

# LENHAM

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2017-2031**

**QUALITY GROWTH QUALITY LIFE**



**REGULATION 16 SUBMISSION  
BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT  
NOVEMBER 2019**

**LNP3**



# LENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 This document

- 1.1.1 This Basic Conditions Statement has been produced to accompany the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan. It sets out how the basic conditions prescribed by Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 are considered to have been met. The basic conditions are:
- a) Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Plan.
  - d) The making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
  - e) The making of the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).
  - f) The making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.
  - g) Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the Neighbourhood Plan. The prescribed condition is that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or an offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural habitats etc.) Regulations 2007) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).
- 1.1.2 There are two further basic conditions (b) and (c) but these only apply to the making of a Neighbourhood Development Order and are thus not considered relevant for this document. Please see Appendix A for more detail on the legislative context to the basic conditions.

### 1.2 Lenham Neighbourhood Plan 2012 - 2015

- 1.2.1 Work on the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan began in 2012. An application was made by Lenham Parish Council to Maidstone Borough Council to designate the boundary of the Parish to be the boundary for the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan. This application request was approved by Maidstone Borough Council on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2012.
- 1.2.2 The following key events were organised in order to process the Plan:
- 1) Consultation in 2012-2013
  - 2) Tour of the parish on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014
  - 3) Lenham market on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2014
  - 4) Public consultation event on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2014
  - 5) Public consultation event on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2014
  - 6) Public consultation event on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2015
  - 7) Public consultation event 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015
  - 8) Schools consultation events on 5/6<sup>th</sup> October 2015
  - 9) Public consultation event on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2015
  - 10) Public consultation event 21<sup>st</sup> November 2015
- 1.2.3 In addition to the above events, public evidence gathering was conducted by the HIVE work groups

during the course of 2014. These comprise sector work groups in Housing, Infrastructure, Village Life and Economy. The work of these groups was presented as stand-alone documents as part of the evidence base of the Plan.

- 1.2.4 To ascertain any requirements local businesses may have, a questionnaire was sent to known business in Q4, 2014. The subsequent analysis of the returned questionnaires was presented in the report entitled Economy Group Summary Report published on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015.
- 1.2.5 Furthermore, the Parish conducted a Housing Needs Survey in November 2014. This was presented as stand-alone document as part of the evidence base of the Plan. This had a 30% response rate, which is considered high and representing a sufficiently large and workable cross section of the population of the Parish. It is higher than the response rate of other comparable parishes in producing their own plans.
- 1.2.6 As the body of consultation feedback increased the Plan was able to evolve to take account of community views. From this, specific meetings were organized with businesses and landowners whose land holdings were of potential relevance within the emerging plan. In doing so, close attention was paid to the Government's wish to encourage development of housing on sites that are or become available and to give 'automatic' planning permission in principle on suitable brownfield sites.

### **1.3 Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Submission 2016**

- 1.3.1 The culmination of this work was the production of three documents:
  - 1) Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Submission February 2016;
  - 2) Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement February 2016;
  - 3) Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Public Consultation Statement February 2016.
- 1.3.2 Close working with Maidstone Borough Council continued during this process. The February 2016 Plan sought to accommodate a total of 1100 dwellings. Of these 467 dwellings were to be allocated at the existing industrial Marley Site. A further 200 dwellings were to be allocated at Lenham Storage, an existing site in storage and distribution use.
- 1.3.3 The Borough Council, in its formal response to the 2016 Regulation 14 Plan, pointed out a conflict with Policy ED2 in the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan. That policy sought to retain existing employment sites in employment use. The Borough Council advised Lenham Parish Council that Policy LNP 1 and the associated text was not in general conformity with the adopted employment protection Local Plan Policy ED2.
- 1.3.4 There was at that time, an emerging Local Plan which would eventually become MBLP 2017 and replace the then adopted Local Plan. The proposed development of some 667 dwellings on these two major employment sites within the parish was held also not to be in general conformity with strategic employment protection policies within the emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan.
- 1.3.5 Lenham Parish Council had regard to the opinion of Maidstone Borough Council that the emerging LNP was not in general conformity with both the existing Local Plan and its emerging replacement plan. The Parish Council decided that to continue with the proposed allocations would put the Plan of risk at failing at Public Examination because it failed to meet one or more of the basic conditions for neighbourhood plans.

### **1.4 Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Regulation 14 Consultation Draft August 2017**

- 1.4.1 As a consequence, three further documents were produced:
  - 1) Lenham Neighbourhood Plan: The Plan Policies Pre-Regulation 14 Consultation Draft dated 24<sup>th</sup> August 2017;

- 2) Lenham Neighbourhood Plan: Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Report, Pre-Regulation 14 Consultation Draft dated 24<sup>th</sup> August 2017;
- 3) Lenham Neighbourhood Plan: Local Green Space, Pre-Regulation 14 Consultation Draft August 2017.

1.4.2 The 2017 Plan was the subject of extensive public consultation which is described in the Consultation Statement. A consultation event was held in September 2017 at Lenham Primary School. This event was attended by approximately 500 members of the public.

1.4.3 In order to avoid conflict with employment protection polices, the 2017 Plan proposed the development of 1000 dwellings on a series of Strategic Housing Delivery Sites (SHDS) all of which were green field sites in agricultural use.

1.4.4 Work continued on the Plan to take account of the responses made.

1.4.5 Lenham Parish Council has been working actively with developers and landowners who will be bring the sites proposed in the Plan forward on the ground. The Parish Council formed an informal grouping of developers and landowners called the Infrastructure Delivery Group (IDG). This group has met every 2/3 months since its inception in 2017. The IDG has been able to consider issues such as foul drainage. The IDG worked cooperatively with the Parish Council to develop solutions to ensure that a new foul sewerage network can be put in place to serve the sites proposed in the Plan without any harmful impact on the existing sewerage network serving the parish.

## **1.5 Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation Draft September 2018**

1.5.1 Consultation continued with other agencies such as the County and Borough Councils during this time. This work culminated in the production of Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation Draft in September 2018.

1.5.2 The Regulation 14 Consultation Draft Plan consisted of three documents:

- 1) Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation Draft (September 2018);
- 2) Strategic Environmental Assessment for the LNP (September 2018);
- 3) Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Transport Assessment (2018)

1.5.3 The Regulation 14 Consultation Draft Plan was the subject of public consultation in the Autumn of 2018. A public consultation event was held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2018 in the Tithe Barn near Lenham Square. This event was attended by approximately 650 members of the public. A questionnaire survey was given wide distribution at that time and some 83 responses were received and analysed. The consultation process is described in full in the 2019 Consultation Statement which accompanies this Plan.

1.5.4 In order to inform the development of the Plan and its policies, Lenham Parish Council commissioned independent consultants, Peter Brett Associates (pba), to undertake a Transport Assessment of the draft proposals. This work was 100% funded by a grant from Maidstone Borough Council.

1.5.5 The resultant study, Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Transport Assessment 2018, was published alongside this Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation Draft for public comment.

1.5.6 An informal environmental screening of the draft Plan revealed that it would be necessary to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) because of the scale of development proposed and the resultant effects on the environment. Lenham Parish Council therefore decided, in consultation with Maidstone Borough Council, to undertake voluntary SEA as part of the Plan making process.

1.5.7 Lenham Parish Council commissioned AECOM to undertake SEA of the proposals. This work is 100% funded by a grant from central government. SEA is a process which runs parallel to the Plan making process and considers likely environmental implications at each stage as the proposals emerge. The resultant SEA report was published alongside the Regulation 14 Consultation Draft Plan and the Transport Assessment for public comment at that time.

- 1.5.8 Concern was expressed by Borough and County Councils and several landowners that the infrastructure proposed in the 2018 Plan went beyond that which would have been strictly necessary simply to serve the development proposed in the Plan.
- 1.5.9 Government policy on this issue set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF (2019) at paragraph 56 sets out three tests which planning obligations must meet if they are to be applied to the grant of a planning permission. This is called the 'necessity test' that the obligations should be reasonably related to the scale of the development proposed and not go beyond the minimum required to simply serve the development.
- 1.5.10 The NPPF (2019) at paragraph 37 also sets out that neighbourhoods plans must meet the 'basic conditions' and other legal requirements before they can be brought into force. A note on the effect of the basic conditions is included as Appendix A to this Statement. The first basic condition (condition (a)) is, that having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the Plan.
- 1.5.11 The Parish Council reviewed the consultation responses received in 2018 and decided that, unless modified, the 2018 Plan would not accord with the necessity test contained within the NPPF and would thus not meet basic condition (a).
- 1.5.12 An area of concern was that the Link Roads connecting six of the seven sites proposed in the Plan would be excessive and would go beyond what was simply needed to serve the development proposed.
- 1.5.13 As a result of further consultation with Kent County Council as Highway Authority the nature of the roads serving the proposed sites was better defined and a new 2019 Transport Assessment was published clarifying nature of the roads proposed.
- 1.5.14 The 2018 Plan also proposed a new roundabout on the A20 serving the Tanyard Farm, Old Ashford Road, Lenham H1 (41) residential allocation contained in MBLP 2017. This proposal received a large element of local support, including a supporting petition. In the event, planning permission was granted to the H1 (41) allocation without requiring a new access onto the A20. As a consequence, the 2019 Transport Assessment no longer contains the proposal for a new roundabout access on the A20 and the proposal for a new roundabout will not be included in the 2019 Deposit Draft version of Lenham Neighbourhood Plan.

## **1.6 Supporting Documents**

- 1.6.1 The Lenham Neighbourhood Plan is supported by a Consultation Statement and this Basic Conditions Statement.

### **Transport Assessment (TA)**

- 1.6.2 Work on the August 2017 Consultation Draft with Maidstone Borough Council identified the need to produce a Transport Assessment (TA) as an evidence base to support the site allocations. A contract for this work was let in April 2018 and the TA itself was produced in the summer of 2018 to support the publication of the Regulation 14 Consultation Draft Plan in September 2018. The TA was funded by a grant from Maidstone Borough Council.
- 1.6.3 Following consultation on the Regulation 14 Plan revisions were made to the TA resulting in the 2019 version which supports the Submission Draft Plan.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

- 1.6.4 Discussions with Maidstone Borough Council in 2017 led to an agreement that Lenham Neighbourhood Plan should be the subject of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 1.6.5 This work was undertaken by AECOM and was funded by a grant from Locality. An Environmental Report was produced in September 2018 and was published to accompany the Regulation 14 Draft of Lenham Neighbourhood Plan.

- 1.6.6 The SEA has been updated and a revised Report has been produced to support the Submission Draft Plan.

#### **Agricultural Land Quality**

- 1.6.7 Paragraph 171 of the NPPF (February 2019) requires an understanding of agricultural land quality in circumstances, such as Lenham, where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary.
- 1.6.8 Land Research Associates (LRA) were commissioned to undertake a review of the “Likely Impact on Vest and Most Versatile Agricultural Land” of the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan proposals. The LRA report is dated 20th February 2019 and is published to support the Submission Draft Plan.
- 1.6.9 Having reviewed the quality of the agricultural land at the periphery of the village, the Report concludes that it is inevitable that development at the level set by MBLP will involve at least some best and most versatile land and will often need to be exclusively on such land.

#### **Viability**

- 1.6.10 Paragraphs 34 and 57 of the NPPF require a plan to be underpinned by up to date viability evidence. This approach is amplified in the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).
- 1.6.11 A Financial Viability Statement was commissioned to support the Plan and was produced by BNP Paribas Real Estate (trading as Strutt and Parker) on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019. This work was commissioned on behalf of Lenham Parish Council was funded by members of the Infrastructure Delivery Group (IDG).
- 1.6.12 The FVS is published to support the Submission Draft Plan. The Statement concludes that all seven sites allocated can be brought forward with a policy compliant provision of affordable housing, Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments whilst maintaining an appropriate landowner premium and developer’s return.

#### **Archaeology**

- 1.6.13 Section 16 of the NPPF ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ requires that plans should understand the significance of heritage assets. This approach is amplified in the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). When consulted on the 2018 Regulation 14 Draft Plan, both Historic England and Kent County Council raised the issue of the Historic Environment Record (HER) and how it should be considered when formulating the Plan proposals.
- 1.6.14 RPS Group were commissioned to undertake an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment. The Assessment is dated 21<sup>st</sup> August 2019 and is published to support the Submission Draft Plan. The Assessment concludes that an archaeological evaluation of the Sites should follow the grant of planning consent secured by an appropriately worded archaeological planning condition.

#### **Housing Needs Assessment**

- 1.6.15 Lenham Parish Council wished to understand the extent to which the Plan could assist in meeting perceived housing needs arising within the Parish.
- 1.6.16 As a consequence, the Parish Council commissioned a Lenham Housing Needs Assessment (HNA). This Assessment was undertaken by AECOM and funded by a grant from Locality.
- 1.6.17 This approach is supported by paragraph 60 and 61 of the NPPF.
- 1.6.18 The HNA was used to assist in framing the housing policies within the Plan. The Assessment is published in support of the Submission Draft Plan.

#### **Landscape and Visual Baseline Assessment**

- 1.6.19 Much work on the evaluation of the Lenham landscape had been done during the production of earlier versions of the Plan (2016, 2017 and 2018). In finalising the Plan for Submission, the Parish Council wished to be informed as to the most valued local landscape and the sites most suitable for development in landscape terms. The Parish Council commissioned a Landscape and Visual Baseline Assessment report. This report was undertaken by David Parfitt, a Landscape Consultant, who had been engaged as part of the neighbourhood planning team since the production of the 2016 Plan.

- 1.6.20 Under the heading 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment', the NPPF at paragraph 170(a) encourages planning policies to enhance the local environment by 'protecting and enhancing valued landscapes'.
- 1.6.21 The Parish Council wished to protect valued landscapes. As a consequence, the Regulation 14 Consultation Draft Plan (September 2018) included a Lenham Local Landscape Area (LLLA) notation, which extended east and south from the Parish Church of St. Mary and the Conservation Area.
- 1.6.22 Consultation with Maidstone Borough Council cast doubt on the LLLA notation and whether this policy approach complied with national and local plan policy guidance.
- 1.6.23 Further discussions were held with officers of the Borough Council to see if a different name could be chosen for the designation and indeed a different set of boundaries to it.
- 1.6.24 The Borough Council maintained its objection to the local valued landscape notation and the Parish Council decided to remove it from the Plan in its entirety.
- 1.6.25 The Landscape and Visual Baseline Assessment report was drafted to reflect the above decision. The report is published in support of the Submission Draft Plan.

#### **Provision of Local Health Services**

- 1.6.26 A significant issue arose both in the consultation on the Plan and with the Parish Council generally. The issue is accessibility to local health services and whether the system could cope with the addition of some 1,364 additional dwellings over the year 2017-2031.
- 1.6.27 The planning system is able to generate funding for the addition of new buildings to accommodate enhanced health provision if justified and proportionate. The system cannot, however, be used to fund the provision of additional health care professionals (including Doctors).
- 1.6.28 In recognition of this issue, and in order to better inform the public of the background to health care provision, the Parish Council produced a short note having regard to how the provision of local health services interacts with the Neighbourhood Plan. The note has been published in Support of the Deposit Draft Plan.

### **1.7 Key statements**

- 1.7.1 The draft Plan is submitted by Lenham Parish Council, which, as a qualifying body, is entitled to submit a Neighbourhood Plan for its own parish. The Plan has been prepared by the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Group, which is led by Lenham Parish Council.
- 1.7.2 The whole parish of Lenham has been formally designated a Neighbourhood Area through an application under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 and approved by Maidstone Borough Council on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2012.
- 1.7.3 The draft Plan contains policies relating to the development and use of land within the neighbourhood area. Proposals relating to planning matters (the use and development of land) have been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.
- 1.7.4 The draft Plan identifies the period to which it relates as 2017 to 2031. This period has been chosen to align with the dates of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017).
- 1.7.5 The draft Plan does not deal with county matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or any other matters set out in Section 61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 1.7.6 The draft Plan relates only to the parish of Lenham. It does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area. There are no other neighbourhood development plans in place within the neighbourhood area.

## 2. National Planning Policy

### 2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1.1 The Neighbourhood Plan must show that it has regard to national policies contained in guidance issue by the Secretary of State. This is principally provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
- 2.1.2 Paragraphs 29, 30 and 37 of the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) (the Framework) refer explicitly to neighbourhood plans. The Framework confirms the basic conditions and states in addition that neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies.
- 2.1.3 For the purpose of this Plan, the development plan comprises Maidstone Borough Local Plan, adopted October 2017.
- 2.1.4 This section demonstrates that the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan has regard to relevant goals within the NPPF in relation to:
- 1) Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
  - 2) Building a strong, competitive economy
  - 3) Promoting healthy and safe communities
  - 4) Promoting sustainable transport
  - 5) Supporting high quality communications
  - 6) Making effective use of land
  - 7) Achieving well-designed places
  - 8) Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
  - 9) Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### 2.2 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

2.2.1	Section 11 of the Plan contains a set of policies which release 1000 dwellings on 7 sites (Strategic Housing Delivery Site 1-7). Appendix B and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Report set out in detail the process by which the 7 Strategic Housing Delivery Sites were identified.	NPPF paragraphs 59-66
2.2.2	There has been extensive consultation with the landowners, developers and their representatives during the preparation of the Plan. To facilitate this, Lenham Parish Council established a special grouping for the Plan called the Infrastructure Delivery Group (IDG). The IDG has met every 2/3 months since early 2018 and has discussed many issues arising with the Plan.	NPPF paragraph 67
2.2.3	The work of the IDG led to collaborative funding of the 'Lenham Neighbourhood Plan – Financial Viability Statement – August 2019' produced by BNP Paribas Real Estate (t/a Strutt and Parker). That Viability Statement establishes that there are no abnormal costs applying at Lenham and that the 7 sites can all be delivered, with associated infrastructure in a viable manner. This work fits in with paragraph 67 of the Framework and associated material contained in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).	NPPF paragraph 67

**2.3 Building a strong, competitive economy**

2.3.1	Section 7 of the Plan contains policies to support the role of Lenham Square as an employment centre (Policy EMP1). Policy EMP2 supports proposals to form a secondary employment and social hub around Lenham Station. Policy EMP3 is generally supportive of employment opportunities elsewhere.	NPPF paragraphs 80 and 81
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**2.4 Promoting healthy and safe communities**

2.4.1	The site selection process in the Plan was based on selecting housing sites which are accessible to a range of facilities, including schools, by walking and cycling. This is described in Appendix B to this Statement.	NPPF paragraph 91(e), 92 and 94
2.4.2	The Plan contains (at Section 8.0) a series of policies aimed at supporting and expanding schools, community facilities and local health facilities.	NPPF paragraph 92 and 94
2.4.3	The Strategic Housing Delivery Sites (SHDS) include specific requirements to provide additional public open space, both for recreation and as amenity space. See also LNP Policy GS1.	NPPF paragraph 96 and 97
2.4.4	The Plan (Section 6.2) identifies 5 areas which are designated as Local Green Spaces. See also LNP Policy LGS1.	NPPF paragraphs 99 and 100

**2.5 Promoting sustainable transport**

2.5.1	The approach to site selection in Lenham Neighbourhood Plan was, to a significant extent, based on the desire to choose a set of sites able to score highly against sustainable transport criteria and deliver an enhanced foot, cycle and bus network based on easy links to Lenham Railway Station. This approach is reflected in the SHDS (see Section 11) and the approach to delivering infrastructure.	NPPF paragraphs 102 to 105
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**2.6 Supporting high quality communications**

2.6.1	Lenham Neighbourhood Plan supports high quality communications infrastructure. See Policy SHDS1(5).	NPPF paragraph 112 and 113
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**2.7 Making effective use of land**

2.7.1	The development of the SHDS is based on an average residential density of 30 dwellings per hectare (see Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Section 11). This is regarded as an appropriate density for Lenham bearing in mind the rural character of the Parish. The provision of Maidstone Borough Local Plan to provide approximately 1000 dwellings is met in full by the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan.	NPPF paragraphs 122 and 123
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## 2.8 Achieving well-designed places

2.8.1	Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Section 4 contains a number of policies aimed at securing high quality design. Policies D1 to D5 seek to achieve this objective. Within the SHDS, Policy SHDS 2 sets out a series of ten design principles to inform the development of the new housing areas. The Plan is supported by the Lenham Masterplanning Report which sets out the basic design quality parameters for the Strategic Housing Delivery Sites.	NPPF paragraphs 124 and 127
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## 2.9 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

2.9.1	Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Policy SHDS 1(ii) requires the provision of sustainable drainage systems within the new housing areas.	NPPF paragraph 165
2.9.2	Section 10 of the Plan contains a set of policies aimed at facilitating the provision of charging for electric vehicles (Policy AQ1 and AQ2).	NPPF paragraph 148

## 2.10 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

2.10.1	The site selection process in Lenham Neighbourhood Plan avoided selection of sites within the Kent Downs AONB. See Appendix B to this Statement.	NPPF paragraph 172
2.10.2	The SHDS selection process avoided the most locally valued landscape areas. The Plan mitigates against any potential environmental harm by incorporating high quality Masterplanning in the design process.	NPPF paragraphs 170(a) and 171
2.10.3	Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Policy GS1 supports proposals which enhance wildlife habitats. The SHDS selection process avoided areas of habitat and biodiversity value. SHDS3 includes provision for a wildlife and landscape corridor of not less than 15m in width to protect the integrity of Kiln Wood to the south which is an area of ancient woodland. Kiln Wood is owned and managed by Kent Wildlife Trust and a Local Wildlife Site. The Trust has been consulted on the Plan proposals.	NPPF paragraphs 174 and 175
2.10.4	In its process of site selection, Lenham Neighbourhood Plan has had regard to the provision of the NPPF as expressed in paragraph 170(b). Lenham Parish Council is aware of the quality of the landscapes within the Parish and has deliberately sought not to allocate housing development on sites which are remote from existing large-scale developments. Similarly, the Plan has avoided making allocations which would have an adverse impact on features such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or ancient woodland. The land on the periphery of Lenham all tends to be of high-quality agricultural land, including best and most versatile. The Plan has had regard to the quality of agricultural land as one of a number of considerations in selecting the SHDS.	NPPF paragraph 170(b)

## 2.11 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

2.11.1	The NPPF at paragraph 185 asks that plans set out a positive strategy for conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. Paragraph 185(d) refers to opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place. The Parish Council has had regard to that NPPF policy in the process of both selecting the SHDS and the sites for Local Green Space. Policy LGS1(5) identifies Court Lodge Meadow as a Local Green Space.	NPPF paragraph 185
2.11.2	For many people the unique charm of Lenham village arises from the fact that the open countryside penetrates through the churchyard to the Square, which lies within the Conservation Area at the heart of the village. The Conservation Area contains many listed buildings, including the Grade 1 Listed barn which has survived virtually unaltered since Medieval times. The views towards these Listed Buildings, when approaching on the well-used footpath across Court Lodge Meadow, are quintessentially Lenham. The Parish Council wishes the Neighbourhood Plan to do all it can to protect this unique element adding character to the Parish. The Parish Council believes that it is an important attribute of the Neighbourhood Plan that it should contain appropriate policies to protect the very best of the Parish.	NPPF paragraphs 185(d)
2.11.3	The Plan reflects important policies contained within NPPF paragraph 185(d) to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to character of place in this regard. In the preparation of the Plan the Parish Council has had regard to comments made by Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council and Historic England. The Plan has therefore had regard to the historic environment record (HER). The SHDS avoid potential conflicts with any known heritage asset.	NPPF paragraphs 187 and 190



### 3. Sustainable Development

#### 3.1 Achieving sustainable development

3.1.1 The NPPF (paragraph 7) states that the ‘purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development’. Sustainable development is defined as ‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’.

3.1.2 The NPPF views sustainability as made up of three objectives: economic, social and environmental. These objectives are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The objectives are:

- 1) Economic: to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.
- 2) Social: to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being.
- 3) Environmental: to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

3.1.3 The following section summarises how the objectives and policies in the Plan contribute toward sustainable development as defined in the NPPF. This demonstrates that the objectives of the Plan are considered to comprise a balance of social, economic and environmental goals.

#### 3.2 Economic Sustainability

3.2.1 The following Plan policies are particularly relevant:

- 1) Policy EMP1 Lenham Square
- 2) Policy EMP2 Lenham Station
- 3) Policy EMP3 Employment Opportunities
- 4) Policy TOU1 Tourism
- 5) Policy SHDS Sites 1 – 7

3.2.2 The Plan notes that the area benefits from proximity to a number of natural landscape environments that are visited by day-trippers, however the village does not capture the benefit of this high visitor footfall to the surrounding areas. The Plan therefore aims to integrate the area more successfully with enhanced walking and cycling routes to encourage day-trippers to also visit Lenham village.

3.2.3 The Plan also encourages economic development in Lenham Square in order to broaden the retail offer and enhance the centre as a location for shopping and to contribute to the evening economy. The Plan encourages the development to increase economic activity in the town centre. Finally, the Plan supports small businesses within the built-up area.

3.2.4 By incorporating the allocation of 1000 dwellings, the Plan supports associated economic activity within the Plan period to 2031.

### **3.3 Social Sustainability**

3.3.1 The following Plan policies are particularly relevant:

- 1) Policy CF1 Community Facilities
- 2) Policy CF2 Lenham Community Centre
- 3) Policy CF3 Health Infrastructure
- 4) Policies ED1-ED4 Education
- 5) Policy SHDS 1-4. Public Open Space
- 6) Policy SHDS 1-3 Housing Mix and Tenure.
- 7) Policy CIL1 Community Infrastructure Levy

3.3.2 The Plan encourages the provision of community facilities, such as education and healthcare. Green Space is encouraged in new developments to provide opportunities for community uses, such as allotments and food production. The Plan acknowledges that such facilities and active travel routes can contribute towards good placemaking in new developments. The Plan supports the integration of new and existing communities to ensure that communities are cohesive.

3.3.3 The Plan also encourages community facilities to be provided within walking and cycling distance from homes. Walking and cycling facilities should be safe and convenient to use and should provide connections between residential, retail, leisure and community uses. Public transport proposals should provide connections to Lenham railway station.

3.3.4 Throughout the Plan, policies encourage the improvement of the quality of the public realm to facilitate civic spaces and create safe communities. Particular attention is given to improving the public realm in Lenham Square for people to relax and interact with each other.

### **3.4 Environmental Sustainability**

3.4.1 The following Plan policies are particularly relevant:

- 1) Policy D1 Quality Design
- 2) Policy D2 Small-scale Development
- 3) Policy D3 Innovation and Variety
- 4) Policy D4 Self and Custom- built Homes
- 5) Policy D5 Residential Car Parking Design
- 6) Policy AT1 Active Travel
- 7) Policy AT2 Public Transport
- 8) Policy AT3 Travel Projects
- 9) Policy ES1 Natural and Amenity Green Space
- 10) Policy LGS1 Local Green Space
- 11) Policy AQ1 Charging Points for Electric Vehicles
- 12) Policy AQ2 Charing Points for Electric Vehicles Within New Housing Development
- 13) SHDS1 SHDS General Requirements
- 14) SHDS2 SHDS Design Principles

- 3.4.2 Throughout the Plan important local sites are protected, such as the Kent Downs AONB.
- 3.4.3 Active travel is encouraged throughout the Plan through connected walking and cycling routes in an attempt to decrease car usage and thus mitigate climate change. Environmental sustainability is also encouraged in the design and construction of developments.
- 3.4.4 Consideration is given to preserving and enhancing heritage assets and the ancient market town character of Lenham Square.
- 3.4.5 Finally, the Plan seeks to channel CIL payments to projects aligned with providing and enhancing natural space, active travel routes and improving the character of the appearance of Lenham Square.



## **4. The Development Plan**

### **4.1 Overview of the development plan status**

4.1.1 For Neighbourhood Plans to meet the Basic Conditions set out in the Neighbourhood Planning regulations they need to demonstrate general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan.

4.1.2 The NPPF establishes what should be covered by a strategic policy in a Local Plan. It states that such policies should provide a clear starting point for any non-strategic policies that are needed and should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other non-strategic policies. Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states that strategic policies should help to deliver:

- 1) Housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;
- 2) Infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management;
- 3) Community facilities (such as health and cultural infrastructure); and
- 4) 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.

Strategic policies are set out in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017).

### **4.2 Lenham Rural Service Centre**

4.2.1 Maidstone Borough Local Plan Strategic Policy SP8 makes provision for Lenham as a Rural Service Centre within the settlement hierarchy of Maidstone.

4.2.2 SP8(1) refers to two housing allocations H1(41) and the H1(42) which are now both permitted.

4.2.3 SP8(2) refers to two pitches for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in accord with policy GT1(8).

4.2.4 SP8(3) refers to the three sites which are designated as Economic Development Areas within Maidstone Borough Local Plan in accord with policy SP22.

4.2.5 SP8(4) refers to the infrastructure requirements necessary to support the above-mentioned provisions.

4.2.6 Policy SP8(5) states that the loss of local shops, community facilities and green spaces will be resisted. New retail development community services and open space will be supported to meet local needs.

4.2.7 The following policies in the Plan are consistent with MBLP Policy SP8:

- 1) Policy GS1 Natural and amenity green space
- 2) Policy EMP1 Employment and retail at Lenham Square
- 3) Policy EMP2 Employment and retail at Lenham Railway Station
- 4) Policy EMP3 Mix of employment opportunities
- 5) Policy CF1 Community facilities
- 6) Policy CF3 Health Infrastructure
- 7) Policies ED1-4 Education facilities

### 4.3 Lenham Broad Location for Growth

4.3.1 MBLP Policy identifies Lenham as a broad location for growth and reads as follows:

*'Lenham is also identified as a broad location for growth for the delivery of approximately 1000 dwellings post April 2021, in accordance with policy H2(3). Master planning of the area will be essential to achieve a high-quality design and layout, landscape and ecological mitigation, and appropriate provision of supporting physical, social and green infrastructure. Housing site allocations and associated infrastructure requirements will be made through the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan or through the local plan review to be adopted by April 2021. Housing sites should avoid significant adverse impact on the setting of the AONB and coalescence with neighbouring Harrietsham.'*

4.3.2 Provision for Masterplanning is incorporated within Policy SHDS1 (v) and (vi) of the Plan.

4.3.3 The Strategic Housing Delivery Sites make provision for a total of approximately 1000 dwellings as required by MBLP Policy SP8 (6).

4.3.4 The Lenham broad location for housing growth is further considered in MBLP Policy H2 (3) as follows:

*'The rural service centre of Lenham is identified as a broad location in accordance with policies SP8 and H2 for approximately 1000 dwellings post April 2021. Master planning of the area will be essential to achieve a high-quality design and layout, landscape and ecological mitigation, and appropriate provision of supporting physical, social and green infrastructure. Housing site allocations and associated infrastructure requirements will be made through the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan and/or the local plan review.'*

*It is important that development of Lenham takes place in a manner that is well integrated with the existing communities of Lenham, so that they are seen as, and function as, the village which they adjoin, rather than stand-alone communities. In order to ensure a coordinated planned approach, proposals for development within Lenham which come forward prior to an agreed Neighbourhood Plan and/or the local plan review being adopted will be refused.*

*Housing site allocations and associated infrastructure requirements will be made through the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan and/or the local plan review which will illustrate how environmental, social, design and economic objectives of the local plan will be met and to demonstrate the physical and functional integration of the site(s) within Lenham. The Neighbourhood Plan and/or local plan will incorporate and address the following principles:*

- 1) *Make efficient use of land and provide a broad range of housing choice by size and tenure (including market and affordable housing) and cater for people with special housing needs;*
- 2) *Outline measures to mitigate the traffic impacts from development on the strategic and local road networks;*
- 3) *Identify appropriate provision of, or contributions towards infrastructure improvements;*
- 4) *Incorporate primary school(s) and secondary school(s) if the scale of development justifies on-site, or if not, contributions to provision off-site in order to meet the needs generated by the broad location;*
- 5) *Ensure development is fully integrated with the surround village through shared community uses, and a variety of transport modes including walking, cycling and public transport;*
- 6) *Provide, commensurate with the scale of development, a network of open spaces and green infrastructure for amenity, play, sport and recreation, including allotments, local nature reserves woodlands, green spaces and wildlife corridors. Such provision should respond positively to the wider area of enhanced linkages and networks;*
- 7) *Incorporate appropriate landscape treatment which ensures that developments can be satisfactorily assimilated into the surrounding area;*
- 8) *Protect and, where possible, enhance any features of biodiversity value on site or which are off-site but might be affected by the proposed development;*
- 9) *Incorporate an appropriate flood risk management strategy and measures for its implementation;*
- 10) *Ensure adequate provision is made for enhanced and comprehensive sewerage infrastructure.'*

**4.3.5 The Plan responds to the MBLP broad location allocation as follows:**

<u>MBLP Requirement</u>	<u>LNP Response</u>
H2 (3) (i) Range of Housing Choice	Policy SHDS (iii) Affordable Housing Policies SHDS Sites 1 to 7
H2 (3) (i) Range of Housing Choice and Tenure	Policy SHDS3 Housing Mix and Tenure
H2 (3) (2) Mitigate Traffic Impacts	Policies SHDS Sites 1 to 7 Policy SHDS 1 (vii) Development Access Roads Policy CIL1 Community Infrastructure Levy Projects Policy AT3 Sustainable Transport
H 2(3) Infrastructure Improvements	Policy AT1 Active Travel Policy AT2 Public Transport Policy GS1 Natural and Amenity Green Space Policy CF1 Community Facilities Policy CF3 Health Infrastructure Policy ED1-4 Education Policies
H2 (3) (4) Education Provision	Education Policies
H2 (3) (5) Sustainable Transport Integration	Policy SHDS1 7. Transport Provision Policy AT1 Active Travel Policy AT2 Public Transport Policy AT3 Sustainable Transport Provision Policy AT4 Sustainable Travel Projects Policy AQ1 and 2 Charging Points
H2 (3) (6) Provision of Open Space	Policy GS1 Natural and Amenity Green Space Policy SHDS 1 4 Public Open Space Policy SHDS 2 Design Principles
H2 (3) (7) Landscape Treatment	Policy SHDS Sites 1-7 Policy SHDS2 Design Principles Policy SHDS 1 4 Public Open Space Policy SHDS 1 5 Masterplans – Lenham Masterplanning Report Lenham Masterplanning Report
H2 (3) (8) Biodiversity	Policy SHDS1 1 Ecological Survey Policy GS1 Natural and Amenity Green Space
H2 (3) (9) Flood Risk Management	Policy SHDS1 2 Sustainable Drainage
H2 (3) (10) Foul Sewerage	Policy SHDS1 6 Foul Sewerage Provision

## **5. Strategic Environmental Assessment**

- 5.1 Consultation with Maidstone Borough Council led to the conclusion that Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) was needed to support the Plan. The SEA was commissioned through a grant facilitated by locality. The work was undertaken by AECOM at no cost to the Parish or Borough Councils.

## **6. Habitats Regulations Assessment**

- 6.1 Consultation with Maidstone Borough Council lead to the conclusion that, because of the distance from any European site, the Plan did not need Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). This issue is considered further in the SEA.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 The Basic Conditions as set out in Schedule 4B to the TCPA 1990 are considered to be met by the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan and all the policies therein. It is therefore respectfully suggested to the Examiner that the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan complies with Paragraph 8(10)(a) of Schedule 4B of the Act.

## Appendix A: Legislative Context and the Basic Conditions

1. The legislative framework for any Neighbourhood Development Plan is that the plan (or order) must meet the 'basic conditions' set out at Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to Neighbourhood Plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A draft plan (or order) meets the basic conditions (and thus can proceed to the referendum stage without modification) if:
  - a) having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the order,
  - b) having special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, it is appropriate to make the order,
  - c) having special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any conservation area, it is appropriate to make the order,
  - d) the making of the order contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,
  - e) the making of the order is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area),
  - f) the making of the order does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations, and
  - g) prescribed conditions are met in relation to the order and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order.
2. The legislation refers to the making of a plan or other order such as a Neighbourhood Development Order including a community right to build order. Not all of the basic conditions apply to the making of a Neighbourhood Development Plan. The basic conditions which apply to the making of a Neighbourhood Development Plan are (a), (d), (e), (f) and (g) from the above list.
3. Throughout the documentation supporting this plan each of the five basic conditions will be referred to by reference to one of the above letters. The need to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, for example, will be referred to as basic condition (d).



## Appendix B: Alternative Development Strategies

### 1.0 Development within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

- 1.1 Much of the land within Lenham Parish which lies to the north of the A20 lies within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In considering where best to locate the new residential development proposed in the Plan, Lenham Parish Council has had regard to national policy contained within the NPPF which gives the highest status of protection to the AONB (paragraph 172).
- 1.2 The Parish Council has also had regard to development plan policy in relation to the AONB. Strategic Policy SP17(3) of the adopted Maidstone Borough Council Plan (MBLP) 2017 attaches great weight to the conservation and enhancement of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 1.3 As a result, the Parish Council concluded that major development within the AONB would conflict with basic conditions (a) and (e). This option is therefore not taken further at this stage.

### 2.0 Re-development of significant employment sites

- 2.1 Three significant employment sites are located within or close to Lenham village. These are;
  - 1) Marley Works (also now called Aliaxis);
  - 2) Lenham Storage;
  - 3) Ashmills Business Park.

These sites are all in active employment use. Consultation with Maidstone Borough Council has indicated that objection would be raised to the loss of these employment sites because continued retention in employment use is regarded as fundamental to meet the needs of existing and modernising businesses in the Borough. This option would not comply with the basic condition which requires neighbourhood plans to be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan.

- 2.2 Maidstone Borough Council has confirmed that the employment retention policies in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, adopted October 2017, are strategic in nature. It is not a sustainable proposition to promote new housing in a rural area away from main centres of employment (such as Maidstone and Ashford) and at the same time to lose the few existing employment sites within the Parish. Residential re-development of these sites would not comply with the basic conditions (d) and (e) for neighbourhood plans. This option is not therefore taken further.

### 3.0 Strategy of Rural Dispersal

- 3.1 There are several hamlets within Lenham Parish which lie outside the AONB. These include Platts Heath, Lenham Heath, Sandway and Lenham Forstal. Detailed examination of the local facilities contained within these hamlets reveals that they are too few to be regarded as supporting a sustainable village.
- 3.2 A more sustainable solution is to concentrate new development at Lenham village itself to support the many local educational, employment, medical, retail, recreational and social facilities which are located within easy walking or cycling distance of the proposed new housing. As such a strategy of rural dispersal at the smaller rural hamlets which do not have appropriate local facilities to be supported is regarded to be contrary to the basic condition (d), which is that the Plan should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 3.3 A rural dispersal strategy does not fit happily within the rural settlement strategy proposed within the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, adopted October 2017. This option is contrary to basic conditions (d) and (e) and is not therefore taken further at this stage.

#### 4.0 Lenham village options – general considerations

4.1 The above analysis leads to the consideration of development options on the periphery of Lenham Village, outside the AONB, and close enough to be within potential walking or cycling range of the village which contains existing medical, educational, employment, recreational, social and retail facilities.

4.2 In considering which areas to consider as potential housing allocations, Lenham Parish Council paid very careful attention to the guidance contained in the NPPF on the issue of promoting sustainable transport. The Parish Council had regard to the following five objectives set out in paragraph 102 (a) - (e) of the NPPF.

*‘Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:*

- (a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;*
- (b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;*
- (c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;*
- (d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and*
- (e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport consideration are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to make high quality places.’*

4.3 The Parish Council paid particular regard to paragraph 103 of the NPPF which reads as follows:

*‘The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.’*

4.4 During the evaluation of development options, it became apparent that sites on the western and southern periphery of the village offered the potential to be served by a new development access road. Once completed that road had the potential to accommodate an extended bus route. That route could also open up access to the south side of Lenham Station which could be served via the new bus route.

4.5 The Parish Council considered that such a distribution of sites would comply with the objectives of paragraph 110(a) and (b) of the NPPF which read as follows:

- (a) ‘give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitate access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;*
- (b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport.’*

4.6 The Parish Council preferred a strategy of concentrating development on the western and southern periphery of Lenham village because it allowed relatively easy access by walking, cycling and public transport to the following facilities:

- 1) The Lenham School (secondary education)
- 2) Lenham Primary School (primary education)
- 3) The site proposed for a new nursery school north of the allotments (nursery education)

- 4) Lenham Storage (employment)
  - 5) Marley/Aliaxis (employment)
  - 6) Lenham Cricket Ground and the nearby Recreation Area (open space)
  - 7) Lenham Square (employment, retail, recreation uses)
  - 8) Co-operative Store, Faversham Road (retail)
- 4.7 Consultation with KCC demonstrated that a development access road could be built to serve the six sites selected to the west and south of the village. Development access roads built through six of the seven sites could facilitate a bus route and be built to an adoptable standard. The County Council accepted that such a proposal met the necessity test of the NPPF in that the highway infrastructure proposed was directly related and proportional to the needs of the development proposed.
- 4.8 A strategy of concentrating development on the western and southern periphery of the village was therefore considered to score very highly in terms of compliance with national policy for locating development at locations which are (or can be made) sustainable. The strategy was considered to perform very well in terms of compliance with basic conditions (a) and (d). The strategy could also meet all the requirements of MBLP (2017) strategic policies SP8(6) and H2(3) and thus scored very highly in terms of basic condition (e).
- 4.9 Major woodland blocks, including ancient woodlands, are excluded from the area of search and are instrumental in structuring the identification of option sites with potential to accommodate large scale residential development.

## **5.0 Land north of the A20 Ashford Road, east of Marley works and west of the AONB.**

- 5.1 This site forms the visual setting of the AONB and the Pilgrims Way long-distance footway which forms its northern boundary. The site is attractive open farmland visible from the AONB, the Pilgrims Way, the A20 Ashford Road and existing residential development to the south of it. Development here would be contrary to the objectives of national and local plan policies aimed at protecting the AONB. In view of the sensitive location within the landscape this option is not therefore taken further at this stage as it would conflict with basic conditions (a) and (e).

## **6.0 Land south of the A20, east of Dickley Wood, north of the railway, west of Lenham village**

- 6.1 This land contains clear boundaries formed by the existing village to the east and the A20 to the north. A committed residential site lies to the north-east of the site, having been allowed on appeal on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016. Dickley Wood and the railway lie to the west and south. Development further to the west of this site to the west of Dickley Wood raises issues of potential coalescence with the village of Harrietsham which lies to the west.
- 6.2 Because of the enclosed nature of this site and its limited impact on the wider landscape setting of Lenham, this option is therefore taken further as a residential development site within the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **7.0 Land south of the railway and west of Ham Lane**

- 7.1 This land contains a scatter of mature trees within an attractive semi-parkland setting. Lying south of the railway and to the west of Ham Lane the land is more remote from the village than the land which lies to the north and east of it. The site contains significant heritage assets, including a Grade 2\* Listed Building. In view of the relative remoteness of this site and the environmental sensitivity this option is not therefore taken further.

## **8.0 Land south of the railway, west of the Headcorn Road, north of Kiln Wood, East of Ham Lane**

- 8.1 This land is enclosed by the railway, the Headcorn Road and its roadside hedges, Kiln Wood to the south and Ham Lane to the west. Views to the north of this site are somewhat curtailed by the large buildings within the existing Lenham Storage depot which lies to the north of the railway. The Old Goods Yard site which lies to the northeast is a committed residential site having been allowed on appeal on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015. Access to the facilities of Lenham village is provided by both Ham Lane and the Headcorn Road. There is the opportunity to enhance the accessibility to Lenham Station by providing a footbridge crossing over all three railway lines and a new road access with station car park to the south. Such a crossing would also provide for enhanced pedestrian access from the site to the facilities within Lenham village to the north of the railway.
- 8.2 Because of its relative accessibility and its relative enclosure within the landscape, this option is taken further as a residential development site within the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **9.0 Land South of the railway, east of the Headcorn Road and south of Oxley Wood.**

- 9.1 This site is exposed to far reaching views from the Headcorn Road and from the open land to the east and north. In view of the sensitive location within the landscape this option is not therefore taken further at this stage.

## **10.0 Land north of the railway east of Lenham village and south of the A20 Ashford Road**

- 10.1 The more northerly part of this land offers clear views to St. Mary's Parish Church and the Tithe Barn to the north-west, both of which are Grade I Listed Buildings lying within Lenham Conservation Area. The land is crossed by several well used public footpaths including the Stour Valley Walk. The stream which crosses the meadows forms the headwaters of the River Stour. For many people the unique charm of Lenham village arises from the fact that the open countryside penetrates through the churchyard to the Square, which lies within the Conservation Area at the heart of the village. The views to the Listed Buildings, when approaching on the footpath, are quintessentially Lenham. The Parish Council, through its local knowledge and consultation, wishes the Neighbourhood Plan to do all it can to protect this unique element adding character to the Parish. The Parish Council believes that it is an important attribute of the Neighbourhood Plan that it should contain appropriate policies to protect the very best of the historic character of the Parish. For all these reasons this land is regarded as being of exceptional landscape quality and the option of residential development here is not therefore taken further.

## **11.0 Land South of Ashmills Business Park and west of East Lenham**

- 11.1 The visual setting of this land is somewhat compromised by the industrial buildings of Ashmills Business Park, a retained employment site, which lies to the north. The site is also enclosed by the scatter of farm buildings comprising East Lenham which lies to the east of it. Because of its close relationship to existing built development, including allocations proposed in Maidstone Borough Local Plan and its relative enclosure within the landscape, this option is taken further as a residential and recreational development site within the Neighbourhood Plan.



