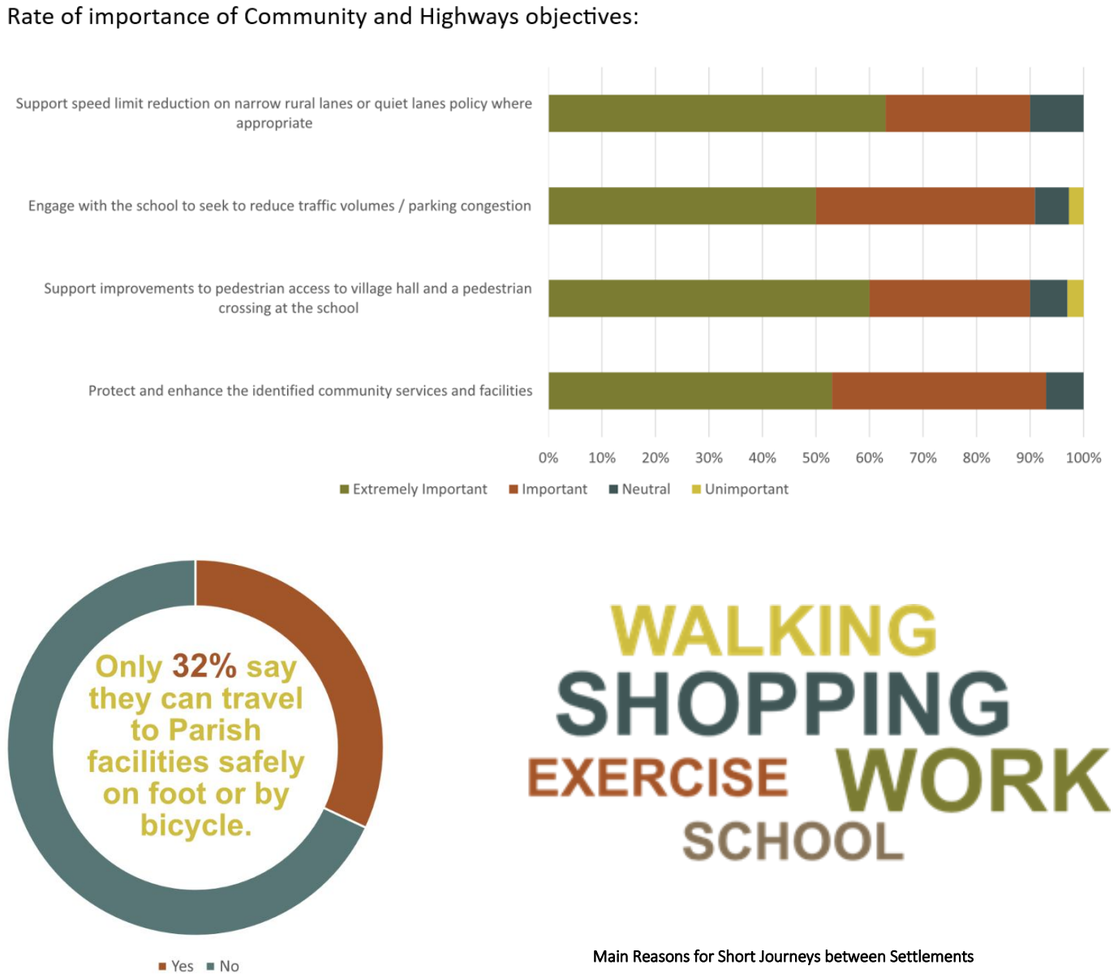


Figure 41. Survey Results Relating to Accessibility and Highway Safety

Pedestrian Safety

9.2.3 Various issues relating to pedestrian safety have been highlighted on Figure 41. In particular there are a number of narrow rural lanes where conflict between pedestrians and cyclists and motor vehicles occur.

9.2.4 The image below (Figure 42), highlights the current problems experienced on Saunders Lane, for example, where pedestrians have to walk on the road. The lane is not sufficiently wide enough for two vehicles to pass and there is no pavement or protected area for pedestrians. There are numerous dwellings in this location and no safe walking route to the school or other facilities.

9.2.5 The recent development at Butteridge Rise has exacerbated this problem further with no suitable mitigation measures proposed. In this regard, it is essential that where there is a net gain in dwellings, proposals are not located where they are inaccessible to pedestrians or would result in solely car-based journeys.



Figure 42. Current Road Safety Issues at Saunders Lane

9.2.6 Another key issue raised by residents is pedestrian accessibility to services and facilities, in particular, a path leading from Kent's Oak to Awbridge. There is currently no safe route between Kent's Oak and Awbridge Primary School, Awbridge Village Hall, the playing field, playground, Nature Reserve and Hansard's Farm (see Figure 43). This has been highlighted below, with a potential option for a new informal permissive path subject to discussions with landowners.

9.2.7 It would also require existing path improvements and a safe crossing which would need separate funding and implementation but could arise from future infrastructure improvements linked to development in the area, as supported in Policy A7.

9.2.8 Whilst the same could be argued for the Awbridge Hill and Stanbridge Earls areas, there are public footpaths which link the settlements, albeit a rather circuitous route.

9.2.9 Awbridge Hill is another narrow lane where it is unsafe for pedestrians to walk on the road due to vehicle use and speed.

9.2.10 The Stanbridge Earls area was designed as a self-contained community and given the age restriction of residents, it is unlikely that such parish facilities and services would be a priority. The remaining settlement areas are more closely aligned to other settlements.



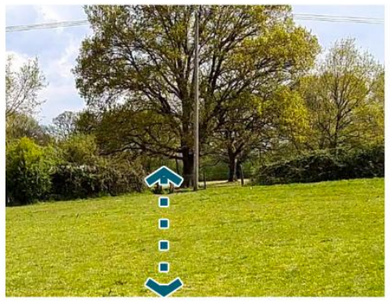
1. The current path between Kent's Oak and Awbridge Village Hall, the playground, playing fields and Nature reserve. The paved path currently leads directly out onto a narrow rural lane with a blind bend. A suitable alternative would be supported.



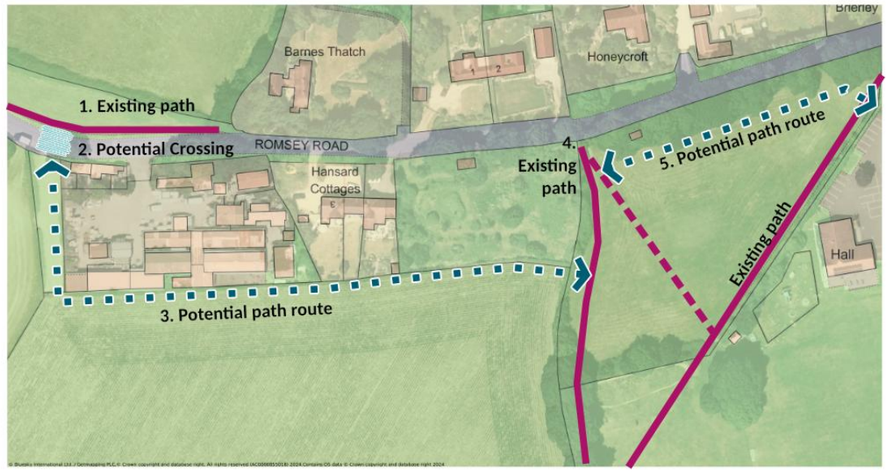
2. The path also links to Hansard's Farm Shop, which is well used by residents. Currently there is no direct route to step down from the path and allow pedestrians to cross the road. An appropriate ramp or steps would be supported.







A crossing link to Hansard's Farm Shop, could with landowner permission, allow for an alternate route alongside the shop (3), which would link into the existing public footpath (4) which leads to the playing field, a further path extension (5) along the hedgeline could also link into the Village Hall.



A potential route is shown above, but would depend on landowner permission. Any improvements to the area could be funded by appropriate developer contributions, which would link Parish facilities.

Figure 43. Potential Improvements to link Kent's Oak to Awbridge Village Hall Facilities

Road Safety and Junctions

9.2.11 Figure 47 highlights a number of road safety concerns and issues. In particular, the figure highlights the number of reported road traffic incidents since 2000. From this, it is clear where the roads with significant problems currently exist. It is key that any new development, as supported in Policy A7, does not exacerbate existing problems and proposes suitable mitigation measures to address issues.



Figure 44. The Staggered Junction of Saunders Lane, Romesey Road and Danes Road



Figure 45. The Junction of Old Salisbury Lane and Danes Road

Public Transport

9.2.12 The principle of sustainability is well established in national and local policies including the NPPF (Section 9). Of particular importance is how residents in rural areas can access services without resorting to private car travel and how to provide infrastructure which encourages and supports the use of sustainable transport modes including walking/cycling.

9.2.13 The parish is poorly connected by public transport with only a school bus route between Wellow and Barton Peveril College travelling along Danes Road, stopping at Awbridge Primary School and Church Lane.

9.2.14 A primary school bus also collects children within the catchment area but again is not open to the public.

9.2.15 Additionally, there is a community bus route along Romsey Road and Stanbridge Lane which runs twice a week and travels to Romsey. The routes are shown on Figure 46.

9.2.16 The poor level of public transport, combined with the lack of safe walking and cycling routes, highlights that residents without a car are effectively isolated and cannot access shops, services or employment. Proposals which seek to provide a realistic and effective change will be welcomed.

Awbridge Primary School

9.2.17 The primary school has no parking for parents which, given that the catchment area is wider than the parish, leads to a significant number of vehicle movements and parking problems around school drop off and pick up times. This particularly affects Danes Road and Romsey Road, which worsens the already problematic junction.

9.2.18 There is also no permanent safe crossing area which makes walking with young children extremely difficult.

9.2.19 Residents would support proposals which improve parking around the school and/or make realistic sustainable travel improvements in the wider parish.

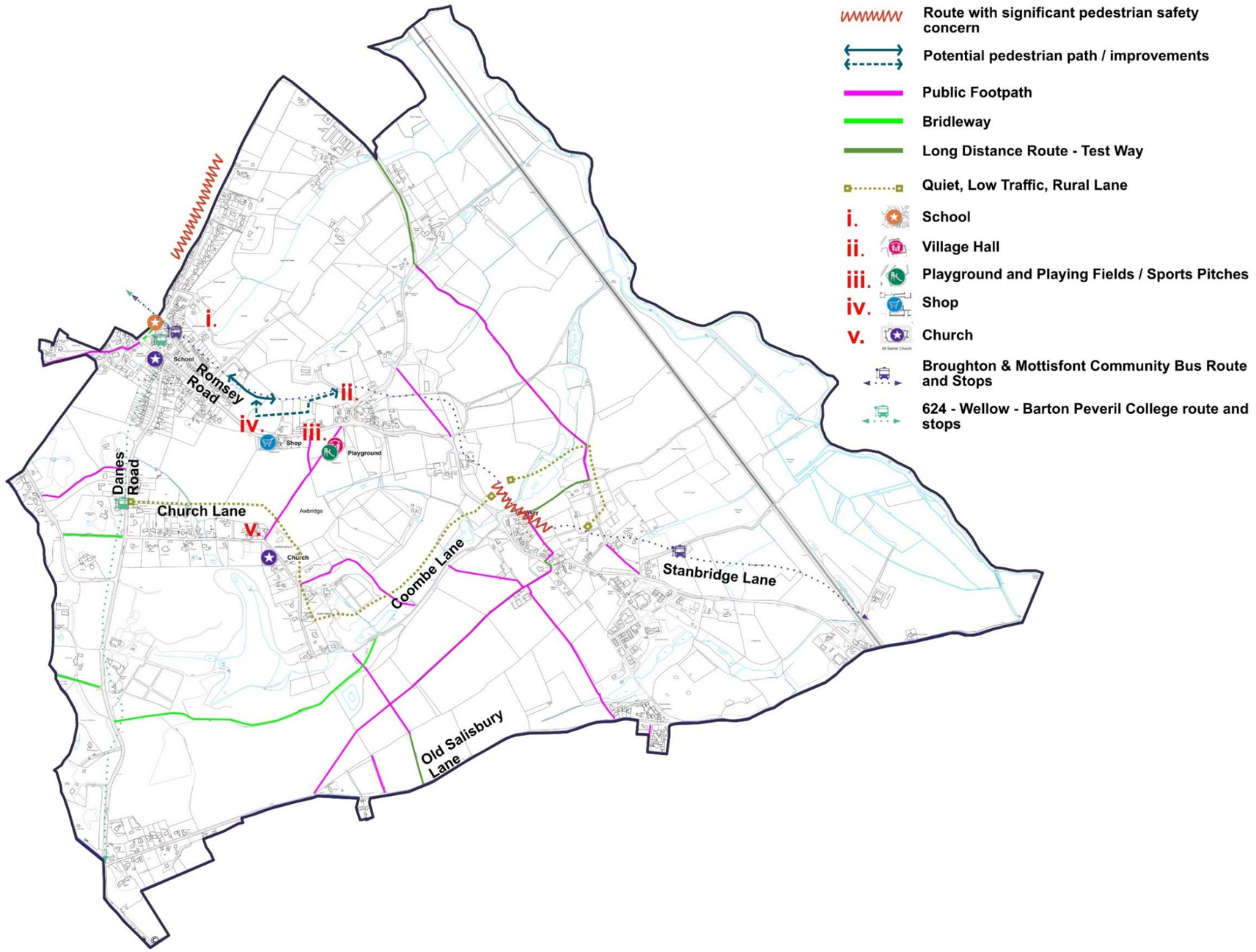


Figure 46. Community Facilities, Public Rights of Way, Bus Route and Stops

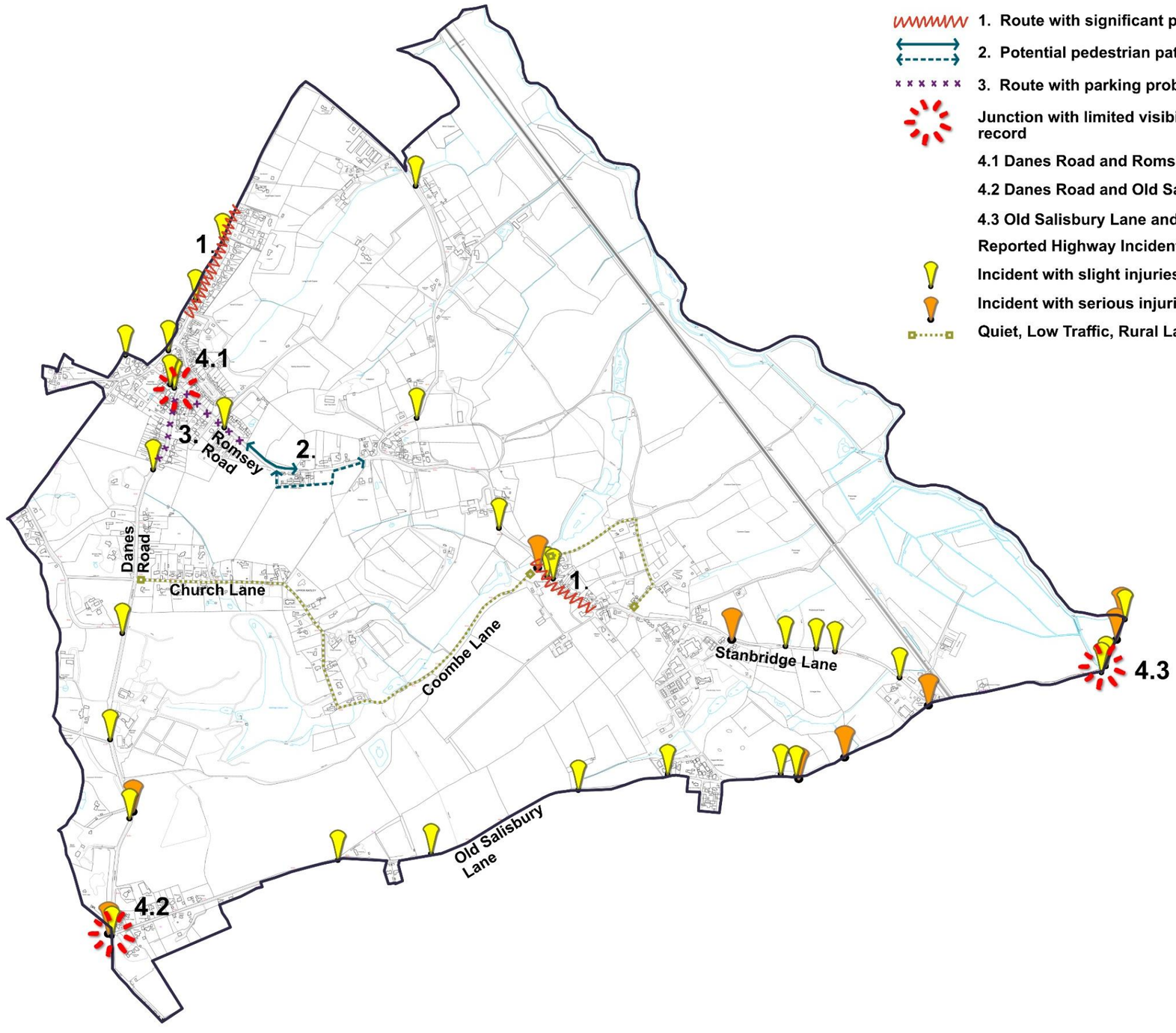


Figure 47. Accidents and Areas of Concern

Policy A11 – Accessibility, Public Rights of Way and Highway Safety

Support in principle will be given to development proposals which include measures for improving the safety and convenience of local walking and cycling routes between the settlements and to community facilities and the wider area, a priority being the potential route shown on Figure 43. All proposals should have regard to Local Plan Policies T1 (managing development) and T2 (parking standards). Particular attention will be given to addressing parking problems in the vicinity of the primary school.

9.3 Community Facilities and Employment

9.3.1 This policy seeks to prevent the unnecessary loss of valued local community facilities and to seek their improvement where possible. Such services and facilities are shown on Figure 46 above.

9.3.2 Awbridge Village Hall is a key facility which provides an excellent service to its residents. In addition to the main hall there is a playground (with a zip wire), trim trail, a playing field, outdoor table tennis, off-road bike track, basketball and sports pitches. There are also recycling facilities located within the hall car park.



Figure 48. Awbridge Village Hall[5]

9.3.3 It should also be noted that the Nature Reserve is seen by many as a key facility in the parish. As a privately-owned space which allows permissive use by residents, this could be rescinded at any time. It should be noted that residents wish to support the longevity of the reserve as it provides an excellent resource not only for biodiversity, but for the education of local people as well as a positive space for mental wellbeing.

All Saints Awbridge

9.3.4 All Saints Awbridge is not only a designated heritage asset but also a valuable community resource.

9.3.5 The church building requires repairs and improvements, as identified in the recent Quinquennial Architect's Inspection. This will include the replacement of ageing audio-visual, heating and lighting systems – all of which will enable significantly improved opportunities for wider community use.

9.3.6 These repair recommendations for community benefit come alongside a recent installation of a new car park – which has helped contribute to the reduction of congestion in Church Lane.

Policy A12 – Community Facilities

Development that would enhance the range of local retail services, recreation and other social amenities will be supported in principle, subject to compliance with other relevant development plan policies.

9.4 Small Scale Employment Uses

9.4.1 The policy also seeks to encourage proposals for new facilities, including new small business, commercial or service (Class E) uses that could be provide a local café or enhanced convenience store goods etc. The emphasis is on the creation of appropriate opportunities for this rural setting, which would not harm the quiet nature of the parish, its rural lanes, leafy sylvan appearance and the amenity of neighbouring residents.

9.4.2 Traffic generation is always a key concern and proposals should demonstrate how any adverse impacts will be adequately mitigated.

Policy A13 – Small Scale Employment Uses

Proposals for new or expanded small scale start up business units or similar uses, which are appropriate in terms of noise and air pollution, traffic generation, visual impact and design to a countryside setting will be supported.

[5] Awbridge Village Hall. (2025) *Awbridge Village Hall.* Accessed at: https://www.awbridgevillagehall.com/

10 Community Aspirations

10.1.1 The community aspirations in Awbridge Parish are shaped by a set of key priorities, as set out below, which reflect the collective values, aspirations, and needs of its residents.

List of Community Aspirations

- The Parish Council will continue to monitor speeding and accident data to highlight the current problems to Highways County Council (HCC).

- The Parish Council has identified various infrastructure schemes that are important to the community. Funding for these improvements can be secured by a number of sources and where not part of a development proposal, the following will continue to be investigated and sought separately.
  - a wider network of footpaths that better connect the hamlets and allow safer access to the village hall and school;
  - a pedestrian crossing at the school;
  - traffic mitigation around the school at peak times;
  - a shop;
  - a café;
  - a community/drop-in workspace;
  - communal vegetable gardens;
  - a permissive path between Romsey Road and Dunbridge hill adjacent to Saunders Lane;
  - transport and highways improvements along Romsey Road between the settlements of Awbridge and Kent's Oak;
  - transport and highways improvements along Saunders Lane leading into Kent's Oak; and
  - fibre broadband.

11 Glossary

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers). Including affordable housing for rent, discounted market sales housing and other affordable routes to home ownership.

Ancient woodland: an area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

Best and most versatile agricultural land: land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-land-assess-proposals-fordevelopment/guide-to-assessing-development-proposals-on-agricultural-land#alc

Brownfield land: see previously developed land (PDL).

Conservation (for heritage policy): the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Design code: a set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code should build upon a design vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area.

Design guide: a document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice.

Designated heritage asset: a world heritage site, scheduled monument, listed building, protected wreck site, registered park and garden, registered battlefield or conservation area designated under the relevant legislation.

Development plan: is defined in Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and includes adopted Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force.

Neighbourhood Plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan, unless the local planning authority decides that the Neighbourhood Plan should not be made.

Environmental impact assessment (EIA): a procedure to be followed for certain types of project to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.

Essential local workers: public sector employees who provide frontline services in areas including health, education and community safety, such as NHS staff, teachers, police, firefighters and military personnel, social care and childcare workers.

Existing dwelling: see original dwelling.

Green and blue infrastructure (GI): a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces (waterways and bodies of water) and other natural features, urban and rural, which are capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities as well as prosperity.

Habitats site: any site which would be included within the definition at Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites.

Heritage asset: a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

International, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity: all international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

Landscape character: a distinct pattern or combination of elements that occur consistently in parts of the landscape.

Landscape quality: the term used to indicate value based on character, condition and aesthetic appeal.

Local housing need: the number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance.

Local Green Space (LGS): a designation providing special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities and close to the community it serves. The spaces are considered demonstrably special to the local community. Designating a green area as Local Green Space would give it protection consistent with that of Green Belt, but otherwise there are no new restrictions or obligations on landowners.

Local planning authority (LPA): the public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area.

Major development: means development involving any one or more of the following -

a) the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits;

b) waste development;

c) the provision of dwelling houses where –

   i) the number of dwelling houses to be provided is 10 or more; or

   ii) the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known whether the development falls within sub-paragraph (c)(i);

d) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or

e) development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): the revised National Planning Policy Framework sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG): The National Planning Practice Guidance adds further context to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and it is intended that the two documents should be read together. It is an online resource which is continually updated.

Original dwelling (for the purposes of extensions and replacement dwellings):

- The existing dwelling means the dwelling as it existed on 1 July 1948, or as the dwelling was originally built or legally established, if the residential use postdates 1 July 1948.
- References to a dwelling with a gross internal floor space of 100 sq. metres is as it existed on 1 July 1948, or as the dwelling was originally built or legally established, if the residential use post-dates 1 July 1948.
- The floorspace of original, existing and small dwellings will be measured as the total internal habitable floorspace of the dwelling but will not include floorspace within conservatories attached outbuildings and detached outbuildings (irrespective of whether the outbuilding's current use is as habitable floorspace).
- The floorspace of proposed extensions will include conservatories and attached outbuildings and any habitable floorspace provided within a detached outbuilding.
- A conservatory is defined as having not less than three-quarters of the area of its roof and not less than one-half of the area of its external walls made of clear or translucent material.

Neighbourhood Plan (NP or NDP): a plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA): the Local Planning Authority for the majority of the parish.

New Forest National Park Local Plan (NFNPLP) 2016 – 2036: the primary planning policy document for the New Forest National Park, guiding development and land use until 2036.

Non-strategic policies: policies contained in a Neighbourhood Plan, or policies in a local plan that are not strategic.

Nutrient neutrality: *'a means of ensuring that development does not add to existing nutrient burdens [to the surrounding water environment] and this provides certainty that the whole of the scheme is deliverable in line with the requirements of Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017'.*

There are three stages to calculating the Nutrient Neutrality for a proposed development:

1. Calculate total nitrogen load from development wastewater.
2. Adjust nitrogen load to account for existing nitrogen from current land use.
3. Adjust nitrogen load to account for land uses with the proposed development.

Older people: people over or approaching retirement age (although planning conditions often relate to those over 55), including the active and newly retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can

encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

Planning condition: a condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Planning obligation (can be known as a S106 Agreement): a legal agreement entered into under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Previously developed land (PDL): land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes:

- land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings;
- land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures;
- land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and
- land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

Priority habitats and species: species and habitats of principal importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Ramsar sites: wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

Renewable and low carbon energy: refers to energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Rural exception sites: small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

Setting of a heritage asset: the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Significance (for heritage policy): the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC): areas defined by Regulation 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been given special protection as important conservation sites.

Special Protection Areas (SPA): areas classified under regulation 15 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds.