

# Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan

SEA Scoping Report

Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development  
Plan Steering Group

February 2022

## Quality information

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## Revision History

<b>Revision</b>	<b>Revision date</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
V1	02/02/2022	Draft for internal review	Emily Baker	Graduate Environmental Planner
V2	09/02/2022	Updated draft for internal review	Emily Baker	Graduate Environmental Planner
V3	16/02/2022	Draft for QB comment	Mike Inkson	Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group
V4	21/02/2022	Final for consultation	Rosie Cox	Senior Environmental Planner

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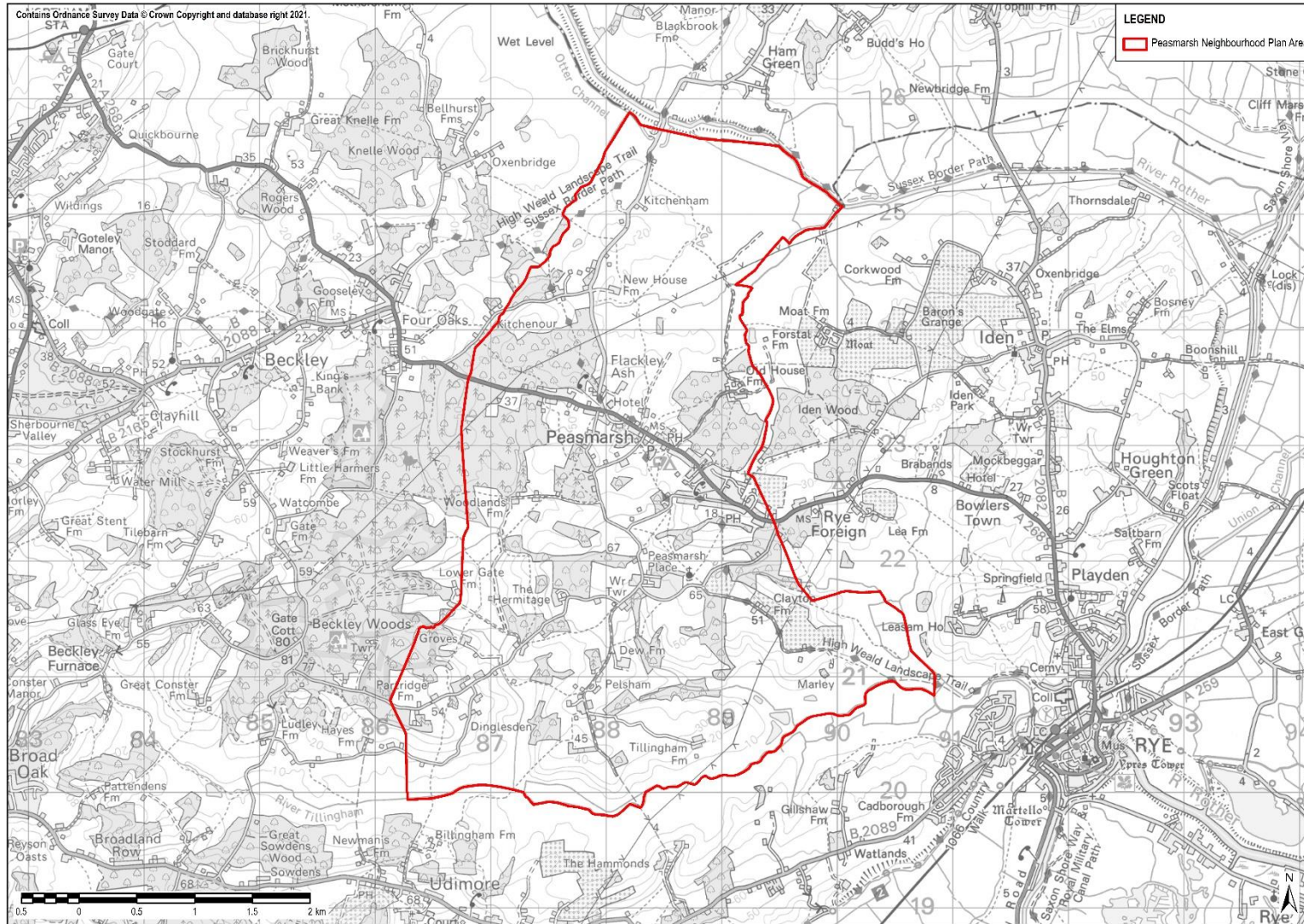
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Figure 1.1 Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan area



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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 1.2 The Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan (hereafter referred to as the 'PNDP') is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011<sup>1</sup> and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012<sup>2</sup>. The PNDP is being prepared in the context of the adopted Rother District Council Local Plan Core Strategy 2014-2028<sup>3</sup>. Due regard is also given to the emerging Local Plan<sup>4</sup> which, once adopted, will replace the current Rother District Council Local Plan Core Strategy 2014-2028, and cover the period up to 2039.
- 1.3 Key information relating to the PNDP is presented below in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1 Key information relating to the PNDP**

<b>Name of Responsible Authority</b>	Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group ("the Neighbourhood Group")
<b>Title of Plan</b>	Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan (known as the PNDP)
<b>Subject</b>	Neighbourhood Development Planning
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The PNDP is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Development Planning (General) Regulations 2012. It is being prepared in the context of the adopted Rother District Council Local Plan Core Strategy 2014-2028. Due regard is also given to the emerging New Local Plan.</p> <p>The Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan will be used to guide and shape development within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area.</p>
<b>Timescale</b>	2021 - 2039
<b>Area covered by the plan</b>	The Neighbourhood Area covers Peasmarsh Parish, as shown in <b>Figure 1.1</b> above.
<b>Summary of content</b>	The PNDP will set out a vision, strategy, and range of policies for the Neighbourhood Development Plan area.
<b>Plan contact point</b>	<p>Mike Inkson</p> <p>Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group</p>

<sup>1</sup> The Localism Act 2011 can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> The Rother District Council Local Plan Core Strategy 2014-2028 can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> Information about the New Local Plan Update can be accessed [here](#).

## Planning policy context

### Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- 1.4 Adopted in September 2014, the Rother District Council Local Plan Core Strategy sets out the land use policies to meet the area's economic, environmental, and social needs and aims for the future (up until 2028) and provides the framework for all subsequent documents which form part of the adopted Local Plan<sup>5</sup>. The Core Strategy identifies Peasmarsh as a 'local service village', and a village that 'appear(s) to have a particular need for employment'. This is based on several factors including unemployment, economic activity rate, ratio of in: out commuting, economic base and broadband speeds.
- 1.5 In terms of distribution of rural housing, the Core Strategy identified 59 new homes (50 minus completions and commitments after 2014) for Peasmarsh Parish within the Plan Period 2011 – 2028, including completions and commitments as of 2014.

### Emerging New Local Plan

- 1.6 Rother District Council have agreed to launch the preparation of a new Local Plan in keeping with national guidance promoting an on-going cycle of plan making and review. The council is currently in the early preparatory phase of work for the new Local Plan. The new Local Plan will set out the spatial strategy for the distribution and development of new homes, employment and supporting infrastructure in Rother, while protecting the valued natural and historic environment. It will also incorporate detailed development management policies to guide and manage development across the district.
- 1.7 The Council undertook targeted engagement at an early stage in the production of the local plan<sup>6</sup>, in advance of proposed public consultation that will form the first public consultation stage later 2022.
- 1.8 Neighbourhood development plans will form part of the development plan for the district, alongside the Rother District Council Local Plan Core Strategy. Neighbourhood development plans are required to be in general conformity with the relevant Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for Core Strategy to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood development planning process where appropriate. Consideration will also be given to the emerging new Local Plan, while recognising it is currently at a very early stage of preparation.

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<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Rother District Council (2014) Early Targeted Engagement on the Local Plan is available [here](#).

# SEA for the PNDP

## SEA Screening for the PNDP

1.9 A Neighbourhood Development Plan requires SEA where it is likely to have significant environmental effects. In this respect, the PNDP has been screened by Rother District Council (November 2021), and it has been concluded *“that the Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore a SEA should be undertaken. I have set out the reasoning below in relation to the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects as contained in Schedule 1 of the above Regulations:*

- *The PNP will form part of the ‘development plan’ and thereby exert a direct and substantial influence over development proposals coming forward in the plan;*
- *The PNP has a key role in integrating social, economic, and environmental considerations in meeting its obligation to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; and*
- *The PNP needs to consider several nationally or locally important environmental factors, notably:*
  - *The area is wholly within the High Weald AONB, which enjoys the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.*
  - *There are many key features of the AONB within the Parish, including historic field boundaries, historic routeways, etc.*
  - *There are significant heritage constraints, including several listed buildings, unlisted buildings of architectural interest, and archaeological notification areas. There are potential direct impacts where sites contain, or lie within these assets, as well as indirect impacts through development in the setting of assets.*
  - *The Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Areas flank the settlement to the north and south, as do priority habitats of deciduous woodland and ancient woodland.”<sup>7</sup>*

## SEA explained

1.10 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues.

1.11 The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the PNDP seeks to maximise the emerging plan’s contribution to sustainable development.

1.12 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:

- i. When deciding on ‘the scope and level of detail of the information’ which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues;

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<sup>7</sup> Rother District Council (2021) Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan SEA Screening [online] available [here](#).

- ii. A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for consultation alongside the draft plan (i.e., the draft PNDP) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e., discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

1.13 This 'Scoping Report' is concerned with item 'i' above. It presents a suggested scope for the SEA so that the designated authorities (Historic England, Natural England, and the Environment Agency) can provide timely comment.

## SEA scoping explained

1.14 Developing the draft scope for the SEA as presented in this report has involved the following steps:

- Exploring the policy context for the PNDP and SEA to summarise the key messages arising.
- Establishing the baseline for the SEA (i.e., the current and future situation in the area in the absence of the PNDP) to help identify the plan's likely significant effects.
- Identifying particular problems or opportunities ('issues') that should be a particular focus of the SEA; and
- Considering this information to develop an SEA framework comprising SEA objectives and assessment questions, which can then be used as a guiding framework for the subsequent assessment.

1.15 The scope is explored and presented under a series of key environmental themes as follows:

- Air quality
- Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Climate change (including flood risk)
- Landscape
- Historic environment
- Land, soil, and water resources
- Community wellbeing
- Transportation

1.16 The selected environmental themes incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive.<sup>8</sup> These were refined to reflect a broad understanding of the anticipated scope of plan effects. The discussion of the scoping information for each theme is presented in Chapters 2 to 9, along with a summary of the key issues and the proposed SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions. Each proposal within the emerging PNDP will be assessed consistently using this framework. The full SEA Framework is presented in Appendix A.

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<sup>8</sup> The SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC) is 'of a procedural nature' (para 9 of the Directive preamble) and does not set out to prescribe particular issues that should and should not be a focus, beyond requiring a focus on 'the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors'



## 2. Air Quality

### Focus of theme

- Air pollution sources
- Air quality hotspots
- Air quality management

### Policy context

2.1 **Table 2.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan.

**Table 1.1 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to air quality**

Document title	Year of publication
<a href="#"><u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u></a>	2021
<a href="#"><u>The Clean Air Strategy</u></a>	2019
<a href="#"><u>UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations</u></a>	2017
<a href="#"><u>A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</u></a>	2018
<a href="#"><u>Rother Local Plan Core Strategy</u></a>	2014
<a href="#"><u>Rother District Council 2020 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)</u></a>	2020

2.2 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The PNDP will need to conform to the principles outlined in the NPPF, which seek to mitigate air quality impacts during development whilst simultaneously taking advantage of opportunities to improve air quality. Measures include, but are not limited to; sustainable transport solutions, limiting the need to travel, complying with relevant pollutant limits or national objectives, and enhancing green infrastructure in strategic development. Smaller-scale development should consider the potential for cumulative effects in relation to air quality.
- Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared in zones that exceed national objectives for levels of particulates, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead and/or nitrogen oxides.
- To improve air quality across the country, the UK government has produced national strategies focused on regulatory frameworks, industrial investment in cleaner processes and shifting towards cleaner forms of energy. Whilst there are dedicated strategies to reducing roadside emissions (due to traffic emissions being a substantial source of nitrogen dioxide emissions), the Clean Air Strategy objectives seek to recognise wider sources that contribute to poor air quality, such as diffuse sources and smaller contributors.
- The PNDP will also need to be in line with the policies outlined in the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan, which

states that there are no specific localities that have been identified as having poor air quality. Air quality is monitored annually and the Rother District Council 2020 Air Quality Annual Status Report states that there are no areas in Rother where members of the public are exposed to levels of pollutants in excess of the UK Air Quality Objectives. Therefore, no specific air quality policies have been put forward for the PNDP area, however air quality is a development consideration and a consideration when reviewing environmental impacts of traffic and congestion.

## Baseline summary

- 2.3 Councils are obligated to review and assess air quality in their region on a regular basis under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) process, set out in Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995). Rother District currently does not have any Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), because previous monitoring and modelling studies have not indicated any likelihood of the UK air quality objectives being exceeded.
- 2.4 The 2020 Rother ASR identifies that road traffic is the dominant source of air pollution in the area, the major routes being the A21, the A28, the A265, the A258, the A27 and the A268. Notably the A268 extends through the centre of Peasmarsh. The main pollutants of concern with respect to road traffic are nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>). Currently, there are no areas in Rother where members of the public are exposed to levels of these pollutants in excess of the UK Air Quality Objectives.
- 2.5 As in other suburban and rural areas of East Sussex, Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) is a considerable concern, with high levels being recorded in the Rye Harbour area since 2011, however this area is not within the PNDP boundary – being approximately 10km away from Peasmarsh Parish (13 minute drive)<sup>9</sup>.
- 2.6 The ASR outlines some actions deployed to help improve air quality, including monitoring O<sub>3</sub> levels in Rye Harbour and informing the public of pollution events through the airAlert pollution warning service, supporting the Energise Network to promote electric car charging points, contributing to the Air Quality and Emissions Mitigation Guidance for Sussex, and promoting sustainable and/or active transportation.

## Future baseline

- 2.7 The effects of new housing and employment on air quality in the PNDP area are uncertain given future travel patterns into/outside of the parish are unknown. Nonetheless, exceedances of air quality objectives in the PNDP area are unlikely.
- 2.8 It is considered that the ongoing move towards the use of sustainable modes of transport, including active travel modes, working from home and electric vehicle use has the potential to support air quality improvements in the long term.

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<sup>9</sup> Google Maps visualising distance of Rye Harbour from Peasmarsh can be accessed [here](#).

## Key issues

2.9 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the following key issues within the PNDP area are identified in relation to air quality:

- Air quality is not a significant constraint for the PNDP area. There are no AQMAs present within the parish or close by, and the latest Air Quality ASR (2020) acknowledges NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels are below the annual mean objective throughout the district.
- Local congestion is seen on the A268 which extends through the village. The effects of the PNDP in relation to traffic and congestion will be explored under the 'Transportation' SEA theme.
- Designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites within and in proximity to the PNDP area are potentially sensitive to air pollution issues. The effects of the PNDP in relation to these concerns will be explored under the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' SEA theme.
- The PNDP could present opportunities to improve accessibility and support more local and sustainable journeys/connections. These opportunities will be explored in the 'Community Wellbeing' and 'Transportation' SEA themes.

2.10 Considering the above, within the PNDP area there is an absence of any significant air quality issues (i.e., AQMAs) and there are no exceeded or expected exceedances of national air quality objectives. **Therefore, the air quality theme has been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process.**

## 3. Biodiversity and Geodiversity

### Focus of theme

- Nature conservation designations
- Geological sites
- Priority habitats and species

### Policy context

3.1 **Table 3.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan.

**Table 3.1: Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to biodiversity and geodiversity**

Document title	Year of publication
<a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</a>	2021
<a href="#">A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</a>	2018
<a href="#">Environment Act 2021</a>	2021
<a href="#">UK Biodiversity Action Plan</a>	2007
<a href="#">Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006</a>	2006
<a href="#">Rother Local Plan Core Strategy</a>	2014

3.2 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The PNDP will need to be aligned with the principles set out in the NPPF, highlighting planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance soils and sites of biodiversity and/or geological value. Plans should also identify, map and safeguard components of wider ecological networks; promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats and species and pursue opportunities to secure net gains in biodiversity. The NPPF states that if substantial harm to biodiversity through development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or compensated, then planning permission should be refused.
- The NPPF also supports the establishment and enhancement of habitat networks and green infrastructure at both the landscape and catchment scales, allowing for more resilience to current and future pressures. Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can assist in climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. Planning policies and decisions should ensure new streets are tree-lined and opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in development.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan places importance on improvements to the natural environment; aiming to achieve clean air and water, a reduced environmental hazard risk, a thriving plant and wildlife network, sustainable resource use and the enhancement of the natural environment. This will be accomplished through sustainable land

management, engagement in nature recovery, connecting people to the environment, increased resource efficiency and the protection and improvement of land, sea, and ocean.

- The Environment Act 2021 makes provision for biodiversity gain to be a condition of planning permission in England, in addition to biodiversity gain site registers and biodiversity credits. The Act recognises there is a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, by identifying priorities for an area using biodiversity reports and local nature recovery strategies. Local nature recovery strategies will identify biodiversity priorities for the strategy area as well as a local habitat map. Furthermore, habitat maps are expected to include recovery and enhancement areas which are or could become of importance for biodiversity.
- The PNDP will also need to be in line with the policies outlined in the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan, which states that areas of biodiversity interest function as important ecological habitats and attract visual resources and amenities for the local community and the tourist economy. Furthermore, the Core Strategy states that biodiversity, geodiversity, and green space will be protected and enhanced to:
  - Maintain and develop a district-wide network of green infrastructure;
  - Protect and enhance the international, national, and local designations;
  - Ensure development retains, protects, and enhances habitats of ecological interest, including ancient woodland, water features and hedgerows and provides for appropriate management of such features; and
  - Require developers to integrate biodiversity into development schemes by avoiding adverse impacts from development on biodiversity or habitat, or where unavoidable provide appropriate mitigation against or compensation for any losses.

## Baseline summary

### Internationally designated sites: Ramsar and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

- 3.3 The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (known as the Ramsar Convention) is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and appropriate use of wetlands and their resources<sup>10</sup>. The convention was adopted in 1971 and came into force in 1975. In the UK, the initial emphasis was on selecting sites of importance to waterbirds<sup>11</sup>. Consequently, many Ramsar Sites were also designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the European Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)<sup>12</sup>.
- 3.4 To ensure European Directives were operable in the UK after the EU transition period, changes were made through the implementation of the Conservation of

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<sup>10</sup> An introduction to the Ramsar Convention can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>11</sup> Information on the Ramsar Convention in the UK can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>12</sup> The European Birds Directive (79/209/EEC) can be accessed [here](#).

Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019<sup>13</sup>. In doing so, SPAs and SACs in the UK no longer form part of the EU Natura 2000 ecological network. Instead, the 2019 Regulations propose the creation of a national site network within the UK<sup>14</sup>, comprising of sites already designated under the Nature Directives (i.e., 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC) and any additional sites designated under the 2019 Regulations. The national site network operates in parallel with other designations and contributes towards the UK's international commitments for protected areas.

- 3.5 In relation to the PNDP, there are no Ramsar sites within the parish boundary. However, the parish is approximately 1.6km north-north east from the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Ramsar site. Covering approximately 6,778 hectares, the area is a diverse coastal landscape which includes a number of habitats formed by a barrier of shingle beaches and sand dunes across intertidal mud and sand flats<sup>15</sup>. The designation also includes the largest and most diverse area of shingle beach in Britain, with nationally important saline lagoons, natural freshwater pits, and basin dens. However human activity has modified the site – resulting in the creation of extensive areas of wetland habitat caused by gravel extraction. The whole Ramsar is important for breeding, wintering and passage waterbirds, wetland plants, bryophytes, invertebrates, natural and near-natural wetland habitats.
- 3.6 There are no SACs within the PNDP area. However, Dungeness SAC is in proximity to the Neighbourhood Development Plan area - approximately 2.2km south east from the parish boundary. Covering approximately 3,241 hectares the designated land comprises of the following habitats<sup>16</sup>:
- Tidal rivers, estuaries, mud flats, sand flats, lagoons (including saltwork basins) (20%);
  - Salt marshes, salt pastures, salt steppes (1%);
  - Coastal sand dunes, sand beaches, machair (2%);
  - Shingle, sea cliffs, islets (64%);
  - Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (2%);
  - Bogs, marshes, water fringed vegetation, fens (10%); and
  - Coniferous woodland (1%).
- 3.7 These habitats could be favourable to the species included in Article 4 of Directive 2009/147/EC<sup>17</sup> and Annex II of Directive 92/43/EEC<sup>18</sup>, including the Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*).

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<sup>13</sup> The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>14</sup> DEFRA 'Policy Paper: Changes to the Habitats Regulations 2017' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>15</sup> Information on the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Ramsar site can be accessed [here](#)

<sup>16</sup> JNCC 'Dungeness SPA Standard Data Form' can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>17</sup> Article 4 of Directive 2009/147/EC can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>18</sup> Annex II of Directive 92/43/EEC can be accessed [here](#).

## Nationally designates sites: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

- 3.8 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are protected by law to conserve their wildlife or geology. In proximity to the PNDP area there are multiple SSSIs, however only one (Leasam Heronry Wood) SSSI is within 1km of the parish.
- 3.9 Leasam Heronry Wood SSSI covers approximately 2.2 hectares and is designated for its nationally important heronry<sup>19</sup>. The woodland is small and not long established but does contain an interesting assemblage of plants that attracts a large number of breeding pairs of herons, often representing 1% of the total British breeding population. Based on the most recent condition survey, 100% of this SSSI is in favourable condition<sup>20</sup>.
- 3.10 SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) are a GIS tool/dataset that map zones around each SSSI according to their sensitivities. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location, including residential, rural-residential, and rural non-residential. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that have the potential to impact on SSSIs. In this respect, most of the PNDP area overlaps with SSSI IRZs for the types of development that are likely to be brought forward during the plan period. These areas include:
- Leasam Heronry Wood SSSI;
  - Winchelsea Cutting SSSI;
  - Rye Harbour SSSI; and
  - Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI
- 3.11 The majority of the northern area of the parish (north of the A268) is constrained by SSSI IRZs for rural residential development, where *“residential development needs to be for ten or more houses outside of settlements/urban areas.”*<sup>21</sup> The same is true for the southern part of the parish from the area around Clayton Farm, Cockney Hill Wood, Tillingham Wood, Hooker’s Wood and Pelsham Wood to the southern parish boundary.

## Priority habitats and species

- 3.12 There are a variety of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats located within or within proximity to the Neighbourhood Development Plan area, including coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland heath, deciduous woodland, and traditional orchards, some of which is also classified as ancient woodland. According to the Peasmarsh Parish Council website, these priority habitats total 495 hectares and cover approximately 31.3% of the parish land surface<sup>22</sup>.
- 3.13 The Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre<sup>23</sup> contains archives of protected and/or notable species within the region, including protected by the Wildlife and

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<sup>19</sup> Leasam Heronry Wood SSSI ‘Reasons for Designation’ can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>20</sup> The condition of the Leasam Heronry Wood SSSI can be assessed [here](#).

<sup>21</sup> <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>22</sup> Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021-2039: Protecting Our Environment can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>23</sup> Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre can be accessed [here](#).

Countryside Act 1981<sup>24</sup> and under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. It is likely the BAP Priority Habitats and ecological designations within and surrounding the PNDP area are likely to support populations of protected species.

3.14 Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 at the end of this chapter show the location of designated sites and BAP Priority Habitats within/ within close proximity to the PNDP area.

## Future baseline

3.15 Habitats and species within the PNDP area may potentially face increasing pressures from future development, with negative impacts on the wider ecological network being a real possibility. This could include the degradation or loss of habitat/s and impacts on biodiversity networks, which could be intensified by the effects of climate change. This has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition of habitats.

3.16 The PNDP presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by considering important habitats, species, and designated sites at all stages of planning for future growth. This is particularly relevant for new housing developments. To maintain and improve the condition of the local biodiversity in the future, it is paramount to protect and enhance important habitats and the connections between them. Effective coordination of development delivery will be key in ensuring opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised within the PNDP area.

## Key issues

3.17 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the ensuing key issues within the PNDP area are identified in relation to biodiversity and geodiversity:

- There are no designated sites within the PNDP area, however the parish is within proximity to the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Ramsar site, the Dungeness SAC, and the Leasam Heronry Wood SSSI.
- The PNDP falls within several SSSI IRZs for rural residential development, stating that Natural England would need to be consulted for proposals of ten or more homes within these areas.
- There are a variety of BAP Priority Habitats located within or in proximity to the Neighbourhood Development Plan area. These BAP habitats likely support populations of protected species.

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<sup>24</sup> The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 can be accessed [here](#).

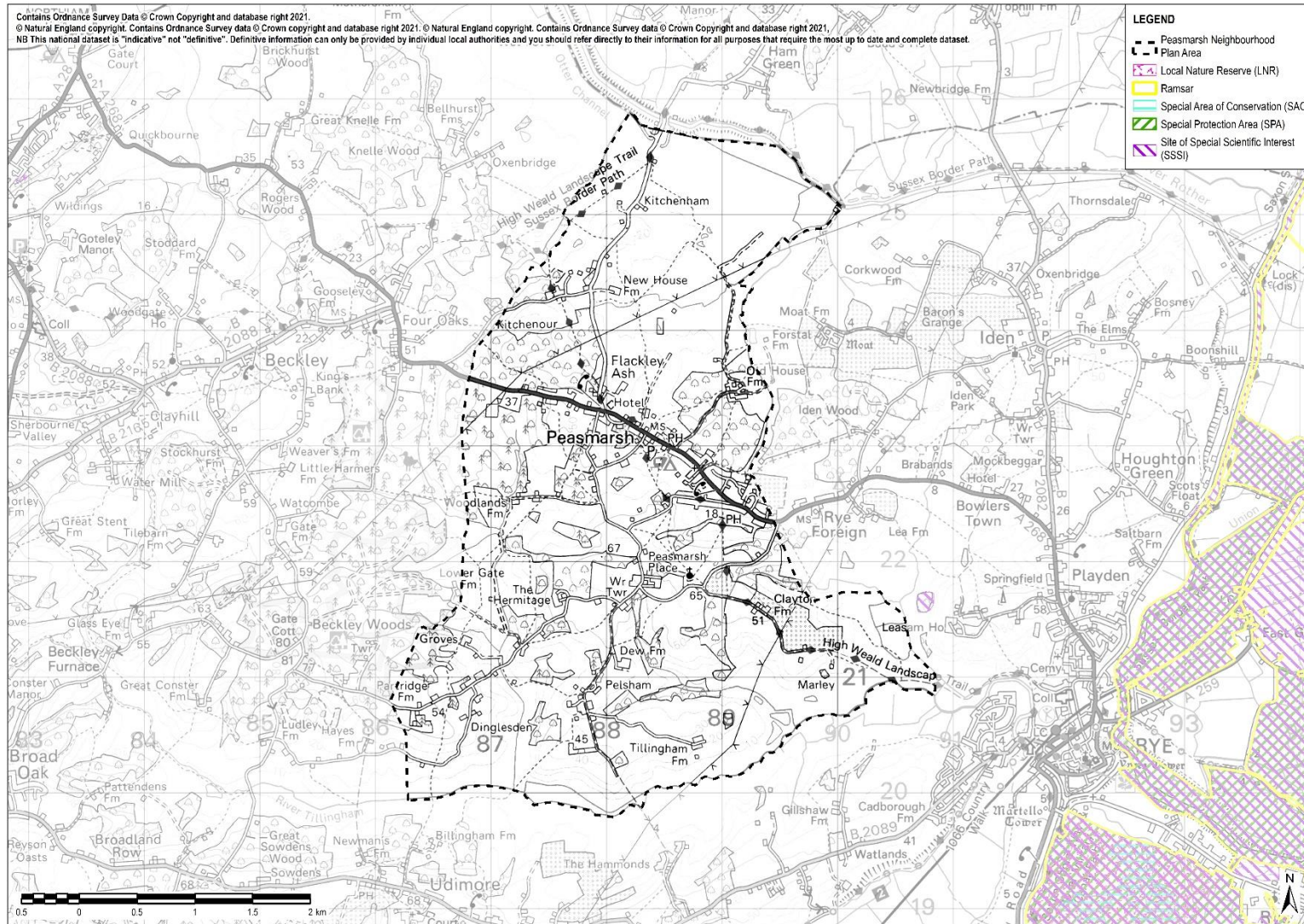


## SEA objectives

3.18 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions.

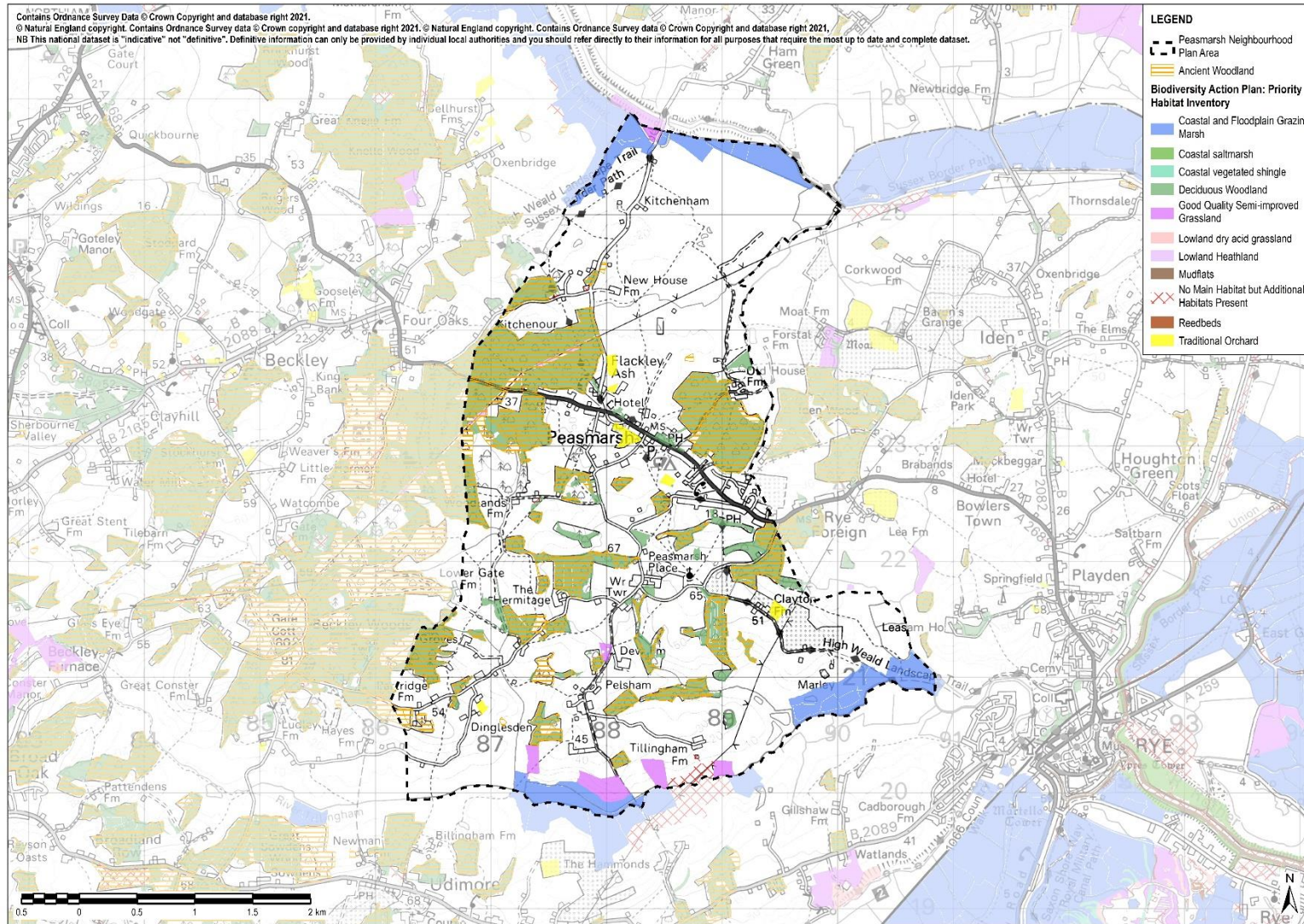
SEA Objective	Assessment questions to consider for the allocations/proposals within the PNDP
<b>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</b>	
Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the integrity of the designated sites for biodiversity and geodiversity located within proximity to the Neighbourhood Development Plan area?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats as well as priority habitats and species?</li> <li>• Achieve biodiversity and environmental net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green infrastructure networks?</li> <li>• Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?</li> </ul>

**Figure 3.1 Peasmarsh Biodiversity Designations**



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Figure 3.2 Peasmarsh Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats



## 4. Climate Change

### Focus of theme

- Contribution to climate change
- Effects of climate change
- Climate change adaptation
- Flood risks

### Policy context

4.1 **Table 4.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan.

**Table 4.1: Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to climate change**

Document title	Year of publication
<a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</a>	2021
<a href="#">Climate Change Act 2008</a>	2008
<a href="#">The National Adaptation Programme and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting</a>	2018
<a href="#">The Clean Air Strategy 2019</a>	2019
<a href="#">The Clean Growth Strategy</a>	2017
<a href="#">Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener</a>	2021
<a href="#">The UK Sixth Carbon Budget</a>	2020
<a href="#">A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</a>	2018
<a href="#">National Infrastructure Assessment</a>	2021
<a href="#">UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017</a>	2017
<a href="#">Flood and Water Management Act 2010</a>	2010
<a href="#">Rother Local Plan Core Strategy</a>	2014

4.2 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The PNDP will need to conform to the principles set out in the NPPF, including adopting a proactive planning approach to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies are expected to improve the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, avoid inappropriate development in the flood plain zone and support the move to a low carbon economy. The NPPF recognises the potential for planning to shape places to better contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and deliver long-term resilience, including through reuse, regeneration, and conversion.
- The Clean Growth Strategy, Clean Air Strategy, the 25 Year Environment Plan, and the Net Zero Strategy are a collection of documents seeking to

progress the government's commitment to becoming net zero by 2050 under the UK Climate Change Act 2008. The documents outline how the government will tackle air pollution sources whilst maintaining an affordable energy supply and increasing economic growth. This parallels with the 25 Year Environment Plan, which seeks to manage land resources sustainably, recover and reinstate nature, protect soils and habitats, increase resource efficiency, improve water quality, and connect people with the environment. The documents also interlink with the government's commitment to decarbonising transport. The decarbonisation plan recognises the need to undertake action to adapt the transport sector and increase resilience to climate change risks; this challenge is more directly addressed through the UK's National Adaptation Programme.

- The PNDP will also need to be in line with the policies outlined in the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan, which states that the South East is expected to see the greatest impact of climate change within the UK, with increased incidences of extreme weather, increase sea and air temperatures and rising sea levels. Policy SRM1 outlines the strategy to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Policy EN6 also discusses climate change.

## Baseline summary

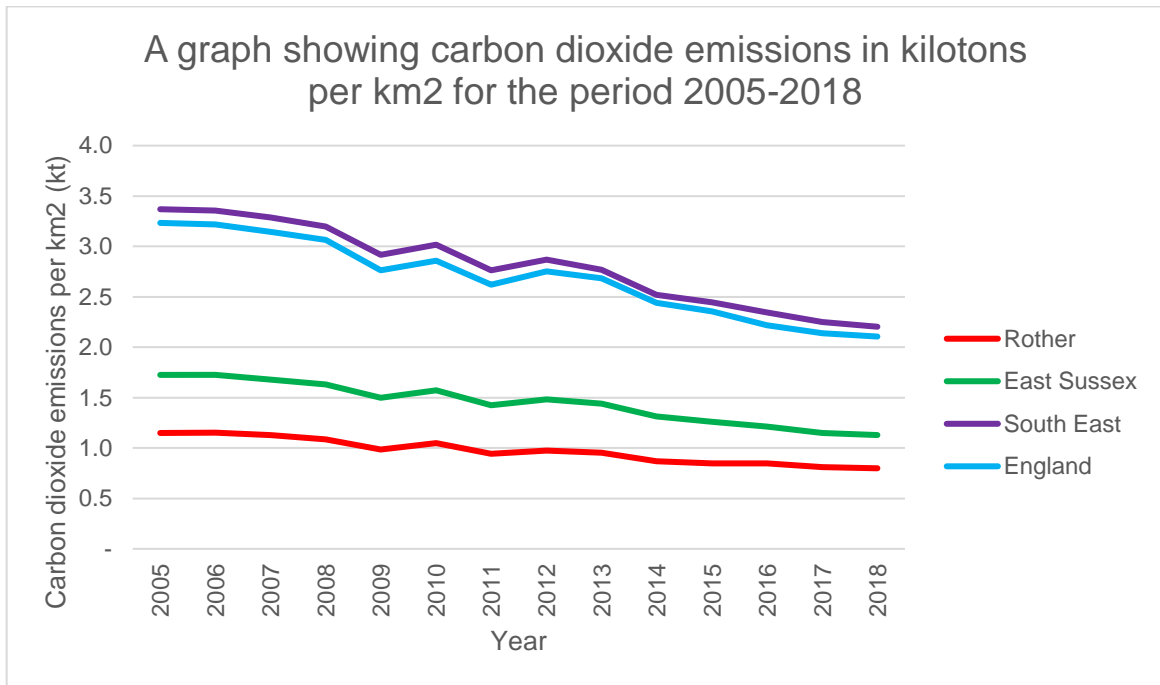
### Contribution to climate change

- 4.3 In September 2019 Rother District Council declared a Climate Emergency, pledging to become carbon neutral by 2030. The Council adopted its draft Environment Strategy document in September 2020<sup>25</sup>.
- 4.4 Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions shown in Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 overleaf are derived from data supplied by the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy<sup>26</sup>.
- 4.5 Figure 4.1 indicates that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Rother district are lower in kilotons per km<sup>2</sup> in comparison to the whole of East Sussex, the South East region and England.

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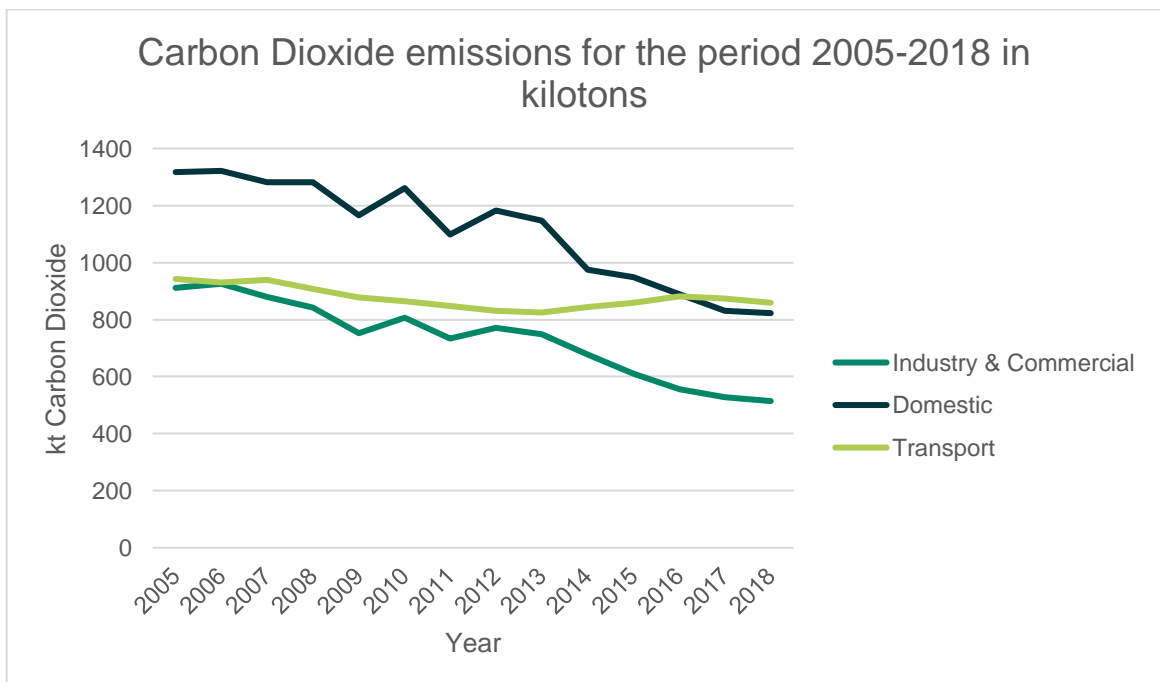
<sup>25</sup> Rother Environment Strategy information and document can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>26</sup> Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2020) 2005 to 2018 UK local and regional CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – data tables can be downloaded [here](#).



**Figure 4.1 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in kt per km<sup>2</sup> across the selected locations (2005-2018)**

4.6 As demonstrated in Figure 4.2 below, the largest contributing sector with regards to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in East Sussex was the domestic sector until 2016, whereupon the transport sector increased and continues to contribute the highest levels of CO<sub>2</sub> across the three sectors.



**Figure 4.2 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in kt per sector in East Sussex (2005-2018)**

4.7 The introduction and uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) will contribute positively towards the reduction of road transport related emissions. In line with assumptions made by the Department for Transport's 'Road to Zero'

report (2018)<sup>27</sup>, it is assumed that ULEV uptake will increase rapidly in the coming decade. Therefore, all vehicles could be ultra-low emission (powered either by hydrogen or electricity) by 2030, thus the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the transport sector have the potential to decrease.

## Effects of climate change

4.8 The UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) programme is a climate analysis tool that provides the most up-to-date assessment on potential future climatic changes in the UK based on climate model simulations<sup>28</sup>. Projections can be downscaled to a regional level across the UK, allowing for specific evaluations of a selected area.

4.9 The UKCP18 projections conclude the effects of climate change for the South East, under the medium emissions scenario, are likely to be as follows:

- The central estimate of increase in annual mean temperatures of between 2°C and 3°C; and
- The central estimate of change in annual mean precipitation of +20 to +30% in winter and -20% to -30% in summer.

4.10 Resulting from these changes, a range of risks may exist for the Neighbourhood Development Plan area, including:

- Increased incidence of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer;
- Increased incidence of illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight (e.g., skin cancer, cataracts);
- Increase in health problems related to rise in local ozone levels during summer;
- Increased risk of injuries and deaths due to increased number of storm events;
- Effects on water resources from climate change;
- Reduction in availability of groundwater for abstraction;
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
- Increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100-year floods;
- A need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- A need to upgrade flood defences;
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding;

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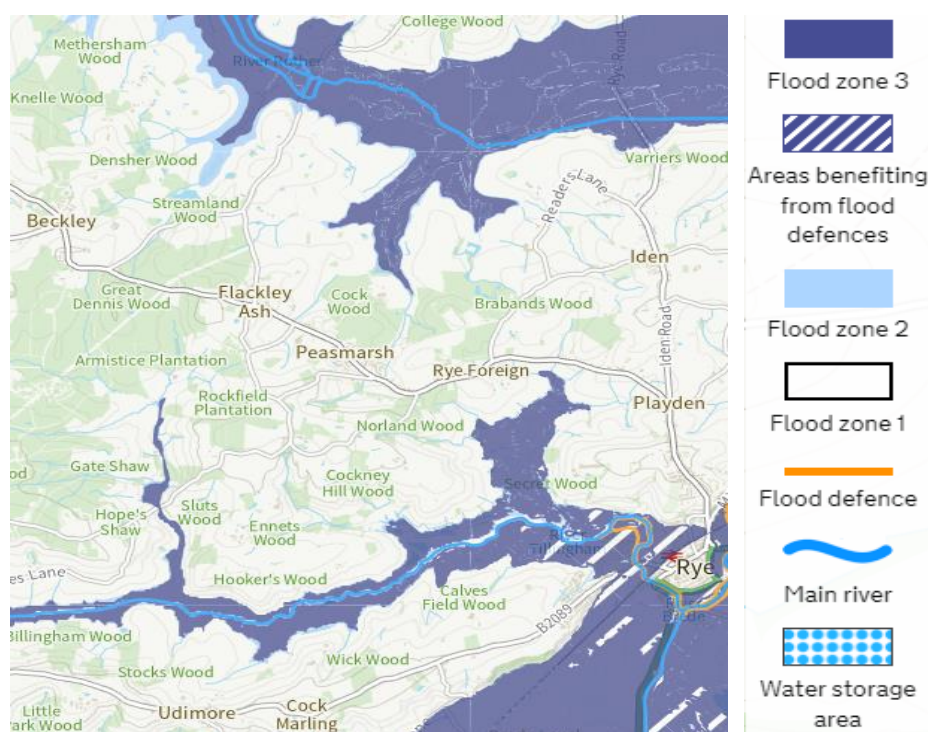
<sup>27</sup> Department for Transport (2018) The Road to Zero report can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>28</sup> Information about UKCP18 and key data can be accessed [here](#).

- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution;
- Spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- Deterioration in working conditions due to increased temperatures;
- Increased demand for air-conditioning;
- Increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence;
- Risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- Flooding of roads.

## Flood risk

4.11 As demonstrated by Figure 4.3<sup>29</sup> below, a considerable amount of the parish is within a Flood Zone 1 and thus has a low-very low fluvial flood risk. However, flood risk is a significant issue for other parts of the parish, particularly along the River Rother running alongside the northern parish boundary and along the River Tillingham on the southern boundary of the PNDP area. Both these areas are classified as Flood Zone 3, which is of high risk of flooding.



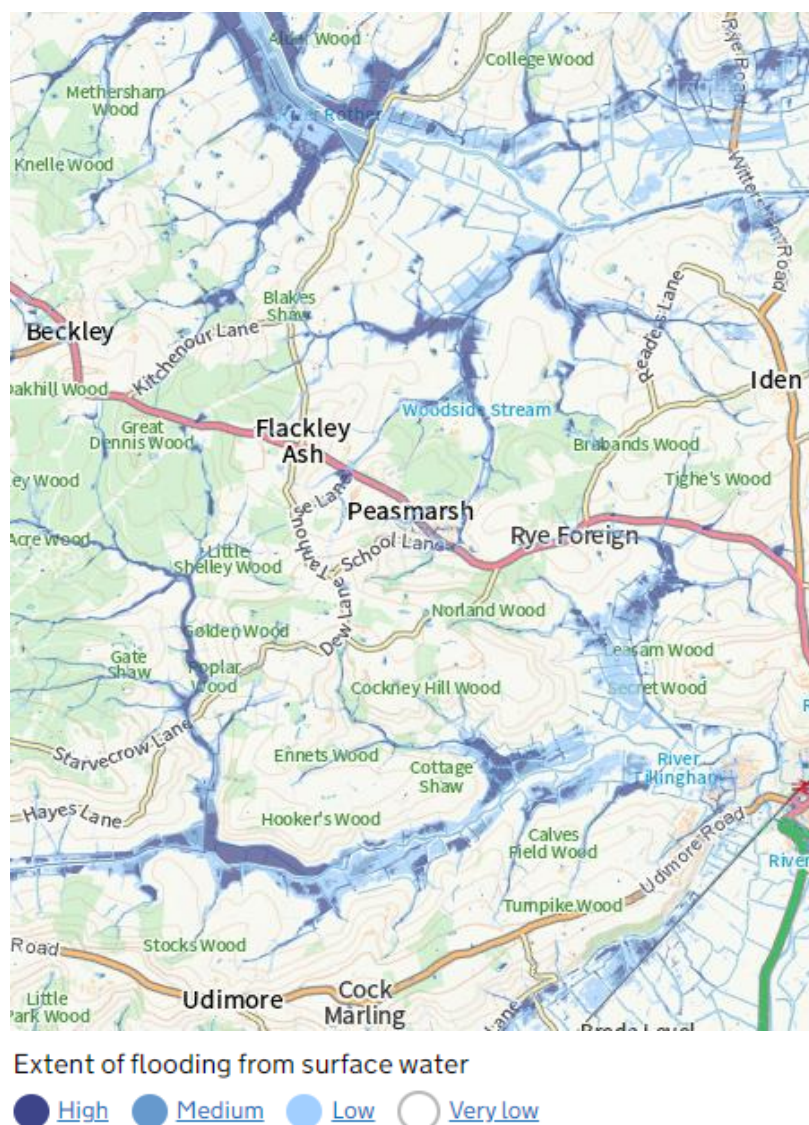
**Figure 4.3: Fluvial flood risk within the PNDP area**

4.12 Surface water flood risks within the PNDP area are shown in Figure 4.4 below<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Flood map for planning can be found [here](#).

<sup>30</sup> Long term flood risk mapping tool can be found [here](#).





**Figure 4.4: Fluvial flood risk within the PNDP area**

4.13 As shown in Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4 above, areas within the PNDP boundary that are at risk of surface water flooding are as follows:

- The area bordering the River Tillingham on the southern parish boundary is at high, medium, and low risk of surface flooding.
- The River Rother itself is at low risk of flooding when at its closest to the Peasmarsh parish boundary, however it is at high and medium risk in the preceding parish of Beckley. The northern half of the parish has areas of low surface water flooding risk, however there is an elevated risk along the Woodside Stream with high and medium risk areas in that part of the parish.

4.14 While Figure 4.3 shows that small areas of fluvial Flood Zone 3 and Zone 2 exist to the far north and the far south of the parish, local evidence suggests that the biggest problem for the parish is surface water flooding in fluvial flood

risk Zone 1 (which is much of the parish). Furthermore, it is suggested that there are important areas of critical drainage.<sup>31</sup>

- 4.15 The parish experienced a significant level of flooding in 2021. The key areas of flooding that have been locally identified are the north end of Tanhouse Lane close to the junction with the A268, the A268 in the middle of the village where the stream flows down the middle of the road and The Old Hop Garden. All three seem to be related to insufficient drainage on the road network. The Old Hop Garden is the natural low point of the village.
- 4.16 Reflecting these issues, a key priority of the PNDP is likely to be more effectively managing drainage regimes.

## Future baseline

- 4.17 Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the PNDP area. In turn it is likely the parish will experience an amplified level of risk associated with climate change and a subsequent increase in need for resilience and adaptation. New development has the potential to increase flood risk through changing surface and ground water flows, overloading existing inputs to the drainage and wastewater networks and/or increasing the number of residents exposed to areas of existing flood risk.
- 4.18 In terms of climate change contribution, greenhouse gas emissions generated in the PNDP area may continue to decrease with the wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies. However, increases in the built footprint of the PNDP area would contribute to increases in the absolute levels of greenhouse gas emissions.

## Key issues

- 4.19 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the ensuing key issues within the PNDP area are identified in relation to climate change:
- Climate change has the potential to lead to an increase in extreme weather events, including relating to extremes in precipitation and temperature. These changes could lead to increased environmental risks and increased health risks for the local population.
  - The transport sector continues to be a key challenge in terms of reducing emissions.
  - Flood risk is a key issue for the parish. Parts of the parish are within fluvial flood risk zone 3, and many locations in the built up part of the village suffer from poor surface water flood risk/ drainage issues, owing in part to the low lying topography of the parish. Surface water run-off from development can heighten the risk and impact of flooding through increasing the run-off from land to water courses.
  - Exacerbating the flood risk issue within the parish is the low-lying topography of the parish, the inadequate road drainage, and subsequent

high levels of surface water run-off. Undeveloped parts of the plan area are known to experience flooding which extends throughout the village, flooding developed areas such as existing properties towards the lower extent of the village.

## SEA objectives

4.20 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objectives and assessment questions.

SEA Objective	Assessment questions to consider for the allocations/proposals within the PNDP
<b>Climate Change</b>	
Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the PNDP area.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of journeys made?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>• Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria?</li> <li>• Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources?</li> <li>• Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?</li> <li>• Support proposals for EV charging infrastructure?</li> </ul>
Support the resilience of the PNDP area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of fluvial and surface-water flooding?</li> <li>• Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the PNDP area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change?</li> <li>• Sustainably manage water runoff and drainage?</li> <li>• Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the PNDP area?</li> <li>• Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?</li> </ul>

## 5. Landscape

### Focus of theme

- Landscape and villagescape character and quality
- Visual amenity

### Policy context

5.1 **Table 5.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan.

**Table 5.1: Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to the landscape**

Document title	Year of publication
<a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</a>	2021
<a href="#">A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</a>	2018
<a href="#">The National Design Guide</a>	2019
<a href="#">National Model Design Code</a>	2021
<a href="#">Higher Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024</a>	2019
<a href="#">Rother Local Plan Core Strategy</a>	2014

5.2 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The PNDP will be required to conform to the principles outlined in the NPPF, which gives great weight to conserving and enhancing protected landscapes, landscape character and scenic beauty. The scale and extent of development within these areas should be limited and development within their setting should be mindfully located and designed to avoid/minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.
- The NPPF also recognises the role of green infrastructure in landscape settings in addition to designated biodiversity sites, habitats, woodland, historic features, agricultural land, and cultural landscapes. The positive contribution that land remediation can have on despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land is also recognised.
- The 25-year Environment Plan and National Design Guide outline the same aims as one another, focusing on creating a cleaner, greener country that puts the environment first and celebrates the variety of natural landscapes and habitats present in the UK. Design is focused on creating beautiful, enduring, and successful places, which respond to local character and provide a network of high quality and green open spaces.
- The National Model Design Code states that all design codes should include a landscape and open space strategy that incorporates the existing natural features and new structural elements. It recognises that landscapes can be major drivers in the design process.

- The Neighbourhood Development Plan area falls within the Higher Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and as such the key aims and objectives within the most recently prepared management plan for this nationally protected landscape should be a key source of reference during plan making.
- The PNDP will also need to be in line with the policies outlined in the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan. The current plan states that historic, built, and natural landscape character needs to be maintained appropriately through ensuring the protection and enhancement of the nationally designated and locally distinctive landscapes and landscape features. Conservation of the landscape's intrinsic value should be made a priority.

## Baseline summary

### Nationally protected landscapes

- 5.3 The PNDP area is within the boundaries of the Higher Weald AONB (see Figure 5.2 at the end of the Chapter). The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 confirms the significance of AONBs, which were originally created under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act in 1949. Section 85 of the CRoW Act places a statutory (legal) duty on all relevant authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty when discharging any function in relation to or affecting land within an AONB.
- 5.4 The Higher Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 discusses the area's special qualities, split into the following themes: geology, landform and water systems, settlement, routeways, woodland and field and heath. Other qualities are also discussed.
- 5.5 The Higher Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 lists key issues that have the potential to influence the AONB's landscape. These include:
- Pressure on sensitive geological features from invasive species and recreation;
  - Increase in greenfield development pressure and the subsequent loss of land;
  - Housing development layout and design failing to respond to or reinforce AONB character;
  - Erosion of AONB character through suburbanisation;
  - Damage to the landscape through development;
  - Development including traffic, noise and light pollution degrading the AONB qualities.

### Local landscape and villagescape character

- 5.6 Landscape and villagescape character are important when evaluating the relationship between people and place; allowing for the identification of

recognisable and distinct patterns in the landscape which make areas unique. Character can assist in assessing the significance of change resulting from development and the value of landscape in both visual and amenity terms. Assessments can provide indications of landscape sensitivity and capacity.

5.7 The PNDP is included in the Lower Rother Valley Landscape Assessment<sup>32</sup> which sits as part of the East Sussex County Landscape Assessment. Key landscape characteristics in this area include:

- Long and dramatic views across valleys from the enclosing ridges and spurs;
- Ancient inland sea cliffs;
- An intricate pattern of rectangular fields bounded by reed fringed ditches;
- A few extensive areas of orchards;
- Exceptionally remote unspoilt areas away from the main roads and villages;
- Extensive loss of hedgerows on lower valley slopes resulting in a stark intensively farmed landscape;
- Scattered woodland across valley slopes and high ground, much of which is ancient woodland;
- Indigenous characteristic tree species on drier slopes with non-native species present in gardens and settlements;
- A variety of wetland birds; and
- Country lanes that are winding, narrow and sunken

5.8 East Sussex County Council conducted a landscape character assessment in 2009, which detailed the following about the Lower Rother Valley:<sup>33</sup>

*“Running from Salehurst in the west, to Iden in the east, this area is dominated by the broad valleys of the lower reaches of the Lower Rother, and the secondary reaches of the Tillingham River. Both rivers have changed course many times over the centuries. The valleys are surrounded by rolling well-wooded country affording long views to Kent. Bodiam Castle dominates the Rother valley floor. The key action priorities for this area include conservation of the distinctive villages and the setting of vernacular buildings. There is also a desire to improve villages with tree conservation plans. The management of tourism pressures and traffic on the main roads is an issue. The landscape structure has been degraded with the decline of traditional farming practice, notably hop growing and orchards. This has led to pressure for agricultural diversification and consequent impacts on small rural settlements”.*<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> The East Sussex County Landscape Assessment – Lower Rother Valley can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>33</sup> East Sussex County Council (2009) Rother Local Development Framework Core Strategy: Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

5.9 Figure 5.1 and Table 5.2 overleaf provide information on locations examined by the East Sussex County Council landscape character assessment within Peasmarsh<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> East Sussex County Council (2009) Rother Local Development Framework Core Strategy: Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment

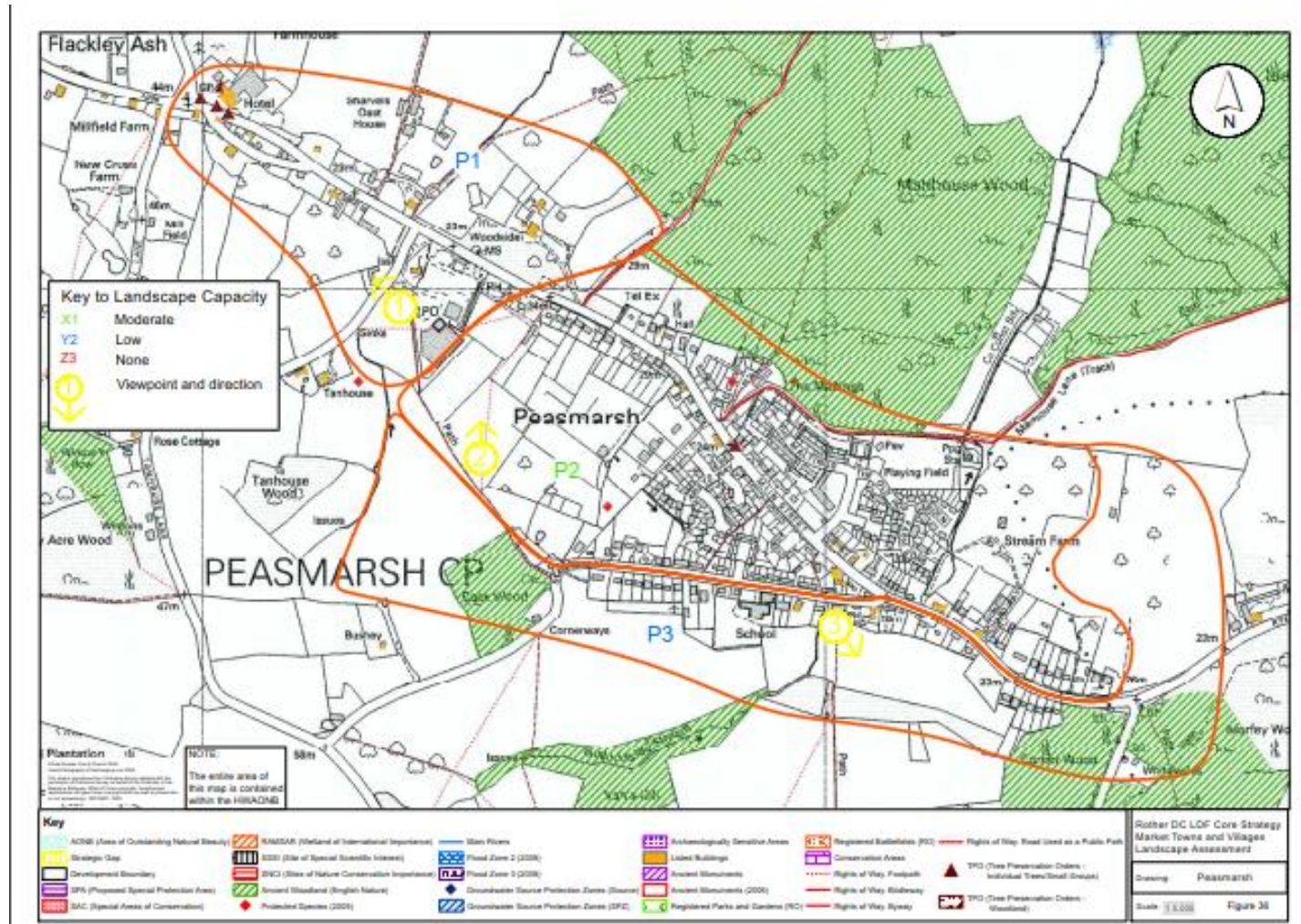


Figure 5.1: Peasmarsh landscape assessment<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> East Sussex County Council (2009) Rother Local Development Framework Core Strategy: Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment



**Table 5.2: Peasmarsh landscape summary<sup>37</sup>**

Village Landscape Areas	Quality	Value	Character Sensitivity to Change	Visual Sensitivity	Management Opportunities	Potential for Mitigation	Capacity to accept change	
							Housing	Business
<p><b>P1 West of Village</b></p> <p>This is pleasant Wealden countryside. The area has a parkland character with feature trees, Lime avenues, Horse Chestnut and unimproved meadows. There are enclosed fields close to the village and more open fields on rising ground to north and west. The area has a sense of place which is enhanced by feature oast houses and weatherboard cottages.</p> <p>The settlement is of older ribbon development with traditional character along the Main Street. More modern cul-de-sacs are at the heart of village</p>	Good	High AONB	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	<p>Well managed farmland. Small paddocks and parkland. Some loss of hedgerows and field structure.</p> <p><b>Conservation</b></p> <p>Trees. Woodland. Tree belts.</p> <p><b>Restoration</b></p> <p>Lost field boundaries.</p> <p><b>Comments</b></p> <p>There is scope for limited infill to the characteristic ribbon</p>	Moderate-Low.	Low	Low

<sup>37</sup> East Sussex County Council (2009) Rother Local Development Framework Core Strategy: Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment

and between School Lane and Main Street.

development. This is limited by the rising nature of the open countryside and development would not be acceptable on the open countryside slopes. Consider the parkland setting of listed Woodside House and other vernacular buildings.

<b>P2 Central Paddocks</b>	Ordinary	High AONB	Low	Low		Moderate.	Moderate	Low
<p>This is the central part of the village on either side of the Main Street. The built up area of the village is included as the character extends across the area to the north of the village. The area is characterised by enclosed paddocks which extend out beyond the gardens of the residential development. The paddocks are generally enclosed by tall well treed hedgerows. Weatherboard cottages</p>					<p>Some less well managed pockets of land and intensive grazing. Hedges replaced with fence.</p> <p><b>Conservation</b></p> <p>Trees and tree belts – hedges.</p> <p><b>Restoration</b></p> <p>Lost field structure.</p>	<p>Moderate.</p> <p>There would be scope to redefine the village edge to the south. Extend tree belts and link to woodland. Replace lost hedges with tree belts and hedges.</p>		

are local features. The settlement is of older ribbon development with traditional character along the Main Street. There are more modern cul-de-sacs at the heart of the village and between School Lane and The Maltings.

**Comments**

There would be scope to infill with sensitive development and redefine the village boundaries where they interface with the countryside. There may be scope in enclosed paddocks close to the village edge.

<p><b>P3 South and East of Village</b></p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>High AONB</p>	<p>Moderate-High</p>	<p>Moderate-High</p>	<p>Grazed meadows and pastures. Hedges replaced with fences in places.</p>	<p>Low.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>This is the area of more open countryside which surrounds the village to the south and east. Ribbon development along Church Lane does not detract from the rural character of the area. The area is characterised by Grazed meadow areas with some areas of orchards to the east of the village. Several footpaths run out from</p>					<p><b>Conservation</b> Woodland and trees and tree belts – hedges.</p>	<p>There would be scope to strengthen the village edge to the south by extending tree belts and linking existing woodlands. There would be scope to replace lost hedges with tree belts and hedges.</p>		
					<p><b>Restoration</b> Lost field structure.</p>			

the area giving access to  
the wider countryside.

The settlement is of older  
ribbon development with  
traditional character  
along the Main Street.  
There are more modern  
cul-de-sacs at the heart  
of the village and  
between School Lane  
and The Maltings.

## **Comments**

There may be limited  
scope in enclosed  
areas and as infill  
development close to  
the village edge.

## Future baseline

- 5.10 New development has the potential to cause changes in landscape character in and around the Neighbourhood Development Plan area. In the absence of a Neighbourhood Development Plan, inappropriate development may take place, threatening the landscape and villagescape features that contribute to the distinctive character of the parish, and wider AONB.
- 5.11 Locally distinctive landscape and villagescape features, characteristics and special qualities can be protected, managed and enhanced through appropriate planning policies. This will supplement the development guidelines and management objectives set out within the AONB Management Plan (as set out above). It is further recognised that new development that is appropriately designed and landscape led could support the area's intrinsic landscape character and quality. This could include regeneration that improves the village setting, delivering green infrastructure improvements and/or new recreational opportunities and enhanced framing of key views.

## Key issues

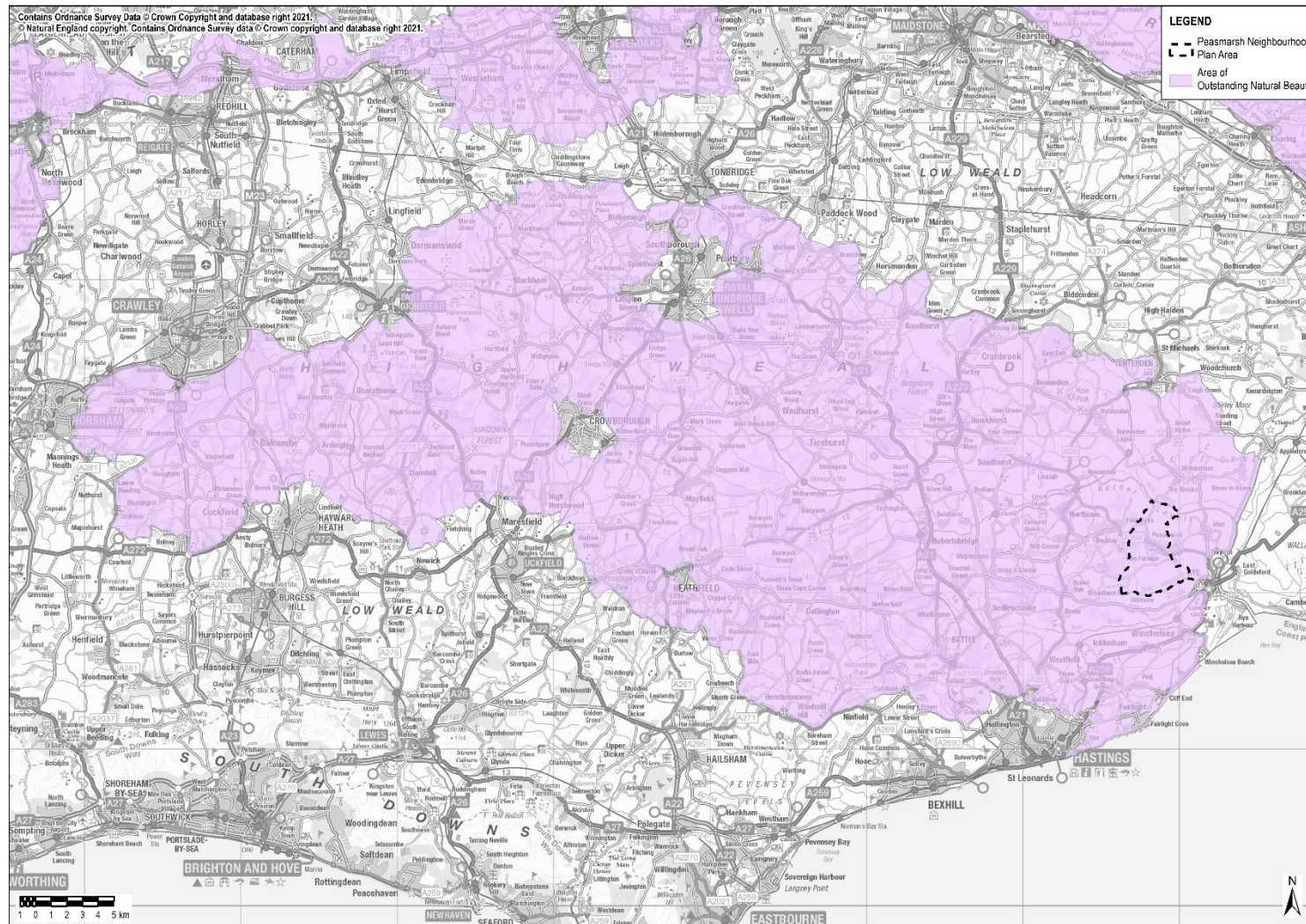
- 5.12 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the ensuing key issues within the PNDP area are identified in relation to the landscape:
- The PNDP area is within the boundaries of the Higher Weald AONB, a nationally designated landscape, designated to ensure its conservation and enhancement.
  - The area is part of the Lower Rother Valley. Key features of this landscape include the dramatic views across the valleys, a pattern of rectangular fields, remote and unspoiled areas, scattered woodland and many species of trees.
  - New development has the potential to lead to incremental change in landscape and villagescape character and visual amenity.
  - Development that is appropriately designed should be implemented to allow for the support of the area's intrinsic landscape character and quality, in accordance with the AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024.

## SEA objectives

5.13 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions.

SEA Objective	Assessment questions to consider for the allocations/proposals within the PNDP
<b>Landscape</b>	
To protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape and villagescape.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance the Higher Weald AONB in line with the objectives of the AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance local landscape and villagescape character, key sensitivities and quality of place?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity and settlement character?</li> <li>• Protect visual amenity and locally important views in the Plan area?</li> <li>• Retain and enhance landscape and villagescape features that contribute to the rural setting of the Plan area?</li> </ul>

Figure 5.2 Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan area in the context of the High Weald AONB



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## 6. Historic Environment

### Focus of theme

- Designated and non-designated heritage assets
- Setting, special qualities, and significance of heritage assets
- Locally important heritage features
- Historic character of the Neighbourhood Development Plan area

### Policy context

6.1 **Table 6.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan.

**Table 6.1: Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to the historic environment**

<b>Document title</b>	<b>Year of publication</b>
<a href="#"><u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u></a>	2021
<a href="#"><u>A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</u></a>	2018
<a href="#"><u>The National Design Guide</u></a>	2019
<a href="#"><u>National Model Design Code</u></a>	2021
<a href="#"><u>Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal Designation and Management</u></a>	2019
<a href="#"><u>Historic England Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets</u></a>	2017
<a href="#"><u>Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</u></a>	2016
<a href="#"><u>Historic England Advice Note 3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans</u></a>	2015
<a href="#"><u>Rother Local Plan Core Strategy</u></a>	2014

6.2 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The key principles for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment are as follows:
  - The historic environment is a shared resource;
  - Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment;
  - Understanding the significance of places is vital;
  - Important places should be managed to sustain their values;
  - Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent; and



- Documenting and learning from decisions is essential<sup>38</sup>.
- The significance of a place is the crucial element that supports the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Significance is the collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, no matter what form the place takes. This means a singular building, an archaeological site or a larger historic area, such as a whole village or landscape, can be important.
- The PNDP will need to conform to the principles set out in the NPPF, which seek to conserve and enhance historic environment assets in a way that compliments and works with their significance. The NPPF pursues planning policies and decisions that are understanding to local character and history without preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation and change. The NPPF supports the use of area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places.
- The NPPF indicates proposed plans should ensure the design of streets, parking areas and other transport elements reflect current national guidance including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. Design Codes are able to set out a necessary level of detail in sensitive locations. In the case of the historic environment, they can indicate specific ways to maintain local character.
- The 25 Year Environmental Plan and the National Design Guide recognise and reiterate the role of the historic environment in supporting healthy and thriving ecosystems, landscapes and cultural values.
- Historic England's Advice Notes provide further guidance on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Of relevance for the PNDP is the emphasis on the importance of:
  - Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest that underpin designations and the consideration of how settings and/or views contribute to the significance of heritage assets;
  - Recognising the value of implementing controls through neighbourhood development plans, conservation area appraisals and management plans; and
  - Appropriate evidence gathering, including the clear identification of any issues that threaten an area, asset character or appearance that merit the introduction of management measures
- The PNDP will also need to be in line with the policies outlined in the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan, which states that the historic landscape is to be managed to the highest standard. Furthermore, the Core Strategy states that development affecting the historic built environment will be required to:
  - Reinforce the special character of the district's historic settlements;

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<sup>38</sup> Historic England: Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance can be found [here](#).

- Take opportunities to improve areas of poor visual character or with poor townscape qualities;
  - Preserve and ensure clear legibility of locally distinctive buildings and their settings, features, fabric and materials;
  - Refer to character analysis in Conservation Area Appraisals where relevant;
  - Reflect current best practice guidance; and
  - Ensure appropriate archaeological research and investigation of both above and below-ground archaeology. This includes retention where required.
- iii. In addition to conserving the historic environment, the PNDP should also look to identify opportunities to enhance the setting of the historic environment in combination with the rejuvenation of features and areas that are at risk of neglect and decay.

## Baseline summary

### Listed buildings

6.3 Listed buildings are nationally designated buildings that are protected through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990<sup>39</sup>. According to the National Heritage List for England, the PNDP area contains a total of 54 listed buildings: one Grade I, two Grade II\* and 51 Grade II. The listed buildings are provided below in addition to their Historic England List Entry Number (HE), and are grouped by listing grade:

#### Grade I:

- The Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, HE: [1217124](#)

#### Grade II\*:

- Woodside, HE: [1217327](#)
- Flackley Ash Hotel, HE: [1275455](#)

#### Grade II:

- Peasmarsh Place, HE: [1217122](#)
- Dew Farmhouse, HE: [1217126](#)
- Stream Farmhouse, HE: [1217127](#)
- Sunnyside, HE: [1217128](#)
- Old House, HE: [1217129](#)
- Morebread Cottages, HE: [1217317](#)

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<sup>39</sup> Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 can be accessed [here](#).

- Stream Farm Cottage, HE: [1217318](#)
- Old Well Cottage, HE: [1217319](#)
- The Stables of Woodside to the north of the house, HE: [1217328](#)
- The White House, HE: [1217329](#)
- Ivy Cottage, HE: [1217330](#)
- White Knights, HE: [1217331](#)
- The Cock Inn, HE: [1217332](#)
- Kings Head Cottages, HE: [1217333](#)
- Cobbler's Cottage, HE: [1217334](#)
- Lavender Cottage, HE: [1217335](#)
- Old Winders, HE: [1217337](#)
- Lobbs, HE: [1217338](#)
- The Old Cottage, HE: [1217339](#)
- The Horse and Cart Inn, HE: [1217340](#)
- Button's Farmhouse, HE: [1217341](#)
- Cleves, HE: [1217342](#)
- Tanhouse, HE: [1217343](#)
- Old Shepherds, HE: [1217344](#)
- New House, HE: [1217345](#)
- Old Thatch, HE: [1217365](#)
- Farthings, HE: [1217367](#)
- Goldspur Cottage, HE: [1217372](#)
- Pound Cottage, HE: [1217375](#)
- Apple Tree Cottage, HE: [1217377](#)
- Bushey Farmhouse, HE: [1217379](#)
- Groves Farmhouse, HE: [1217381](#)
- Oasthouess and Granary at New House to the south east of the farmhouse, HE: [1217547](#)
- Wheelwrights, HE: [1257367](#)
- Tanhouse Oast, HE: [1275363](#)
- Rose Cottage, HE: [1275366](#)

- Clonmel, HE: [1275438](#)
- Partridge Farmhouse, HE: [1275442](#)
- Bay Tree Cottage, HE: [1275456](#)
- Mill Cottage, HE: [1275458](#)
- Pond Cottage, HE: [1275461](#)
- Oak Cottage, HE: [1275462](#)
- Blackwall Cottage, HE: [1275463](#)
- Hales Stores with the house attached Redford House, HE: [1275473](#)
- South View, HE: [1275488](#)
- Sharwells Home for the Elderly, HE: [1275493](#)<sup>40</sup>
- Stables, tack room and coach house approximately 40 metres north west of Peasmarsh Place, HE: [1275554](#)
- Peasmarsh House, HE: [1275555](#)
- Dinglesden, HE: [1275557](#)
- Birds Kitchen, HE: [1275558](#)
- The Rectory, HE: [1392725](#)

6.4 While there are numerous Listed Buildings, there are no Conservation Areas present in the parish.

## Locally important heritage features

6.5 It is recognised that not all historic environment features in an area are subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people have contact with as part of daily life. Although they may not be designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are important to local communities, like open spaces and distinctive buildings.

6.6 The Heritage Gateway<sup>41</sup> identifies the important and distinctive structures and/or features that positively contribute to the local character and sense of place in East Sussex. A search of the Heritage Gateway<sup>42</sup> revealed a total 95 features included within the local records (East Sussex HER) in addition to 32 non-statutory features.

6.7 During the subsequent stages of the SEA process, the East Sussex HER database will be reviewed in further detail to determine whether the policies and proposals in the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan have the potential to impact these features.

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<sup>40</sup> Designation as listed by Historic England [here](#). It is noted the building is no longer an elderly home and is now a private dwelling.

<sup>41</sup> The Heritage Gateway can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>42</sup> The search involved selecting the admin location tab and inputting Peasmarsh into the search bar then running the search. The results were presented in a table split into Statutory Data, National Designation Decisions, Non-Statutory National Data, Local Records and National Image Collections.

In terms of the parish's archaeological resource, Archaeological Notification Areas (ANA) define presently known and recorded areas of heritage sensitivity which could contain further un-recorded features of archaeological and historic interest within the Rother District Council area. According to the Archaeological Notification Areas for East Sussex, Brighton and Hove mapping tool<sup>43</sup>, there are two ANAs within the parish boundary: DES12856 and DES12927<sup>44</sup>.

## Heritage at risk

- 6.8 Since 2008, Historic England has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights the Grade I and Grade II\* listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields, wreck sites and conservation areas deemed to be 'at risk'. According to the 2021 Heritage at Risk Register for South East England<sup>45</sup>, there are no heritage assets at risk within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area.
- 6.9 It is important to recognise that the Heritage at Risk Registers for areas outside of London do not contain information about the status of Grade II listed buildings. As such, it is currently not possible to determine whether any of the Grade II listed buildings within the PNDP area are at risk.
- 6.10 Encouraging and facilitating improvements to the condition of heritage assets within the Plan area (wherever practicable) is recognised as an opportunity for the PNDP.

## Future baseline

- 6.11 New development within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area has the potential to negatively affect designated and non-designated heritage assets, notably the many listed buildings present, as well as their settings. It is however recognised that assets will continue to be afforded protection under the provisions of national legislation, the NPPF and adopted Core Strategy, and that sensitive design and layout could allow new development to lead to positive effects overall. This may include through public realm and access improvements, or opportunities to better reveal the significance of an asset, to increase enjoyment of the historic environment.
- 6.12 Furthermore, there may be the opportunity for new development to enhance the historic setting of the parish, through engaging in conserving the historic landscape and helping reveal the historic importance of assets.

## Key issues

- 6.13 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the ensuing key issues within the PNDP area are identified in relation to the historic environment:
- The PNDP area contains a number of designated heritage assets, including one Grade I, two Grade II\* and 51 Grade II listed buildings and two ANAs.

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<sup>43</sup> Archaeological Notification Areas for East Sussex, Brighton and Hove mapping tool can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>44</sup> The search was carried out by opening the mapping tool and searching for Peasmarsh in the search bar, then cross-referencing the mapping tool with a map showing the parish boundary.

<sup>45</sup> Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register 2021 for London and South East England can be accessed [here](#).

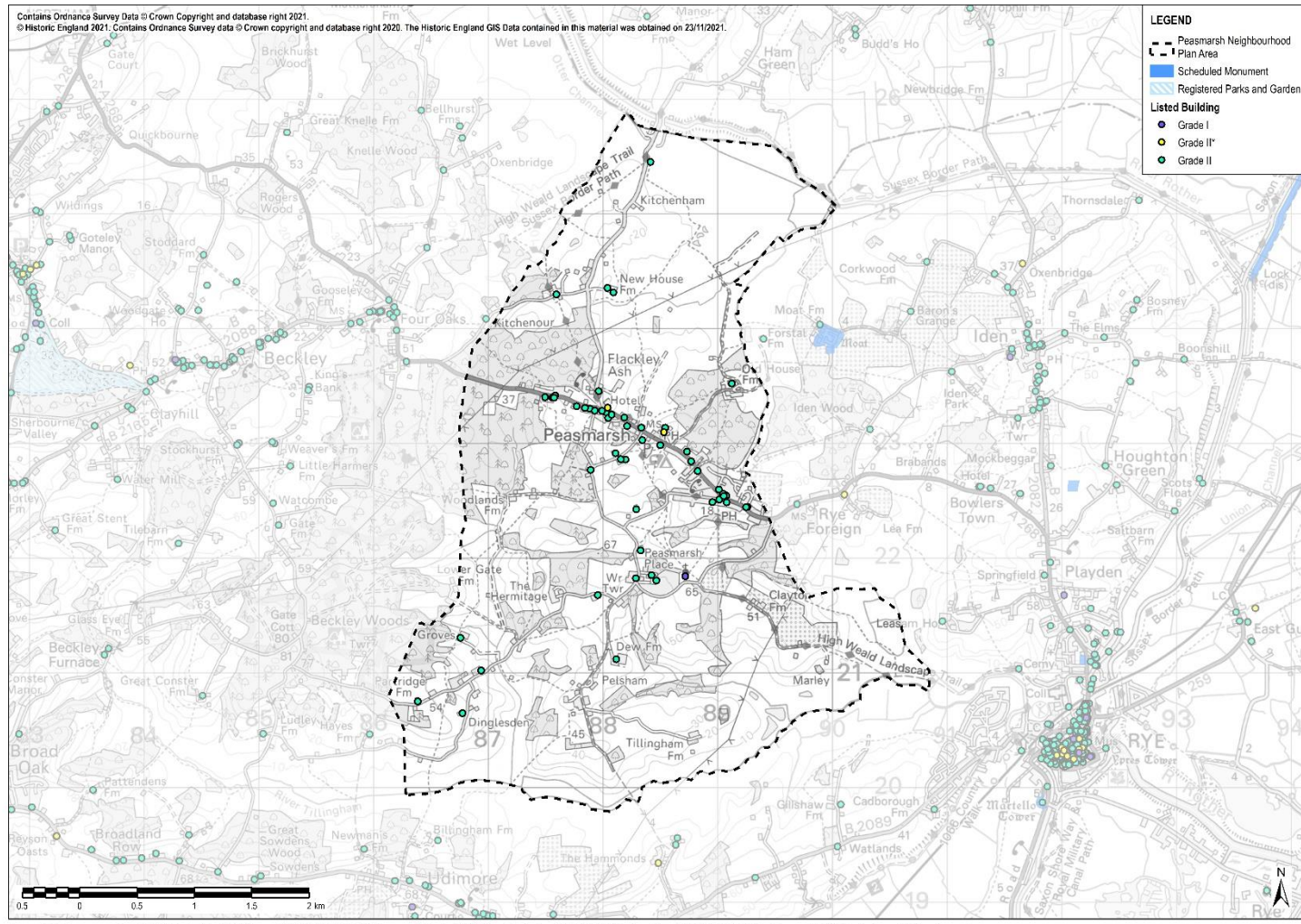
- As well as this, the East Sussex HER highlights 95 locally important heritage features which provide local historic significance to the PNDP area. It also highlights the presence of 32 non-statutory features. These sensitivities should therefore be appropriately considered in future growth strategies.
- It will be important to ensure that future development avoids/minimises impacts upon the historic environment and maximises opportunities to improve the public realm and green infrastructure, to the indirect benefit of heritage settings.

## SEA objectives

6.14 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions.

SEA Objective	Assessment questions to consider for the allocations/proposals within the PNDP
<b>Historic Environment</b>	
Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the PNDP area.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and enhance buildings, structures and areas of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated as well as their settings?</li> <li>• Protect the integrity and the historic setting of key finds of cultural heritage interest as listed in the East Sussex HER?</li> <li>• Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the PNDP area?</li> </ul>

Figure 6.1 Peasmarsh Historic Environment Designations



## 7. Land, Soil and Water Resources

### Focus of theme

- Quality of agricultural land
- Water resources, quality and management
- Mineral resources

### Policy context

7.1 **Table 7.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan.

**Table 7.1 Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to land, soil, and water resources**

Document title	Year of publication
<a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</a>	2021
<a href="#">A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</a>	2018
<a href="#">Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England</a>	2009
<a href="#">Future Water: The Government's water strategy for England</a>	2011
<a href="#">Water for Life</a>	2011
<a href="#">Waste Management Plan for England</a>	2013
<a href="#">Southern Water Resources Management Plan</a>	2019
<a href="#">South East Water Resources Management Plan</a>	2019
<a href="#">East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton and Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan</a>	2013
<a href="#">Rother Local Plan Core Strategy</a>	2014

7.2 The key messages emerging from the review are summaries below:

- The PNDP will need to conform to the principles outlined in the NPPF which pursues the protection of high-quality soil resources and the improvement of the water environment. It recognises the wider benefits of natural capital and the need to consider the long-term implications of climate change and ways in which to build resilience in this respect. The NPPF encourages efficient land use, utilising brownfield land opportunities and land remediation schemes where appropriate and delivering environmental gains.
- The 25-year Environment Plan discusses measures to improve soil quality, restore and protect peatlands, use water more sustainably, reduce pollution, maximise resource efficiency and minimise environmental impacts. This correlates to the Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England policy paper, which seeks to ensure that all soils in England will be managed sustainably and degradation threats minimised



successfully by 2030. This policy paper also seeks to secure sustainable and resilient water resources in addition to the improvement in waterbody quality. The Waste Management Plan for England identifies measures being taken to move towards a zero-waste economy, which includes national waste plan which seeks to identify measures being taken to move towards a circular economy in which resources are kept in use for longer. To do this, there needs to be a maximisation in the value of resources used and a minimisation in the waste created.

- The Southern Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) states that the South East of England is in a state of serious water stress and intends to implement 32 catchment schemes, two desalination schemes and three water recycling projects over the plan period of 2020-2070. This WRMP states that in Sussex several measures will be put in place to ensure reliable water supplies: increase the number of homes with meters, reduce leaks, upgrade infrastructure, introduce catchment schemes to protect water from contaminants, refurbish a groundwater source and apply for drought orders and permits to continue to abstract water in dry weather.
- The South East Water WRMP also states that the South East of England is in a serious state of water stress which implemented a compulsory water metering programme that commenced in 2011. The document highlights other issues, such as the high reliance on groundwater sources and a growing population with an increasing housing need.
- The PNDP will also need to conform with the principles set out in the East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton and Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan, which identifies and safeguards sites and resources that are important to the continuation of sustainable mineral and waste management.
- The PNDP will also need to be in line with the policies outlined in the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan. In particular, the adopted Core Strategy states that soils contribute to the present-day landscape through their historic use and that the careful management of water will be important to living more sustainable lifestyles, outlined in Policy SRM2.

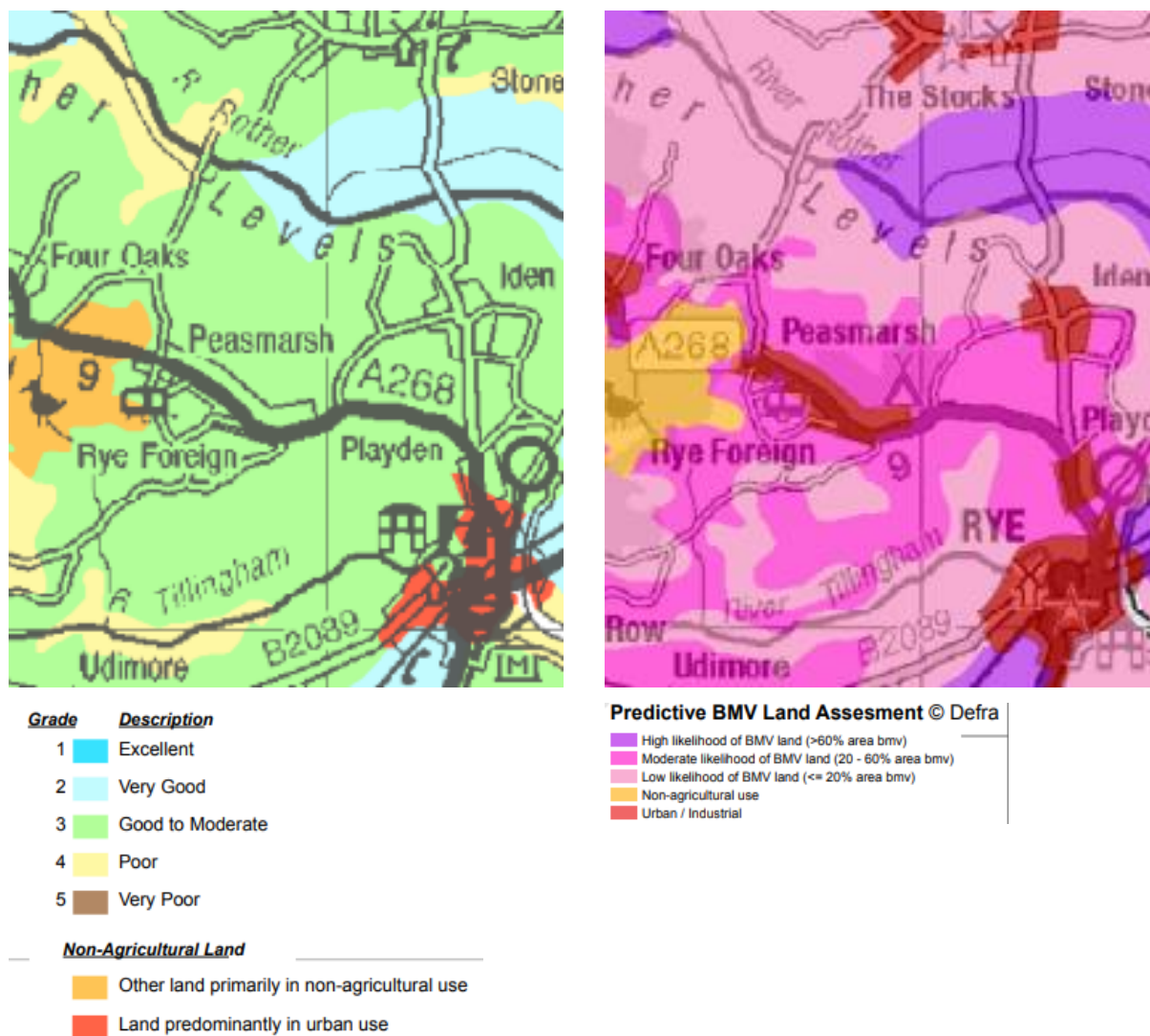
## Baseline summary

### Soil resources

- 7.3 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural land' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) land and Grades 3b to 5 of poorer quality. In this context, there is a need to avoid loss of higher quality BMV agricultural land.
- 7.4 As shown in Figure 7.1 overleaf (left hand side image), the parish is underlain by mostly Grade 3 (Good to Moderate) agricultural land, with Grade 4 (Poor) to the south of the parish and Grade 2 (Very Good) to the north bordering the

River Rother<sup>46</sup>. In the absence of a detailed assessment, it is not possible to determine whether the isolated areas of Grade 3 land are Grade 3a (the best and most versatile land) or Grade 3b quality (not best and most versatile).

7.5 Figure 5.1 also shows (right hand side image) the results of Natural England’s ‘Predictive Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land Assessment’ for London and South East England <sup>47</sup>. Figure 5.1 shows the PNDP area to include areas of High, Moderate and Low likelihood of BMV land, in addition to an area of urban development coinciding with the built up village centre.



**Figure 7.1: Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) and Likelihood of BMV**

## Water resources and quality

7.6 The PNDP area is located in the South East river basin district<sup>48</sup> and within the Rother Management Catchment area<sup>49</sup>. The parish overlaps with two operational catchments:

<sup>46</sup>Natural England ALC map of London and the South East can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>47</sup> Natural England Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land - Strategic scale map London and the South East can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>48</sup> UK River Basin District map can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>49</sup> Rother Management Catchment area can be accessed [here](#).

- The Brede and Tillingham Operational Catchment, with the River Tillingham bordering the southern parish border.
- The Rother Levels Operational Catchment, with the Lower Rother from Etchingham to Scot's Float Water Body to the north of the parish area.

7.7 In terms of the status of the water bodies, The River Tillingham Water Body<sup>50</sup> was awarded a moderate ecological status in 2019 but was given a failed chemical status for the same year due to the presence of the priority hazardous substances Mercury (and its compounds) and Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE).

7.8 The Lower Rother from Etchingham to Scot's Float Water Body<sup>51</sup> was awarded a moderate ecological status in 2019 but was given a failed chemical status for the same year due to the presence of the priority hazardous substances Mercury (and its compounds) and PBDE. It was also failed due to the presence of the priority substance Cypermethrin. Taking each in turn:

- Mercury is a naturally occurring metallic element, but much of the mercury found in today's environment is present due to past industrial use. It can occur in various forms, which change in their degree of toxicity and bioavailability. It is designated as a priority hazardous substance under the Water Framework Directive<sup>52</sup> due to its ability to bioaccumulate, its toxicity and its persistence in the environment<sup>53</sup>.
- PBDEs are man-made compounds that are persistent in the environment, with a degradation half-life estimated between months to years. They have been used as flame retardants in a wide range of products including electrical and electronic equipment, textiles and foams. They also have the potential for long-range transport<sup>54</sup>. It is designated as a priority hazardous substance under the Water Framework Directive.
- Cypermethrin is a synthetic insecticide used to control pests in arable and livestock farming, in homes and garden and in public and commercial buildings. It is not very persistent in the environment nor is it likely to bioaccumulate in aquatic organisms, however it is highly toxic to some species of aquatic life, in particular aquatic invertebrates like insects and crustaceans<sup>55</sup>. Cypermethrin is designated as a priority substance under the Environmental Quality Standards Directive<sup>56</sup>.

7.9 There have been a number of sewage incidences in the parish over the last three years, indicating sewage capacity issues. Local evidence indicates that the village treatment plant has been shut down and replaced by the pumping station, located by the old bowls green, and is reported to be under- or at least at capacity.<sup>57</sup> While sewage disposal is the responsibility of Southern Water, as a key concern for residents, drainage is a priority for the PNDF.

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<sup>50</sup> River Tillingham Water Body information can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>51</sup> Lower Rother from Etchingham to Scot's Float Water Body information can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>52</sup> The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (2017) can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>53</sup> Mercury: sources, pathways and environmental data can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>54</sup> Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs): sources, pathways and environmental data can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>55</sup> Cypermethrin: sources, pathways and environmental data can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>56</sup> The Environmental Quality Standards Directive (2008) can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>57</sup> Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group (date unknown) Neighbourhood Development Plan – Other Issues can be accessed [here](#)

- 7.10 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) represent areas at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution, identifying rules in relation to the use of fertilisers and manures as well as the requirement to prevent water pollution from farming areas<sup>58</sup>. Peasmarsh parish is within S509 Lower Rother from Robertsbridge to Iden NVZ and S503 Tillingham NVZ.
- 7.11 Wastewater and sewerage capacity has been identified locally as a key issue for the parish.

## Future baseline

- 7.12 Future development has the potential to affect water quality and availability through increased consumption and pollution, wastewater discharges, water runoff and modification. It is recognised that this is a significant issue for the parish, and that Southern Water and South East Water are required to address any water supply and wastewater management issues in line with their WRMP. Communication is ongoing between the PNDP steering group and Southern Water to address concerns regarding capacity and drainage within the village. It will therefore be important for new development to avoid impacts on water quality and to contribute to reducing consumption and improving efficiency.
- 7.13 New development has the potential to lead to the loss of BMV agricultural land in the parish.
- 7.14 It is unlikely that new development within the parish would have an impact on the wider area's NVZ designation given the strategic scale of the overall NVZs. Additionally, a large source of detriment to NVZ comes from agricultural use, which is not anticipated to be brought forward through the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

## Key issues

- 7.15 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the ensuing key issues within the PNDP area are identified in relation to land, soil and water resources:
- The PNDP area has the potential to be underlain by best and most versatile (BMV) land, though a full classification of the quality of this land has not been undertaken. While new development is likely to be focussed on the existing settlement, as a finite resource, BMV land should be retained where possible in future growth.
  - The River Tillingham Water Body and the Lower Rother from Etchingham to Scot's Float Water Body are located to the north and south of the parish. Both of these water bodies were awarded moderate ecological status in 2019 but failed the chemical status tests for the same year due to the presence priority contaminants.
  - The parish area overlaps with two NVZs, however it is unlikely that development set out in the PNDP will have an impact on the designation.

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<sup>58</sup> Information on NVZs can be accessed [here](#).

- Wastewater and sewerage capacity has been identified locally as a key issue for the parish.

## SEA objectives

7.16 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objectives and assessment questions.

SEA Objective	Assessment questions to consider for the allocations/proposals within the PNDP
<b>Land, Soil, and Water Resources</b>	
Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources?</li> <li>• Promote any opportunities for the use of previously developed land, or vacant/underutilised land?</li> </ul>
Protect and enhance water quality in addition to the use and sustainable management of water resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid impacts on water quality?</li> <li>• Support improvements to water quality?</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development?</li> <li>• Protect waterbodies from pollution?</li> <li>• Support enhancements to sewerage and wastewater capacity?</li> <li>• Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/or water recycling?</li> </ul>

## 8. Community Wellbeing

### Focus of theme

- Population structure and density
- Age structure
- Deprivation issues
- Views on housing
- Community assets and infrastructure
- Influences on health and wellbeing

### Policy context

8.1 **Table 8.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan.

**Table 8.1: Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to community wellbeing**

<b>Document title</b>	<b>Year of publication</b>
<a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</a>	2021
<a href="#">A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</a>	2018
<a href="#">Healthy and safe communities - Planning practice guidance</a>	2019
<a href="#">Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On</a>	2020
<a href="#">Planning for Sport Guidance</a>	2019
<a href="#">Rother District Council - Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024</a>	2019
<a href="#">Active Rother - Rother Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2018-2022</a>	2018
<a href="#">Rother Local Plan Core Strategy</a>	2014

8.2 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The PNDP will need to conform to the principles outlined in the NPPF, which seek to retain and enhance access to community services and facilities such as educational facilities and open spaces. The NPPF recognises the benefits of having a range of local provision to support community needs. In addition, the NPPF recognises the benefits of creating cohesive communities in safe environments where the fear of crime (and crime itself) does not undermine resident quality of life. This contributes to ensuring settlement and community identities are protected.
- The NPPF recognises the role of development plans in helping to deliver access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity, therefore contributing to the health and wellbeing of communities. The health benefits of access to nature, green spaces and

green infrastructure are further reiterated in the 25 year Environment Plan.

- The 2020 Health Equity in England Report identifies a health gap between less and more deprived areas, which has grown in the last decade. This means an increased amount of people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health with a stalled, or even declining, life expectancy.
- The Planning for Sport Guidance seeks to help the planning system provide formal and informal opportunities for everyone to take part in sport and be physically active, setting out twelve principles.
- The Rother District Council Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy recognises that more can be done to achieve an improvement in the quality of life of residents. It sets out priorities linking to three key areas: housing development (with a focus on increasing the supply of affordable housing), housing needs (with a focus on reducing homelessness and rough sleeping) and housing quality (with a focus on improving current housing standards and ensuring housing meets the needs of the residents).
- The Rother Sport and Physical Activity Strategy outlines the vision to make Rother District an active place where it is easy to engage in sport and physical activity opportunities. The aims are:
  - To facilitate flexible, attractive and sustainable opportunities for the population to participate in sport and physical activity, with a focus on inactive individuals from under-represented population groups and priority areas;
  - To utilise sport and physical activity participation as a driver for community development;
  - To increase insight into the physical activity behaviour of local residents and the influences that could support them in being more active in the future;
  - To utilise behaviour changes to support inactive individuals;
  - To widen the appeal of physical activity participation; and
  - To develop and implement a shared approach to understanding the impact of the strategy
- The PNDP will also need to be in line with the policies outlined in the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan. In particular, the adopted Core Strategy dedicates chapter 14 to communities and outlines six policies to aid the Rother District community. Chapter 15 outlines local housing needs. These allow for the continuation of supporting vibrant, safe, balanced and inclusive communities and providing housing in a way that supports local priorities.

## Baseline summary

### Population and age structure

- 8.3 According to the previous AECOM HNA document<sup>59</sup>, Peasmarsh parish had a total population of 1,191. The mid-2019 population estimate for the PNDP area is 1,294 which indicates a growth since 2011.
- 8.4 Within 2020 it was estimated that approximately 17.5% of the population of the PNDP was between the ages of 0-17, with 53.3% between the working ages of 18-64 and 29.25% within the over 65 age band.

### Index of Multiple Deprivation

- 8.5 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation and is the combination of seven different domains as described below. The seven deprivation domains are as follows:
- Income: the proportion of the population experiencing a deprivation relating to low income. There are a further two subsets of this measure:
    - Income deprivation affecting children: the proportion of children aged 0-15 living in income deprived families.
    - Income deprivation affecting older people: the proportion of all adults aged 60 and above that experience income deprivation.
  - Employment: the proportion of the working-age population involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those who want to work but cannot.
  - Education, skills and training: the lack of attainment and skills in the population.
  - Health deprivation and disability: this risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health.
  - Crime: the risk of personal and material victimisation at the local level.
  - Barriers to housing and services: the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, split into 'geographical barriers' linked to the physical proximity and 'wider barriers' linked to access to housing.
  - Living environment: the quality of the local environment, categorised into 'indoors living environment' to measure the quality of housing and 'outdoors living environment' to measure indicators like air quality and road traffic accidents.
- 8.6 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)<sup>60</sup> are designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies intended to be as consistent as possible, with each LSOA containing

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<sup>59</sup> UK Census data for the PNDP can be accessed via the AECOM HNA [here](#).

<sup>60</sup> The Indices of Deprivation Explorer is available [here](#).



approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2019, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived.

- 8.7 In this respect, the PNDP is within the Rother 002D LSOA. The 2019 rankings for this neighbourhood can be found in Table 8.2 below.

**Table 8.2 The LSOAs of the PNDP area against each Index of Multiple Deprivation**

<b>Deprivation Indices</b>	<b>Rother 002D</b>
Index of Multiple Deprivation	15071 (amongst 50% most deprived neighbourhoods)
Income	14871 (amongst 50% most deprived neighbourhoods)
Employment	15883 (amongst 50% most deprived neighbourhoods)
Education, skills and training	9132 (amongst 30% most deprived neighbourhoods)
Health and disability	22468 (amongst 40% least deprived neighbourhoods)
Crime	27750 (amongst 20% least deprived neighbourhoods)
Barriers to housing and services	5134 (amongst 20% most deprived neighbourhoods)
Living environment	10980 (amongst 40% most deprived neighbourhoods)
Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)	12660 (amongst 40% most deprived neighbourhoods)
Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI)	20583 (amongst 40% least deprived neighbourhoods)

- 8.8 Table 8.2 above demonstrates that whilst, on balance, Peasmarsh parish is somewhat deprived, the only significant deprivation issues are the 'Barriers to housing and services' and 'Education, skills and training' categories. This reflects the rural nature of the parish, for example the limited access to schools, wider education, and health services (as discussed further below).
- 8.9 Rother District is ranked 135 out of 317 local authorities in 2019 for overall deprivation.

## Community assets and infrastructure

8.10 An overview of the services, facilities and amenities within the PNDP area is provided below<sup>61, 62</sup>.

- Jempson's Superstore provides the main service offer of the parish. The company was founded in 1935 and is one of the largest family owned food supermarkets in the UK, and includes a superstore, restaurant, post office, pharmacy and a petrol station.
- Other local, independent shops and businesses in the parish include the Tanhouse Garage, James Dean Pottery, Mydotty Photography, Flackley Ash Hotel and Restaurant; public houses The Cock Inn and The Horse and Cart Inn; Peasmarsh Place Care Home; and a primary school. There is also the Tillingham vineyard, restaurant and hotel.
- James Dean Pottery and Mydotty Photography are independent businesses but have no employees.
- Other community assets include the parish Memorial Hall and St Peter and Paul's Church.

8.11 In terms of access to education, it is noted that Peasmarsh parish does not have a secondary school within the parish boundary. The nearest secondary school is Rye College, a seven minute drive from Peasmarsh. There are additional secondary schools further afield in Hastings, Robertsbridge and Tenterden within a 20-40 minute drive. Furthermore, schools in Ashford are accessible via a 20 minute train journey.

8.12 Rye and Hastings offer a wider variety of services, facilities and amenities for those living in Peasmarsh.

8.13 In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, an increasing number of residents are working from home. Subsequently, a key priority of the PNDP is telecommunications.<sup>63</sup> Local evidence suggests *"there have been reports of deterioration of broadband performance at peak periods, and cell phone coverage will likely come under increasing pressure."*<sup>64</sup>

8.14 A further priority of the PNDP is access to health services. The parish does not have a medical centre or surgery, with the closest facilities located within Rye and Northiam. Access to these facilities can be problematic for those without access to a private car. There are also capacity issues at these facilities, which affects their ability to take on new patients.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> The examination of the services, facilities and amenities within each settlement was conducted via a high-level Google maps search – focusing on each area in turn and making a note of the different features.

<sup>62</sup> Information on the services, facilities and amenities within Peasmarsh Parish can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>63</sup> Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan webpage can be accessed [here](#)

<sup>64</sup> Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan webpage can be accessed [here](#)

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

## Housing tenure

8.15 The following information regarding housing tenure in Peasmarsh has been extracted from the Peasmarsh Housing Needs Assessment (2022) <sup>66</sup>:

- According to the 2011 Census, 67.5% of homes in the PNDP were owned outright, 1.2% were shared ownership, 20.2% were socially rented and 9.3% privately rented
- The mean house price in 2020 was £549,676 and median house price in 2020 was £405,000. It is normal for the median to be below the mean because the mean captures the average of all house prices, including outlying data points.
- Mean property prices have grown by 90.6% and median prices also increased by 90.6% between 2011-2020.
- According to the 2011 Census, 51.2% of houses in PNDP were detached, with 26.4% being semi-detached, 16.3% terraced, 4.5% flats, 0.7% converted/shared houses and 0.4% in commercial buildings. 7.1% of these homes were one bed, 24.2% two bed, 45.6% three bed, 14.9% four bed and 8.1% five bed or more.

## Green infrastructure networks

8.16 Access to gardens, parks, woodlands and rivers have played a huge part in helping people through the pandemic. Almost nine in ten adults surveyed by Natural England reported that being in nature makes them feel happy and nearly three quarters of adults were concerned about biodiversity loss in England<sup>67</sup>.

8.17 Green spaces in the Neighbourhood Development Plan area include:

- Allotments;
- Peasmarsh Park;
- Many wooded areas;
- Playground; and
- Sports field and pavilion.

## Future baseline

8.18 The 2019 IMD indicates deprivation in the PNDP area is relatively high for the 'Barriers to housing and services' and 'Education, skills and training' categories. To reduce deprivation levels in these areas in the longer term, the PNDP should seek to utilise opportunities to support the delivery of the right mix of housing types, tenures and sizes according to local needs, to support sustainable growth of the community.

8.19 As the population of Peasmarsh increases and ages, there is likely to be increasing pressure on healthcare services. Therefore, the lack of direct

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<sup>66</sup> Peasmarsh Housing Needs Assessment can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>67</sup> Natural England's survey can be accessed [here](#).

healthcare services in the PNDP area has the potential to lead to the decline in access to core services for residents. This highlights a need to support the retention and improvement of important facilities within the Plan area. This also includes open green space provision in Peasmarsh, which has been increasingly highlighted through the ongoing COVID19 pandemic. These factors are more likely to be appropriately considered and addressed through planned development rather than unplanned development.

8.20 The COVID-19 pandemic has also changed the way people work and shop. For many people, working from home is likely to continue to form part of a more flexible approach. The effects of increased levels of home working are further discussed under the transportation theme (Chapter 9).

## Key issues

8.21 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the ensuing key issues within the PNDP area are identified in relation to community wellbeing:

- The Neighbourhood Development Plan area has experienced an increase in population for the period 2011-2020, with 29.25% of the 2020 population within the over 65 age band. This suggests there is an ageing population within the parish.
- Based on the 2019 IMD data, Peasmarsh parish has no significant deprivation issues, except for the 'Barriers to housing and services' and 'Education, skills and training' categories.
- While there are a range of existing services, facilities, and amenities within the PNDP area, health services are notably limited. A wider variety of services can be found in the neighbouring settlements of Rye and Hastings.
- There is no secondary school in the parish or neighbouring parishes.
- As the requirements of the working population continue to change, there is likely to be a greater need for adaptable dwellings that can accommodate flexible working practices which might include co-working facilities/hubs.

## SEA objectives

8.22 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions.

SEA Objective	Assessment questions to consider for the allocations/proposals within the PNPD
<b>Community Wellbeing</b>	
<p>Ensure growth in the Neighbourhood Development Plan area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality and affordable housing?</li> <li>• Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes?</li> <li>• Meet the needs of all sectors of the community?</li> <li>• Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's needs?</li> <li>• Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?</li> <li>• Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities?</li> <li>• Facilitate green infrastructure enhancements?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction?</li> <li>• Minimise fuel poverty?</li> <li>• Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing residents?</li> </ul>

# 9. Transportation

## Focus of theme

- Transport infrastructure
- Traffic flows and congestion
- Accessibility
- Public rights of way

## Policy context

9.1 **Table 9.1** below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan.

**Table 9.1 Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to transportation**

<u>Document title</u>	<u>Year of publication</u>
<u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</u>	2021
<u>Transport Investment Strategy</u>	2017
<u>East Sussex Local Transport Plan 3 (2011-2026)</u>	2011
<u>Rother Local Plan Core Strategy</u>	2014

9.2 The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The PNDP will need to conform to the principles outlined in the NPPF, which influence plans and development proposals to ensure they consider transport issues from the earliest stages, address any known issues, and maximise opportunities to increase accessibility to sustainable transport. Larger developments are expected to limit the need to travel and offer a genuine choice of transport modes. However, it is recognised that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural environments.
- The Transport Investment Strategy sets out investment priorities to improve the connectivity, effectiveness and reliability of transport network whilst simultaneously reducing impacts on the natural environment. Furthermore, the document places great emphasis on making cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journeys.
- The East Sussex Local Transport Plan 3 sets out how to improve transport and maintain roads over the plan period. The overall aim is to develop an effective, well managed transport infrastructure with improved travel choices – helping businesses thrive, delivering better access to jobs and services and creating safer, healthier, more sustainable, and inclusive communities.
- The PNDP will also need to be in line with the policies outlined in the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan. In

particular, the adopted Core Strategy dedicates chapter 18 to transport and accessibility and outlines policies to aid Rother District Council to provide a higher level of access to jobs and services and improve connectivity with the rest of the region.

## Baseline summary

### Rail network

- 9.3 There are no railway stations within the PNDP area. The closest station is Rye Station, run by Southern Railway<sup>68</sup>. Hourly services are available to Hastings, Bexhill, Eastbourne, and Ashford International station. Ashford International provides links with London St Pancras, to which it is a 35-minute travel time. As such, the Rye/Ashford International route is typically used to access London by rail from the Plan area.
- 9.4 Hastings' railway station<sup>69</sup> is run by Southern Railway and in addition to services to Bexhill, Eastbourne and Ashford International, has up to twice hourly services to Battle, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, and London Charing Cross. There are also services to London Bridge via Eastbourne and Gatwick Airport.
- 9.5 Ore railway station<sup>70</sup>, which is slightly closer to the Plan area than Hastings, but is less well served, has hourly services to Eastbourne, Ashford International, Brighton and London Bridge.

### Bus network

- 9.6 Bus services are relatively limited in the parish, with just one 'Stagecoach South East' service running every two hours Monday – Friday. The 313 service travels from Rye Harbour to Northiam, stopping at several stops in Peasmarsh along the main road<sup>71</sup>.
- 9.7 Local evidence suggests stakeholders consider the current frequency and routing of local bus services in Peasmarsh to be *“very inadequate”*.<sup>72</sup> While it is recognised that the bus services are the responsibility of East Sussex County Council, the 313 is considered by residents as not fit for purpose: Specifically, *“the frequency is inadequate, there need to be early and late buses and there needs to be a coordinated approach with onward buses and the trains in Rye. In addition, Peasmarsh - which is designated as a key service centre - should have more than one bus service with direct destinations such as Tenterden and the Conquest Hospital.”*<sup>73</sup>

### Cycle network

- 9.8 While there are no designated cycle ways in the parish, it is recognised that several residents cycle to Rye and would benefit from improved links.

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<sup>68</sup> Rye train station information can be viewed [here](#).

<sup>69</sup> Hastings train station information can be viewed [here](#).

<sup>70</sup> Ore train station information can be viewed [here](#).

<sup>71</sup> Bus 313 route information can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>72</sup> Peasmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan webpage can be accessed [here](#)

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

## Road network and congestion

- 9.9 The A268 runs through the middle of the PNDP area and joins the A259 in Rye. The A268 provides access to Camber Sands, therefore the road gets congested with tourist traffic in the summer season. Furthermore, deliveries to Jempson's and HGV deliveries to Rye also cause congestion year-round. Given the limited bus service (set out above) and good parking availability in Rye, a high proportion of residents rely on the private vehicle to drive rather than take the bus for employment and leisure. Many will park in Rye to board the train to larger centres, particularly London. Local congestion is experienced on the A259, particularly at 'peak' times.
- 9.10 There are several other minor roads within the parish area: Mackerel Hill, Kitchenour Lane, Tanhouse Lane, School Lane, Dew Lane, Church Lane and Starvecrow Lane. The rest of the Plan area is navigated using a series of minor roads and tracks.
- 9.11 Public transport, roads and traffic is a key issue brought up by residents locally. The Utilities and Infrastructure website states *"the A268 through the village is very busy and frequently the traffic is well in excess of the speed limits. The speeding problem is exacerbated by a lack of policing. The parish roads are also the responsibility of ESCC, and the associated policing is the responsibility of Sussex Police... Discussions with ESCC are deliberately being delayed until we know where future developments are expected to be. That will allow discussions to be coordinated with access issues in the hope of combining traffic calming measures with access. A roundabout on the A268 at the Jempson's turning would be an example of that. These discussions will be supported by the data now being collected using the parish's newly acquired BlackCAT Traffic Monitor. Discussions with police can, however, proceed at an early date. Some of us remember a few years ago when a senior officer addressed the parish Annual Assembly and promised regular traffic camera van visits - not that that happened. Again, the BlackCAT data will be used to support discussions which are expected in the first quarter of 2022"*.

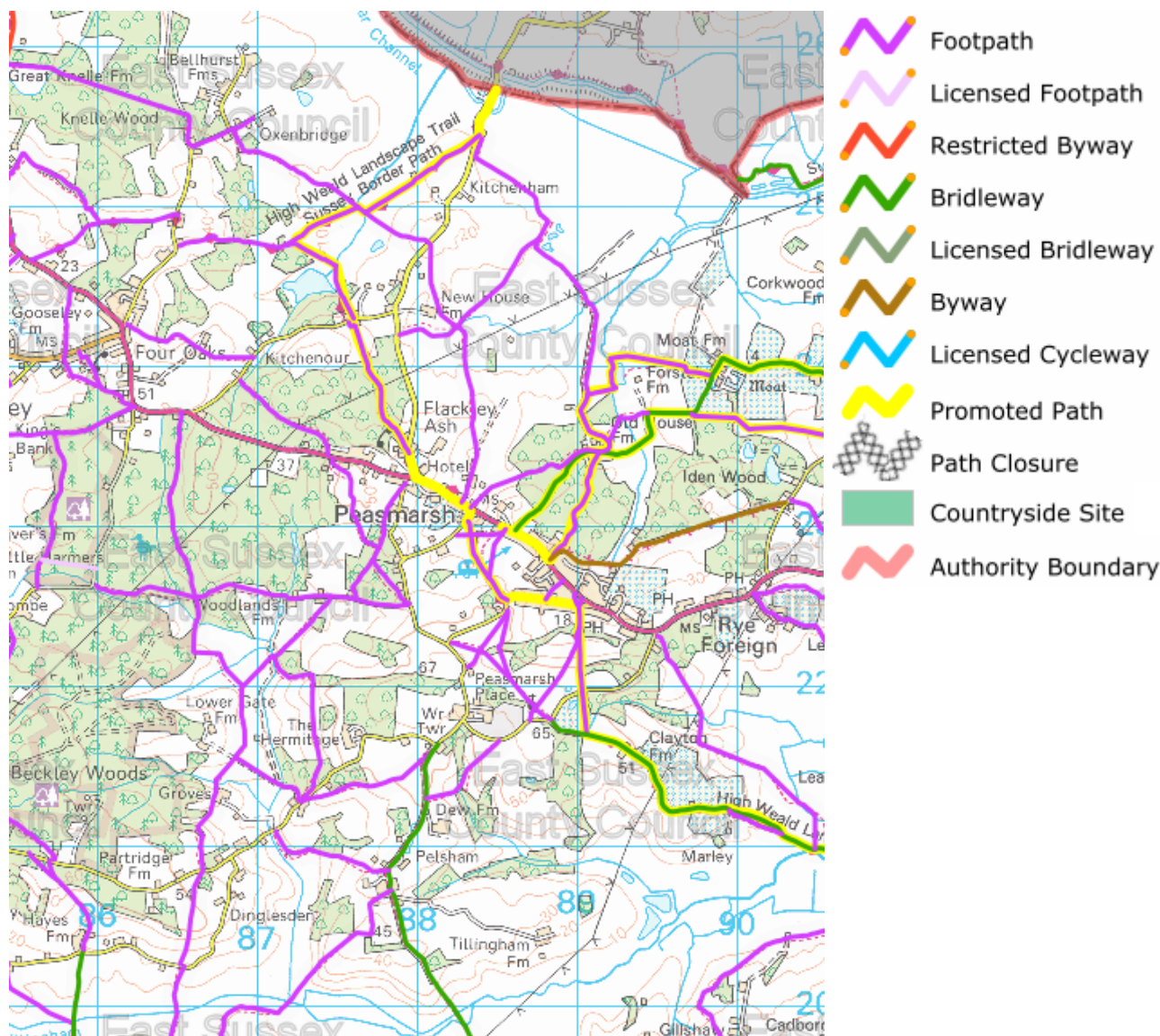
## Public rights of way (PRoW)

- 9.12 According to East Sussex County Council Public Rights of Way map and Figure 9.17<sup>74</sup>, footpaths and bridleways run across the Peasmarsh parish area. Of note, there is the eastern section of the Higher Weald Landscape Trail in the PNDP area.

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<sup>74</sup> East Sussex County Council Public Rights of Way map can be accessed [here](#).





**Figure 9.1: Public Rights of Way in the PNDP**

9.13 The Higher Weald Landscape Trail<sup>75</sup> is a 145km route running through the Higher Weald AONB from east to west. The specific section that crosses the PNDP area is the Flackley Ash to Rye section and contributes two sightseeing spots on the map – the Church of St Peter and St Paul and Peasmarsh Place<sup>76</sup>.

## Future baseline

9.14 Given the relatively rural setting of the PNDP area and the lack of local sustainable transport options, in the absence of strategic transport interventions growth in the parish is likely to increase the reliance on private vehicles. Therefore, new development has the potential to increase traffic and cause congestion within the Plan area, particularly along the A268.

9.15 There may be opportunities to improve public transport networks within the PNDP area to encourage an increased use in sustainable modes of transport, which would also alleviate any pressures on the road networks. This could also include planning and implementing public rights of way and cycle routes to

<sup>75</sup> Higher Weald Landscape Trail information can be accessed [here](#).

<sup>76</sup> Higher Weald Landscape Trail Flackley Ash to Rye section information can be accessed [here](#).

improve the connectivity within the PNDP area as well as outside of the parish. It is noted that a cycle route from Rye to Peasmarsh is currently being explored, potentially as part of the High Weald Way.

9.16 As discussed in previous chapters, considering the pandemic, and changing working habits, the provision of infrastructure to facilitate working from home is likely to positively contribute towards transport management, reducing the number of vehicles on the road at peak times.

9.17 Whilst negative effects of new development on the transport network are likely to be mitigated in part by new infrastructure, there will be a continuing need for development to be situated in accessible locations.

## Key issues

9.18 Following the consideration of the baseline information and policy context review, the ensuing key issues within the PNDP area are identified in relation to transport:

- Public transport is limited to the 313 bus service. The service runs infrequently and is limited in its route.
- There are no railway stations within the PNDP area. However, the Plan area is accessible to stations which provide access to a range of destinations, including London, Eastbourne, Ashford, and Brighton.
- There are numerous footpaths and bridleways present in the PNDP area. There is also a section of the Higher Weald Landscape Trail.
- The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to change travel patterns in the short, medium, and longer term.
- There is a need to promote an effective pedestrian, cycling and movement strategy for the Plan area.

## SEA objectives

9.19 Based on the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the SEA should include the following objective and assessment questions.

SEA Objective	Assessment questions to consider for the allocations/proposals within the PNDP
<b>Transportation</b>	
Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the key objectives within the East Sussex Local Transport Plan 3 to encourage more sustainable transport?</li> <li>• Encourage a shift to more sustainable forms of travel and enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements to reduce traffic congestion?</li> <li>• Increase and improve accessibility and support local connectivity and sustainable travel movement?</li> <li>• Reduce impacts of transport on the landscape character of the Lower Rother Valley and the Higher Weald AONB?</li> <li>• Reduce the impact of the transport sector on climate change?</li> <li>• Facilitate working from home and remote working?</li> <li>• Improve road safety?</li> <li>• Reduce the impact on residents and the built environment from the road network?</li> </ul>

# 10. Next steps

## SEA objectives

10.1 The five stages of the SEA process<sup>77</sup> are identified below. Scoping (the current stage) is the second stage of the SEA process.

- Screening.
- Scoping.
- Assess reasonable alternatives, with a view to informing preparation of the draft plan.
- Assess the draft plan and prepare the Environmental Report with a view to informing consultation and plan finalisation; and
- Publish a 'statement' at the time of plan adoption to 'tell the story' of plan-making / SEA (and present 'measures concerning monitoring').

10.2 The next stage will involve appraising reasonable alternatives for the PNDP. This will consider alternative policy approaches for the plan, including, if appropriate, alternative spatial strategies. The findings of the appraisal of these alternatives will be fed back to the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group so that they might be considered when preparing the draft plan.

10.3 Once the draft 'pre-submission' plan has been prepared by the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group, it will be subjected to SEA and the Environmental Report prepared for consultation alongside it.

10.4 Following subsequent submission to Rother District Council, and consultation, the Neighbourhood Development Plan will be put forward for Independent Examination.

## Consultation on the Scoping Report

10.5 At this scoping stage, the SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies. The statutory consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England. The Scoping Report has been released to these three statutory consultees, Rother District Council, and to the Higher Weald AONB Team. Consultees are invited to comment on the content of this Scoping Report; in particular, the evidence base for the SEA, the identified key issues, and the proposed SEA Framework.

10.6 The consultation period runs from 21<sup>st</sup> February to 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022. Comments on the Scoping Report should be sent to:

Rosie Cox, AECOM

Email address: [rosie.cox@aecom.com](mailto:rosie.cox@aecom.com)

10.7 All comments received on the Scoping Report will be reviewed and will influence the development of the SEA where appropriate.

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<sup>77</sup> In accordance with the stages set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance

10.8 All comments received on the Scoping Report will be reviewed and will influence the development of the SEA where appropriate.

# Appendix A SEA framework

The SEA framework has been established through the identification of key issues and environmental objectives as part of the scoping exercise. This draws upon the baseline position and policy context that has been prepared for a range of SEA themes (as set out in Chapters 2-10).

The framework consists of a set of headline objectives and supporting assessment questions, which will be used to appraise the environmental effects of the draft Plan (and reasonable alternatives).

**Table A.1** below outlines the proposed SEA framework, bringing together the objectives and assessment questions that have been set out at the end of each SEA theme.

**Table A.1 proposed SEA framework**

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...)
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the integrity of the designated sites for biodiversity and geodiversity located within proximity to the Neighbourhood Development Plan area?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats as well as priority habitats and species?</li> <li>• Achieve biodiversity and environmental net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green infrastructure networks?</li> <li>• Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?</li> </ul>
Climate Change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the PNDP area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of journeys made?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>• Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria?</li> <li>• Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources?</li> <li>• Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?</li> <li>• Support proposals for EV charging infrastructure?</li> </ul>
	Support the resilience of the PNDP area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of fluvial and surface-water flooding?</li> <li>• Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the PNDP area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change?</li> <li>• Sustainably manage water runoff and drainage?</li> <li>• Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the PNDP area?</li> </ul>

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?</li> </ul>
Landscape	To protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape and villagescape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance the Higher Weald AONB in line with the objectives of the AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance local landscape and villagescape character, key sensitivities, and quality of place?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character?</li> <li>• Protect visual amenity and locally important views in the Plan area?</li> <li>• Retain and enhance landscape and villagescape features that contribute to the rural setting of the Plan area?</li> </ul>
Historic Environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the PNDP area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and enhance buildings, structures, and areas of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated as well as their settings?</li> <li>• Protect the integrity and the historic setting of key finds of cultural heritage interest as listed in the East Sussex HER?</li> <li>• Support the undertaking of early archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the PNDP area?</li> </ul>
Land Soil and Water Resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote any opportunities for the use of previously developed land, or vacant/underutilised land?</li> <li>• Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources?</li> </ul>
	Protect and enhance water quality in addition to the use and sustainable management of water resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid impacts on water quality?</li> <li>• Support improvements to water quality?</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development?</li> <li>• Protect waterbodies from pollution?</li> <li>• Support enhancements to sewerage and wastewater capacity?</li> <li>• Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/or water recycling?</li> </ul>
Community Wellbeing	Ensure growth in the Neighbourhood Development Plan area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality and affordable housing?</li> <li>• Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes?</li> <li>• Meet the needs of all sectors of the community?</li> <li>• Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's needs?</li> </ul>

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the option/ proposal help to...)
	and inclusive communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?</li> <li>• Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities?</li> <li>• Facilitate green infrastructure enhancements?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction?</li> <li>• Minimise fuel poverty?</li> <li>• Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing residents?</li> </ul>
Transport	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the key objectives within the East Sussex Local Transport Plan 3 to encourage more sustainable transport?</li> <li>• Encourage a shift to more sustainable forms of travel and enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements to reduce traffic congestion?</li> <li>• Increase and improve accessibility and support local connectivity and sustainable travel movement?</li> <li>• Reduce impacts of transport on the landscape character of the Lower Rother Valley and the Higher Weald AONB?</li> <li>• Reduce the impact of the transport sector on climate change?</li> <li>• Facilitate working from home and remote working?</li> <li>• Improve road safety?</li> <li>• Reduce the impact on residents and the built environment from the road network?</li> </ul>



