

Rusper Neighbourhood Plan

Landscape Character Assessment

and

Assessment Of Local Gaps In Plan Area

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1. Introduction

The Rusper Neighbourhood Plan Group has set out to identify distinct areas within the overall plan

area and provide a broad assessment of the character of each area and its importance to the landscape and the communities that live there. This document also identifies three specific Local Gap areas between settlements in the parish, which either serve as a rural buffer or a visual break helping to maintain the individual nature of a settlement, or which make a key contribution to the character of a settlement, or its rural setting. These will be designated as Local Gaps in the Ruser Neighbourhood Plan and given additional protection in recognition of the significant role they play.

The Ruser Neighbourhood Plan Group has prepared this assessment to create a consistent and transparent methodology for evaluating potential Local Gaps. It forms part of the Evidence Base which has informed the production of the Neighbourhood Plan.

This assessment establishes three tests which potential sites must pass in order to qualify as important landscape areas and a fourth test to qualify as Local Gaps. It also demonstrates how each of the sites identified in the Ruser Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Plan (August 2019) satisfies these tests.

While preparing the document, we have been especially aware of the need to follow natural boundaries and incorporate important wildlife and flood plain areas. This means that some areas extend outside of the plan area. It is recognised that no special protection can be provided outside this plan area by this plan, but it was felt that to end the recognition of the significance of these areas at an arbitrary parish boundary did not seem consistent with recognising the reason for their designation.

2. Policy Background

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) §20 item (b) highlights the need to consider flood risk implications and item (d) is clear about the need for “conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation”.

NPPF §15 makes it clear that planning should be genuinely plan-led ... for local people to shape their surroundings.

NPPF §29 states that “Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan”.

NPPF §170 states that the “planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes”.

Local Planning Policy

Note 16 on page 10 of the NPPF states that: “Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area”. Therefore, any policy in the Neighbourhood Plan, including the policy relating to Local Gaps, must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the local plan.

The important local plan for our purposes is the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF).

Key policies in the HDPF are:

HDPF Policy 27 Strategic Policy: Settlement Coalescence, which is clear that “Landscapes will be protected from development which would result in the coalescence of settlements.”

HDPF Policy 26 Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection, which is clear that “Outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected

against inappropriate development.”

HDPF Policy 25 Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character, which states “The Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats will be protected against inappropriate development.”

HDPF Policy 24 Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection, which states “The high quality of the district’s environment will be protected through the planning process and the provision of local guidance documents.”

HDPF Policy 30 Protected Landscapes also applies as the plan areas lies close to the High Weald AONB and point 1 states “The natural beauty and public enjoyment of the High Weald AONB and the adjoining South Downs National Park will be conserved and enhanced and opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities will be promoted”. Many of the views from the plan area extend across the High Weald AONB and even to the South Downs National Park.

Additional considerations from the HDPF are:

HDPF Policy 38 Strategic Policy says that Development proposals will avoid the functional floodplain.

HDPF Spacial Objectives:

7. To locate new development in sustainable locations that respect environmental capacity and which have appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities in place, or where these can realistically be provided; and to encourage the appropriate re-use of brownfield sites in sustainable locations
10. Identify and preserve the unique landscape character and the contribution that this makes to the setting of rural villages and towns and ensure that new development minimises the impact on the countryside.
11. To safeguard and enhance the environmental quality of the district, ensuring that development maximises opportunities for biodiversity and minimises the impact on environmental quality including air, soil, water quality and the risk of flooding.
12. Ensure that new development minimises carbon emissions, adapts to the likely changes in the future climate and promotes the supply of renewable, low carbon and decentralised energy.

HDPF Spacial Portrait:

- 3.17 It is important for the strategy to reflect and address the challenges that emerge from a mixed urban/rural environment, whilst maintaining and enhancing the natural beauty of the area. The natural environment plays a key role in the health of the district's economy. This includes the provision of ecosystem services such as flood attenuation and the offsetting of climate change, as well as land for food production. The district also provides ecosystem services for the more urbanised areas in the wider Gatwick Diamond, including Crawley. The natural environment also has direct economic benefits, and woodland management for biodiversity has for example been identified as having high potential as a low carbon fuel source by the Local Economic Partnership.
- 3.18 The diversity of the landscapes, townscapes and settlement pattern which characterises the district is an environmental and cultural asset of great value which needs to be respected and enhanced in planning and land management decisions. This is of particular importance as the rural, leafy environment and historic villages are a key reason that individuals and businesses choose to locate in the district, and protecting this

character will help ensure the health of the economy of the district into the future. The role and influence of Horsham Town as the major centre within the district is key. The need to manage change within the District also remains a priority. There is a need to plan for new infrastructure, largely funded by new development, to serve a growing population. The district also has its own rural issues, not least in terms of access to services within rural areas and the future of the rural economy in such a changing context.

Other Horsham District Council References

Horsham District Landscape Capacity Assessment (April 2014)

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planningpolicy/planning-policy/evidence-base/landscape-capacity-assessment-report>

Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (Oct 2003)

https://www.horsham.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/31349/Landscape-Character-Assessment-2003.pdf

Considerations from West Sussex County Council

The plan area also falls within the Low Weald Hills area LW4 and Low Weald Northern Vales area LW8 of the West Sussex County Council (WSCC) **West Sussex Landscape Land Management Guidelines**, last updated: 29 May 2019. This is part of the WSCC **Landscape character assessment of West Sussex** (see <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/land-waste-and-housing/landscape-and-environment/landscape-character-assessment-of-west-sussex/>).

The WSCC **Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape** document (see

https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/1771/landscape_strategy.pdf) is designed to assist community led planning and states:

The results of their decisions and actions will assist delivery of the Strategy if:

- *strong landscape character-based development plan policies are adopted.*
- *the location of development in Development Plans takes account of the Strategy objectives.*
- *the Strategy informs the preparation of development briefs and concept statements for sites subject to major development proposals.*
- *the Strategy informs and supplements development control, landscape protection and design policies and criteria.*
- *the Strategy underpins the preparation of Countryside Design Summaries to help foster local distinctiveness.*

All of this applies to local gap decisions, especially the last point on local distinctiveness.

3. Criteria For Assessing Landscape Areas

Wherever feasible, physical boundaries have been used to define all areas. However, where no suitable boundary exists, other features have been used to demarcate the area, such as a line created by extending a neighbouring boundary.

Large areas of native woodland have been included in potential Local Gaps for ease of mapping, even though these are sufficiently protected under specific HDPF and Neighbourhood Plan policies.

To ensure consistency of approach across the parish, three tests have been devised for identifying important landscape character areas. To qualify for designation, each area should satisfy Test 1, as well as satisfying either Test 2 or Test 3. An additional Test 4 has been used to identify specific areas that would qualify as a Local Gap in planning terms, this test, relates to proximity to an area that is in danger of losing its distinct character if development occurred in these gaps. A further Test

5 is used to identify areas that need special consideration in relation to the Spatial Plan policy in the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan.

Test 1. Does any land in the proposed Local Gap already have planning permission, or has it been allocated for development in the HDPF?

- The first stage in the assessment will be to review the planning history of each area to ensure that it is not subject to an extant planning permission, and that it has not been allocated for development under a local plan.
- The Local Gaps designation will rarely be appropriate where land already has planning permission, or where it has been allocated for development under the local plan.
- An exception to this may be where it can be demonstrated that the Local Gap designation would be compatible with the planning permission / local plan allocation, or where the planning permission / local plan allocation is no longer capable of being implemented.

Test 2. Does the area play an important role as a buffer preventing coalescence between settlements, and if so, could this role be significantly harmed by development?

- An area could qualify for designation as a Local Gap if it played an important role as a buffer preventing coalescence between settlements, and if this role could be significantly harmed by development.
- Coalescence is the growing together of settlements. This frequently takes the form of ribbon development along main roads between neighbouring settlements. The merging of settlements is often accompanied by a loss of individual identity: instead of being experienced as a community in its own right, a settlement may be regarded as a neighbourhood or suburb of a larger combined entity.
- In evaluating the importance of an area's role as a buffer, consideration should be given as to how much open space currently exists between settlements. Where little open space remains between settlements, its designation should be prioritised.
- Consideration should also be given to the quality of the remaining open space. A significant stretch of undeveloped land will be more effective at preventing coalescence than land punctuated by built forms.
- In determining if development would significantly harm an area's ability to act as a buffer, account should be taken of how even low levels of development can bring about changes in the way an area is experienced. For example, a few dwellings, modern agricultural barns, holiday caravans or equine structures can in some situations fragment the sense of uninterrupted open countryside, and create the experience of a suburban rather than a rural landscape.
- Account should also be taken of the fact that large settlements tend to exert greater effects on their hinterlands than small ones. The impacts of noise, litter, light pollution, traffic and incidental development tend to extend further from large settlements than from small ones. Larger settlements may therefore require larger buffers than smaller ones in order to prevent a sense of coalescence.

Test 3. Does the area make an important contribution to the character or rural setting of a settlement, and if so, could this be significantly harmed by development?

- An area could qualify for designation if it made an important contribution to the character or rural setting of a settlement, and if that contribution could be significantly harmed by development.
- Contributions to character or rural setting might include helping to create an attractive rural backdrop for a key approach to the settlement, or providing important views into or out of the

settlement or its environs.

- Harms might include the interruption of views, or a reduction in the sense of rural isolation.
- In determining harms to the character or rural setting of a settlement, account should be taken of how even low levels of development can bring about changes in the way an area is experienced in certain contexts. For example, a single dwelling, modern agricultural barn or equine complex on open land can fragment a sense of rural isolation deriving from uninterrupted countryside.
- Account should also be taken of the effects of incidental development such as gardens, lighting, vehicle splays and signage. For example, the planting of alien coniferous trees or shrubs around new dwellings can have a powerfully suburbanising effect in a rural location.

Test 4. Will the character of a nearby settlement be significantly altered by development and cause it to merge with another settlement?

This test mostly applies to small distinct communities (not necessarily formally recognised as “settlements”) close to larger established developments. These areas fall within the terms of *Policy RUS8: Landscape Character and Local Gaps* of the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Plan (August 2019).

Whilst the whole of the plan area is rural and under threat, there are specific areas, with their own special character, that risk being enveloped into their neighbouring settlements. This test relies on the area being identifiable as separate to the larger area that might otherwise absorb them.

Test 5. Is the area significant in terms of its location or character?

This test applies to areas or communities (not necessarily formally recognised as “settlements”) close to larger established developments, that have special significance, either in terms of their character, environment or views. These areas fall within the terms of *Policy RUS1: Spatial Plan* of the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Plan (August 2019).

Whilst the whole of the plan area is rural and under threat, there are specific areas, with their own special character, that risk being enveloped into Crawley and Horsham. This test relies on the area being identifiable as being separate to the larger area that might otherwise absorb them.

4. Consultation

This assessment is published on Rusper Parish Council’s website as part of the Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base, where it can be viewed and commented on by all those taking part in consultations on the Neighbourhood Plan.

The views of parish residents and external organisations are sought through the consultations on the Pre-Submission Plan (August 2019).

In the light of responses received from consultees, the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan Group will revise the criteria for assessing Local Gaps, and review each proposed area according to the updated criteria.

5. Areas Identified as Landscape Character

TABLE A: Assessment of Landscape Character Areas identified in the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Plan (August 2019) below provides information about each of the six areas (LC1 to LC6) identified as distinct landscape character areas in the Rusper plan area. These have each been assessed against the three tests set out above. They are clearly marked on the Landscape Character Areas Map also below.

6. Areas Identified as Local Gaps

TABLE B: Assessment of Local Gaps identified in the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Plan (August 2019) below provides information about each of the area (LG1) identified as a distinct Local Gap in the Rusper plan area. This has each been assessed against the three tests set out above and fall within one of the six landscape character areas. It also passes the additional test 4 set out above for Local Gaps. The area is clearly marked on Local Gap Map 1 also below.

7. Areas Identified as Spatial Plan Areas

TABLE C: Assessment of Spatial Plan areas identified in the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Plan (August 2019) below provides information about each of the two areas (SP1 and SP2) identified as significant areas as part of the Rusper plan Spatial Plan policy. These have each been assessed against the three tests set out above and fall within one of the six landscape character areas. They are additionally important in providing clear distinction between the rural fringe of the parish and the neighbouring more urban developments. Each is clearly marked on Spatial Plan Map 1 and Spatial Plan Map 2 also below.

8. Special Views Within the Plan Area

Additionally, there are important views out from Rusper Village that need to be recognised. The village is the highest in West Sussex and as such has extensive views in all directions. There are three main views identified here as being of a special nature that require protecting:

1. The westerly view from the sports field in the High Street. This view extends to the South Downs in the south and Leith Hill in the north and is the most extensive view from the village. Along with the setting of the beacon, erected to commemorate the end of the First World War, this location is an important part of the character of the village as a whole.
2. The easterly view from behind the playground in the High Street extends across to Ashdown Forest in the distance and the southerly part of this view takes in the High Weald AONB along the Colgate ridge.
3. The views from the footpath between the Star Inn, Rusper and Lambs Green highlight the rural nature of this area. The extensive views looking down from the village take in the High Weald AONB, while the views on the walk up to the village provide a rural landscape setting for the village itself.

The views re highlighted on Spatial Plan Map 3 as SPV1 to SPV3 respectively.

8. Maps and Assessment Details

Below are the tables and maps showing the details of the landscape character areas and the local gaps.

TABLE A: Assessment of Landscape Character Areas identified in the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Plan (August 2019)

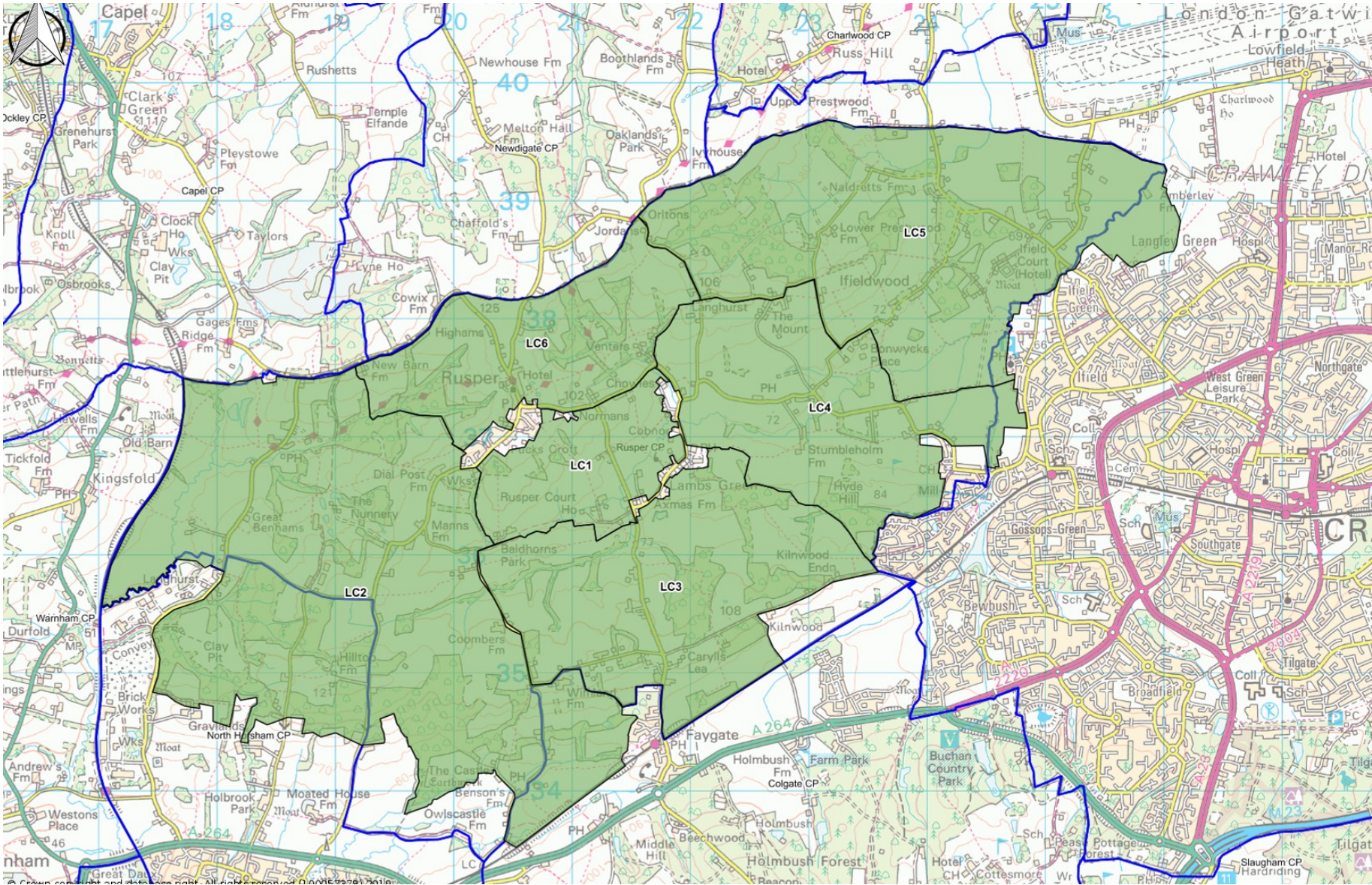
| Ref. | Location of area | Description of area | Overall area (km ²) | Test 1. Is there any planning permission, or has it been allocated for development in the HDPF? | Test 2. Does the area play an important role as a buffer preventing coalescence between settlements, and if so, could this role be significantly harmed by development? | Test 3. Does the area make an important contribution to the character or rural setting of a settlement, and if so, could this be significantly harmed by development? |
|------|--|--|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| LC1 | Between Rusper Village and Lambs Green | <p>The area extends from Lambs Green Road and the bridleway that runs to the west northward to the Rusper Village built-up boundary. It incorporates some fields just to the south of the bridleway to follow the natural contours.</p> <p>It is bounded by the River Mole to the west, Lambs Green Road to the east and East Street to the north.</p> | 1.5 | No | <p>The area acts as an essential buffer between Rusper Village and Lambs Green hamlet.</p> <p>Even a limited amount of new development in this gap would have a significant detrimental impact. The loss of any open land would lead to coalescence.</p> | <p>The sloping nature of the land up to Rusper Village from Lambs Green provides important countryside views, recognised by the planning inspector during the recent planning consideration for a refused application in this area (DC/15/2857).</p> <p>This area also provides important pasture land and wildlife habitat as part of the wildlife corridor to the south of Rusper Village.</p> <p>This area falls in the Low Weald Hills area LW4 of the WSCC landscape character assessment, which states that we should: <i>Conserve the rural quality of the area including the pattern of the agricultural landscape, the intricate patchwork of small scale fields, and linked woodland, and the intimate and unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout much of the area.</i></p> |
| LC2 | Between North Horsham and Rusper Village | <p>The area extends from the northern edge of the proposed North Horsham development north to the Rusper Village built-up boundary.</p> <p>It is bounded by Wimlands Road to the East and the parish boundary to the west.</p> <p>The area is ancient woodland to the south and sloping farmland and woodland up to Rusper Village.</p> | 9.26 | No | <p>The area to the south of this gap, was previously recognised as part of the strategic gap between Horsham and Crawley. It has now been allocated for the North Horsham major development of 2,750 houses and business park. This makes this area especially important in terms of maintaining the Horsham Crawley separation and ensuring that the new North Horsham development and Rusper Village do not coalesce.</p> | <p>Again, the sloping nature of the land up to Rusper Village provides important countryside views in this area.</p> <p>The ancient woodland at the top of Hurst Hill (the section to the north of Hawkesbourne Farm) and other ancient woodland along this ridge form part of an important wildlife corridor that needs special consideration given the significant development to the south. Note that this area extends to the edge of the proposed new North Horsham development and so incorporates some areas outside of the plan area.</p> <p>The rest of this area falls in the Low Weald Hills area LW4 of the WSCC landscape character assessment, which states that we should: <i>Conserve the rural quality of the area including the pattern of the agricultural landscape, the intricate patchwork of small scale fields, and linked woodland, and the intimate and unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout much of the area.</i></p> |

| Ref. | Location of area | Description of area | Overall area (km ²) | Test 1. Is there any planning permission, or has it been allocated for development in the HDPF? | Test 2. Does the area play an important role as a buffer preventing coalescence between settlements, and if so, could this role be significantly harmed by development? | Test 3. Does the area make an important contribution to the character or rural setting of a settlement, and if so, could this be significantly harmed by development? |
|------|---|---|---------------------------------|---|--|---|
| LC3 | Between Lambs Green and Faygate and Kilnwood Vale | The area extends from Lambs Green Road south down to Faygate. The southern boundary is the parish boundary along the railway, but cuts up over the proposed area of development for the final phase of Kilnwood Vale. The eastern boundary follows the woodland edges and field boundaries down Hyde Hill to the edge of the Ifield West estate. The western boundary runs up Wimlands Road and turns to follow the woodland and field edge to the bridleway back to Lambs Green. | 4.21 | No | <p>This gap is an important southern break to Rusper parish again with important views down Hyde Hill. It becomes even more critical once the final phase of Kilnwood Vale is complete: that final phase crosses the railway boundary northward into Rusper parish.</p> <p>The gap avoids the coalescence of Faygate Village with Lambs Green.</p> <p>As North Horsham develops along the A264, with the proposed garage being built on the Faygate roundabout and with Kilnwood Vale extending west along the A264, this area of strategic gap between Horsham and Crawley becomes even more important.</p> | <p>The sloping nature of the land down Hyde Hill means that there are important views of open country and woodland in this area that need to be maintained.</p> <p>The main part of this area falls in the Low Weald Hills area LW4 of the WSCC landscape character assessment, which states that we should: <i>Conserve the rural quality of the area including the pattern of the agricultural landscape, the intricate patchwork of small scale fields, and linked woodland, and the intimate and unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout much of the area.</i></p> <p>The rest of the area falls in the Low Weald Northern Vales area LW8 of the WSCC landscape character assessment, which states that we should: <i>Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.</i></p> |
| LC4 | Between Lambs Green and Ifield | The area extends from Lambs Green west and south down to Ifield. The western boundary follows the woodland edges and field boundaries down Hyde Hill to the edge of the Ifield West estate. It then follows the parish boundary eastward, skirting around the developments along the Rusper Road at Ifield and then following along the built up area boundary of Ifield, to Ifield Church. Although this takes it just outside of the plan area, it includes the important flood | 3.54 | No | The gap avoids the coalescence of Ifield West with Lambs Green and Rusper. It again is especially important with the recent developments along the Rusper Road from Ifield. | <p>This area is an important part of the flood plain along Ifield Brook. The brook and fields here form an important wildlife corridor along the eastern edge of the plan area and as Crawley expands outwards, these wildlife areas become more important.</p> <p>The area extends outside the plan area here, as it is especially important as flood plain and wildlife habitat and trying to set an arbitrary border for this along the parish boundary does not make sense. We recognise that the plan can give no extra protection to these outside areas, but is important to note their importance.</p> <p>As you leave Crawley's built up area and pass Ifield Golf Course, you immediately notice the change to a rural area with farm fields and woodland areas along narrow country roads with rich hedgerows. This landscape is a critical part of the Rusper plan area in terms of identifying the break from the rural area of Crawley.</p> |

| Ref. | Location of area | Description of area | Overall area (km ²) | Test 1. Is there any planning permission, or has it been allocated for development in the HDPF? | Test 2. Does the area play an important role as a buffer preventing coalescence between settlements, and if so, could this role be significantly harmed by development? | Test 3. Does the area make an important contribution to the character or rural setting of a settlement, and if so, could this be significantly harmed by development? |
|------|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|---|--|
| | | plain and fields along Ifield Brook. The eastern and northern boundary follows the footpath and field boundaries from Ifield Church to Bonwycks Place, then up Hillybarn Road and along the Mount. | | | | The area falls in the Low Weald Northern Vales area LW8 of the WSCC landscape character assessment, which states that we should: <i>Conserve the mostly rural character of the area</i> . It recognises that “ <i>Some localities retain an enclosed rural character, for instance, west of Ifield</i> ” and encourages us to “ <i>Conserve the open character of the floodplain and promote natural floodplain management avoiding the introduction of engineered flood defences</i> ”. |
| LC5 | Between Ifield and Charlwood | The southern and western boundary follows the footpath and field boundaries from Ifield Church to Bonwycks Place then up Hillybarn Road and along the Mount. It continues up Orletons Lane and follows the parish boundary to the north. The eastern boundary follows the built up area of Crawley along Ifield Brook and includes Willoughby Fields to the east. | 6.33 | No | This area avoids the coalescence of Crawley through Rusper parish along the Charlwood Road to Charlwood. As Crawley and Gatwick Airport grow, this area becomes at greater risk and the danger of these settlements coalescing and expanding up to Rusper Village is a real concern. | This area is an important part of the flood plain along Ifield Brook. The brook and fields here form an important wildlife corridor along the eastern edge of the plan area and as Crawley expands outwards, these wildlife areas become more important. The area also extends outside the plan area, but Willoughby Fields are especially important as flood plain and wildlife habitat, and trying to set an arbitrary border for this along the parish boundary does not make sense. We recognise that the plan can give no extra protection to these outside areas, but it is important to note their importance. The area mostly falls in the Low Weald Northern Vales area LW8 of the WSCC landscape character assessment, which states that we should: <i>Conserve the mostly rural character of the area</i> . It recognises that “ <i>Some localities retain an enclosed rural character, for instance, west of Ifield</i> ” and encourages us to “ <i>Conserve the open character of the floodplain and promote natural floodplain management avoiding the introduction of engineered flood defences</i> ”. Part of the area also falls in the Low Weald Hills area LW4 of the WSCC landscape character assessment, which states that we should: <i>Conserve the rural quality of the area including the pattern of the agricultural landscape, the intricate patchwork of small scale fields, and linked woodland, and the intimate and unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout much of the area</i> . |
| LC6 | Between Rusper Village and | This is the area to the north of Rusper Village and | 2.59 | No | This area is a part of the defence against coalescence with Newdigate to the north and Capel | This area includes the ancient woodland of Horsegills Wood and other ancient woods to the east. They are separated by |

| Ref. | Location of area | Description of area | Overall area (km ²) | Test 1. Is there any planning permission, or has it been allocated for development in the HDPF? | Test 2. Does the area play an important role as a buffer preventing coalescence between settlements, and if so, could this role be significantly harmed by development? | Test 3. Does the area make an important contribution to the character or rural setting of a settlement, and if so, could this be significantly harmed by development? |
|------|---------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | Newdigate and Capel | extends from the built up boundary of the village to the parish boundary in the north. The eastern boundary is along East Street, then up the farm track to Venters Farm, following the field boundaries and footpath out to Orltons Lane, then up Orltons Lane to Partridge Lane. The western boundary leaves the built up area of Rusper Village by Gardeners Green and follows field boundaries and tracks through Horsegills Wood and up to the Capel Road. | | | to the north-east. Whilst there is still a lot of open country once you pass the parish boundary, this area is considered an important part of the Rusper plan area and clearly separates it from the other settlements. | <p>open farmland with wildlife rich hedgerows. It is an important part of the wildlife corridor to the north of Rusper Village.</p> <p>Views out to the west of this area, especially from the Sports Field and along the Capel Road, are an important part of the character of the area. The views extend all the way to the South Downs and up to Leith Hill in the north.</p> <p>Views out to the east, especially from Ghyll Manor field behind the playground in the High Street are equally important, with views across to Turners Hill, Saint Hill and Ashdown Forest.</p> <p>This area falls in the Low Weald Hills area LW4 of the WSCC landscape character assessment, which states that we should: <i>Conserve the rural quality of the area including the pattern of the agricultural landscape, the intricate patchwork of small scale fields, and linked woodland, and the intimate and unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout much of the area.</i></p> |

Landscape Character Areas Map



Map of Rusper Neighbourhood Plan Landscape Character Areas

TABLE B: Assessment of Local Gaps identified in the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Plan (August 2019)

| Ref. | Location of area | Description of area | Overall area (Ha) | Test 1. Planning allocation? | Test 2. and 3. Coalescence and rural setting? | Test 4. Will the character of a nearby settlement be significantly altered by development and cause it to merge with another larger settlement? |
|------|---|---|-------------------|------------------------------|---|---|
| LG1 | The area extends from the north of the houses along Lambs Green Road, across the fields toward Rusper Village in the north. The eastern boundary is out to the houses along East Street and the western boundary extends across Faygate Lane to include the few fields to the north of the houses at the end of Lambs Green Road. | <p>This is an area of open farmland that slopes steeply up towards Rusper Village.</p> <p>The area is open fields with mature hedges. It is crossed by the main footpath from Lambs Green to Rusper Village through its centre.</p> | 63.58 | No | See Landscape Character Assessment LC1 | <p>Development in this area would seriously impact the boundary of the community along Lambs Green and lead to a coalescence with Rusper Village.</p> <p>This area falls in the Low Weald Hills area LW4 of the WSCC landscape character assessment, which states that we should: <i>Conserve the rural quality of the area including the pattern of the agricultural landscape, the intricate patchwork of small scale fields, and linked woodland, and the intimate and unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout much of the area.</i></p> |

Local Gap Map 1

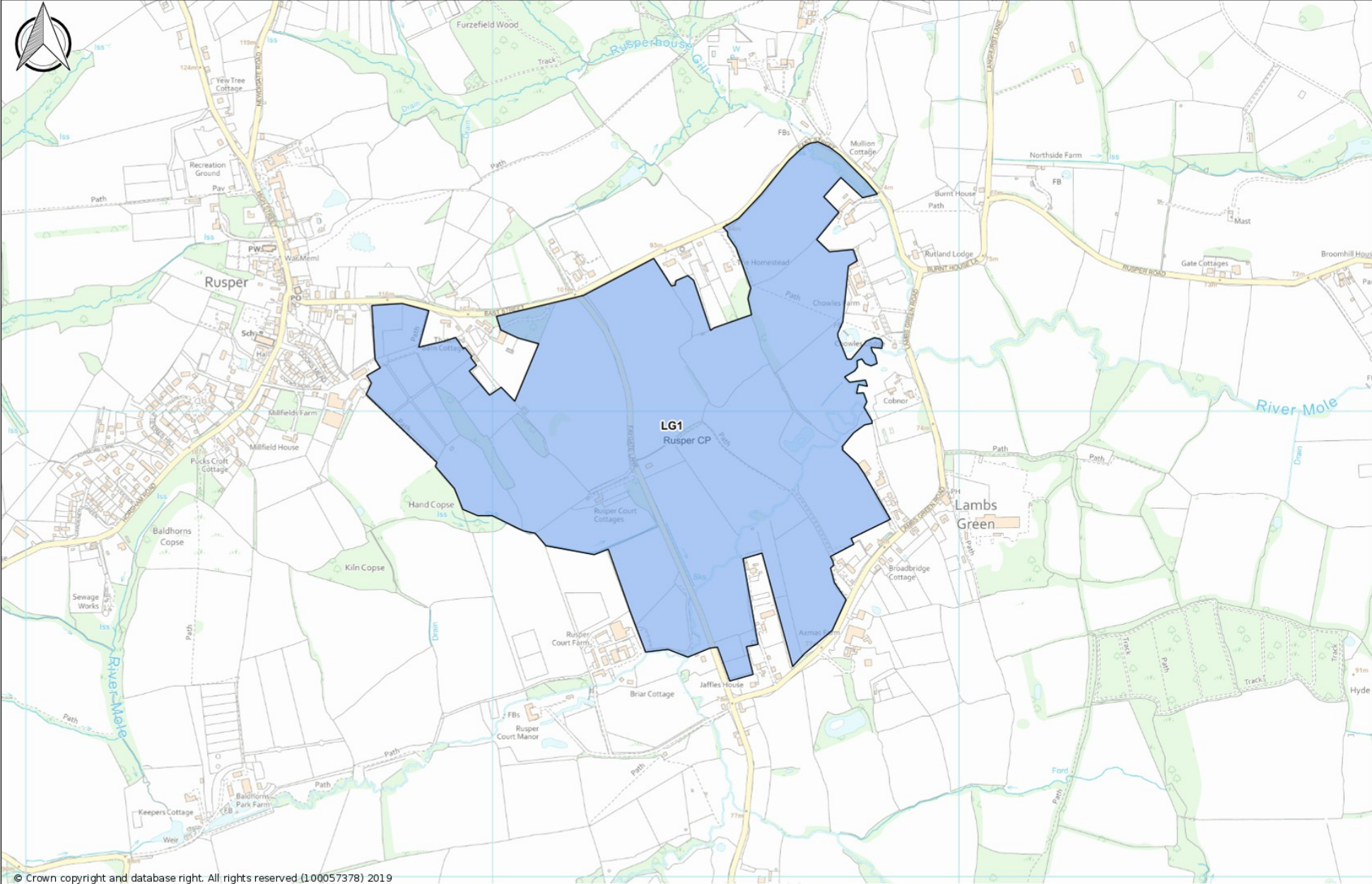
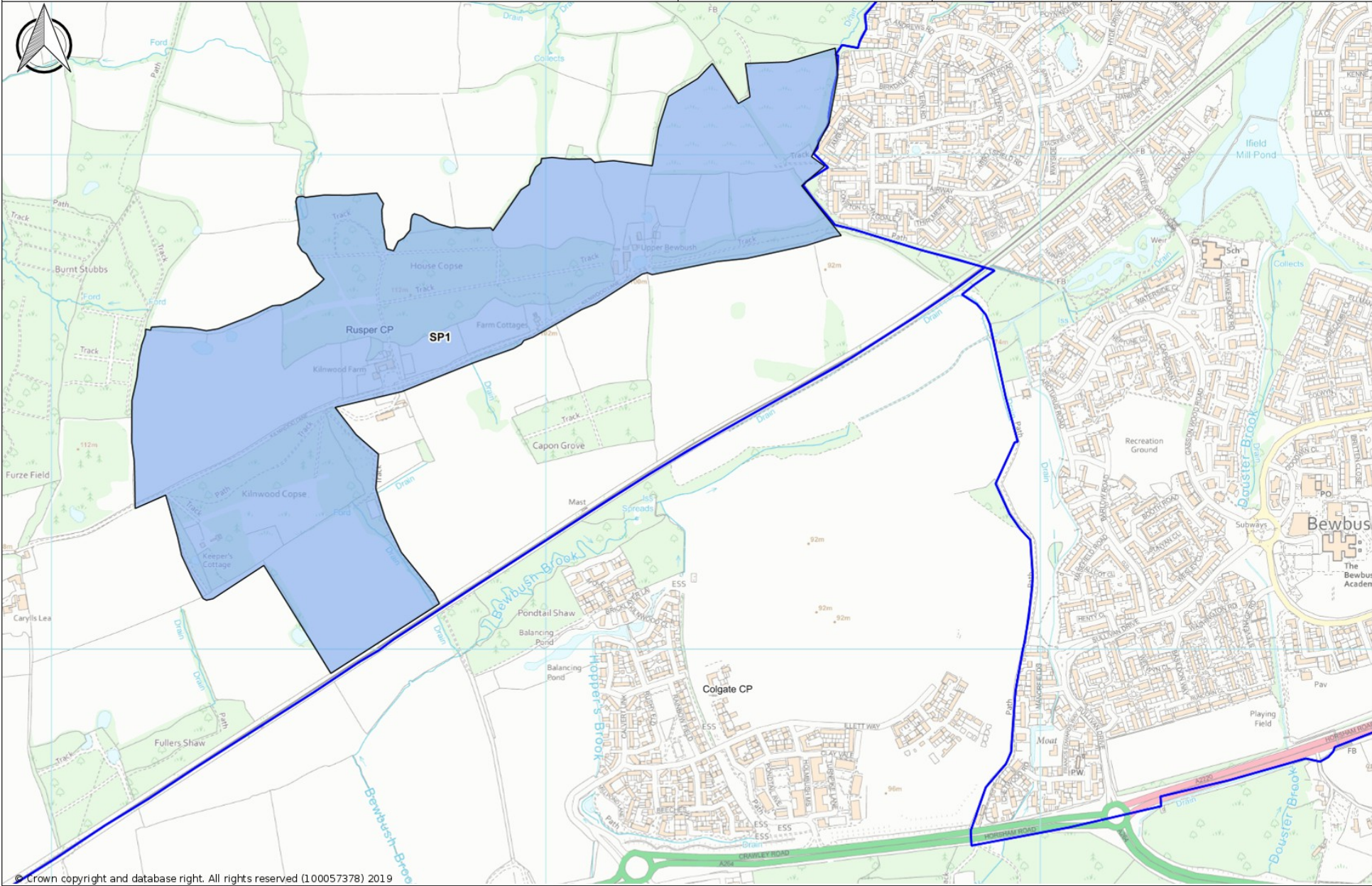


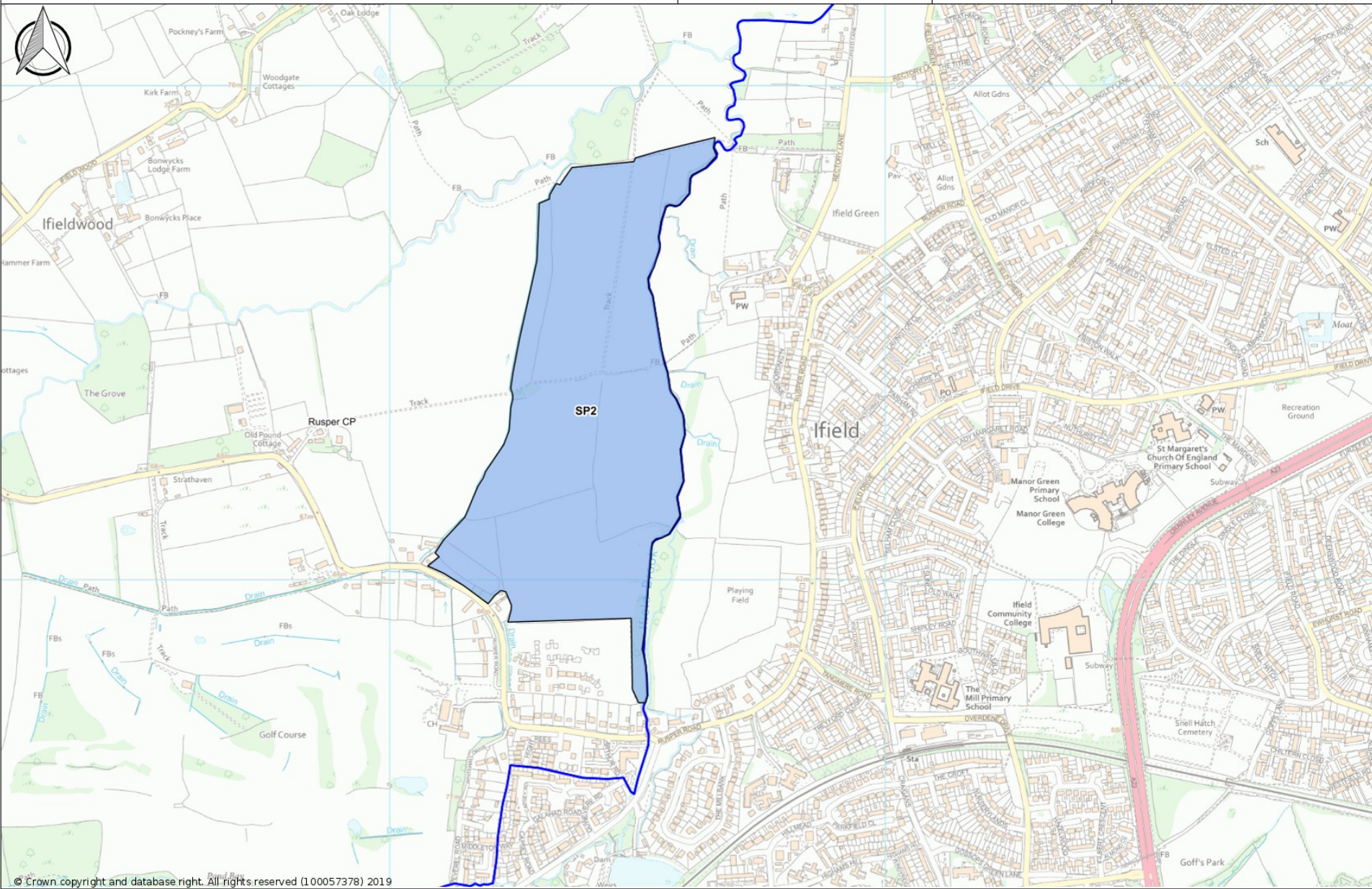
TABLE C: Assessment of Spatial Plan areas identified in the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Plan (August 2019)

| Ref. | Location of area | Description of area | Overall area (Ha) | Test 1. Planning allocation? | Test 2. and 3. Coalescence and rural setting? | Test 5. Is the area significant in terms of its location or character? |
|------|--|--|-------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| SP1 | <p>Land around the Kilnwood Vale development final phase.</p> <p>It runs along the railway line to the south and skirts the proposed layout of the new development and along the parish boundary.</p> <p>The northern boundary runs along the field lines to the north of Kilnwood Lane and encompasses House Copse and Kilnwood Copse.</p> | <p>This is an area of mostly pasture farm land with mature hedges that provide a varied wildlife habitat. Kilnwood Lane, a quiet country cul-de-sac, runs through the area.</p> | 61.34 | No | <p>See Landscape Character Assessment LC3.</p> <p>A small part of the area to the east falls into LC4.</p> | <p>Development in this area would seriously impact on the boundary of the new Kilnwood Vale development where it crosses the railway line. This would break into the separation of the new development with Ifield to the east and Lambs Green to the north.</p> <p>House Copse and Kilnwood Copse are included as they form an important part of the character of the area.</p> |
| SP2 | <p>This area is to the north of the new Rusper Road development (The Maples, Rusper Road).</p> <p>It runs along the northern boundary of the development and follows Ifield Brook (the parish boundary) on the east, up to the footpath from Ifield Church. The northern extent follows along the footpath and turns along the field boundaries back to the Rusper Road.</p> | <p>The area is open farmland and flood plain, with mature hedgerows and an a wealth of flora and fauna.</p> <p>The area along Ifield Brook, is wildlife rich. It supports a large number of birds including kingfishers and heron, which feed on the abundant fish life.</p> | 30.86 | No | <p>See Landscape Character Assessment LC4 and LC5</p> | <p>Development in this area would seriously impact the boundary of the new Maples development along the Rusper Road. This would break into the separation of the new development with Ifield to the north-east.</p> <p>The land along Ifield Brook also establishes the edge of Crawley and the start of Rusper parish. It provides a wildlife rich area with extensive examples of flora and fauna.</p> <p>The area falls in the Low Weald Northern Vales area LW8 of the WSCC landscape character assessment, which states that we should: <i>Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.</i> It recognises that “<i>Some localities retain an enclosed rural character, for instance, west of Ifield</i>” and encourages us to “<i>Conserve the open character of the floodplain and promote natural floodplain management avoiding the introduction of engineered flood defences</i>”.</p> |

Spatial Plan Map 1



Spatial Plan Map 2



Spatial Plan Map 3

Special views within the plan area

