

Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031

Basic Conditions Statement



Looking towards the South Downs

Published by Woodmancote Parish Council under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

June 2016

1.Introduction

1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Woodmancote Parish Council ("the Parish Council") to accompany its submission to the local planning authority, Horsham District Council ("the District Council"), of the Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Plan ("the Neighbourhood Plan") under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 ("the Regulations").

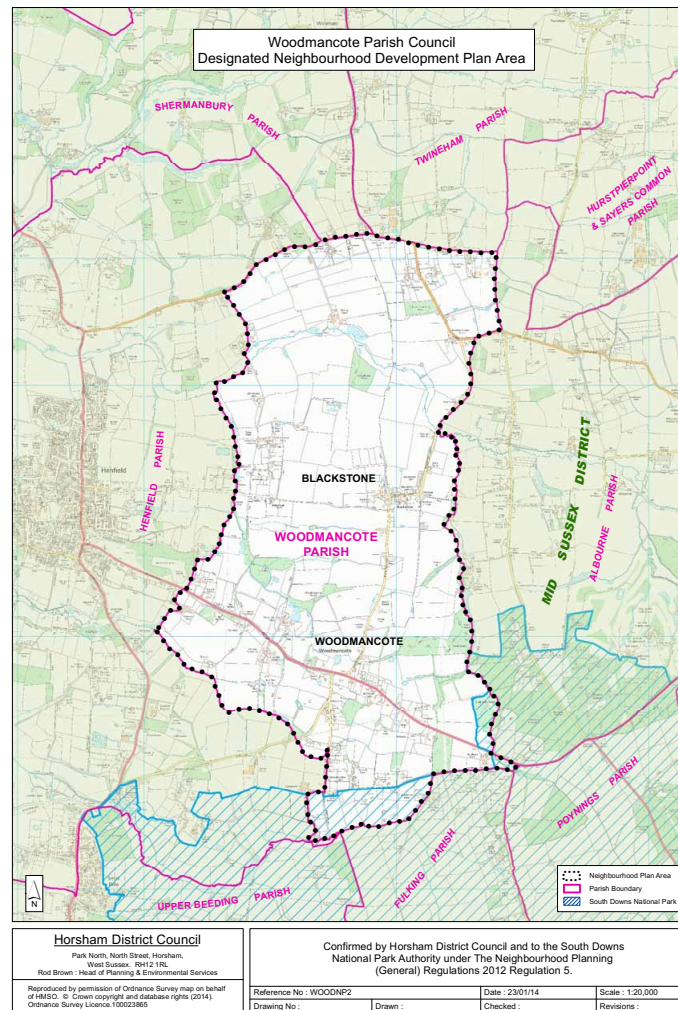
1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Parish Council, a qualifying body, for the Neighbourhood Area covering the whole of the Parish of Woodmancote, as designated by the District Council on 23 January 2014 (see Plan A overleaf). As part of the designated area falls within the South Downs National Park, that part of the area was also designated by the Park Authority for this purpose and designation was confirmed on 17 February 2014. The Park Authority has agreed that the District Council will be responsible for arranging the examination and referendum of the neighbourhood plan.

1.3 The policies described in the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area. The plan period of the Neighbourhood Plan is from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2031 and it does not contain policies relating to 'excluded development', as defined by and in accordance with, the Regulations.

1.4 The Statement addresses each of the four 'basic conditions' required of the Regulations and explains how the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act.

1.5 The Regulations state that a Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the basic conditions if:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood development plan,
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,
- the making of the neighbourhood development 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 neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.



PLAN A: The Designated Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Area

2. Background

2.1 The Parish Council commenced preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan in December 2013. The key drivers of that decision was to enable residents of the parish to influence the future of the parish and to ensure that local planning policies were robust enough to protect the character of the parish whilst encouraging and supporting modest development proposals which would not undermine this character nor the quality of life of local people. The Parish Council also wishes to have greater influence over local development issues and to promote the sustainable development of the parish.

2.2 A Steering Group was formed in October 2014 comprising parish councillors and members of the local community and the group was delegated authority by the Parish Council to make day-to-day decisions on the Neighbourhood Plan. However, as qualifying body, the Parish Council approved the publication of:

- the Community Evidence Report of July 2015
- the Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan of February 2016
- the Submission Neighbourhood Plan of June 2016

2.3 The Parish Council has worked closely with officers of Horsham District Council during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. The positioning of the Neighbourhood Plan in respect of the development plan has been challenging. The new Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) was adopted on 19 November 2015, during the advanced stages of production of the evidence base for the Pre-Submission Plan, and its adoption had consequences for the neighbourhood plans' initial intention to allocate a small number of sites for housing within the parish.

2.4 Following advice from HDC, the draft pre-submission documentation and associated evidence base was reviewed to reflect the newly adopted strategic policy framework of the HDPF and specifically to ensure general conformity with Policy 3 which establishes the settlement hierarchy of the District and Policy 4 which supports settlement expansion based on this hierarchy. The housing strategy of the HDPF requires 1,500 new homes to be delivered over the plan period (2011-2031) throughout the Neighbourhood Plans in the district, the HDPF does not identify a number for each of the parishes but indicates an expected share of the housing number based on its settlement hierarchy.

2.5 Both policies are relevant to the response to housing by the WPNP given Woodmancote Parish only has 'unidentified settlements' in the hierarchy with no built up area boundaries and therefore the Parish is considered to be in the 'countryside' where development "will be more strictly controlled". This means there is no expectation on the WPNP to allocate sites for new

homes, notwithstanding the desire of the WPNP Steering Group to consider potential sites for low cost housing to meet local needs, and this is now reflected in a policy approach intended to support appropriate small scale windfall development.

2.6 The Neighbourhood Plan contains seven land use policies (in Section 5) and Policies and Inset Maps and non-statutory proposals (in Section 6) that are included for the completeness. The Parish Council has deliberately sought to focus policies on the key issues that matter to the local community and to avoid proposing policies that may duplicate national planning guidance and/or development plan policies that are already material considerations in determining future planning applications.

2.7 In making a clear distinction between land use planning policies and non-statutory proposals relevant to land use planning, the Neighbourhood Plan allows for the examination to focus on the requirement of the policies to meet the Basic Conditions but also allows the local community to see the Neighbourhood Plan in the round. In any event, the non-statutory proposals will each have a land use effect at some later point but cannot do so as part of the Neighbourhood Plan as they fall outside its scope.

3. Conformity with National Planning Policy

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is mindful of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in respect of formulating neighbourhood plans.

3.2 In overall terms, there are four NPPF paragraphs that provide general guidance on neighbourhood planning, to which the Neighbourhood Plan has directly responded:

Para 16

3.3 The Parish Council believes the Neighbourhood Plan is planning positively for future development in the parish given its rural character and that part of the parish lies within the South Downs National Park, and that the Plan is consistent with the provisions of the HDPF. The parish is very rural in character and remote from the larger populations of the district and the settlement of Blackstone is designated a Conservation Area, with a number of listed buildings. As the parish is designated as containing only 'unidentified settlements' in the district settlement hierarchy, there is no expectation of any major development within the parish. However, Policies 1 and 2 do allow for small infill development within suitable locations and on previously developed land. The plan also seeks to encourage high quality design and protect and enhance a community facility, employment uses and improve access to and enjoyment of the countryside for which the parish as a whole will benefit.

Para 183

3.4 The Neighbourhood Plan establishes a clear vision and objectives for the parish that reflect the views of the majority of the local community. It has sought to translate the objectives into a small number of meaningful planning policies to complement other development plan policies for managing development proposals.

Para 184

3.5 The Parish Council believes the Neighbourhood Plan, as is highlighted below, is in general conformity with all the relevant policies of the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015 and the provisions of the 2007 Horsham Core Strategy as they relate to the designated area within the South Downs National Park. It is considered to strike a positive balance between the physical and policy constraints of the Parish and the desire to meet local housing need.

Para 185

3.6 The Neighbourhood Plan avoids duplicating development plan policies by focusing on policies that translate the general requirements of the development plan into a Woodmancote Parish context. Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan should be easily considered alongside the development plan and any other material considerations in determining planning applications.

3.7 Set out in Table A below, is a brief summary of how each policy conforms to the NPPF. The particular paragraphs referred to in the table are those considered the most relevant to each policy but are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible relevant paragraphs.

Table A: Neighbourhood Plan & NPPF Conformity Summary

Policy No.	Policy Title	NPPF Para	Commentary
1	A Spatial Plan for the Parish	15, 50, 55, 110, 111, 115	<p>This policy establishes the spatial strategy for directing future development proposals in the parish as clarified in the supporting text to the policy. This primarily relates to the support for modest windfall proposals that can be accommodated without undermining the quality and character of the Parish or those parts of the Parish that lie within the South Downs National Park or its setting. It reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development and will guide how development will be delivered over the plan period in line with paragraph 15, 50 and 55 of the NPPF.</p> <p>The Parish Council has chosen not to attempt to define any built up areas on the Policies Map given the unclassified status of settlements within the Parish, principally Blackstone. The policy balances modest housing growth with the provisions of para 110 of the NPPF in respect of preparing a plan to meet the development needs and at the same time minimising detrimental effects to the natural environment through providing for infill development proposals.</p>
2	Housing Windfall Sites	28, 50, 55, 58,	This policy takes positive approach to rural development in line with para. 28 and is consistent with para. 50 in contributing to the supply of a mix of new homes to meet local needs and para. 58 in requiring to respond to the rural character of the parish. This will enhance and maintain the vitality of the rural community and further avoid the delivery of isolated homes in the countryside. In these respects, the policy is in line with para. 55.
3	Design	58, 115, 162	This policy accords with para. 58 of the NPPF in requiring the design of all development proposals to reflect the local character and countryside of the Parish and para. 115 in respect of its landscape qualities. The policy also provides consistency with para. 162 of the NPPF.
4	Community Facilities	28, 70	This policy accords with paras 28 and 70 of the NPPF by supporting the use of the Parish Hall through proposals that further this objective, including the partial or complete redevelopment of the building to maintain should this be necessary to improve its viability and to maintain it as a valued community asset.

5	Local Employment	28	This policy is consistent with para. 28 of the NPPF in supporting rural economic development opportunities and the expansion of local businesses in support of the wider rural economy.
6	'Green Links' throughout the Parish	35, 73, 114	The policy supports the formation and maintenance of a green infrastructure network as promoted by para 114 of the NPPF and in supporting pedestrian access to, and enjoyment of, the countryside. In these respects it is consistent with paras. 73 and 35.
7	Broadband	43	This policy accords with Para 43 of the NPPF in supporting the expansion of electronic communications networks across this rural Parish to improve accessibility to super-fast broadband services for local residents and businesses.

4. Contribution to Achieving Sustainable Development

4.1 The District Council considered that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was not required for the Neighbourhood Plan as it considered the policies were unlikely to have significant environmental effects, as defined by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

4.2 In its formal screening opinion of 27 January 2016, the District Council confirmed that on the basis that the neighbourhood plan will not allocate land for development then no formal Strategic Environmental Assessment will be required. For more details on the SEA opinion please refer to the HDC Screening Letter dated 27 January 2016 and correspondence from Natural England accompanying the letter dated 25th January 2016; copies of which accompany the submission documentation.

4.3 However, the basic condition of 'contributing to the achievement of sustainable development' requires a broader scope of assessment to embrace social and economic, as well as environment, objectives. For completeness, therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been analysed and a summary is contained in Table B below.

4.4 It is clear that the Neighbourhood Plan, in its own modest way, will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. This outcome may be inevitable for Neighbourhood Plans prepared in similar planning policy circumstances. If local communities are to back land-use proposals in this type of location, to the extent they will turn out to vote at a referendum, then they will expect that the environmental assets of the parish will be protected from inappropriate development. In any event, the planning policy context is such that to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan, the Neighbourhood Plan must acknowledge those environmental constraints.

Table B: Neighbourhood Plan & Sustainable Development Summary

No.	Policy Title	Soc.	Eco.	Env.	Commentary
1	A Spatial Plan for the Parish	+	+	+	This policy has modest social and economic benefits in providing for small infill housing development and supporting the expansion of existing business uses within the parish. In confining development in this way, the policy will protect the essential rural character of the parish and its landscape setting.
2	Housing Windfall Sites	+	0	+	This policy has positive social and environmental benefits in seeking to control the location of development to infill and previously developed land in order to protect the parish's essential open character.
3	Design	+	0	+	This policy has positive social and environmental benefits in seeking to control the design of new housing proposals and for proposals to have regard to the characteristics of the surrounding area and buildings. In doing so, it will maintain the strong local community identity and enjoyment of living in a charming parish as well as ensure that heritage assets are not harmed by inappropriate development.
4	Community Facilities	+	0	0	This policy has a positive social benefit in retaining and supporting the continued viability of the Parish Hall for the use and enjoyment of the local community.
5	Local Employment	+	+	0	This policy has positive economic and social benefits in supporting local employment and in encouraging new local employment through the expansion of existing business premises
6	'Green Links' throughout the Parish	+	+	+	This policy has positive social, health and environmental benefits by improving pedestrian access throughout the parish and economic benefits by supporting access to the countryside and National Park for residents and visitors.
7	Broadband	+	+	0	This policy has positive social and economic benefits in supporting access to high-speed broadband services to improve local business efficiency and enable residents to better access other services available on-line.

Key: + positive 0 neutral - negative

5. General Conformity with the Development Plan

5.1 The Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Plan (WPNP) has been prepared to ensure its general conformity with the development plan for Horsham District Council and the South Downs National Park. The current development plans of relevance to the WPNP comprise the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework (November 2015) for all those areas that do not lie within the South Downs National Park, and the saved policies of the adopted Horsham District Core Strategy 2007 for land that lies within the South Downs National Park.

5.2 The analysis in Table C below summarises the conformity of the WPNP with the Horsham District Planning Framework, and the saved policies of the Horsham Core Strategy 2007 as they relate to the land that lies within the South Downs National Park.

Table C: Neighbourhood Plan & Development Plan Conformity Summary		
No.	Policy Title & Refs	Commentary
1	A Spatial Plan for the Parish 2007 Core Strategy: CP5, CP8 HDPF: 3, 4, 16, 26	<p>This policy conforms with the settlement hierarchy, which defines Woodmancote Parish as an unclassified settlement with no built up area boundaries in line with Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy and Policy 3 of the Horsham District Planning Framework which established the new settlement hierarchy. It is also in line with Policy CP8 in respect of the small scale greenfield sites provision to meet identified local needs and support the gradual evolution of the Parish. It further protects the qualities of the Blackstone Conservation Area and countryside and its unique and special setting. The policy also conforms with Policy 4 of the HDPF which allows for expansion of settlements outside of defined built up area boundaries and infilling with a focus on brownfield land as long as proposals are provided for in a Neighbourhood Plan, amongst other requirements.</p> <p>The policy is in line with the Policy 16 in respect of proposing a mix of different housing types depending on the established character and density of the neighbourhood and the viability of the scheme. The policy proposes development outside recognised built-up area boundaries where the development enables the sustainable development of the rural area and where it enhances the key characteristics and is therefore in conformity with Policy 26 of the HDPF.</p>

2	<p>Housing Windfall Sites</p> <p>2007 Core Strategy: CP8</p> <p>HDPF: 4, 16, 25, 32</p>	<p>The policy supports limited infill development on small scale greenfield sites in line with Policy CP8 and on previously developed land and where it meets the rural community needs of the parish and maintains the quality and character of the area.</p> <p>The policy requires infill housing schemes to be of high quality and to contribute to the sense of place through providing housing that is well designed, attractive and appropriately contained in line with HDPF Policy 4. Further, Policy 16 of the HDPF requires an appropriate mix of different housing types depending on the established character of the area and the viability of the scheme. The policy sets out a number of development principles intended to mitigate any negative effects on landscape character and the built and historic environment. It also offers protection from inappropriate development to complement Policies 25 and 32.</p>
3	<p>Design</p> <p>2007 Core Strategy: CP3, 13</p> <p>HDPF: 30, 32, 33, 34 and 39</p>	<p>This policy requires all development proposals to be of high quality and to reflect the architectural and distinct character of the Parish. It also acknowledges that part of the Parish lies within the South Downs National Park and therefore the design of any proposals for housing development that accord with the countryside policies of the development plan must be appropriate to a National Park setting. It is therefore in line with policy CP3 of the 2007 Core Strategy and HDPF policies 30, 32, 33 and 34 through requiring development to accord with a series of distinctive development principles and Core Strategy policy CP13 and HDPF Policy 39 in terms of utility provision.</p>
4	<p>Community Facilities</p> <p>2007 Core Strategy: CP14</p> <p>HDPF: 42, 43</p>	<p>This policy supports proposals intended to secure the long term benefit of the Woodmancote Parish Hall that is important to the local community. This is in line with CP14 of the 2007 Core Strategy and Policies 42 and 43 of the HDPF.</p>
5	<p>Local Employment</p> <p>2007 Core Strategy: CP10, CP11, CP15</p> <p>HDPF: 7, 9, 10</p>	<p>This policy is intended to promote economic development in the parish subject to a series of key principles aimed at maintaining existing business uses and supporting proposals to intensify or extend existing employment Uses. In doing so it refines policy CP10. The policy also accords with Policy CP11 in making the exceptional case for the loss of employment land where there is little prospect of a more efficient business use and the location is proven to be unviable.</p> <p>The policy also complements the Rural Strategy set out in CP15 of the Core Strategy, in addition to Policies 7, 9 and 10 of the HDPF by establishing development principles that are specific to Woodmancote.</p>

6	'Green Links' throughout the Parish 2007 Core Strategy: CP19 HDPF: 11, 25, 26, 30, 31	This policy aims to enhance the network of footpaths and bridleways in line with CP19 of the 2007 Core Strategy. The policy complements HDPF Policy 11 Tourism and Cultural Facilities by encouraging a closer relationship with the surrounding countryside and the SDNP which in turn is intended to support tourism and recreational activities in the parish. It is also in line with the provisions of a number of complementary policies including Policy 25 'District Character and Natural Environment, Policy 26 Countryside Protection, Policy 30 Protected Landscapes and Policy 31 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity.
7	Broadband 2007 Core Strategy: CP3 HDPF: 32, 33, 37	This policy supports the improvement of access to superfast (fibre and copper based) broadband infrastructure and services across the very rural Parish. In doing so, the policy is supportive of above-ground installations requiring planning consent, provided they are sited and designed to accord with a rural location. This is in accordance with policies 32 and 37 of the HDPF and in terms of the design is in line with CP3 of the 2007 Core Strategy and policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF.

6. Compatibility with EU Legislation

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act. As set in paragraph 4.2, a screening opinion was issued by the District Council, which confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan would not have any significant environmental effects and that an SEA would not be required for the Neighbourhood Plan to be in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42.

6.2 Natural England confirmed the designated neighbourhood area is not in close proximity to any European designated nature sites and that there was no requirement to undertake a Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan under the EU Habitats Regulations.