

Otham Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement



Introduction

This Consultation Statement has been prepared in order to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 Section 15(2). Part 5 of the regulations sets out what a Consultation Statement should contain:

- a) Details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed Neighbourhood Plan;
- b) An explanation of how they were consulted;
- c) Summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
- d) Describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Aims

The aims of the Otham Neighbourhood Plan consultation process were:

- a) To involve as many of the community as possible throughout all consultation stages of Plan development in order that the Plan was informed by the views of local people and other stakeholders from the start of the Neighbourhood Planning process;
- b) To ensure that consultation events took place at critical points in the process where decisions needed to be taken;
- c) To engage with as wide a range of people as possible, using a variety of approaches and communication and consultation techniques; and
- d) To ensure that results of consultation were fed back to local people.

Background to the Plan

Otham Parish Council took the decision in 2015 to embark on a Neighbourhood Plan in order to provide local people with an input into guiding the future development and conservation of Otham. A Steering Group made up of Parish Councillors and residents was established to deliver the Plan.

The following events were held to inform residents about the work on the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Date	Consultation Details	Outcome
May 2015	A wide-ranging community questionnaire hand delivered to all residents regarding topics such as further housing developments, local walking routes, transport, the village hall, allotments and football ground.	165 responses collected in person. Response rate = 56%. 68% want no further housing in Otham. 80% regularly walk in the village. 50% use the Len valley Walk. 94% value having a village hall. 72% value having allotments. 71% said that the quality of life in Otham is deteriorating. The primary concern was speeding traffic, followed by oversized vehicles and traffic noise. Top three things about Otham: peace and quiet, countryside, views. Top concerns about Otham: housing developments, traffic, loss of rural character. These responses informed the basic structure of the Neighbourhood Plan.
Dec 2015	Residents meeting held in the church to feed back the results of the questionnaire.	40 residents in attendance. Results of questionnaire shared. Positively received.
May 2016	Ragstone newsletter delivered to all residents proposing producing a Neighbourhood Plan and asking for volunteers to join the steering group.	Five residents responded with offers of help. Steering group formed, made of five village residents and five Parish Councillors.
Feb 2017	Ragstone newsletter delivered to all residents including article from Chair promoting Neighbourhood Planning and asking again for more volunteers to join the steering group.	No responses received.
June 2017	Ragstone newsletter delivered to all residents outlining the purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan, the intention to write one, our five key objectives and publicising the consultation on the proposed area boundary. Residents invited to meet councillors, discuss the process and express their views on the Neighbourhood Plan at a stall at the upcoming Otham Fete.	
June 2017	Otham Fete – Stall manned for discussions with residents and visitors regarding the Neighbourhood Plan and the proposed five key objectives. Collection of ideas and opinions.	A number of local residents visited the stall and spoke to councillors regarding the key objectives. All supported the inclusion of all five key objectives, including the construction of a new community centre, but in addition would have liked the rat running traffic included in the plan's objectives. Unfortunately, highways matters cannot be included. All were concerned about the designation of housing in the Maidstone Local Plan and the negative impact of increased housing and increased traffic in Otham. All were against any further housing in Otham.

BACKGROUND TO THE PLAN

Date	Consultation Details	Outcome
August 2017	The 2015 community questionnaire hand delivered to all residents of the new 100 dwelling Coppice housing development recently constructed in Otham. Responses collected in person.	<p>Many of the new residents spoken to were unaware that they were resident in the Parish of Otham. Most had never visited the village of Otham as their homes are located on the A274 so many did not have an opinion on the areas covered by the questionnaire.</p> <p>Written responses mainly concerned Langley eg traffic lights, speed cameras and HGVs on A274.</p> <p>Top three things about Otham: woods and open spaces, views and walks.</p> <p>Top concerns about Otham: traffic, new housing developments, loss of rural character.</p> <p>One new Coppice resident joined both the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the Parish Council.</p>
March 2018	Online Neighbourhood Plan survey and additional paper copy hand delivered to all residents to consult on the five topics to be included in the neighbourhood plan.	<p>175 responses received. 32% response rate.</p> <p>Responses provide strong mandate for direction of the neighbourhood plan:</p> <p>81% want no further housing in Otham.</p> <p>56% in favour of building a new community centre.</p> <p>95% in favour of protecting green spaces.</p> <p>86% in favour of protecting views.</p> <p>82% in favour of establishing heritage walks.</p> <p>78% in favour of making accessible footpaths.</p>
May 2018	Surveys of walkers undertaken in the field opposite the church and in the field adjacent to Woolley Road and in The Glebe field. Walkers were asked for how long and how often they use the open space and why it is of special value. Postcodes collected to identify which communities are using these open spaces.	<p>Woolley Road/The Glebe: Nine responses collected.</p> <p>Field opposite the Church: 16 responses collected.</p> <p>Revealed that walkers use the open spaces daily and have been doing so for as long as 45 years. Used by residents of Otham, Downswood and Senacre. These open spaces are highly valued and deemed essential by those surveyed. This justifies their allocation as Local Green Spaces in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
June 2018	Otham Fete – residents and visitors surveyed on which local spaces they use regularly, how often they visit them and what activities they do there, to support the allocation of Local Green Spaces.	<p>Field opposite the church: 24 more responses collected.</p> <p>Bearsted football club/Cricket club: 21 responses collected.</p> <p>Woolley Road/The Glebe: 16 more responses collected.</p> <p>Allotments: 10 responses collected.</p> <p>Responses reveal that Otham's open spaces are used daily by residents of Otham, Langley, Senacre, Downswood and Parkwood, some who have been walking here for 48 years. These open spaces are highly valued and deemed essential by those surveyed. This justifies their allocation as Local Green Spaces in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
June 2018	Ragstone newsletter delivered to all residents reporting the results of the Neighbourhood Plan survey and also including an article from the Chair responding to comments about the Neighbourhood Plan and again asking for volunteers to join the steering group.	No responses received.
June 2019	Otham Fete – residents shown maps and plans of the new housing development proposal H1(8). Views sought on new housing developments in Otham.	100% of responses were against any further housing development in Otham, including those allocated in the MBC Local Plan. Concerns raised about housing developments in Otham included increased traffic, removal of hedgerows, lack of school places and lack of GP surgeries.
June 2019	Letters sent to all landowners of sites proposed to be allocated as Local green Spaces, informing them of the implications of Local Green Space status and asking for comments.	One reply received from Rumwood Cricket Club, welcoming the change of status and asking for protective fencing around the site.

The Consultation

An email was sent to all statutory bodies as supplied by Maidstone Borough Council. The email informed the statutory bodies of the commencement of the consultation period. This email also notified recipients of the Neighbourhood Plan's availability on the Otham Parish Council website and requested comments on the Draft Plan. Other contacts included numerous bodies and individuals that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group believe may be affected by the Neighbourhood Plan for Otham, such as: neighbouring parish councils, local business owners and farmers.

In addition to the digital copies of documents found on the Otham Parish Council website, a summary document was delivered to every household within the Parish. Hard copies of the Draft Plan were also available to view at Madginford library, the Borough Council building and the village hall. Hand written comments could be returned by post.

A list of all those that were consulted about the Plan:

Kent County Council	The National Trust
Langley PC	WB Chambers & Son
Bearsted PC	Robert Boyd-Howell
Downswood PC	Gore Court 2008 Ltd
Leeds PC	Bearsted Football Club
Boughton Monchelsea PC	Rumwood Cricket Club
Natural England	The Village Hall Committee
The Environment Agency	The White Horse Inn
Historic England	The Orchard Suite
Highways England	Allotments Committee
Openreach	The National Trust
UK Power Networks	WB Chambers & Son
Southern Water	Robert Boyd-Howell
The Canterbury Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd	Gore Court 2008 Ltd
CPRE	Gladman Developments Ltd
Network Rail	Bearsted Football Club
Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust	Rumwood Cricket Club
Southern Gas Networks	The Village Hall Committee
Southern Water	Residents of Otham
South East Water	

Summary of main issues and concerns raised

The Otham Pre-Submission Plan was issued for consultation in July 2019. Only seven comments from Statutory Bodies, Developers and Local Residents were received. The tables below detail the comments received and the responses from the Neighbourhood Plan team.

Consultation Statement – Statutory bodies

Respondent	Main issue/concern	Related policy/reference	Edits made/action taken.
Maidstone Borough Council	The Otham Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) should be referred to. It includes an analysis of local views and unlisted buildings which contribute positively to the area. There is some overlap between the views identified in the CAA and the neighbourhood plan. The plan highlights the area's history and describes very specific details about key listed buildings. The plan should also refer to non-designated heritage assets, including those identified in the CAA. The emphasis on heritage trails, paths and views could be broadened to describe other aspects of the area's character, identifying positive aspects as well as those with the potential for enhancement. In addition to identifying views and stating a desire to preserve them, the plan could set out a strategy for managing change within these views. Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning 3, The Setting of Heritage Assets provides a recommended approach to assessing the impact of development in views.	Section 4: Heritage, Conservation and Landscape Protection	<p>We added further references to the conservation area and expanded the detail regarding the Conservation Area in section 2 and section 4.</p> <p>We have added a map of the Conservation Area.</p> <p>We have taken detail from the Conservation Area Appraisal (2009) as an independent assessment.</p> <p>We have inserted a new paragraph concerning the protection of views into section 4.</p>
	The plan should be clear on the status of Heritage Trail No. 1, as seen in the plan, and No. 2 which isn't shown in the plan. The policy cannot refer to future Heritage Trails that have not been designated through the neighbourhood planning process.	Policy HC1 and Appendix 3	Heritage Walk No. 2 has been added to Appendix 3, alongside Heritage Walk No. 1 to enable official designation.
	The definitions for ancient woodland and veteran trees are incorrect.	Section 5.1	Definitions removed as not important here.
	Clarify if it is the intention to protect ancient woodlands from development. The plan would benefit from an aim to retain trees of significant amenity value, as well as ancient woodlands and veteran trees. Another aim should be to seek to secure appropriate management for these natural assets.	Section 5.3	<p>The suggested aims have been added to section 5.3 and to policy GS5.</p> <p>Clarification of protection of trees from development added to 5.3.</p> <p>Protection of Veteran English Oak in The Glebe added to policy GS4.</p>
	Clarify whether the line of trees is within the boundary of the Local Green Space.	Policy GS3	Policy text amended to clarify that it refers to trees that lie within the site of Bearsted Football Club which is a designated Local green space.
	A 50m buffer would require justification. Woodland Trust's 50m buffer does not accord with current Standing Advice from Natural England and the Forestry Commission.	Policy GS5	Policy amended to 15m to accord with Natural England Standing Advice.

Respondent	Main issue/concern	Related policy/reference	Edits made/action taken.
	Policy AC1 resists development that would result in the coalescence of Otham village with the urban area and other villages, so Policy AC1 would also apply to the Policy AC2 area. Policy AC2 identifies a specific area for the prevention of coalescence. As written, the policy would restrict ANY development within this area – this is not positive planning. The plan should also explain in greater detail why additional protection is needed beyond normal countryside constraints beyond 'highly prized views by residents.	Policy AC1 Policy AC2	<p>Policies AC1 and AC2 combined into one anti-coalescence policy AC1.</p> <p>Positive planning now adopted by rewording the policy to make it more flexible.</p> <p>Additional detail incorporated into the context section of Chapter 6 to explain why the identified field requires special protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is particularly vulnerable to coalescence as it is the last field left between urban Maidstone and the Otham Conservation Area. • It is under particular threat since the inclusion of strategic policy H1(8) in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan which redrew the Maidstone urban boundary to the western edge of this field. • It forms the southern boundary of the urban area of Downswood. • It sits at the southern boundary of the Landscape of Local Value associated with the Len Valley. • It is essential to the rural character of Otham and its Conservation area as it uniquely provides uninterrupted views of the church from its village. • It is the setting of the two Otham Heritage Walks. • The Conservation Area Assessment stresses the importance of it being surrounded by agricultural land.
	The policy criteria do not conform to strategic policy H1(8) of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017. An outline planning application for the site has been submitted. (19/501600/OUT)	Policy ST4 Policy ST5 Policy ST6	Policies ST4, ST5 and ST6 have been deleted. Their contents have already been included in the outline planning application 19/501600/OUT.
	The plan is not clear whether PROW KM94 lies inside or outside of the boundaries of the football field. Are there any land ownership or legal/ planning restrictions associated with the proposed upgrades?	Policy ST4	Policy ST4 amended; KM94 lies outside the football field, on land now owned by the developers of sites H1(7) and H1(9), Bellway and Redrow. If upgrades are not provided by the developers during the construction of the sites, the parish council will approach them for permission to upgrade the path as it is a vital walking route for local people wishing to access the school, shops and restaurant on the south side of the A274.
	The text and policy are too restrictive by confining small-scale residential development to the infill of a single dwelling. 'Planned' development is not windfall.	Section 8.3 Aims	Section 8.3 amended to replace references to single dwellings with references to small scale developments.
	Hedgerow replacement should be reworded to say that specimens should be native and able to achieve the same ultimate height and be of similar proportions as the species removed. The species listed are not in accordance with the Borough Council's landscape guidelines.	Policy BE1	Policy reworded as advised.
	Reference to necessary enabling development is contrary to NPPF paragraph 56 on planning obligations.	Policy CL1	Reference removed to comply with NPPF.
	Appendix 1 should be moved to the consultation statement. Appendix 6 JG6 is not designated as Local Green Space.	Draft Appendix 1 Draft Appendix 6	Appendix 1 moved and appendices re-numbered for the submission stage. JG6 removed from Appendix 6 as this was there in error.

SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES AND CONCERNS RAISED

Respondent	Main issue/concern	Related policy/reference	Edits made/action taken.
The Canterbury Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd	The owners have put forward the Glebe land as a housing allocation in the emerging Maidstone Local Plan Review. This 2-hectare (5 acre) site is currently being evaluated by the Local Planning Authority so the Draft Neighbourhood Plan cannot now be allowed to prejudice the consideration of the proposals on their own planning merits.	Section 5 Policy GS2 Policy GS4 New Appendix 1 New Appendix 2	<p>Advice has been sought from Maidstone Borough Council on this matter who state: 'The Local Plan Review (LPR) is due to be adopted in 2022, and the plan is in its early stages of preparation. The adopted MBLP includes a hierarchy for the spatial distribution of development – Otham is not a designated Rural Service Centre or Larger Village, so policies of countryside restraint apply. MBC's call for sites has attracted a large number of submissions, but the assessment of sites will not be completed before next year and, even then, it does not mean to say that all sites with potential will be allocated through the LPR.'</p> <p>This is a small site proposed for 50 dwellings which sits in the countryside, with sole access from Church Road. Neighbouring site H1(8) has had the planning application rejected by MBC due to safety concerns on Church Road so we think it is unlikely that this site will be included for housing development in the LPR. In addition, the strong reasons for designating this site as Local Green Space are clearly stated in Appendix 1.</p>
	The Glebe is a self-contained, well screened, privately owned field which lies 100m from the urban edge of East Maidstone. Until recently it has been the subject of a succession of farm tenancies. It is currently a fallow field. There are no rights of public access.		<p>Whilst we agree that The Glebe is a self-contained, privately owned fallow field, it is not well screened. The boundaries of the field are as follows: North = the driveway leading to Squerryes Oast, freely accessible by the public from Church Road, only part of the boundary is marked by a very low piece of stock fencing. East = the hedge and stock fencing boundaries of Rectory Cottage and The Old Rectory and an area of publicly accessible woodland with some patchy fencing. South = some trees bordering another fallow field used by the public for recreation. West = trees forming the boundary of Squerryes Oast and some trees and bushes bordering an agricultural field used by walkers and riders.</p> <p>The Glebe can be publicly accessed and seen by the public from the North, West and South.</p> <p>Whilst we agree that there are no official rights of public access, residents of Downswood, Otham and Senacre have been using informal footpaths through The Glebe for in excess of 40 years to walk dogs and ride horses, as evidenced in the Walker Survey Appendix 2.</p> <p>We have added aerial photo GF1 to Appendix 1 in which the routes taken by walkers are clearly visible from the air.</p>

Respondent	Main issue/concern	Related policy/reference	Edits made/action taken.
	There is an extensive network of public rights of way (PROW) to the East of Church Road which reflect long established desire lines. These now enjoy statutory protection. There are no footpaths anywhere near Otham Glebe. This is not surprising given its private status and the absence of any desired route across or near to the property.		Whilst we agree that there are no PROW through The Glebe, there are long established informal pathways through The Glebe which have been used for in excess of 40 years, linking Downswood, Senacre, Parkwood and Otham. We have added an aerial image-based map GF1 to Appendix 1 to show the existing, well-worn footpaths and access points. Their visibility on aerial images proves the existence of these desire lines. Given such longevity of use, these informal pathways could be subject to a formal Rights Of way designation under the Highways Act 1980 in the future, with the agreement of the landowner.
	Otham Glebe cannot be seen from any publicly owned land or any PROW. The Glebe is not visible from Church Road. The unbroken run of houses at the edge of the urban area (Chapman Avenue) blocks views eastwards and prevents public access onto the private farmland beyond. At ground level the Glebe cannot be seen from any public vantage point.		<p>The TPO veteran oak tree that sits in the centre of The Glebe, as identified on photograph GF1, can be seen clearly from both Church Road and from the PROW in the fields to the east of Church Road. It can also be seen from Woolley Road.</p> <p>Although not publicly owned, the field to the south of The Glebe, which is used regularly by dog walkers and horse riders, provides walkers with a clear view over the lower lying Glebe field.</p> <p>The referred to 'unbroken run of houses at the edge of the urban area (Chapman Avenue)' sits at the bottom of a cliff below the level of Otham so does not affect any views. The residents of these houses can directly access the farmland from their gardens. In addition, PROW KM86 enables public access into the farmland from the west and east and the farmland can also be accessed from Woolley Road. This farmland, used regularly by walkers and horse riders, provides a clear view of The Glebe field.</p>
	In 2012 the NPPF established a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This was subsequently reinforced in the 2018 Review. The reference in the Draft Neighbourhood to housing development as a threat is in clear conflict with this principle.		Paragraph 100 of the NPPF states that, 'The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them.' As required by the NPPF, The Glebe has been proved through consultation to be of special significance to local people, is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
	It is untenable to designate a privately owned, comprehensively screened piece of farmland as a Local Green Space. There has never been any right of public access and there is no prospect of achieving it. In any event, the designation of Otham Glebe in this way would not serve any public good. It might be favoured by the two or three adjoining house owners but it could not make any contribution to the proposed Otham Heritage trails or the Protection of Views.		<p>As stated above, The Glebe is not comprehensively screened or indeed enclosed and has been used by the public on a daily basis for in excess of 40 years for leisure pursuits. The designation of The Glebe as a Local Green Space would ensure that the field is given special protection so that it can continue to be enjoyed by future generations as a peaceful, wild, open space and as an important habitat for slow-worms and other wildlife (as detailed in the Ecological Appraisal by Aspect Ecology Ltd on behalf of Bellway Homes for site H1(8) March 2019), recognising its particular importance to the local communities of Senacre and Downswood as well as Otham.</p> <p>We agree that The Glebe does not feature in the Heritage Walks or Protection of views.</p>

SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES AND CONCERNS RAISED

Respondent	Main issue/concern	Related policy/reference	Edits made/action taken.
	There are no sound reasons to designate Otham Glebe as Local Green Space. Such a move is not justified by the evidence, neither is it consistent with the stated aims of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan itself. The Glebe makes no contribution to the public footpath network and no contribution to public views.		<p>The evidence in Appendix 2, the voices of local people who walk through The Glebe on a daily basis and who refer to The Glebe as ‘therapy’ and say they, “Couldn’t cope without it” and who say, “Without it we should be lost,” more than justifies the allocation of this well loved and special place as Local Green Space. The veteran oak tree is a major landmark and contributes considerably to the landscape.</p> <p>The allocation also fits with the vision of the Neighbourhood Plan, that Otham should provide a green oasis for visitors to Otham. The majority of users of The Glebe reside in the Senacre area of urban Maidstone and the parish of Downswood.</p> <p>In addition, the allocation is consistent with the stated aims of the Neighbourhood Plan; paragraph 3.2, ‘That the natural environment with its agricultural fields, uncultivated wild open spaces, beautiful rural views and profusion of mature woodland and hedgerows be maintained’ and 3.3, ‘That the local community will live healthy lifestyles, making full use of their community centre, village green, local green spaces and network of accessible public footpaths, bridleways and heritage walks.’ Having the Glebe on their doorstep allows the residents of Senacre and Downswood to live healthy lifestyles, walking their dogs in an uncultivated, natural environment away from traffic and urban noise.</p>
Southern Gas Networks	SGN are most interested about the housing developments in the plan. After reviewing the developments on the Medium Pressure (MP) and Intermediate Pressure (IP) network analysis model, I can confirm that the area is well supported and it is very unlikely that any of the developments in the plan would lead to reinforcement on the gas network. Where the development is to connect to our Low Pressure (LP) system, reinforcement will be dependent on the nature and location of the requested load(s) and will only become clear once a developer’s request has been received.	Chapter 8	Noted.
The National Trust	We support Policy HC2 which seeks to safeguard views.	HC2	Noted.
	We support Policy GS2 and the designation of The Village Green as Local Green Space as an important green space adjacent to Stoneacre.	GS2	Noted.
	We support Policy BE1 which seeks to protect the surrounding landscape setting of listed buildings within the conservation area and their setting.	BE1	Noted.
	We support Policy BE3 which encourages sustainable development and the efficient use of resources by incorporating appropriate energy efficiency measures and aligns with our strategy that seeks to ‘Look after special places, for ever, for everyone’.	BE3	Noted.

Respondent	Main issue/concern	Related policy/reference	Edits made/action taken.
Gladman Developments Ltd	Identified views must be supported by evidence and ensure that they demonstrate a physical attribute elevating a view's importance beyond simply being a nice view of open countryside. The evidence base to support the policy does little to indicate why these views are important and why they should be protected, other than providing a view of the surrounding fields and woodland. It therefore lacks the proportionate and robust evidence required by the PPG. An important view that should be protected must have some form of additional quality that would 'take it out of the ordinary' rather than views which may not have any landscape significance. This policy should be deleted.	Policy HC2	<p>The 2009 Otham Conservation Area Appraisal highlights the existence 'of a number of important views from the Conservation Area. As the setting for the Conservation Area, these views are to be protected.' For example, 'The wide views towards the North Downs from the vicinity of Green Hill and the War Memorial are particularly important to the character of the Conservation Area and its setting.' It goes on to say that, 'Some land within the Conservation Area is pastureland or otherwise undeveloped. Otham also contains a high proportion of large gardens which are not only attractive in their own right but also offer the low density necessary to provide the village with its characteristic views. These views and those over the wider landscape of fields and woodland make an important contribution to Otham's special rural character, which is further confirmed by the sounds and smells of this quiet, residential and agricultural village.'</p> <p>We therefore feel that the preservation of views in Otham is vital and this policy is essential to comply with the Conservation Area Appraisal.</p> <p>Additional information and justification for inclusion regarding each of the 20 views has been added to paragraph 4.1.</p>
	Supporting evidence is not sufficiently robust to justify the proposed allocation of several of the sites as Local Green Spaces, given their lack of particularly special features.	Policy GS2 Appendix 1	As required in the NPPF, all proposed allocations are in close proximity to residents of Otham, Downswood or Senacre, are proved through consultation to be of special significance to local people and are local in character and not extensive tracts of land. Detailed justification for each site can be found in Appendix 1.
	None of the Local Green Space descriptions in Appendix 6 correspond with their mapped locations on page 19. (Now Appendix 1)	New Appendix 1	The 6 figure grid references have been changed to 10 figure grid references so that there can be no doubt about the Local Green Space site locations. The numbers of each site in Appendix 1 have been changed to match the numbers on map GS2 for clarity.
	The description of JG6 Area bordering ancient woodland is not shown on the map on page 19.	Appendix 1	Noted. The inclusion of JG6 in Appendix 1 was an error. It has been removed.
	The description of JG1 The Village Green does not match the map on page 19 which outlines an additional grazed field to the east.	Appendix 1 Map GS2	Noted. This was a mapping error. The map on page 19, now labelled Map GS2 for clarity, has been redrawn showing the correct area of the village green.
	Several sites have not been designated in accordance with national policy and guidance and subsequently are not in accordance with basic conditions. The village green is an extensive tract of land, there is no evidence base to suggest all sites are demonstrably special to the community. Local Green Space allocations in various Neighbourhood Plans have been rejected due to non-compliance with NPPF.		<p>National policy dictates that Local green Space designation should only be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when the space is in close proximity to the community it serves. • where it is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular significance. • where it is local in character and not an extensive tract of land. <p>We believe all of the Local Green Spaces proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan meet these criteria. (Noting the errors acknowledged above) Details of all sites can be found in Appendix 1.</p> <p>None of our designated Local green Spaces is an extensive tract of land.</p>

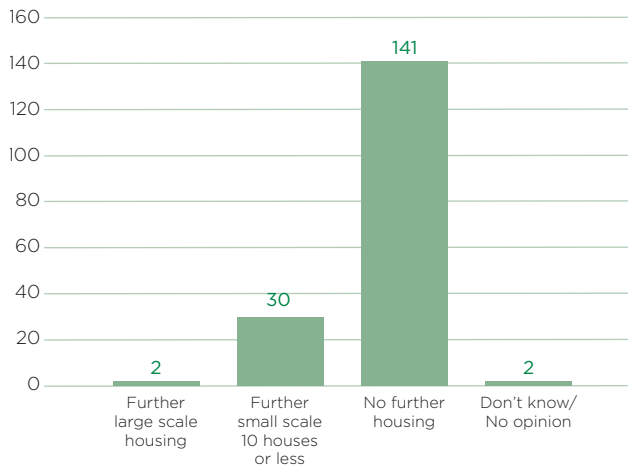
SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES AND CONCERNS RAISED

Respondent	Main issue/concern	Related policy/reference	Edits made/action taken.
	The policies are attempting to preclude any development whatsoever in the identified gap between Otham and Maidstone. There is no supporting evidence, no map of the extent of land to be protected or limits on the scale of development. The policy is ambiguous and unclear.	Policy AC1	<p>Positive planning now adopted by rewording the policy to make it more flexible, so as not to preclude all development:</p> <p>‘Within the parcels of land... any development which results in a significant adverse impact on maintaining the anti-coalescence function of this area will not be supported.’</p> <p>We believe that this policy, read in conjunction with map 6.1 and supporting information in Chapter 6, is now clear and unambiguous.</p> <p>The Context of Section 6 has been rewritten with additional justification. We believe that this has aided clarity. Map 6.1 has been added which shows the extent of land to be protected.</p>
	There is no evidence base to assess land parcels between Otham and surrounding settlements or an evaluation of their relative performance in preventing coalescence.		Agreed. Following your observation, an assessment has been undertaken to assess all of the land parcels between Otham and its surrounding settlements to evaluate their relative performance in preventing coalescence. As a result, three land parcels have been identified that are individually preventing coalescence. These are designated as having high anti coalescence importance on new map 6.1. In addition, six further parcels of land have been identified as forming half of a pair of land parcels that prevent coalescence. These are designated as having moderate anti coalescence importance on new map 6.1.
Rumwood Cricket Club	<p>Our club ground is slowly being surrounded by houses. Two months ago, our pavilion's roof was extensively damaged by youths from the new houses. We are very vulnerable and I have lost count the number of crimes we have reported. We also have the problem of the public using our ground for dog walking and for what they leave behind.</p> <p>Ideally we would like fencing similar to the football club, all around our ground for security purposes and would ask you to consider this if you get any further planning applications.</p>	Policy GS2 Appendix 1	Although we cannot address this in our Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council have asked the developer Redrow to provide a fence as part of our response to their planning application for the neighbouring Monchelsea Place site.
Resident 1	Farming in Otham; it's good to have made the connection to the local community (supermarkets etc). Also, shrinkage of available farmland and increased threat from traffic. Good to end with the 'Vision'.	Paragraph 2.17	Noted.
	Anticoalescence....an important addition	Chapter 6	Noted.
	"The people of Otham.... and other villages". I am sure this is a valid statement on behalf of those living in the village but it would resonate more if it were a geographically more tightly defined space.	Paragraph 8.1	Agreed. We have amended the paragraph to specify the urban areas at risk of coalescing with Otham, namely Maidstone, Bearsted and Downswood and the villages of Langley and Leeds. We have also amended paragraph 6.2 in the same way.

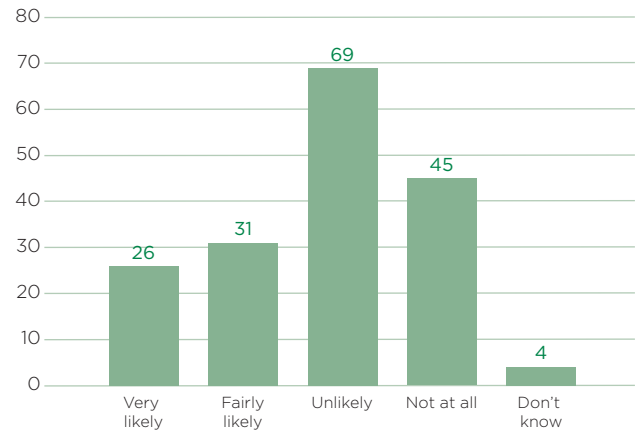
Respondent	Main issue/concern	Related policy/reference	Edits made/action taken.
	<p>I feel this should be strengthened... something along the lines of... "In keeping with the Vision and Aims of this Plan which take account of the overwhelming view expressed by Parish residents in the Planning Survey, March 2018, any proposal for further large scale development in Otham Parish will be strongly resisted. It is an overarching Aim of this Neighbourhood Plan to protect and retain the Parish's rural and historic character and prevent coalescence of settlements."</p> <p>To buttress this 'Aim' I would suggest inclusion of an additional policy.</p>	Paragraph 8.2	<p>Partly agreed. Paragraph 8.3 has been amended to highlight the views of the community against further large-scale developments in Otham.</p> <p>However, it was felt that an additional aim in this chapter would simply duplicate policy AC1 in Chapter 6 and would not be positive planning.</p>
Resident 2	<p>I can see that the current Village Hall is small with insufficient parking but the available space within Otham to build a new one with parking is limited. The idea of a new site and new hall is good, the practical elements unwelcome with more car journeys on the narrow roads. Volume of traffic and safe walking were a major issue in the survey carried out with local residents.</p> <p>However there are two village halls located nearby, one at Senacre and another at Downswood which could be accessed instead.</p> <p>I would prefer to see priority given to safe walking/biking by making public footpaths suitable for all and where possible traffic calming measures introduced.</p>	Chapter 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We agree that an increase in traffic caused by a new Village Hall would be undesirable. We have amended the aims in paragraph 9.3 to specify the features of any new hall to ensure that such a hall primarily serves the needs of the local community, thus limiting the increase in vehicular traffic. • We feel that by only having use of the halls in Senacre and Downswood, an opportunity will be missed to enhance the sense of community which is central to our vision for Otham. • We propose that residents are given another opportunity to comment if a need and a site is identified by the awaited Survey of Community Need. We have added an additional point in Policy CL1 to ensure that the construction of a new village hall will only be supported if the location, size and access arrangements are supported by the majority of residents. • The issues of safe walking/biking and suitability of public footpaths are addressed in Chapter 7. • Traffic calming is not a matter that can be addressed in a Neighbourhood Plan.

Otham Neighbourhood Planning Survey – March 2018

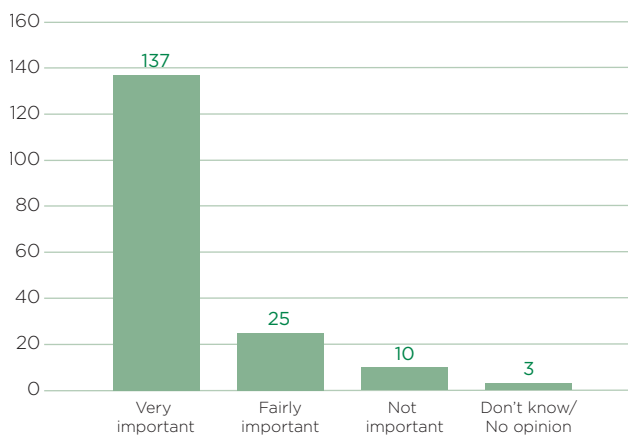
Q1. What further housing would you like to see built?



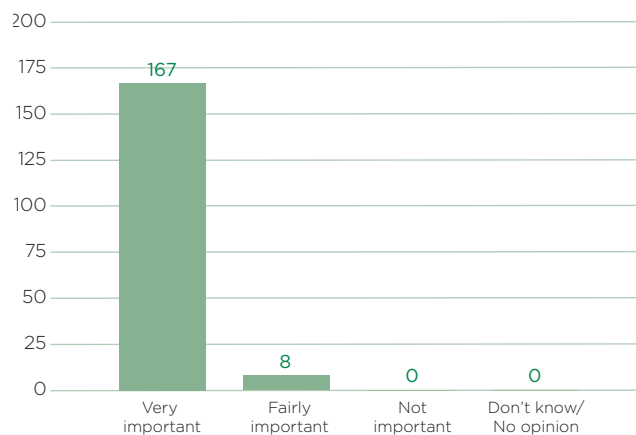
Q4. How interested are you in a Community Transport Scheme?



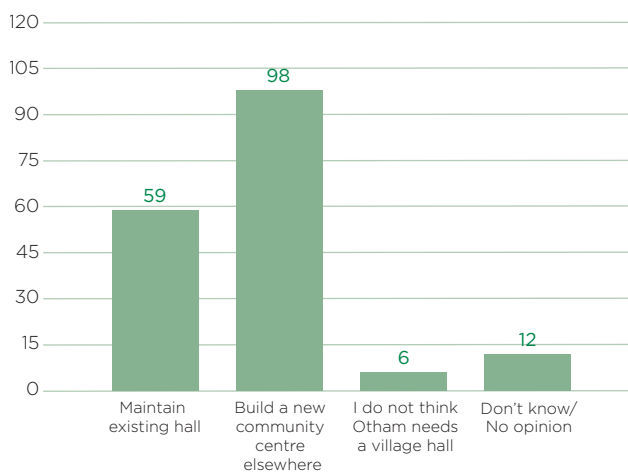
Q2. How important is it to you that building style is included in Neighbourhood Plan?



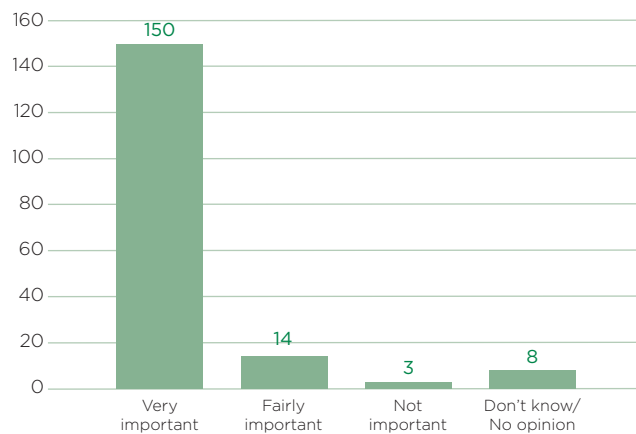
Q5. How important is it to you to retain and protect existing Green Spaces?

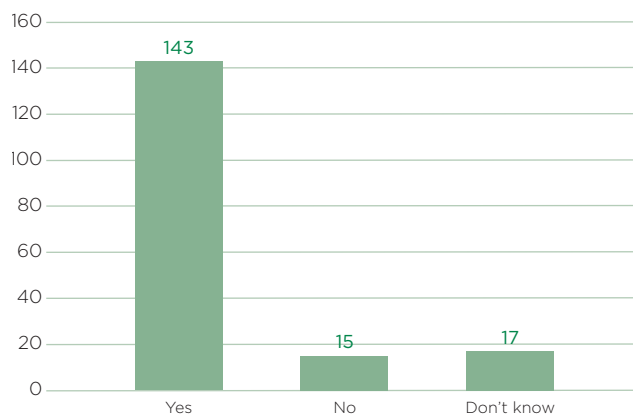
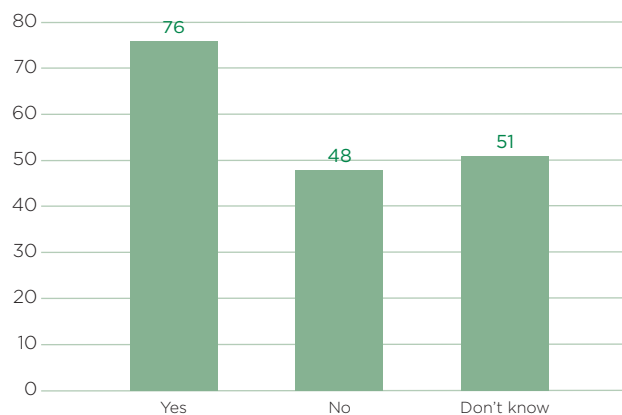
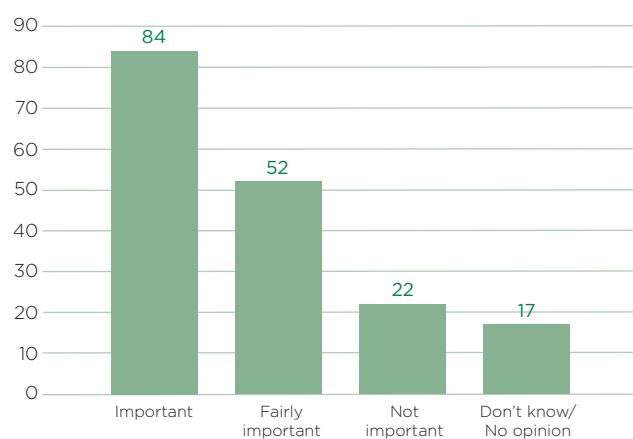
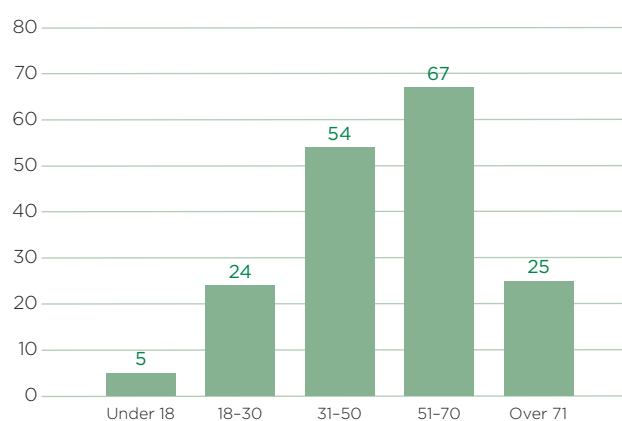


Q3. How do you see the future of the Village Hall?



Q6. How important is it to retain existing views?



Q7. Would you like to see Heritage Walks established?**Q9. Should we extend the Bridleway Network?****Q8. Construction of Wheelchair Accessible Footpaths****Q10. Age range of respondents**

Otham Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire Summary 2015

1. Please indicate your age group and sex?

18-20	2%	Male	48%
21-45	21%	Female	51%
46-55	19%	No Reply	1%
56-65	21%		
66-75	13%		
76+	23%		
No Reply	1%		

2. How long have you lived in Otham?

Minimum	1 year
Maximum	84 years
Average	22 years

3. What type of property do you live in?

Detached	65%
Terrace	4%
Flat	3%
Semi	18%
Bungalow	8%
No Reply	2%

4. Approximate age of dwelling?

Minimum	0 years
Maximum	800 years
Average	155 years

5. How many cars do you have and where are they kept?

Car Storage	Number of Cars	Percentage of Replies
Garage, Covered Area or Driveway	272 cars	78%
Roadside, Outside your Property	13 cars	5%
Elsewhere in Village	10 cars	1%
Off Road	15 cars	5%
None	0 cars	10%
Minimum	0 cars	
Maximum	7 cars	
Average	1.9 cars	

6. In your view, what type of housing is needed?

Large Family Homes	8%
Small Family Homes	17%
Affordable Housing	19%
Housing for the Elderly	12%
Housing for the disabled	5%
No further housing needed	68%
No Opinion	4%
No Reply	0%

7. What other types of development would you like to see?

None	36%
Other Response	26%
No Reply	38%

8. Do you run a business in Otham?

Yes	12%
No	88%

9. Where is your main place of work or study?

At Home	33%
Elsewhere in Village	1%
Outside Village but Within 10 Miles	16%
Within 11-15 Miles	8%
Within 16-50 Miles	2%
Over 50 Miles	3%
London	5%
Not Working	30%
No Reply	1%

10. What is your main means of transport in and out of Otham?

Car	88%
Van	4%
Bus	9%
Train	1%
Motorcycle	0%
Bicycle	5%
On Foot	7%
Other	3%
Not Applicable	0%

11. How many times a month do you use the footpaths and bridleways?

More than 20	21%
Between 11-20	27%
Between 5-10	12%
Less than 5	27%
Never	14%

12. Do you or have you used the Len Valley Walk?

Yes	48%
No	52%

13. Do you feel like Otham suffers from the following types of disturbance?

Traffic Noise	37%
Shooting/Bird Scarers	0%
Noisy Activities in the Village	14%
Agricultural/Chemical Odours	13%
Inconsiderate Parking	22%
Agricultural Machinery on Roads	21%
Oversize Vehicles in General on Roads	68%
Speeding Traffic	82%
Bonfires	12%
No Reply	2%

14. How important is farming to the village?

Very Important	61%
Important in Ecological Terms	33%
Important in Economic Terms	34%
Important in Defining Rural Character	67%
Not Sure or No Opinion	5%
Not Important	1%
No Reply	1%

15. Do you ride, own or keep a horse in the village?

I Ride a Horse in the Village	2%
I Own a Horse in the Village	0%
I Keep a Horse in the Village	1%
No Horse	97%

16. Do you walk or cycle through the village?

Cycle Day	30%
Walk Day	80%
Walk With Children Day	21%
No Walk or Cycle Day	13%
Cycle Night	1%
Walk Night	14%
Walk With Children Night	2%
No Walk or Cycle Night	86%

17. Are you happy with the tidiness of the village?

Yes	65%
No	35%

18. Would you be willing to help with a village tidy?

Yes	64%
No	36%

19. How important are the village pubs (White Horse and Orchard Spot) to you?

White Horse	
Vital	3%
Important	8%
Nice to Have	35%
Not Important	50%
Orchard Spot	
Vital	3%
Important	8%
Nice to Have	29%
Not Important	58%
No Reply	1%

20. How often do you visit them a month?

White Horse	
More than 10	1%
6-10	1%
1-5	5%
Very Infrequently	27%
Never	66%
Orchard Spot	
More than 10	1%
6-10	1%
1-5	2%
Very Infrequently	24%
Never	70%
No Reply	1%

21. How important are the following to you?

Mobile Library	
Vital	4%
Important	12%
Nice to Have	43%
Not Important	41%
St Nicholas Church	
Vital	16%
Important	32%
Nice to Have	33%
Not Important	19%

22. How important is the village hall to you?

Vital	17%
Important	30%
Nice to Have	47%
Not Important	5%

23. How important are the allotments and football ground to you?

Allotments	
Vital	13%
Important	23%
Nice to Have	36%
Not Important	27%
No Reply	1%
Football Ground	
Vital	5%
Important	11%
Nice to Have	21%
Not Important	63%

24. How important are village-based clubs and societies to you?

Vital	7%
Important	22%
Nice to Have	44%
Not Important	30%
No Reply	1%
Church	7
Church Tea Party	3
Football	1
Garden Scheme	1
History Society	14
Pre-School	1
No Club or Society	142 (86%)

25. How important is the village green and play area to you?

Vital	48%
Important	26%
Nice to Have	22%
Not Important	2%
No Reply	1%

26. Do you feel there are adequate street parking places in Otham?

Yes	28%
No	42%
No Opinion	29%
No Reply	1%

27. Do you consider street parking a hazard in Otham?

Yes	44%
No	33%
No Opinion	22%
No Reply	1%

28. How do you view street lighting currently?

Adequate	59%
More Street Lighting Required	19%
No Opinion	21%
No Reply	1%

29. How important is the bus service to you?

Essential	16%
Important	19%
Not Important	16%
Do Not Use	48%
No Reply	1%

30. Are you satisfied with the general state of the roads in Otham?

Yes	24%
No	72%
No Opinion	3%
No Reply	1%

31. Do you think the maintenance of hedges and verges with regard to road safety are:

Good	21%
Reasonable	55%
Poor	22%
No Opinion	1%
No Reply	1%

32. Do you think the road warning signs in Otham adequate for safety?

Yes	38%
No	48%
No Opinion	13%
No Reply	1%

33. Should Otham Lane be signposted/ designated as a single lane with passing places?

Yes	78%
No	12%
No Opinion	10%
No Reply	1%

34. Which of the following do you feel would best improve road safety in Otham?

Improved/Additional Pathways	28%
Speed Humps	24%
Illuminated Speed Warning Signs	35%
Reduce Legal Speed Limit from 30 to 20mph	50%
Extend 30mph speed limit to all roads in Otham	57%
No Reply	1%

35. What are your views on the standard of the following environmental services in Otham?

Water Supply	
Good	61%
Reasonable	30%
Poor	7%
No Opinion	1%
No Reply	1%

Electricity Supply	
Good	71%
Reasonable	27%
Poor	0%
No Opinion	1%
No Reply	1%

Refuse Collection	
Good	63%
Reasonable	29%
Poor	4%
No Opinion	3%
No Reply	1%

Street Lighting	
Good	17%
Reasonable	31%
Poor	15%
No Opinion	36%
No Reply	1%

Street Cleaning	
Good	15%
Reasonable	41%
Poor	32%
No Opinion	11%
No Reply	1%

Winter Weather Service	
Good	18%
Reasonable	38%
Poor	22%
No Opinion	21%
No Reply	1%

Broadband	
Good	16%
Reasonable	30%
Poor	34%
No Opinion	19%
No Reply	1%

Mobile Phone Reception	
Good	12%
Reasonable	36%
Poor	41%
No Opinion	10%
No Reply	1%

Community Policing	
Good	11%
Reasonable	28%
Poor	28%
No Opinion	32%
No Reply	1%

36. Do you feel the quality of life has improved since you moved here?

Yes	10%
No	71%
No Opinion	18%
No Reply	1%

37. Does Otham Parish Council publicise its decisions and activities well?

Yes	62%
No	15%
No Opinion	22%
No Reply	1%

38. Are you aware of the following methods of communication used by Otham Parish Council?

Ragstone Delivery	90%
Website	41%
Noticeboards	65%
Bi-Monthly Meetings	41%
Facebook	15%
No Reply	6%

39. Do you think sufficient publicity is given to planning applications that affect Otham?

Yes	35%
No	56%
No Opinion	6%
No Reply	3%

40. Do you feel your elected representatives are aware of local concerns and feelings?

Parish Council	
Yes	79%
No	5%
No Opinion	14%
No Reply	2%
District Council	
Yes	28%
No	37%
No Opinion	32%
No Reply	3%

County Council

Yes	21%
No	44%
No Opinion	32%
No Reply	3%

Member of Parliament

Yes	15%
No	46%
No Opinion	36%
No Reply	3%

41. If further housing development does go ahead, what benefits should the village gain from it?

Improved Road Safety	53%
Improved Footpaths	37%
Improved Village Hall	26%
Street Lighting	24%
Gas Mains	41%
Fibre Broadband	45%
No Reply	1%

42. Would you like to attend a public meeting to discuss the findings of this questionnaire?

Yes	65%
No	35%