

Agenda Item 8
Report PC22/23-10

Report to	Planning Committee
Date	13 October 2022
By	Director of Planning
Title of Report	Lewes Brooks Road, Planning Brief
Purpose of Report	To approve this draft Planning Brief for consultation and, subject to any necessary changes, to approve its use for development management purposes

Decision

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Approve this draft Planning Brief for consultation, subject to any comments of the Planning Committee being addressed (the wording of which is delegated to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee).**
 - 2. Agree to delegate authority to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee, to consider the results of the consultation, make any minor changes and then approve the Planning Brief for development management purposes as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. If major changes are required as a result of consultation, a further report will be presented to Planning Committee**
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Executive Summary

- A Planning Brief has been prepared for the Brooks Road area of Lewes to set out the approach to redevelopment in the area and guidance on key relevant issues, specifically; land use, design, climate change and movement and connectivity.
- The Planning Brief does not set new policy or allocate sites for development and should be read in conjunction with the adopted Development Plan for the area which comprises the South Downs Local Plan, the East Sussex Minerals & Waste Plan and the Lewes Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).
- Prior to publishing the Planning Brief, comments will be invited from interested parties during a 6 week consultation period. Final changes to the document will be made as necessary in response to the feedback received. Once published, the Planning Brief will be a material consideration in making planning decisions relating to the Brooks Road area.

I. Background

- I.I The Brooks Road area (**Appendix I**), is part of the Central area of Lewes, which is protected as a principal employment site under Policy SD35 of the South Downs Local Plan and identified on the Policies Map. This is the highest level of protection provided by the Local Plan for existing employment sites and requires the maximum period of marketing of eighteen months to support a change of use application. The supporting text to the policy

states that 'There are a small number of principal employment sites in Petersfield, Midhurst and Lewes, which are large-scale, good-quality employment sites providing jobs and services across a wide area. The National Park Authority supports the continued use of these sites for B Class employment and will resist development proposals for alternative commercial uses and housing.' Furthermore, Policy HC4 of the Lewes NDP protects all employment uses and premises in the town.

- 1.2 In recent years there have been several planning applications and enquiries for redevelopment within the area, including for mixed-use development. A Planning Brief (**Appendix 2**) has been prepared, in recognition that a level of change is happening in the area and to set out the approach to redevelopment and guidance on key relevant issues. This is a proactive way that the Local Planning Authority can influence development within the area and, once published, will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 1.3 The draft Planning Brief has been prepared through collaboration between SDNPA officers in Planning Policy, Planning Specialists, Development Management and the Thrive team. In gathering evidence and aspirations for the area, there has also been engagement with stakeholders, including a workshop attended by representatives from Lewes Town Council and East Sussex County Council.

2. Planning Brief – Brooks Road, Lewes

- 2.1 The Brooks Road area is a large mixed employment area of approximately 15 hectares, close to Lewes town centre. To the west are Tesco and Aldi supermarkets and Malling recreation ground adjacent to the River Ouse. There are residential areas to the north and east, with the Lewes Downs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) providing the backdrop to the east of the town.
- 2.2 The area comprises of a range of land uses including; employment (warehouse, storage & distribution), trade counters, offices, large format retail warehouses, Royal Mail sorting office, NHS fleet management & maintenance centre, some residential dwellings, a micro-brewery and assembly & leisure uses.
- 2.3 The draft Planning Brief is structured as follows:
 - Executive summary setting out the role of the Planning Brief, vision and key development principles.
 - Introduction to Brooks Road area covering the area's history, land uses and ownership, policy framework and relevant planning history.
 - The next section provides an overview of the landscape context, emphasising that all development is required to take a landscape-led approach to design
 - There follows four topic sections on the approach to redevelopment covering **land use, design, climate change, movement and connectivity**. Within each of these sections, challenges and opportunities are detailed, as well as key development principles and illustrative maps. Key views and vistas are shown in the appendix. Also in the appendices is an illustrative layout showing how the key principles of the brief will shape the design process. This is not a final proposal, but an interpretation of how key principles in the Brief inform layout design.
- 2.4 Overall the Planning Brief seeks to influence development proposals to achieve the following;
 - Enhanced employment provision
 - A liveable environment compatible with surrounding uses, including residential
 - Incorporate and restore a network of naturally functioning watercourses and drainage ditches
 - Retention of historic buildings and enhancement of their setting
 - Improved permeability and an appropriate walking and cycling environment

- Introduction of characteristic and multifunctional open spaces and vegetation in the public realm.

3. Next steps

- 3.1 Following consideration by Planning Committee, the Planning Brief will be subject to a 6 week consultation period. The consultation will invite feedback and comments from interested parties including Lewes Town Council and local land owners. The consultation will also be publicised on the SDNPA website. Following the consultation, final changes to the Planning Brief will be made as necessary, prior to publishing the Planning Brief. It will then be a material consideration in making planning decisions relating to the Brooks Road area, unless significant change required in which case a further report will be presented to Planning Committee

4. Other implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No, unless significant changes are required in which case a further report will be presented to Planning Committee
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	No – any work will be carried out internally
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	The Planning Brief identifies area-wide measures to adapt to climate change by improving the green and blue infrastructure and mitigation measures by improving walking and cycling provision to reduce car-trips.
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes - the draft Planning Brief supports improvements to the built environment to improve access for all. This will be considered further should planning applications come forward.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	The draft Planning Brief supports the orientation and layout of buildings to increase natural surveillance of public areas, in line with the principles of 'designing out crime'.
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy?	The draft Planning Brief supports and encourages sustainable design, helping us to live within environmental limits.

5. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
The Planning Brief is seen as too prescriptive and stalls development	Low	Medium	The draft Planning Brief does not impose substantial additional requirements on developers but rather makes it clear what the Authority expects to see in the development of the area. Setting this out at an early stage gives clarity to developers and should make the planning application process (including pre-application discussions) more efficient.
The Planning Brief is interpreted as a weakening of Local Plan policy protecting employment use in the area	Medium	High	The draft Planning Brief does not set new policy and is clear that it needs to be read in conjunction with the adopted Development Plan. Key relevant policies in the South Downs Local Plan and Lewes NDP are highlighted.

TIM SLANEY

Director of Planning

South Downs National Park Authority

Contact Officer: Amy Tyler-Jones – Lead Planning Policy Officer

Tel: 01730 819272

Email: amy.tyler-jones@southdowns.gov.uk

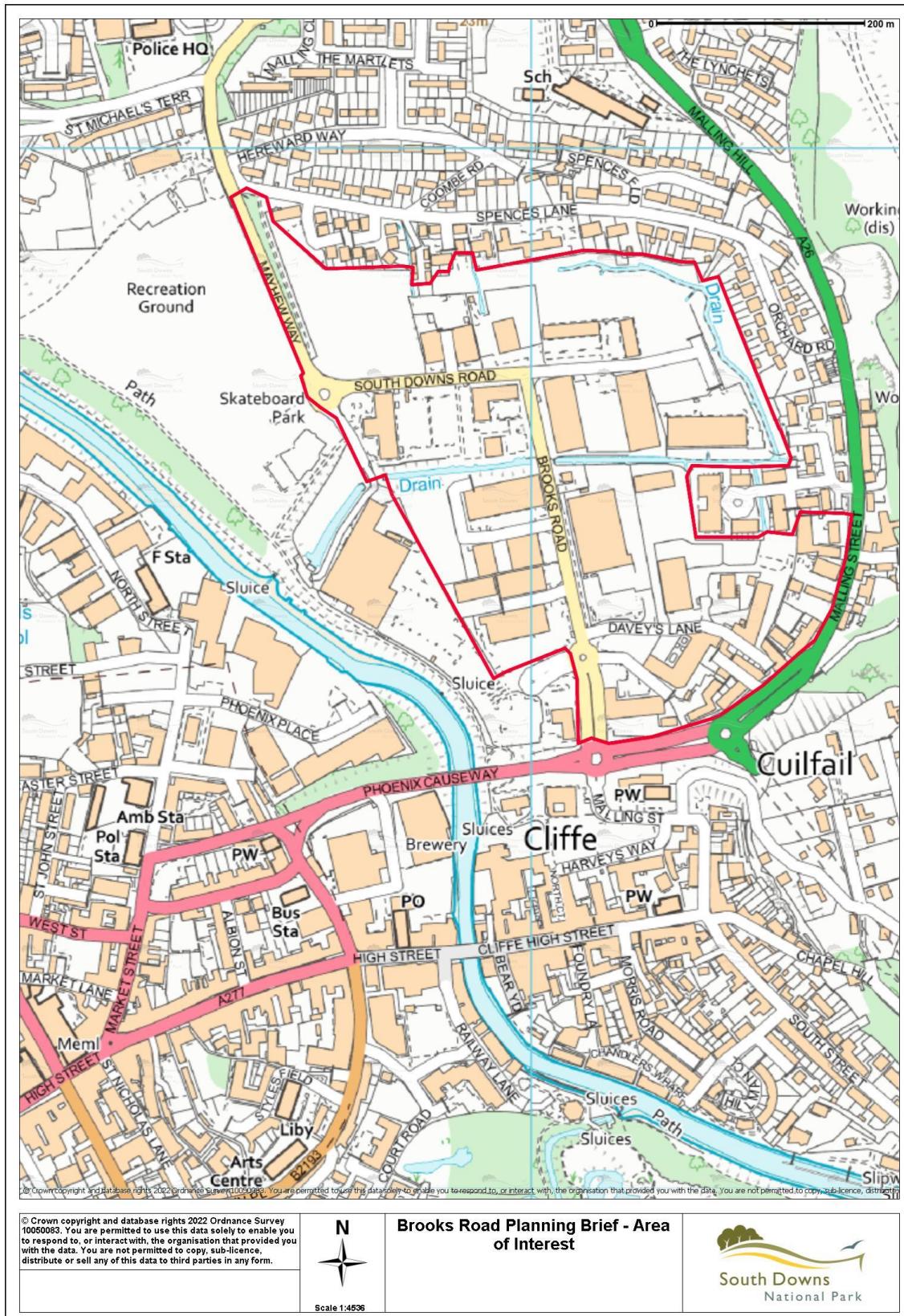
- Appendices
1. Map of Brooks Road area boundary
 2. Draft Brooks Road Planning Brief

SDNPA Consultees Director of Planning; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services,

External Consultees None

Background Documents [Lewes Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015-2033](#)

AGENDA ITEM 08 REPORT PC22/23-10 APPENDIX I



Created by Amy Tyler-Jones on 22 March 2022



Brooks Road, Lewes

Planning Brief

October 2022

South Downs Local Plan

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Executive Summary

About this Planning Brief

The Brooks Road area, is part of the Central area of Lewes, which is protected as a principal employment site under Policy SD35 of the South Downs Local Plan and identified on the Policies Map. This is the highest level of protection provided by the Local Plan for existing employment sites and requires the maximum period of marketing of eighteen months to support a change of use application. The supporting text to the policy states that ‘There are a small number of principal employment sites in Petersfield, Midhurst and Lewes, which are large-scale, good-quality employment sites providing jobs and services across a wide area. The National Park Authority supports the continued use of these sites for B Class employment and will resist development proposals for alternative commercial uses and housing.’ Furthermore, Policy HC4 of the Lewes Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) protects all employment uses and premises in the town.

In recent years there have been several planning applications and enquiries for sites within the Brooks Road area for redevelopment, including mixed-use development. In response, the SDNPA have prepared this Planning Brief in recognition that a level of change is happening in the area. The purposes of the planning brief are to:

- Bring together evidence & aspirations for the Brooks Road area
- Understand the challenges and opportunities for development
- Set out the approach to redevelopment and guidance on key issues relevant to the area

The planning brief does not set new policy or allocate sites for development. It should be read in conjunction with the adopted Development Plan for the area which comprises the South Downs Local Plan, the East Sussex Minerals & Waste Plan and the Lewes Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Planning Brief has been prepared following an analysis of evidence, site visits and a stakeholder workshop to gather views and aspirations for the Brooks Road area.

This draft Planning Brief was agreed for public consultation by SDNPA Planning Committee on the 13 October 2022. The consultation period runs from **XX to XX**. Following the consultation, the document will be revised as necessary and published. If major changes are required then the Planning Brief will go back to Planning Committee. When approved by Committee it will then be a material consideration in making planning decisions relating to the Brooks Road area.

Planning Brief Vision

Brooks Road will be an area that retains its role as a functioning and thriving employment centre with buildings and spaces between that are flexible, functional and of high environmental standards. Buildings will be fit for future needs and efficient in their use of resources and energy. Spaces between buildings will become an environment substantially enhanced for all, providing multiple benefits for climate change resilience, biodiversity, connectivity and public amenity. The Brooks Road area will also contribute towards thriving, prosperous and resilient communities in Lewes, and will be well integrated within and connected to the surrounding town.

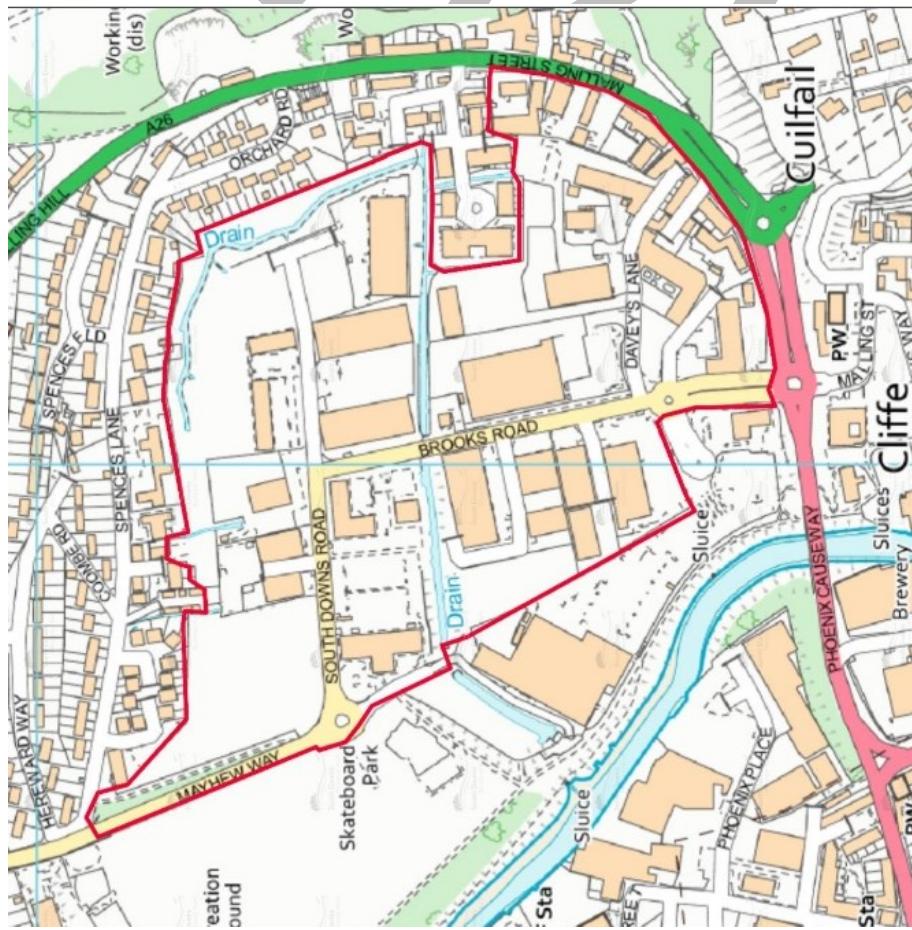
The supporting text for Policy HC4: The Working Town of the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan is relevant to the vision for the Planning Brief:

'There is strong support for Lewes to maintain its distinctive identity and for the town to avoid becoming a clone of many other historic towns across the nation without a manufacturing base. Lewes should create spaces for the future economy and lead the way in supporting applications for new start-up businesses and retaining existing small businesses throughout the town.'

Key development principles

- Enhanced employment provision
- A liveable environment compatible with surrounding uses, including residential
- Incorporate and restore a network of naturally functioning watercourses and drainage ditches
- Retention of historic buildings and enhancement of their setting
- Improved permeability and an appropriate walking and cycling environment
- Introduction of characteristic and multifunctional open spaces and vegetation in the public realm.

Introducing the Brooks Road Area



The Brooks Road area is a large mixed employment area close to Lewes Town Centre, with residential areas to the north and east. To the west of the area are Tesco and Aldi supermarkets and Malling recreation ground which is adjacent to the River Ouse. Most of the area is a principal employment site safeguarded under Policy SD35 of the Local Plan. Brooks Road area is the second largest employment site in the National Park and one of only four protected principal employment sites providing large scale and good quality employment buildings benefitting, crucially, from infrastructure, both digital and road, that support jobs and services across a wide area. The existing green and blue infrastructure of the area, which is currently under-valued, has the potential to support natural processes and help adapt to climate change.



Area History

Historically the Brooks area was the natural flood plain of the River Ouse, an area of wet grassland intersected by a series of drainage ditches, some of which are still apparent today. The South East corner of the area was the historical focus of the brewing industry in Lewes with the Southdown brewery on Thomas Street and the Malthouse on Davey's Lane. The area today consists of modern warehouses, retail units and office development, which largely date from the 1970's.

Area land uses & ownership

The area comprises the following land uses:

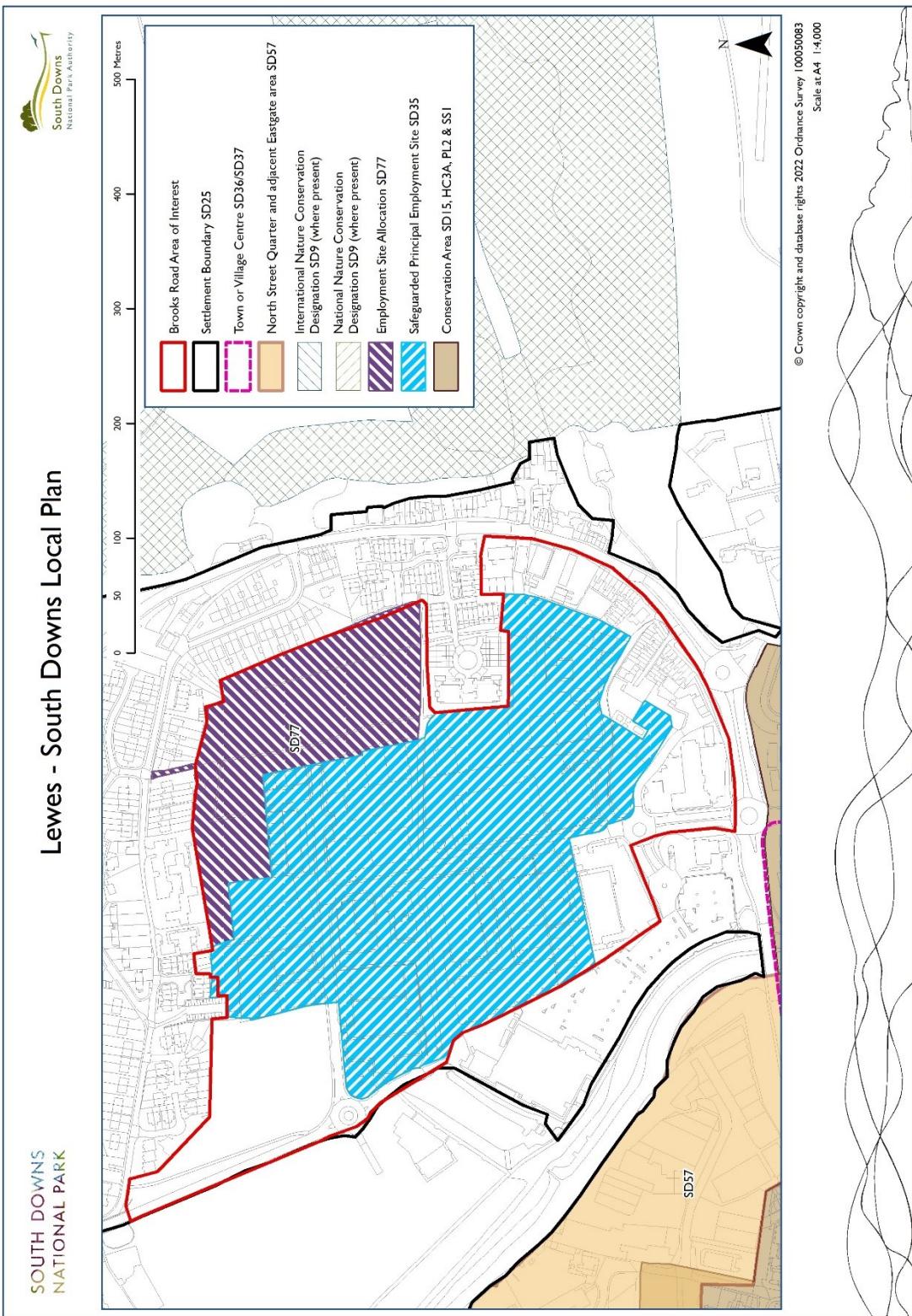
- Employment – comprising warehouse, storage & distribution e.g. Harvey's depot
 - Trade counters – plumbing merchants, hardware & furniture stores
 - Offices e.g. Sackville House & Caburn House
 - Large format retail warehouses e.g. Majestic Wine, Homebase
 - Royal Mail sorting office
 - NHS fleet management & maintenance centre
 - Recent residential permissions e.g. 41 dwellings at 6-8 Brooks Road, 79 dwellings at South Downs Road and four Passive House standard homes at land off Davey's Lane
 - Brewery & taproom (Davey's Lane)
 - Assembly & leisure (Kings Church, Brooks Road)
- There is some public sector land ownership in the area (East Sussex County Council (ESCC), Lewes District Council (LDC), NHS, Royal Mail delivery office.

Policy Framework

The following documents provide the policy framework for the Brooks Road area, any development proposal coming forward will need to demonstrate how it complies with this policy. Whilst these documents should be read as a whole, key policies and allocations relevant to the area are highlighted below:

South Downs Local Plan

- Core of area is safeguarded principal employment site (Policy SD35)
- Malling Brooks employment site allocation (Policy SD77)
- East of the area is Lewes Downs Site of Special Scientific Interest (Policy SD9)
- West of the area is North Street Quarter and Adjacent Eastgate Area strategic development sites allocated for a mixed us redevelopment (Policy SD57)
- South West of area is the Town Centre boundary (Policy SD36/SD37)
- South of the area is the Lewes Conservation Area (Policy SD15)

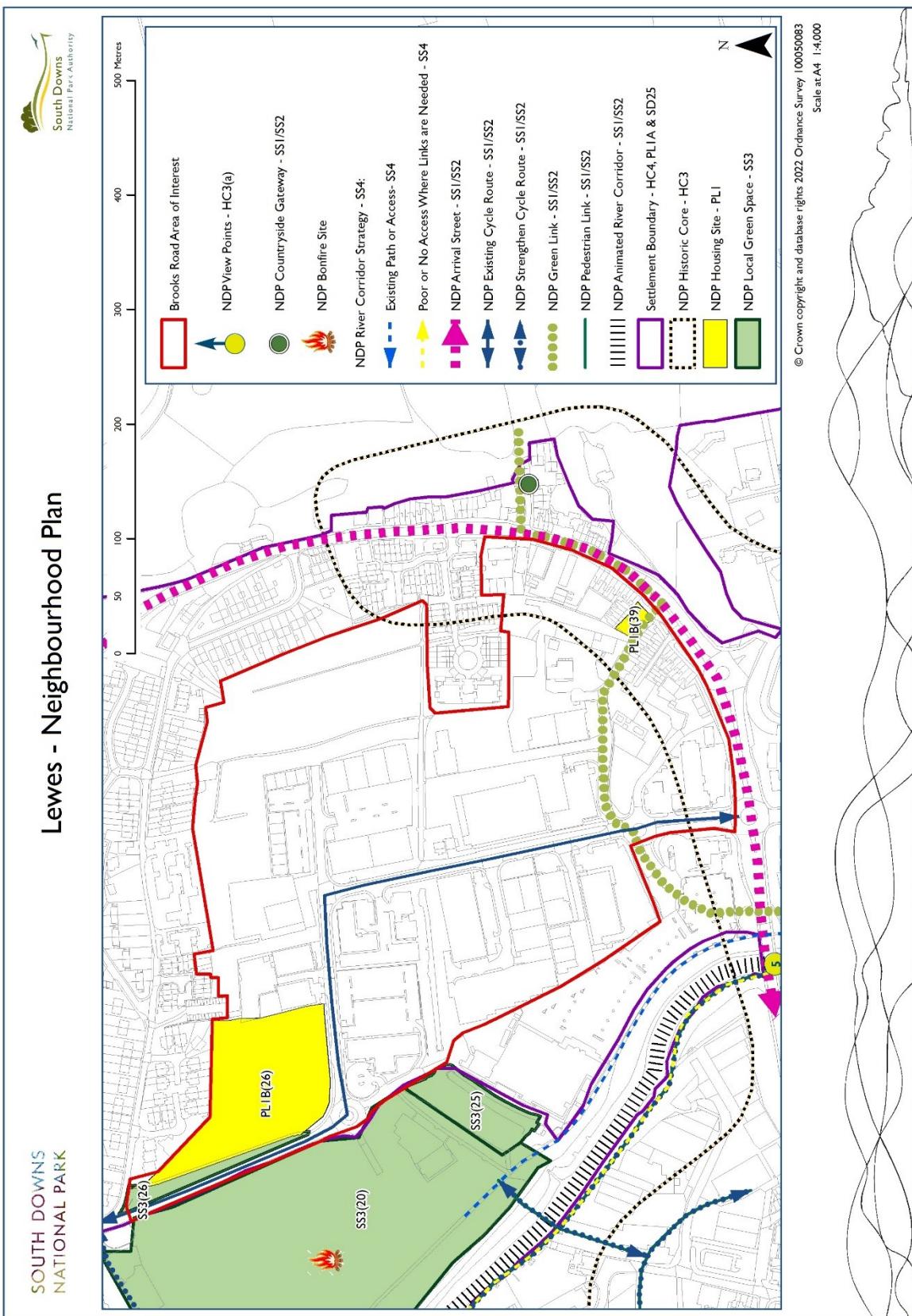


Lewes Neighbourhood Development Plan

- Policy HC4 The Working Town
- Existing cycle network along Brooks Road, South Downs Road & Mayhew Way (Policy SS1/SS2)
- Proposed enhanced green link from Malling Street to Phoenix Causeway (Policy SS1/SS2)
- Historic core of Lewes – southern section of Malling Street & Phoenix Causeway (Policy HC3a)
- Housing and office allocation at South Downs Road (PLIB26)
- To the east – Countryside Gateway (Policy SS1/SS2), Arrival Street (Policy SS1/SS2) and Locally Important Viewpoint (Policy HC3a)
- To the west – River Corridor Strategy (Policy SS4), Malling Recreation Ground – Local Green Space & Waterloo Bonfire site, Wetlands behind Tesco – Local Green Space (Policy SS3), Cycle Route (Policy SS1/SS2),
- To the south – locally important viewpoint to Harvey's Brewery (Policy HC3a)

In addition, there are several Neighbourhood area-wide policies which will be pertinent to proposals in the Brooks Road area, these include but are not limited to:

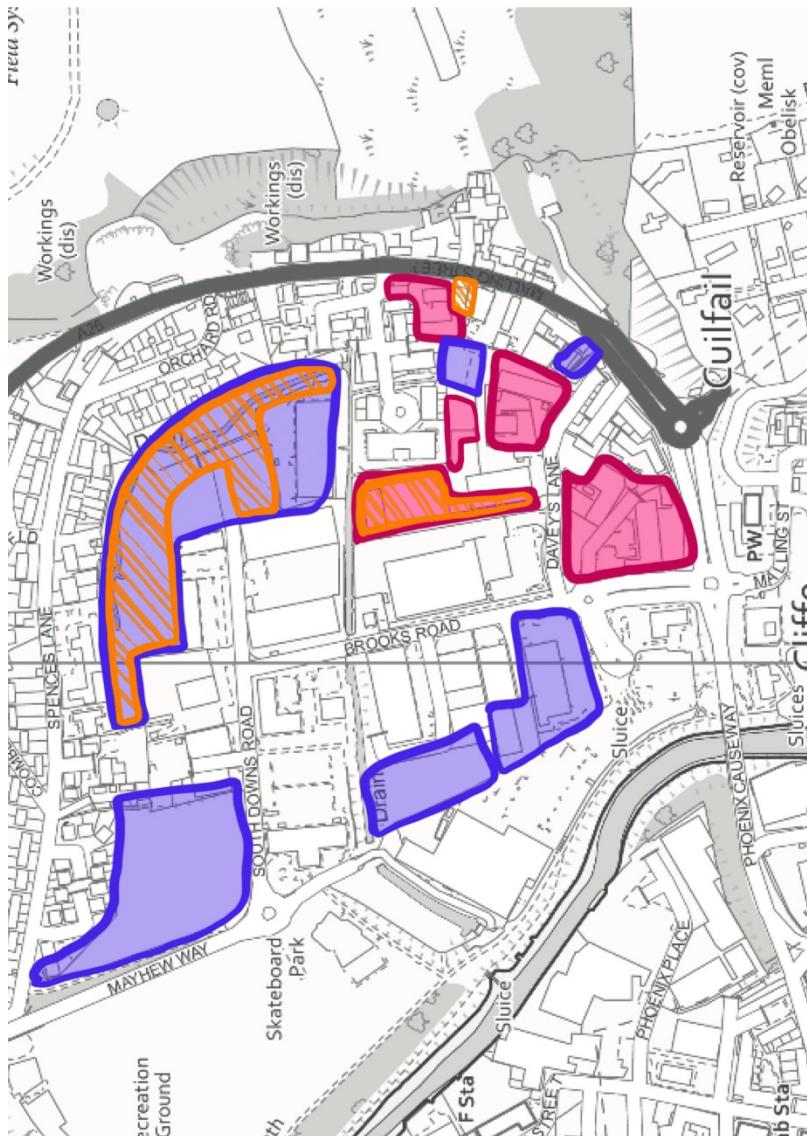
- Policy PLI A General Housing Strategy – including maximising the provision of Lewes Low Cost Housing
- Policy AMI Active Travel Networks
- Policy HC3 A Heritage Protection of Landscape and Townscape
- Policy LEI Natural Capital
- Policy PL3 Flood Resilience



Relevant Planning History

A number of sites have been the subject of planning decisions that have a bearing on future development in the Brooks Road area. There are also several applications in progress and a number of pre-application enquiries:

Address	Description	Reference	Status
Land at South Downs Road	79 dwellings and office space	SDNP/17/00387/FUL	Permission – under construction
Malling Brooks	7,040sqm employment floor space with long stay car park	LW/17/0342	Part implemented
Malling Brooks	Construction of three commercial buildings for light industrial or warehouse/trade counter use (Class E or B8).	SDNP/22/03451	Planning application in progress
Land at Units 6-8 Brooks Road	41 dwellings and office / light industrial floorspace across 13 ground floor business units	SDNP/17/03100/FUL	Permission – under construction
Aldi House, Brooks Road	Replacement supermarket and reconfigured car park	SDNP/18/05206/FUL	Permission
Land off Daveys Lane	4 dwelling houses	SDNP/18/01235/FUL	Permission – under construction
Lewes Working Mens Club, Malling Street	Change of use from club to 2 dwellings	SDNP/20/04725/FUL	Planning application in progress
The Mallings Business Centre , Malling Street	Amendments to the facade of Block A and B of the Mallings Business Centre, including new cladding, windows, roof covering and the creation of a new enclosed staircase to Block A.	SDNP/22/03189/FUL	Planning application in progress
Caffyns, Brooks Road	Proposal for assisted living and retirement living apartments	SDNP/17/03431/PRE	Pre-application enquiry
Land adjacent to Davey's Road	McDonalds restaurant and drive-through lane	SDNP/19/03583/PRE	Pre-application enquiry
The Malthouse, Davey's Lane	Mixed-use redevelopment with commercial space and 61 dwellings	SDNP/21/05639/PRE	Pre-application enquiry
Sig Roofing, Davey's Lane	Demolition of existing building and construction of three mixed-use buildings with 685m ² of commercial floorspace at ground floor level and 30 self-contained flats	SDNP/22/03867/PRE	Pre-application enquiry
Sig Roofing, Davey's Lane	42 dwellings and office space	SDNP/18/05183/PRE	Pre-application enquiry
Storage area, Sig Roofing, Daveys Lane	15 dwellings and ground floor commercial unit	SDNP/19/02642/PRE	Pre-application enquiry
The Malling Business Centre, Malling Street	Proposed changes of use of existing office space to provide dwellings	SDNP/21/03967/PA3O & SDNP/21/03899/PA3O	Pre-application enquiry



LEGEND: **Blue** (Planning permissions), **Pink** (Pre-application enquiries), **Orange** (Ongoing planning applications/enquiries)



Landscape Context

All development within the National Park is expected to conserve and enhance the landscape character in the National Park. This applies equally to the rural and built-up areas of the National Park. To achieve this, development is required to take a landscape-led approach to design, which means taking an evidence-based understanding of landscape (including buildings) to inform the design, scale and layout of proposals.

This Planning Brief provides an initial high level assessment of the landscape considerations for redevelopment within the Brooks Road area. Individual development proposals will be expected to undertake their own detailed evidence gathering and analysis to support any development scheme.

Location

- Area is located at the eastern edge of Lewes on the River Ouse floodplain and at the edge of Mount Caburn open downland (See [SDNP Landscape Character Assessment](#))

Geology & Soils

- Ouse Floodplain landscape character area
- Underlying river alluvium

Topography & Water

- The area forms part of the floodplain of the river Ouse.
- The area's context is formed by the river Ouse and the downland.
- The area itself is largely flat river plain with slightly higher ground within the west of the Planning Brief area
- Central watercourse bisecting area and smaller drainage ditches to north and south



OS 25 Inch 1841-1952, reproduced by permission of CC-BY-NC-SA overlaid aerial photography

Landscape elements

- **Settlement & Buildings:** Due to the area being flood plain, it has historically never been 'settled'. The land has in recent history been used for commercial development, large-scale low-rise buildings of poor quality, which bear little relationship to other elements of landscape.
- The pattern of (historic) **routes**, bear a strong relationship to the contours, running between the flood plain and the Downs. No routes ever existed within this site, but today routes have largely been imposed on the landscape with little acknowledgement of the landscape and the functions it performs.
- The **fieldscape** remains in part, perceptible at this site. Fields are marked by 'wet fences' - and ditches remain within this landscape in varied degrees of condition and acknowledgement from existing development. In the absence of roads and buildings (historically) this landscape is strongly characterised by the patterns of this surviving field system.
- The floodplain is typically not characterised by significant **tree cover**, but often trees as linear groups mark the break in contour between the floodplain and valley sides. Here trees have grown up incidentally, as land has fallen out of use, so whilst not strictly characteristic of this landscape they are likely to be important for other benefits.
- The **perceptual qualities** of the floodplain stem from the other elements - simple topography, open spaces and lack of significant vegetation and the simplicity which results from it, affording views and sense of space, and relationship to the river via views and characteristic vegetation. Clearly this has all been significantly undermined here. The visual connection with the downland setting is also critical to sense of place across Lewes and particularly here, which is interrupted today by some taller buildings. The downland is also within a relatively short walking distance.

Habitats

- Woodland and chalk grassland to the East at Lewes Downs Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Nearby areas of woodland
- Network of ditches provide wet and dry habitat
- Area is identified as habitat network enhancement zone 2 where the delivery of suitable green infrastructure can help counter the effects of habitat fragmentation.
- Lewes Railway Land Local Nature Reserve to the south is an example of floodplain habitat

People & Wildlife

- Malling Brooks area of scrubland and ditches
- Limited public access to watercourse currently
- Nearby access to Lewes Downs

Approach to redevelopment

The following sections of the planning brief address four key issues important to development proposals in the Brooks Road area. These are **land use, design, climate change and movement and connectivity**. These issues have been identified as important to the area through a review of policy and local evidence and through stakeholder engagement. For each key issue, challenges and opportunities are listed as well as a way forward in the form of key development principles.

Land use

Maintaining Lewes as a working town is highly important locally and for the wider National Park. The town has a rich history of both manufacturing and creative industry and there continues to be strong demand for industrial and creative employment space in Lewes. Most of the Brooks Road area is safeguarded for employment uses and retaining and making best use of areas like Brooks Road is critical as there is little scope to create new employment areas in the National Park given the landscape constraints.

There is also an acute affordable housing need in Lewes, and with limited opportunities to expand the town beyond the existing built-up area, it is imperative to make best use of land within the town. Redevelopment in the Brooks Road area could potentially repurpose the employment provision for future needs with residential development, which could create a sensitive mix of a living and working environment.



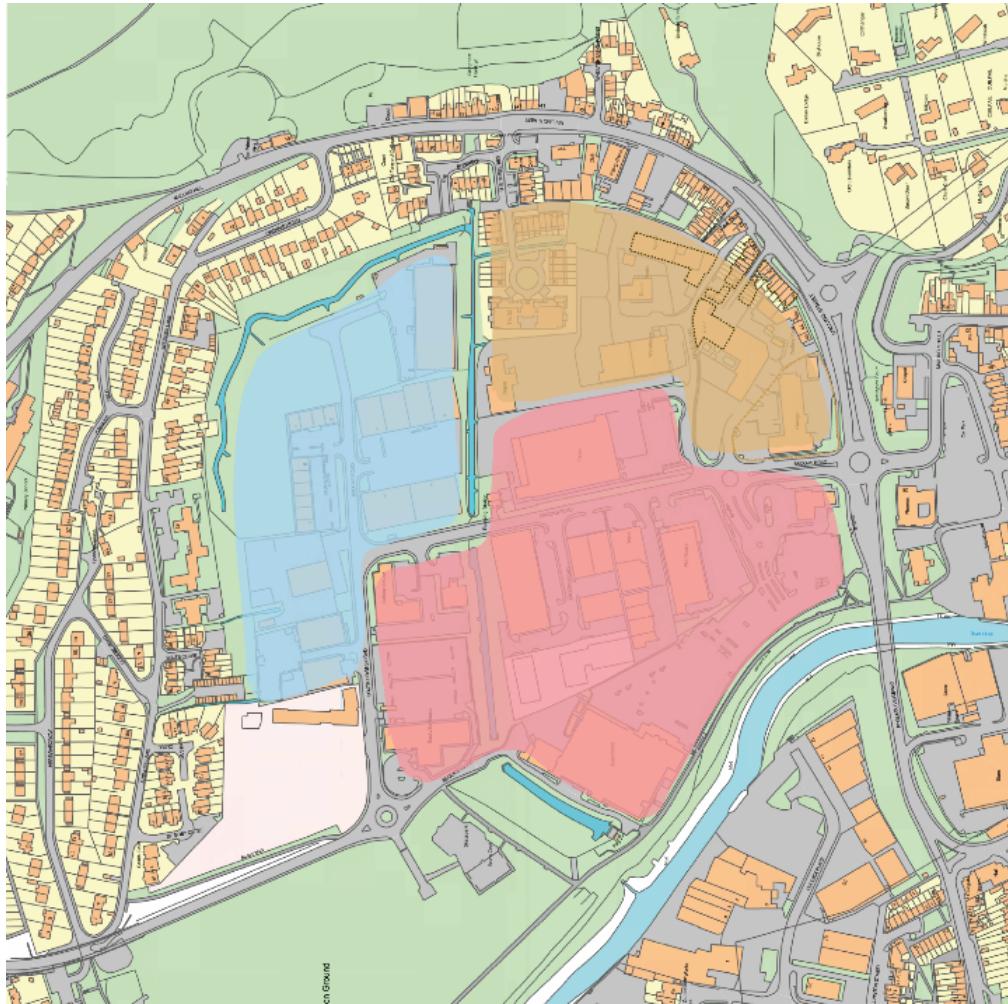
Challenges

- Neglected drainage infrastructure and flood risk
- Loss of jobs
- Reduction in job density to such an extent that the area is no longer the working core of the town
- Compatibility or otherwise of industrial / commercial activity with residential use
- Poor public realm designed around vehicle movement and little provision for walking or cycling



Opportunities

- Central location and close proximity to Lewes High Street and the River Ouse corridor
- Good transport links both by rail (railway station within walking / cycle distance) and road (A26 heading north and A27 to south of town)
- Underutilised land (large storage and car parking areas) as well as some vacant sites
- Manufacturing tradition of Lewes with some surviving references to the brewing heritage still present in the area
- Links to nearby universities and inward investment from Brighton economic area
- Shift since the pandemic to more local working and reduction in commuting
- Some increase in density could offer opportunity for vertical mix of uses



Way forward and key land use principles

1. Redevelopment which provides enhanced employment floorspace will be supported. New employment floorspace should meet the needs of the town; with the following uses encouraged (identified through engagement with Lewes District Council and Lewes Town Council);
 - Space for manufacturing and production
 - Affordable workspace & space for start-ups
 - Modern, flexible and energy efficient industrial warehouse
 - Creative studios or workshops
 - High-tech business space
 - Enhanced heritage assets with flexible employment space

Given the Lewes NDP emphasis on retaining a manufacturing base, and the tradition of craft and production in the town, the expansion of retail, trade-counter or storage and distribution uses are not generally supported. Nominal ground floor employment space provision such as parking spaces will not be acceptable.

2. Any proposed net loss in employment space will need to provide robust evidence that the existing building is no longer fit-for-purpose, complying with the requirements of SDLP Policy SD35 and Appendix 3 and Policy HC4 of the Lewes NDP;
3. Where residential use is included as part of a proposal, redevelopment will need to create a comfortable living environment, avoid conflicts with surrounding uses and amenities and maximise the provision of affordable homes including Lewes Low Cost Housing.

LEGEND: **Blue** (Core employment area) **Pink** (Mixed employment area including retail & distribution) **Light brown** (Mixed employment / residential)
Black dash (historic core) **Orange dash** (gateway / opportunity site)

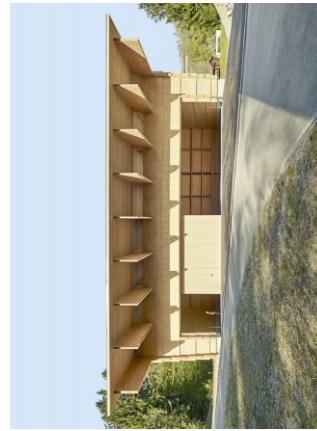
Design principles

The Brooks Road area has been developed for industrial and commercial uses, with infrastructure and highways organised around the needs of these activities. The legacy of this is an area with a poor and hostile public realm dominated by vehicles and neglected Green (includes blue) Infrastructure. This section considers the key design challenges and opportunities for the area and sets out guiding principles in regards to layout, scale & form, materials, heritage assets and the public realm.

A series of key views of the area and the surrounding downland have been identified as relevant in any visual impact assessment and must inform development proposals. **Appendix 1** identifies some key views of the area, but these are non-exhaustive.

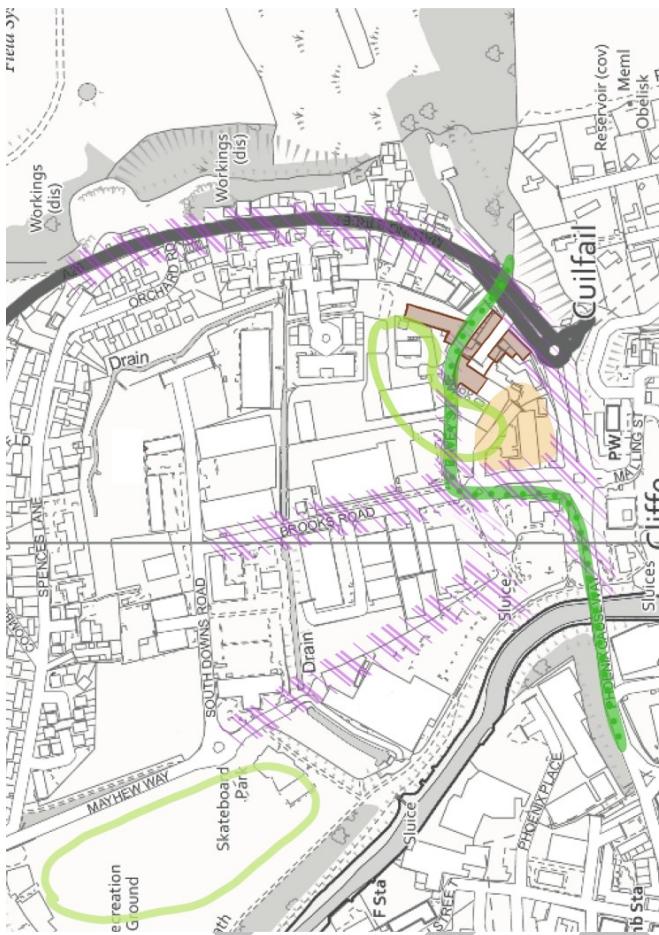
Challenges

- Water management
- Poor quality public realm for people
- Poor architectural quality, with some exceptions
- Lack of trees and vegetation
- Extensive areas of hard surfaces
- Lack of open spaces
- Relationship with and integration to existing development, in particular historic routes and buildings
- Limited space and narrow lanes
- Historic buildings (can also be an opportunity)
- Potential archaeology
- Potential land contamination



Opportunities

- There is scope for a more efficient use of land and compact development in this sustainable location
- Car free or low levels of parking provision if connectivity to the town centre is improved
- Enhance existing and design new views of the Downs and landmarks that contribute to a sense of place
- Contemporary architectural design
- Buildings and spaces that adapt to a variety of uses and activities
- Improved sense of safety through natural surveillance



- Increase street trees for microclimate regulation, amenity, biodiversity, water management and cleaner air
 - Reuse and recycle existing buildings and hardstanding materials (e.g. concrete and metal sheets)
 - Subdivide large plots and create finer urban grain better reflecting the character of the brooks and town
 - Create attractive streets and open spaces. Lively streets that are safe and support people interaction.
 - Repurposing water infrastructure for other benefits whilst restoring character and contributing to a positive, landscape-related sense of place.
 - Maximising the use of roof space for either solar panels or as green roofs providing water management, biodiversity and landscape amenity benefits.

LEGEND: **Dark green** (green corridor/link NDP), **Light green** (opportunity to enhance/create open spaces), **Purple trident** (key routes that would benefit from placemaking and overall public realm improvements), **Light brown** (gateway/key site area), **Dark brown** (heritage assets).

Way forward and key design principles

1. Layout design should positively respond to the historic ditch/brooks network as a key historic and landscape element in the landscape-led approach to design. These should influence the future layout of the area and be incorporated into the Landscape Strategy and ultimately into the public realm.
 2. Development proposals shall conserve and enhance existing views and vistas, including views of the Downs and sequence of views along routes (e.g. Davey's Lane). See **Appendix I**.
 3. Compact forms of development are welcome. Layouts should be efficient and avoid spaces without clear function.

Scale and Form

4. In some areas there may be scope to increase density, taking into account changes in topography across the area. Nevertheless, the maximum height of buildings shall be restricted by views and sympathetic relationship with neighbouring buildings and spaces, both in terms of amenity and townscape character. Particular consideration shall be given to the views in **Appendix 1**.
5. Proposals for buildings that are adaptable to changing needs and technologies, including alternative uses, are welcome and all development will need to be adaptable to climate change impacts including flooding, extreme rainfall events and overheating.
6. The scale and mass of building will be constrained by existing views and sequence of views along routes. Therefore, new buildings and spaces between buildings shall be designed to retain views and vistas of the Downs and key town landmarks. Opportunities to create new framed views through development shall be explored and maximised where possible which may include new landmark buildings and spaces.



Architectural appearance and materials

7. Contemporary designs are supported in principle, when complementing the existing town character and contributes to the special qualities of the area. Traditionally-inspired buildings are also supported. Regardless of contemporary or traditional, designs should enhance local character and standard building types and mediocre imitations/replications will not be supported.
8. Use of high quality traditional materials found in Lewes (flint, clay tiles, red bricks, etc.) is supported.
9. Contemporary materials are supported when they integrate well in the area and have a high sustainability credential (e.g. Timber as structural and cladding material).



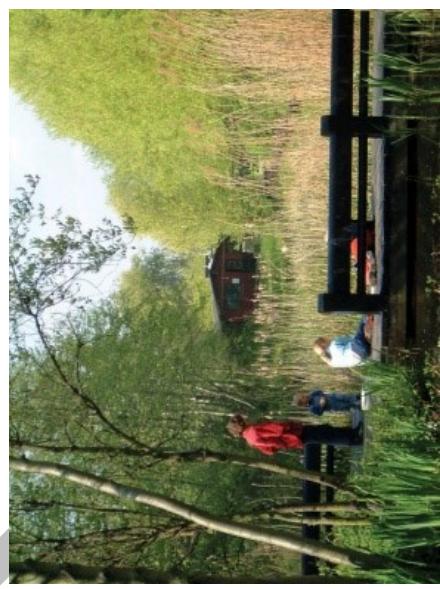
Heritage

10. Thomas Street and Davey's Lane are sensitive areas in heritage terms. The Malthouse (Davey's Lane), the Thomas Street terraces, the Old Brewery (Grade II Listed Building) (Aka Registered Offices of EO Culverwell) shall be retained.
11. The setting of Listed Buildings needs enhancement.
12. There is evidence suggesting potential World War II Allotments associated with the Dig for Victory campaign. If development takes place within the Planning Brief Area, this matter should be investigated and considered as a historic element in the landscape-led approach to design.

Public Realm

13. High quality public realm and open spaces shall be provided in support to all uses and should be guided by these principles:
- Contribute to a diversity of open spaces that support a variety of activities and a memorable sense of place.
 - Support a variety of uses (business, homes) and people (workers, residents and visitors) in the vicinity.
 - Improve water management (water quality and quantity), and being part of the Blue Infrastructure network.
 - Contribute to cleaner air and tranquillity, mitigating air and noise pollution from roads and existing uses.
 - Contribute to rich and varied biodiversity and integrate into the Green Infrastructure network.
 - Open spaces should be resilient to climate change, avoiding spaces that overheat.
 - Spaces should be safe without the need for additional security measures.
 - Spaces should be accessible, fit for purpose and encourage social interaction.

Climate Change



Most of the Planning Brief area falls within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3, where there is a risk of river flooding. There are also areas of localised surface water flood risk, especially to the west of Brooks Road. The area is not currently well adapted for climate change impacts (flooding & overheating) but there are opportunities to improve resilience to climate change by enhancing the local green infrastructure, primarily the network of drainage ditches and other measures including sustainable urban drainage, tree planting and green roofs. These measures will also create improvements for biodiversity as well as a more liveable and attractive environment for people working or living in the area.

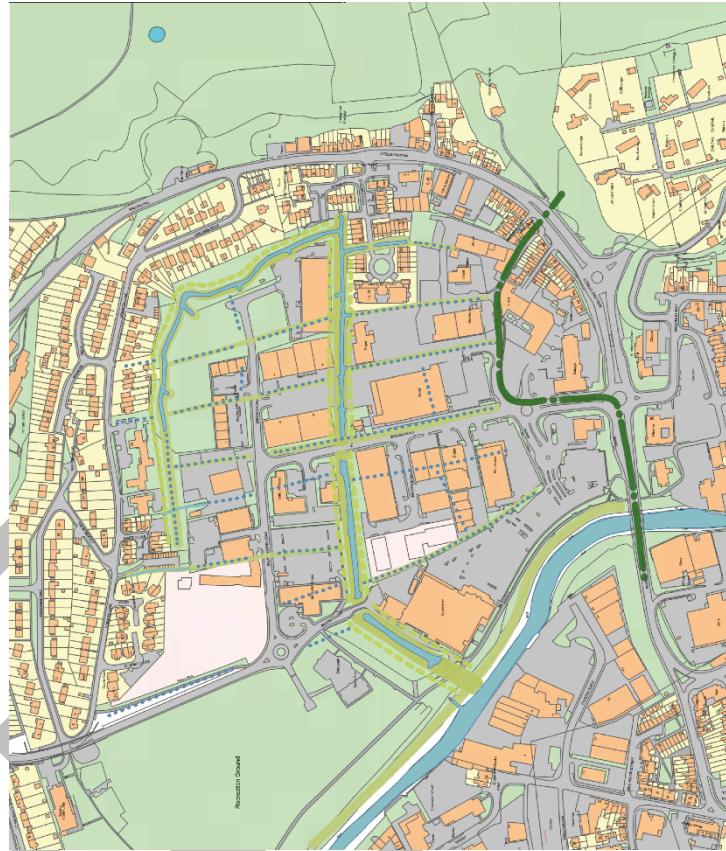
The following challenges and opportunities in regards to climate change for the area have been identified:

Challenges

- The area is subdivided into plots that range in size and ownership, which to date has precluded a strategically connected network of Green and Blue Infrastructure.
- Existing watercourses are not well integrated within adjacent developments.
- Watercourses are underperforming with regards to water flow and water quality management.
- There is an excessive presence of hard surfaced areas and an absence of vegetation. There are few trees or shade available.
- Dependency on car use.

Opportunities

- Enhance the existing central watercourse, to maximise its function to reduce flood risk, to create a green corridor opening it up to the public and provide appropriate tree planting (e.g. willow & alder).
- New Green Infrastructure (GI) joined-up with the existing GI feature along the central watercourse.
- Incorporation of green roofs and walls to complement GI networks where on-ground solutions are not possible.
- Improve GI connectivity to Malling Down area, local green spaces and the River Ouse.
- Adequately maintain and manage existing watercourse and ditch network for the multiple functions it needs to provide.
- Design drainage systems that contribute to clean surface water that discharges into the River Ouse from urban areas, including industrial sites.
- Improve connectivity for active travel and reduce car use
- Opportunity to contribute to lower carbon emissions and deliver zero carbon developments e.g. onsite renewable energy generation.
- Create spaces that can function as climate shelters and mitigate the effects of excessive heat on people.



LEGEND: **Dark Green** (green corridor/NDP link) **Light Green** (existing green infrastructure to be enhance and proposed new green infrastructure) **Blue dash** (new blue infrastructure)

Way forward and key principles

1. Ground floor uses compatible with the level of flood risk with consideration also given to safe access and egress to the site during a flood event. More vulnerable uses such as dwellings are not permitted in flood zone 3 unless the Exception Test is passed. [NPPF Annex 3](#) sets out flood risk vulnerability classification and should be read in conjunction with [Planning Practice Guidance Table 2: Flood risk vulnerability and flood zone 'incompatibility'](#) (Paragraph: 079 Reference ID: 7-079-20220825).
2. Development proposals should incorporate and restore existing watercourses and ditches within the Planning Brief Area. This would include to reinstate ditches to surface and maximise biodiversity and landscape amenity benefits.
3. SuDS systems should maximise opportunities for improving water quality.
4. Sustainable flood management that is compatible with character of the floodplain and the historic ditch network.
5. Wildlife connectivity should be ensured through the avoidance of fencing that would stop the permeability Green Infrastructure and other structural corridors (green and blue).
6. Buildings and spaces in between should be designed to adapt well to a changing climate (e.g. extreme rain events, extreme heat, etc.), through passive design and nature-based solutions.

Movement and connectivity

The area is bisected by Brooks Road, where speed is limited to 30mph and runs north to south connecting Mayhew Way, South Downs Road and the residential areas to the north with the Phoenix Causeway. The other main highway is the A26 Road (Mallings Street), which is a busy route that forms the eastern boundary of the Planning Brief Area. Brooks Road functions as the main route for HGVs and other vehicles in and out the industrial estate. This route is also used by buses and emergency services (e.g. Sussex Police, Church Lane). Most industrial and commercial units have an adjacent car park within private ownership.

The following challenges and opportunities in regards to movement and connectivity for the area have been identified:



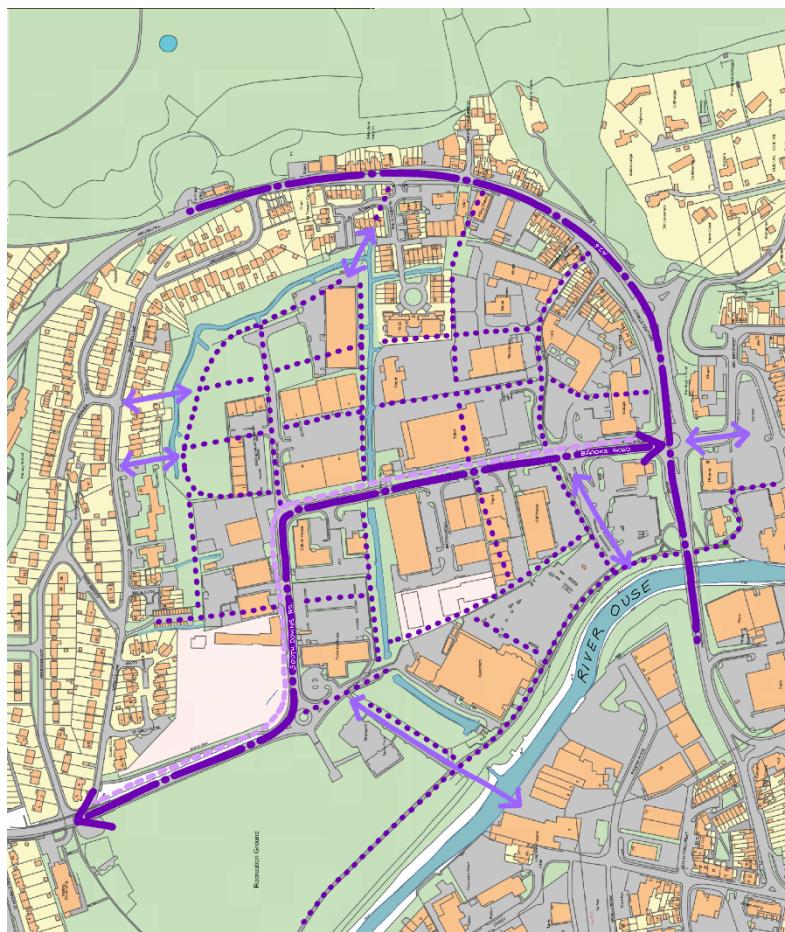


Challenges

- Lack of permeability within the Planning Brief Area and through the East-West axis.
- Brooks Road and Malling Street are busy roads: traffic includes HGVs, buses and emergency vehicles.
- This results in air and noise pollution.
- Large vehicles manoeuvring and parking space requirements.
- Existing uses currently generate high parking requirements.
- Missing pedestrian route on east side of Brooks Road
- Numerous barriers on existing pedestrian routes: steps, kerbs, crossings, vehicular accesses, etc.
- Pavement not adequate for push chairs, wheelchairs, etc.
- Brooks Road speed limit is 30mph, whilst most of the town is 20mph.
- Car-centric public realm and excessive presence of car parks in private ownership.
- Poor on-street parking over pavements.
- No crossings for pedestrians where there are clear desire lines.
- Existing roundabout layout which present navigation challenges for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

Opportunities

- Traffic-calming opportunities at Malling Street, Brooks Road and Phoenix Causeway to reduce environmental and amenity impacts from traffic.
- Increase west-east and town centre non-motorised connections.
- Improve pedestrian and cycle movement along Brooks Road.
- Improve junctions and roundabouts at Tesco, Brooks Road and Phoenix Causeway, facilitating navigation and pedestrian and cycle movement.
- Remove barriers and improve accessibility for all.
- Reduce car dominance of public realm and remove on-pavement parking.
- Ringmer to Southease cycle route skirts the edge of area along Mayhew Way and the riverside path.
- Make cycle and pedestrian routes continuous and connected with the wider network.
- Facilitate active travel with safe and convenient infrastructure and facilities.
- Facilitate quick and easy access to HGVs.



LEGEND: **Dark purple:** spine N-S (for HGVs, including cycle and pedestrians), **medium light purple arrows:** opportunities for improved connectivity/permeability to surroundings. **Purple dash:** secondary routes to create a permeable grid along Green and Blue Infrastructure.

Way forward and key principles

1. Create a joined-up network of pedestrian routes that connect the area within the red line as well as with the surrounding town.
2. Create cycle and pedestrian network segregated from routes of heavy traffic (e.g. Brooks Road).
3. Active travel facilities integrated in all developments (e.g. secure cycle storage, showers, changing room, etc.).
4. Design highways for low speeds.
5. Provide pedestrian crossings or shared surfaces where appropriate.

Developer contributions

Developer contributions will be prioritised towards the following improvements:

1. Cycle lane along Maynew Road – South Downs Road - Brooks Road route.
2. Pathway and accessibility improvement along Brooks Road.
3. Traffic calming schemes for Brooks Road, Malling Street and Phoenix Causeway.
4. Open space contributions

Conclusion

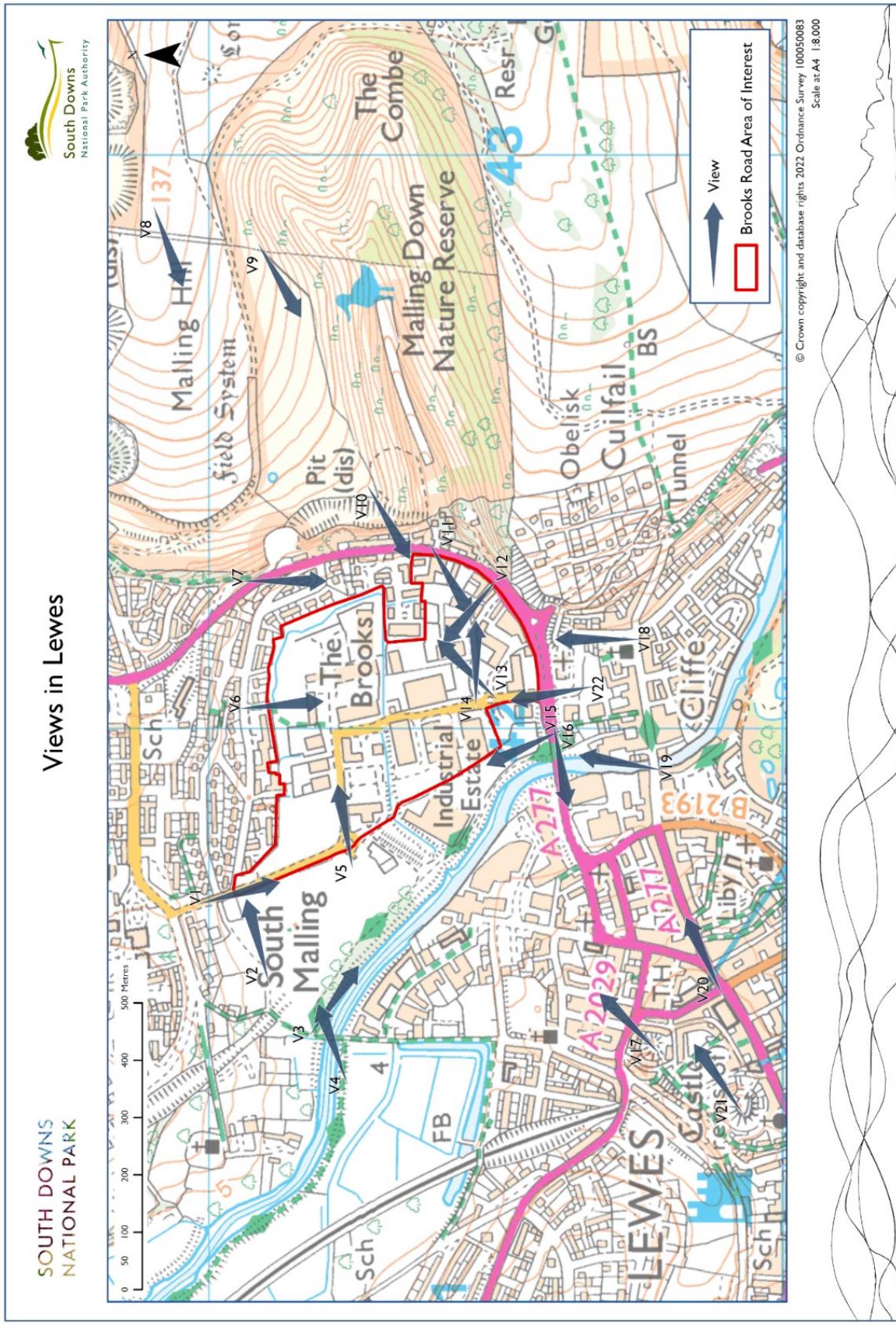
The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) has produced this planning brief to set out the Authority's expectations for development proposals in the Brooks Road area, Lewes. It is intended to provide guidance to potential developers and to give increased certainty to the local community and all relevant stakeholders. The Brief contains a series of development principles which should be incorporated into the earliest stages of the design process.

An illustrative sketch is provided in **Appendix 2**, providing an example of the key principles set out in this Brief and how they will shape the design process. This is not a final proposal, but an interpretation of how key principles in the Brief inform layout design. Additional evidence gathered at design stage would contribute to define layout and building design in a planning application.

In addition to using this document, applicants are encouraged to use the pre-application advice service from the SDNPA.

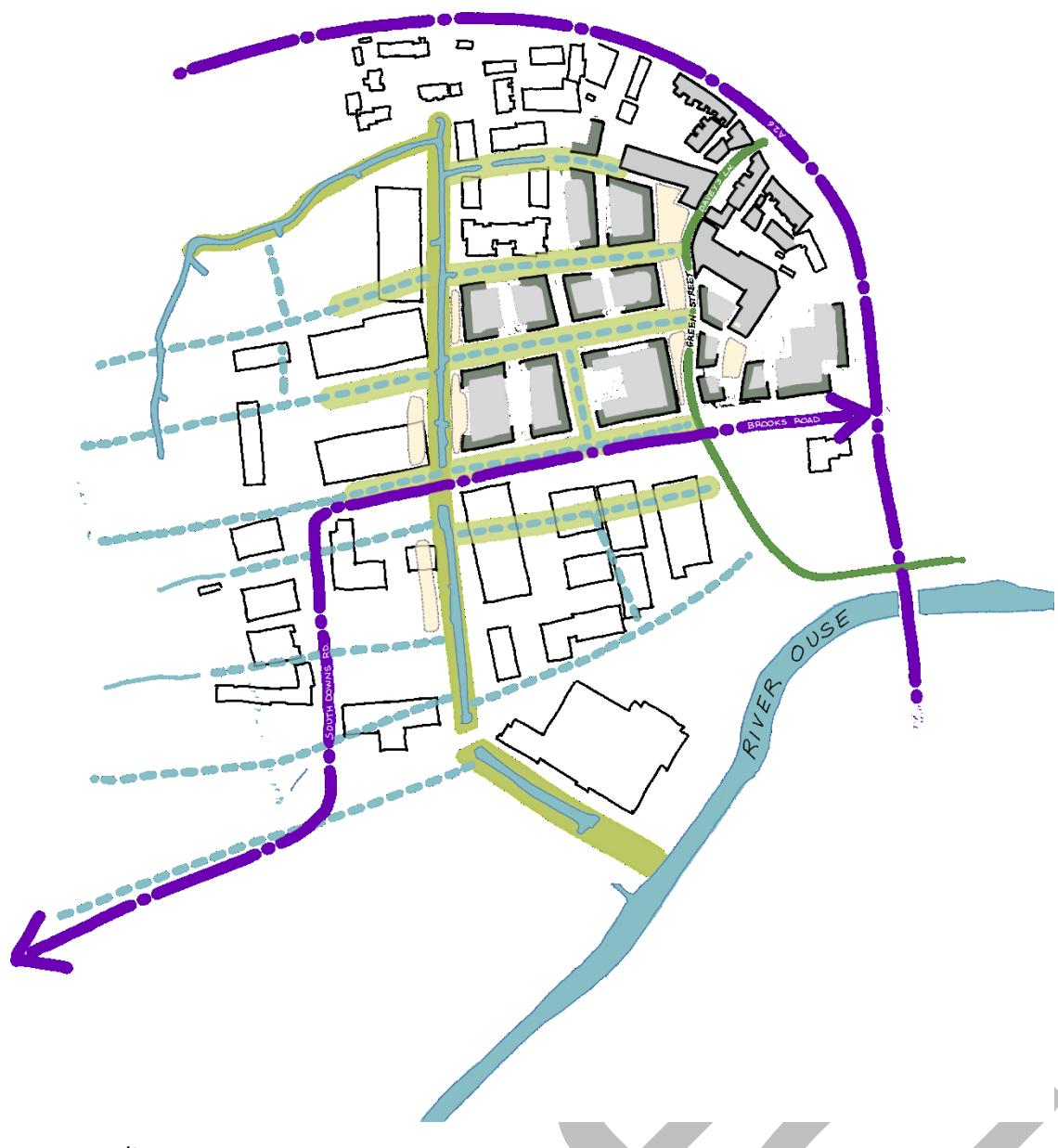
If you have any questions about this Planning Brief please contact: planningpolicy@southdowns.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Key views





Appendix 2 – Illustrative Layout



This sketch provides an example illustrating some of the key principles set out in this brief and how they will shape the design process. This is not a final proposal, but an interpretation of how key principles in the Brief inform layout design. Additional evidence gathered at design stage would contribute to define layout and building design in a planning application.

LEGEND: **Purple arrows:** Main vehicular routes.
Light green: Existing and new Green Infrastructure.
Dashed blue lines: Blue Infrastructure, a SuDS system connected to the ditch network.
Dark green: Green street with vegetation as per the LNDP.
Beige: areas with potential for public realm/open space.
Dark grey: Built form with active frontages facing Green and Blue Infrastructure and public realm.

Appendix 3 – Glossary

Blue Infrastructure – Networks, or features within a network which relate to water, these include rivers, streams, ponds and lakes. These are typically considered, designed and managed within the definition of GI

Exception Test – a requirement for development that is highly vulnerable and in flood zone 2 or essential infrastructure in flood zone 3a or 3b or more vulnerable in flood zone 3a. The exception test shows how flood risk will be managed in a proposed site.

Green Infrastructure (GI) – A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Heritage assets – 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. Includes both designated and undesignated heritage assets.

Lewes Low Cost Housing – defined in the Lewes NDP as the maximum cost affordable on the average Lewes salary whether for sale or rent.

Passive House - a very well insulated, virtually airtight building that is primarily heated by passive solar gains and internal heat gains from occupants

Public realm – places where people can gain unrestricted access (at least during daylight hours) for the purposes of passing through, meeting, leisure and any other public activities.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) – Drainage systems designed to control surface water run off as close to where it falls and mimic natural drainage as closely as possible.