



## First Draft

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Context

Neighbourhood Development Plans [NDP's] were introduced in the 2011 Localism Act with the overall aim of devolving more decision-making powers from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils. Specifically :

*“Instead of local people being told what to do, the Government thinks that local communities should have genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places where they live. The Act introduces a new right for communities to draw up a neighbourhood plan.”*

As distinct from early types of neighbourhood plans, modern NDP's become part of the National Development Plan alongside the local authority's Local Plan and must be used in law by the local authority to determine planning applications in the neighbourhood.

The other key piece of the government's approach to localism is the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF]. The current NPPF must be taken into account in preparing all development plans – including NDP's – and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The current edition of the NPPF is dated July 2021.

An NDP is therefore a powerful tool that gives a community statutory power to shape future development, integrating local knowledge and aspiration with planning regulations to ensure that the community gets the development it needs in an appropriate location or locations.

## 1.2 The Peasmarsh Plan

Peasmarsh is the name of both a parish and the only village within the parish. It is within the area of Rother District Council [RDC], the relevant local authority. For development planning purposes, the neighbourhood has been designated as the full extent of the parish as shown in Figure 1.1 [over].

The stakeholders in the Plan are primarily those who reside or work in the designated area plus the businesses that operate within it.

The current RDC Local Plan is for the period from 2011 to 2028 but the authority is already working on an emerging plan which will run from 2019 to 2039.

Work started on the Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan [PNDP or 'the Plan'] in early 2021 and, as NDP's cannot be backdated, its plan period is from 2021 to 2039 to coincide with the end of the emerging RDC Local Plan.

The Peasmarsh Plan responds to the national challenge of increased demand for housing, jobs and transport and the local challenges set out in the Plan.



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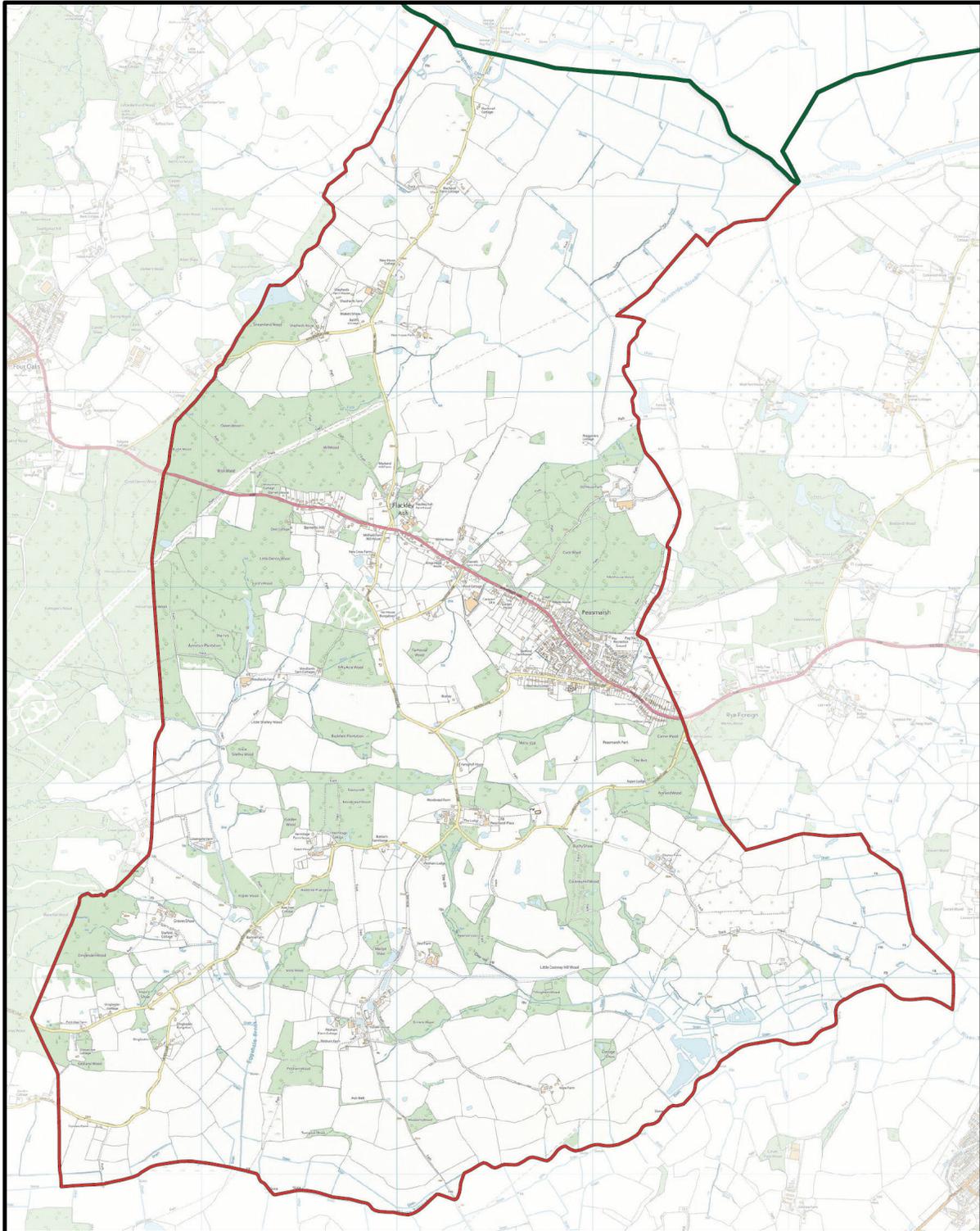


Figure 1.1 : Designated Neighbourhood Area



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Early consultation with the stakeholders provided a set of desires for the proposed plan :

- Protect the High Weald Area of Outstanding Beauty [AONB];
- Preserve the landscape, views and biodiversity of the parish;
- Maintain the tranquillity and dark skies of the parish;
- Maintain the rural character of the village;
- Provide truly affordable housing for families with local connections;
- Provide opportunities to downsize and remain in the parish;
- Avoid larger scale developments;
- Support and promote community facilities;
- Improve infrastructure, particularly public transport, sewage treatment and electricity supply;
- Improve road safety with changes to junctions, crossroads and speed limits;
- Work to improve the secondary education provision;

### 1.3 Vision and Objectives

Following the public consultation, a vision for the Peasmarch Plan was developed and adopted in November 2021 :

#### Vision

Peasmarch parish will continue developing its thriving, safe and friendly rural community through sustainable development.

The Plan will reflect the needs of and enhance / improve the significant environmental assets of the parish whilst developing its economic viability and its rural surrounding. It will also respect our location in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

A set of seven objectives, stemming from the vision, were also developed.

The overall objective of the PNDP is to reflect the wishes of the community in promoting the social, economic and environmental well-being of what is, essentially, a rural parish.

The detailed objectives are as follows :

- 1 Sustain a thriving parish offering a range of facilities to the local community, businesses and visitors by encouraging the expansion of the local retail and service provision;
- 2 Seek adequate education provision for parish children of all ages, extending the local educational facilities in line with future housing developments;



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- 3 Protect and enhance local open spaces and access to the countryside to enhance the physical and mental wellbeing of residents, encouraging development which exceeds current energy efficiency standards and promoting cycle networks and non-vehicular connectivity with adjacent villages and town for a sustainable village life;
- 4 Plan and deliver future developments which reflect both current and future housing needs of the parish in small clusters, promoting principles of good design and quality that encourage the local context;
- 5 Ensure that the parish infrastructure is improved to match existing requirements and then expanded in line with future housing developments; in the short term :
  - i) reduce the impact of road traffic and parking on the local community;
  - ii) eliminate the flooding and stop the supercharging of the sewage system both of which occur regularly;
  - iii) eliminate the frequent and sometimes extended power failures;
  - iv) establish frequent bus services which meet the national Bus Back Better policy with markedly improved frequency all week and timetables integrated with other services including rail;
- 6 Secure the long term future of existing community leisure and cultural facilities for all ages and promote the provision of new facilities to address the future needs of the parish;
- 7 Protect, maintain and enhance the nationally and locally important heritage and environmental assets and historic character by guiding sympathetic development;

### **1.4 Strategic Environmental Assessment**

The environment is a key concern, particularly as the parish is entirely within the High Weald AONB. Accordingly, the preparation of this Plan has been guided by a set of criteria created by external professional consultants as part of a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The consultants have subsequently assessed the Plan against those criteria. The report is provided in **Appendix / Addendum ?????**