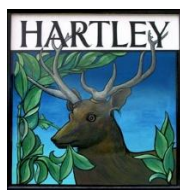




HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL
DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
2025 – 2040 |





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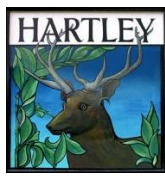
10 OTHER SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

These documents can be reviewed on our dedicated website (www.hartleynp.org.uk) under the “Supporting Information” Section:

- a) Hartley Parish Landscape Character Assessment 2022
- b) Planning Assessments of Green Belt - 2022 & 2023
- c) Housing Needs Survey 2024
- d) Business Survey 2024
- e) Consultation Statement 2026
- f) Basic Conditions Statement 2026

11 GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

HNP	Hartley Neighbourhood Plan
HPC	Hartley Parish Council
HPLCA	Hartley Parish Landscape Character Assessment
LGS	Local Green Spaces
LLCA	Local Landscape Character Areas
MGB	Metropolitan Green Belt
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
SDC	Sevenoaks District Council



SECTION 1

FOREWORD

In May 2021 following a consultation with residents, Hartley Parish Council (HPC) was successful in its application to Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) to become a Qualifying Body for the preparation of a Hartley Neighbourhood Plan (HNP). The Designated Area is the entire Parish.

The powers to prepare the HNP are contained in the Localism Act of 2011 and in his introduction to the Act the Minister of State said that *“for too long central government had hoarded and concentrated power and, that with this Act, powers would be shifted away from central government towards local people who would have new freedoms and flexibilities for local government and new rights and powers for communities and individuals”*.

Using these powers HPC has produced the HNP with the assistance of a Steering Group, which includes both Parish Councillors and local residents, and assisted by Planning Consultants (Tony Fullwood, Derek Stebbing, AECOM & Fiona Fyffe & Associates).

Together with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the emerging Local Plan for SDC, the HNP will help inform SDC about issues in Hartley and influence planning decisions applicable to the Parish of Hartley until 2040. SDC, as Local Planning Authority, will continue to determine planning applications, but they will have to consider the policies in the HNP.

The HNP reflects parishioners’ comments and observations provided in the various consultation processes together with concerns about

the future of the Parish. From these, along with Census information, and strategic and statistical evidence, the HNP has been produced which provides a Vision with aspirations and Plan Policies for the future which also addresses the key concerns of residents, including the protection of the character of the area.

Community consultation events, including open events and Parish Questionnaires have enabled the Steering Group to identify the changes and protections that the local community wishes to see in Hartley.

Hartley is an attractive and popular place to live, and HPC and the Steering Group are very appreciative of the contributions from residents and businesses, who care about their community, and want to make it a better place for future generations.



Hartley Village Centre

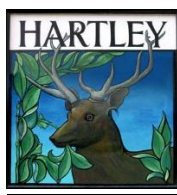
HPC and the Steering Group wish to record their grateful thanks to the many residents, throughout the Parish, who have contributed to this document and volunteered to assist in the distribution of documents to secure good returns in the various stages of the consultation processes.

The HNP will be submitted to SDC for examination by an Independent Examiner and finally by a Referendum of Parishioners in Hartley and, if passed, it will be adopted by SDC.

Whilst every effort has been made to make the HNP easy to read and understood, the wording of the actual Policies is necessarily more formal so that they comply with statutory requirements.

Steering Group:

Chris Alford	Resident - (Chairman)
Ian Ross	Councillor - (Deputy Chairman)
Gary Andrews	(Resident)
Glenn Back	(Resident)
Stephanie Cassidy	(Resident)
Perry Cole	(Councillor)
Jim Colwell	(Councillor)
David Conroy	(Councillor)
Gerald Cramp	(Resident)
Stephen Goss	(Resident)
Mark Heeley	(Resident)
Tracy Longley	(Resident)



SECTION 2

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

The *Localism Act 2011* was planning legislation which came into force in 2012 and gave local people greater control and say over how their community will develop, now and in the future. This includes, for example, where any new homes and businesses should be built, what new buildings and extensions should look like, and which areas of land should be protected from development.

The Act makes it clear that *“Instead of local people being told what to do, the Government thinks that local communities should have a genuine opportunity to influence the place where they live.”*

This HNP covers the whole of the Parish (see Map 1 “Designated Hartley Neighbourhood Area”) and is the Designated Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of the 2011 Act as approved by SDC on 13th May 2021.

The HNP will benefit the residents of the Parish by giving them far greater involvement on where development takes place in and around the Parish and provides a Vision for the future of Hartley over the next 15 years. It will enable residents to enhance and protect what is good within the Parish and seek to help those areas that need improvement. The Policies will provide the residents with the opportunity to realise the aspirations of the community during the period up to 2040.

2.2 How the HNP fits into the planning system.

The 6 Basic Conditions (as set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act) governing the preparation of the HNP are that it:

- a) has general conformity with National and District Council planning policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, unless there are good reasons for not doing so, and
- b) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development; and
- c) is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area, and
- d) is compatible with and does not breach European Union (EU) obligations (under retained EU law), and
- e) meets prescribed conditions and complies with prescribed matters, and
- f) In accordance with Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations, it must not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('the Habitats Regulations).

Also important is the revised NPPF which was published in December 2024 and sets out the Government's planning policies and how they are expected to apply. The NPPF requires the planning system (including Neighbourhood Plans) to encourage housing and other developments in a sustainable manner. To that end they set out three dimensional objectives which are as follows:

- An economic objective – policies should contribute to a strong, responsive, and competitive economy.
- A social objective – policies should support strong, healthy, and vibrant communities.
- An environmental objective – policies should contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural built and historic environment.

Whilst planning applications will still be determined by SDC, the adoption of the HNP will mean that, in addition to considering their own Local Plan, SDC must also have regards to the Policies in the HNP when reaching planning decisions that affect Hartley Parish. It will become part of the Development Plan alongside SDC's Local Plan. However, it should be noted that the Policies in the HNP will not apply until it is formally adopted.

At SDC level the key planning document, which will impact the HNP is the SDC Local Plan which is currently planned for adoption in 2027.

In the emerging new Local Plan, Hartley is identified as a Primary Service Settlement as part of the District Council's Settlement Hierarchy for the District. The assessment of the Parish of Hartley as a Primary Service Settlement remains under dispute by HPC.

2.3 How the HNP supports sustainable development.

The HNP seeks to meet the commitment to promote sustainable development as defined in the NPPF in the following ways:

2.3.1 Economic

To support businesses and employment opportunities within the Parish and, where possible, provide support to protect their future continuity which may necessitate improving infrastructure and innovation.



Shops at Cherry Trees



Hartley Bottom Farm

To protect farmland, which makes up much of the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB) in Hartley, from development and to ensure the future for farming, including security of food stocks.

2.3.2 Social

To safeguard the natural environment of Hartley including the PROWs which give enjoyment to residents by gaining access, for leisure and exercise, to the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB) and designated Local Green Spaces (LGSs), which include the considerable areas of Ancient Woodland and other woodlands and playing fields.



Hartley Wood

To protect existing community facilities and to ensure that any new housing meets the needs of present and future generations.

To promote and enhance provision for pedestrians and cyclists as appropriate.

2.3.3 Environmental

To ensure that development does not harm but, instead, positively responds to the valued existing and historic character of the area. To



All Saints' Church, Hartley

protect the MGB, open spaces, heritage assets and, where possible, improve biodiversity and important wildlife habitats. To ensure that the design of development does not have an adverse effect on the amenities of residents and enhances the Parish's special character and identity.'

2.4 What is in our Neighbourhood Plan

The HNP covers a wide range of issues which have been developed following consultation with residents and businesses over several years. The topics covered in the HNP are as follows:

- Protection of the Natural Environment
- Protection of the Metropolitan Green Belt
- Protection of the Special Views in the Parish

- Protection of Local Green Spaces
- Conservation and Enhancement of Heritage Assets
- Public Rights of Way (PROW)
- Groundwater Source Protection Zone
- The Settlement Boundary
- Housing Needs in Hartley
- Affordable Housing
- The Hartley Parish-Wide Design Guidelines and Codes
- Retention of Community Assets
- Support for existing businesses and employment opportunities.



SECTION 3

HARTLEY PARISH

3.1 A Description and History of the Parish

The Parish of Hartley lies in the north-east part of Sevenoaks district. It is bounded in the north by the Parish of Longfield in Dartford Borough Council area and to the east by the Parish of Meopham in Gravesham Borough Council area. To the south lies the Parish of Ash cum Ridley and to the west the Parish of Fawkham, both of which are parishes in SDC.

Hartley is located on an undulating plateau rising gently to the northern edge of the North Downs. There are steep sided dry chalk valleys on both sides, Hartley Bottom to the east, and Fawkham Valley to the west. The Hartley Parish has a total area of 547.97ha of which 411.24ha (75%) comprises land within the designated MGB.

The Hartley Parish contains significant blocks of Ancient Woodland and further areas of deciduous woodland together with a number of



Chapel Wood

TPOs. Chapel Wood is an Ancient Woodland as well as an important Archaeological site. In addition to the woodland blocks and the shaws, there are also many individual trees in fields and hedges which add to the well-wooded feel of the Parish.

There are also two Local Wildlife Sites (pictured below), and one of these, Rectory Meadow, is also designated as a Local Nature Reserve.



Rectory Meadow



Hartley Wood

The Parish was mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086) and at that time Hartley was a small village with some 60 inhabitants. The oldest building, All Saints Parish Church in Church Road dates from the same period and is a Grade I Listed Building. The name Hartley means “a clearing in the woods, where deer are.”

Hartley remained a small, scattered farming community throughout



medieval and early modern times. The 19th Century saw new houses built at Castle Hill, near the Black Lion Public House in Ash Road, Hartley Court Cottages (pictured) and at New House Farm. A school was built in 1841 at Hartley Green, and the

railway was opened in 1861, although the station at Longfield was not opened until 1871. The arrival of the railway and installation of mains water in 1901 made development possible.

In 1912 a firm called Small Owners Ltd purchased Fairby and Hartley Court Farms and the Company divided the land into between one and six acre plots. These plots were offered for sale to newcomers to settle, build their own house, run their own small holding and travel to London to work.



Local employees outside Post Office on Ash Rd - 1912

Several houses date from this period and represent an important part of the history of Hartley, some examples of which are pictured below



Ashleigh, Church Road



Glebe House, Ash Road/St John's Lane



The Croft, Ash Road



The Red House, Ash Road

Mains electricity arrived in 1932, and the inter-war period saw considerable infilling with bungalows and houses. After the Second World War development resumed with the construction of new roads. Mains drainage was then installed, roads widened and surfaced with tarmac. Mains gas supplies also arrived during this period.

Hartley Primary School was rebuilt on its present site between 1965 and 1970 and is now called Leigh Academy Hartley. Our Lady of Hartley Catholic Primary School was rebuilt in 1976.



Leigh Academy Hartley



Roman Catholic Primary School

The built area of Hartley is surrounded to the north by the London to Kent Coast railway line at Longfield and to the east, south, and west by the MGB which was originally established to check the outward sprawl of London.



Banckside

The last major residential developments in Hartley were in Banckside, Parkfield and Downs Valley totalling 77 properties in 1975 and in Chantry Avenue and Billings Hill Shaw totalling 105 properties completed in 1978.

However, the road system has remained unchanged since November 1967 when the railway bridge at Longfield Station was rebuilt (pictured). This reconstruction enabled the creation of a road with two lanes of opposing traffic that now serves



both Hartley and New Ash Green. All other roads serving this area are narrow country lanes with passing places. New Ash Green was an entirely new village built on open farmland and opened in October 1967. It now has over 2,500 houses.



Wickhams Way (off Church Road)

Since 1978, development has continued within the urban area by the construction of small estates or groups of “executive style” houses on land previously occupied by one dwelling. Although discouraged by both SDC and HPC, some backland development has also taken place.

The first village appraisal was conducted in 1979 and this identified that “the planned development area was exploited to the full”. This appraisal was followed by the Village Design Statement which was adopted by SDC in April 2008 and can be viewed on its website. The aim of the Parish Plan, published the following year, was “to ensure that both the physical development of Hartley and provision of services enables Hartley’s community spirit to develop and flourish.”



Development within the MGB has been limited to Permitted Development as defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1995 , Much of the MGB contains farmland with large areas used for crop growing and grazing. It also includes open spaces and Ancient Woodland. Well used Public Rights of Way (PROW) provide access to treasured views across the valleys to the east and west. To the south the MGB provides a “breathing space” between the communities of Hartley and New Ash Green (Northfield). Development has been constrained by the well-established MGB boundaries which have protected the open countryside, the MGB and Ancient Woodland for the enjoyment of local residents.



Hartley Plateau between Black Lion Pub and All Saints Church towards the Church

3.2 Parish Profile Census figures

3.2.1 Population

Between the 2011 and 2021 Censuses, there has been only a minor increase in the total population of Hartley. However, there has been a marked increase in the population of the over 65's with the younger population decreasing proportionately as shown in the following table:

Age	2011 Census	2021 Census	% Change
15 years and under	847	802	-5.6
16 to 64 years	3033	2863	-5.9
65 years and over	1479	1728	+14.4
Totals	5359	5393	+0.6

3.2.2 Home Ownership

Comparable figures for home ownership (which includes fully owned, partly owned, and mortgaged properties) in HPC and SDC versus rented properties are shown below:

	2011 Census		2021 Census	
	HPC %	SDC %	HPC %	SDC %
Home ownership	84.39	74.44	82.85	73.41
Social/Rented Properties	15.61	25.56	17.15	26.59

Data relating to the number of bedrooms per property is only available in the combined Hartley and Hodsoll Street Ward. Details are provided below from the 2021 census:

No. of bedrooms	Hartley & Hodsoll Street %	SDC %
One	10.5	9.2
Two	15.3	22.4
Three	34.9	37.3
Four and above	39.3	31.1

In the 2021 Census, there were 600 one-person households in the Parish (26.9% of all households) confirming a need to retain smaller homes in the Parish for residents wishing to downsize.

3.2.3 Local Economy

Within the Parish employment can be found in local services such as shops, two primary schools, local care homes, two private members clubs and a variety of small businesses throughout the Parish. In addition, some employment is available at local farms.



Fairby Grange Nursing Home

These businesses employ mainly local people from within the Parish, whilst other residents travel further to businesses in nearby New Ash Green and Longfield as well as to London and the Medway towns by train, and to Dartford and Gravesend by bus or private transport.



Shops at the junction of Ash Rd and Church Rd

In addition, home working remains popular. As recorded in the 2021 Census the number of people working from home totalled 913 in Hartley Parish (16.9%) compared to 25.1% in SDC as a whole.

Of the residents in employment in Hartley, the largest numbers are in professional occupations, managers, directors, and senior officials.

3.2.4 Local Infrastructure

Local Roads

The last major improvement to roads in and out of Hartley and New Ash Green was in November 1967 when the railway bridge at Longfield Station was widened and the road lowered and re-aligned to enable higher vehicles to pass under the bridge. There are no roads to the east, two to the south (giving limited access to the A20) and one road to the west. To the north, there are two very narrow railway bridges constructed when the railway was constructed in the 1860s .



bridges constructed when the railway was constructed in the 1860s .

New Ash Green was developed as a new village with its first residents arriving in October 1967 increasing to its present size of over 5,000 inhabitants. The main means of access to New Ash Green from the north is along Ash Road through the Parish of Hartley.

There has been much development within the urban area of Hartley, resulting in a major increase in traffic along Ash Road. This road is well used by private cars, vans, buses, and heavy goods vehicles. It is especially busy during morning and evening rush hours, with people



Ash Road outside the Social Club looking North



Ash Road outside the Black Lion Pub looking South

commuting to work and schools.

Major problems of access to Hartley and New Ash Green occur if for any reason this road is closed as the only alternatives are country lanes.

Residents of Hartley have expressed great concern about the increased use of Ash Road through the centre of the Parish for many years. This has been added to by traffic using it to gain access to and from the nearby major shopping centre at Bluewater particularly when there are problems on the M25 and A2.

Railways

The nearest railway station is Longfield situated just outside the northern boundary of Hartley. It is reached by the residents of both Hartley and New Ash Green via Ash Road. There are frequent rail services to London, the Medway Towns, and the Kent Coast.

Local Bus Services

Currently there is a limited bus service starting in New Ash Green, stopping in Hartley, and serving, Darent Valley Hospital, Bluewater, Dartford, and Gravesend.



3.2.5 Local Community Facilities

Churches and Church Centres



Hartley has two churches, one being the Anglican 12th Century Church of All Saints, and the other being the Roman Catholic Church of St Francis de Sales founded in 1912 in a converted 17th Century thatched barn (pictured). Church services are also held at All Saints' Church Centre, Ash Road, which

also serves as a community centre hosting events for local voluntary groups and societies.

Schools

The Parish has two primary schools but no secondary school. Secondary pupils attend local schools outside of the Parish, including in Longfield, Gravesend and Dartford. The two primary schools are the Leigh Academy Hartley (with current capacity in 2025 being 449 children), and the Roman Catholic Primary School of Our Lady of Hartley (with current capacity in 2025 being 214 children). Both schools serve pupils up to the age of 11 from Hartley and, elsewhere, contributing to increased traffic in the morning and afternoons.



Leigh Academy Hartley



Roman Catholic Primary School

Local Health Services

GP Surgeries for Hartley are provided by the Jubilee Medical Group



which has clinics in both Longfield and New Ash Green. These are just outside the Parish of Hartley. There are dental surgeries in Hartley (pictured), Longfield and New Ash Green all of which are used by the residents of Hartley.

Local Community Services



There is a branch library in Ash Road (pictured) run by Kent County Council. This building incorporates the HPC Office. Also, there is a community centre used by local residents at Wellfield in the northern part of Hartley. Nearby, between Wellfield and Larkfield, the local Longfield and Hartley

Scout Group has its headquarters. A planning requirement is that this building can only be used for scouting activities. In the centre of Hartley there is the Hartley Country Club and the Hartley Social Club. Both are private member clubs providing social facilities for members. The Country Club has many sporting facilities. The Parish Council

also own the Village Hall in Ash Road and the Manor Field Pavilion in Church Road both of which are available for community use.



Manor Field Pavilion

Local Shops

Within Hartley there are several retail facilities. There are parades of shops at Cherry Trees (pictured) and at the junction of Ash Road and Church Road. There is a general store including a Post Office on Ash Road. Also, in Ash Road there is a garage selling cars and carrying out repairs including undertaking MOT tests. The residents of Hartley also use the many shops in the nearby villages of Longfield and New Ash Green.



Shops at Cherry Trees

There is also one Public House in Hartley “The Black Lion” which is situated on Ash Road. It has held a license to sell alcohol since the early 18th century.



The Black Lion



SECTION 4

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The preparation of the HNP has been undertaken in close consultation with the residents of Hartley and others with interests in the area.

Details of the consultations to date are contained in the Consultation Statement which is published alongside the HNP and can be accessed via the HNP website (www.hartleynp.org.uk) details of which have been given to every household.

The Vision and Policies contained in this HNP are as a result of considerable interaction and consultation with the community and businesses within the Parish since 2021, a summary of which is shown below.

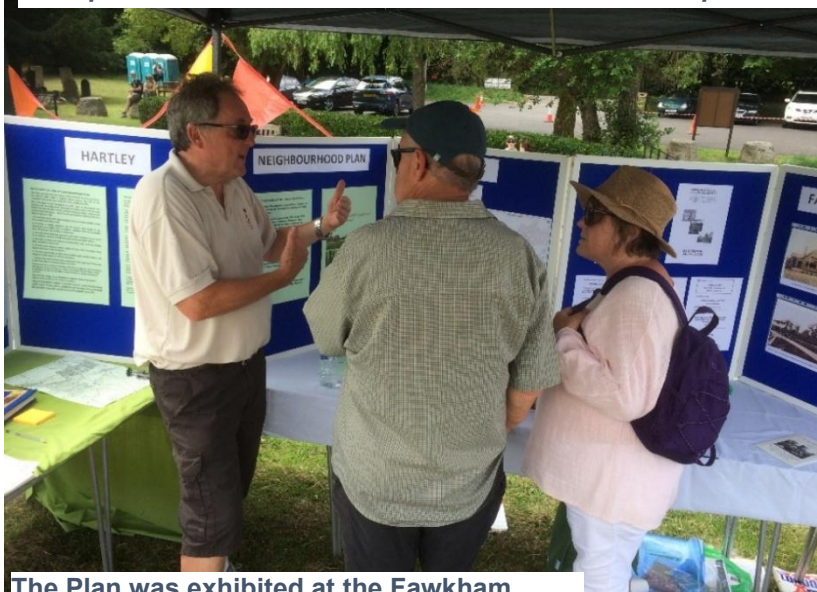
March 2021	Survey of residents to support the idea of a Neighbourhood Plan
October 2021	Survey of residents to provide feedback on Parish (Likes/Dislikes)
May 2022	Hartley NP website released to residents/businesses.
February 2022	Online Workshop with Consultant seeking residents' input into the report on the HPLCA
June 2023	Attendance at Fawkham & Hartley Summer Fete
October 2023	Further consultation with residents on the contents of the HNP
January 2024	Survey issued to all local businesses in the Parish.

February 2024	Housing Needs Survey completed to determine needs in the Parish
April 2024	Two Drop-in sessions hosted in Church Centre , Ash Rd to outline the HNP to date
June 2024	Attendance at Fawkham & Hartley Summer Fete
June 2025	Attendance at Fawkham & Hartley Summer Fete
Nov/Dec 2025	Survey of Children in both the Primary Schools in Hartley

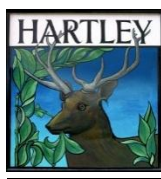
These consultations have been well supported by residents.



A Drop In Session at the All Saints Church Centre in April 2024



The Plan was exhibited at the Fawkham & Hartley Church Fete in June 2024



SECTION 5

A VISION FOR HARTLEY

This Vision Statement was created after consultation with the residents and businesses within the Parish and highlights the main issues that they wish this HNP to cover:



Hartley Village Green at Remembrance Day

Vision Statement

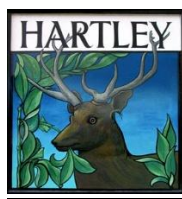
The residents of Hartley seek to protect and enhance the natural environment and biodiversity in and around the Parish and to maintain its rural character, including protection of the MGB, and to preserve the special views from the Parish across the surrounding valleys. They also seek to designate and protect the LGSs and conserve the Heritage Assets, Community Assets, and PROWs. They also seek to support our businesses and local economy in the Parish.

Where development is permitted, it should be small scale sustainable growth that is in line with the needs and wishes of the local community and must follow the Hartley Parish-Wide Design Guidelines and Codes. 2023 Where appropriate, such development should incorporate suitable Affordable Housing primarily for the benefit of local residents.

The HNP seeks to ensure that our residents are given every opportunity to contribute to the vitality of the community, have the opportunity to work, learn, and live in the community, and continue to live healthy, safe, and satisfying lives.



Rectory Meadow



SECTION 6

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

These locally formulated Policies are specific to Hartley Parish and reflect the needs and aspirations of the community.

When development proposals are submitted to the planning authority consideration of the HNP, including the Policies, Guidelines, and Codes and Policies, must be taken into account.

The Policies have been separated into 4 categories as follows:-

- 6.1 Natural and Historic Environment
- 6.2 Housing and the Built Environment
- 6.3 Community Sustainability and Assets
- 6.4 Business and Employment

6.1 NATURAL AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

This section of the HNP contains Policies to deal with the environmental objectives, as described in the NPPF. It balances the requirements for appropriate sustainable development against the value and protection of wildlife, Local Green Spaces and the historical character of the area that are appreciated by local residents. It also deals with broader environmental concerns of the community, including protection of the Metropolitan Green Belt, the views around the Parish and enhancement of local biodiversity. Finally, it sets out to protect the quality of local groundwater supplies and continued access to the wider countryside for exercise and enjoyment.

Seven Policies are included in this category as follows:

Policy ENV1	Protection of the Natural Environment
Policy ENV2	Protection of the Metropolitan Green Belt
Policy ENV3	Protection of the Special Views in the Parish
Policy ENV4	Protection of Local Green Spaces
Policy ENV5	Conservation and Enhancement of Heritage Assets
Policy ENV6	Public Rights of Way (PROW)
Policy ENV7	Groundwater Source Protection Zone

POLICY ENV1 PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Objectives

- To protect visual intrusion of the undeveloped horizons and views across the adjoining valleys.
- To preserve and enhance woodlands, trees, orchards, hedgerows, the rural character of the Parish and the Local Ecological Network as shown on the Map 2 “Local Ecological Network”.
- To preserve, protect and enhance the landscape qualities in the Parish.
- To preserve and protect the biodiversity and connectivity between habitats and to ensure a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain is achieved in any non-exempt developments.
- Promote good soil management and conservation.

Justification

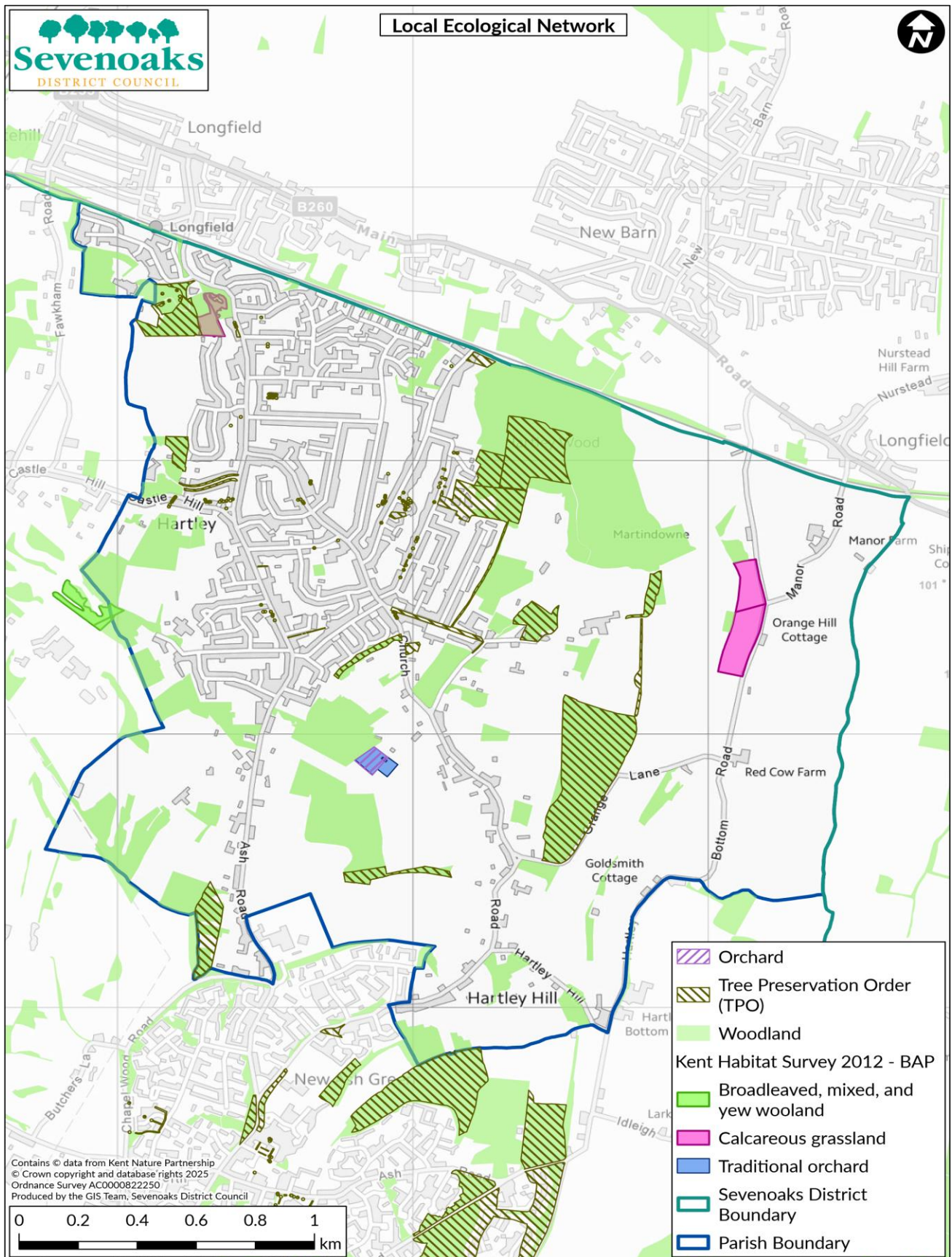
There are steep sided valleys on both sides of the Parish at Hartley Bottom to the east and Fawkham Valley to the west. These valleys are described in detail in the Hartley Parish Landscape Character Assessment (HPLCA) produced in 2022.

There are two Local Wildlife sites and one of these, situated in the northwest of the Parish at Rectory Meadow (pictured), is also designated as a Local Nature Reserve. These are shown on Map 3 “Local Wildlife Sites & Nature Reserve”

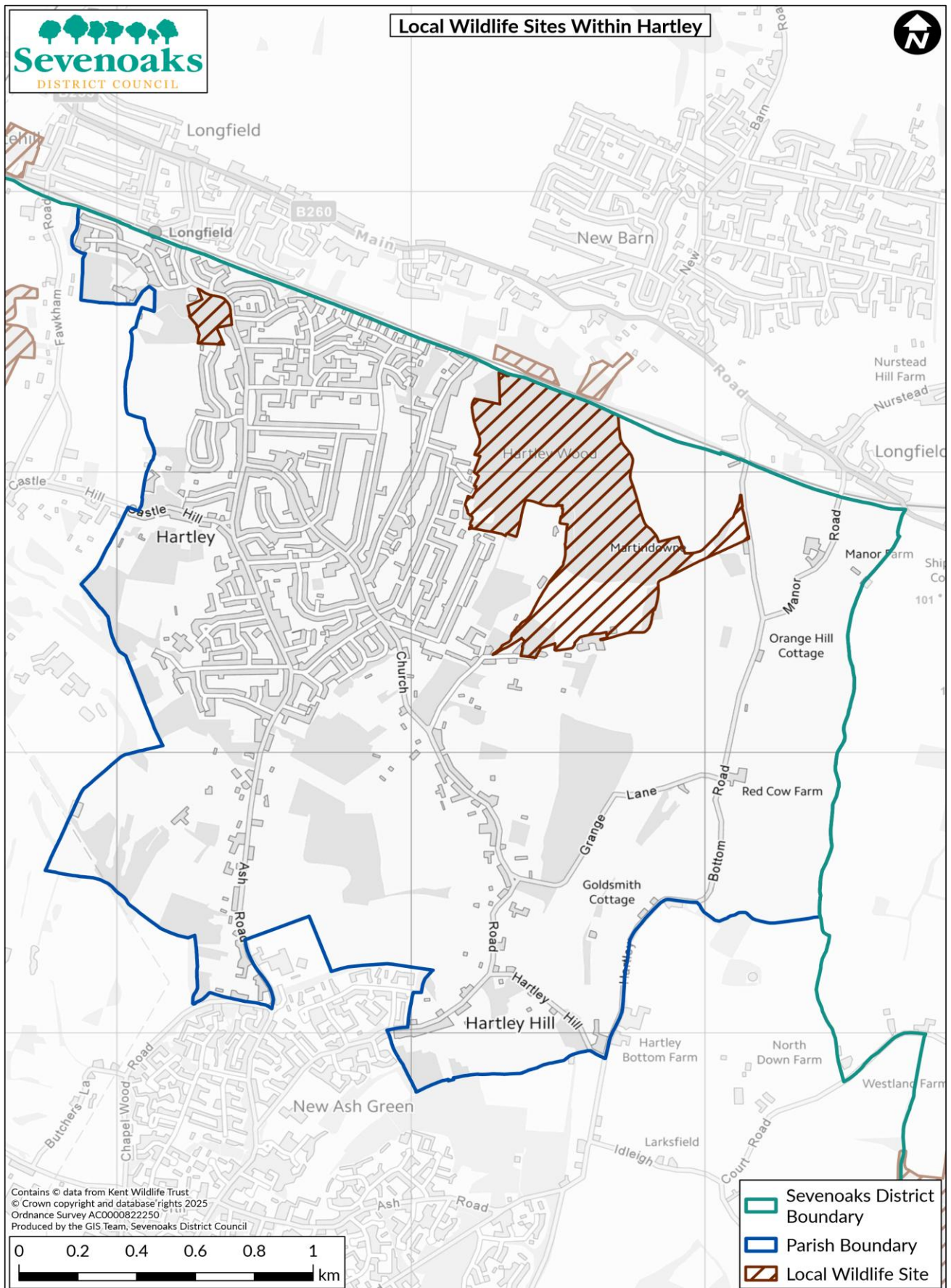


Entrance to Rectory Meadow

Map 2 - Local Ecological Network



MAP 3 – Local Wildlife Sites & Nature Reserve



Bedrock chalk is consistent across the Parish but there are variations in the superficial geology. The highest land is covered by clay with flint deposits (formed by surface weathering of chalk) giving heavy but fertile soils. Alluvial surface deposits (also relatively fertile) are found in the valley bottoms.

The objectives of soil conservation are to retain the natural soil fauna and flora to assist the establishment of new native planting, to reduce the spread of undesirable and potentially invasive plant material and soil-borne diseases, and to reduce off-site traffic movements associated with the import and export of soils and any other excavated materials. Where development takes place appropriate soil conservation measures should address the handling and temporary storage of soils, if that is required, as well as preventing erosion, both during construction and until stabilising vegetation is re-established.

The Parish contains significant blocks of Ancient Woodland covering approximately 47 hectares. The largest blocks are Bramblefield Wood, Hartley Wood, Foxbrough Wood and Chapel Wood as shown on Map 4 “Ancient Woodland Designations”. There are also smaller areas of Ancient Woodland, several of which are narrow strips known as Shaws, at Northfield, Old Downs, Hoselands Wood, Bridelands Wood and woodland on the edge of Fawkham Valley.

There are also further areas of deciduous woodland identified on the National Priority Habitat Inventory which are included on Map 5 “Woodlands, TPOs and Priority Habitats”. TPOs cover parts of Hartley Wood, Foxbrough Wood, trees to the west and northeast of Hartley Manor, part of Chapel Wood, the Shaw at the northern edge of the Northfield Public Open Space and part of Hoselands Wood. A large area of new woodland known as Barnettts Wood has been planted adjoining the Ancient Woodland in Northfield Public Open Space (See Local Green Spaces Section).

In addition to the woodland blocks and shaws there are also many individual trees in fields, hedges and gardens which add to the well-

wooded feel of the Parish. Also shown on Map 5 is an area of Traditional Orchard Priority Habitat to the west of Church Road.

Much of Hartley Wood is also designated as a Village Green and the Wood is also designated as a Local Wildlife site which is home to many rare and protected species.

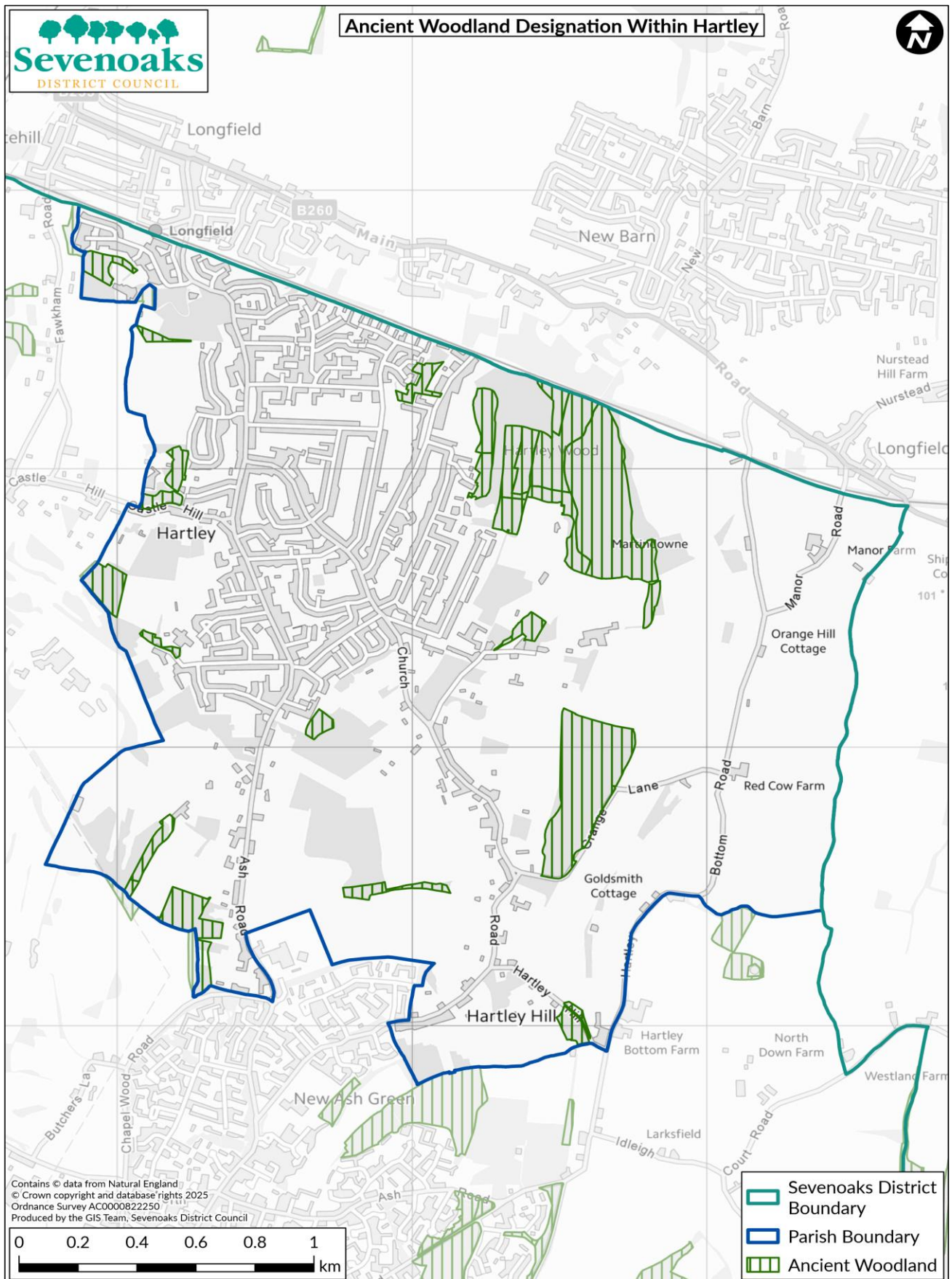
The Ordnance Survey book of Reference published in 1868 includes Foxbrough Wood as an area of woodland of 10.5ha. It has remained unaltered to this day and is also designated as Ancient Woodland.

Chapel Wood is the site of a medieval village which was decimated by the Black Death in about 1350. The site is bounded by a bank and ditch and the whole area had already become established woodland by the end of the 16th Century. Chapel Wood remains an important archaeological site and is designated Ancient Woodland.

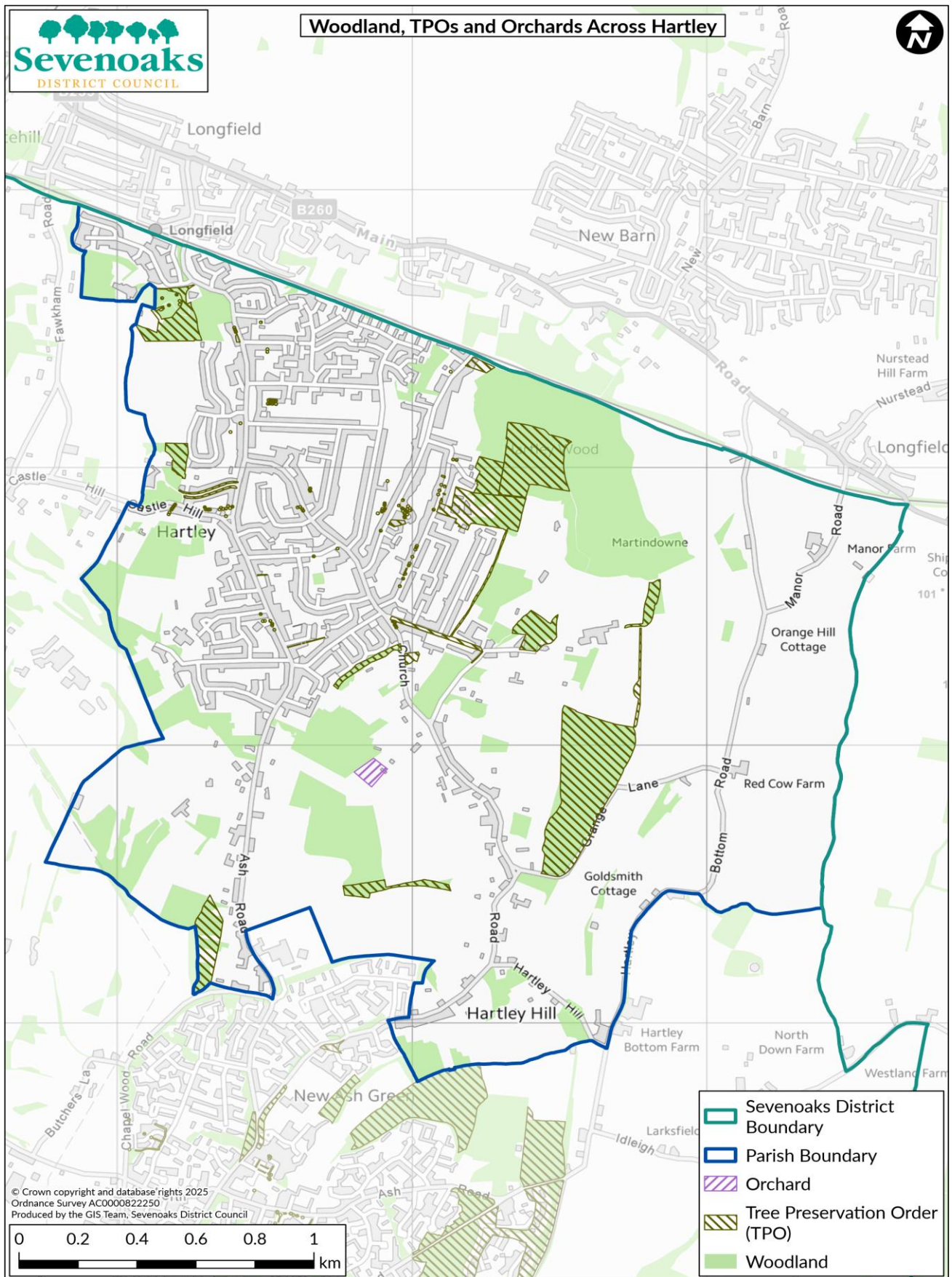
Rectory Meadow is designated as a Local Nature Reserve and a Local Wildlife Site and managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust on behalf of HPC (as shown on Map 3 “Local Wildlife Sites & Nature Reserve”) The site contains flower rich unimproved chalk grassland.

A large area of land at the northern end of Hartley Bottom and immediately east of Hartley Wood is a former municipal refuse tip which closed in the 1960’s and has been re-colonised by scrub and woodland. It provides undisturbed habitat for a range of plants, insects, and birds.

MAP 4 - Ancient Woodland Designation



MAP 5 - Woodland, TPOs & Orchards



Adopted Core Strategy Policy (LO8) of the SDC 2011 Local Plan states that “the countryside will be conserved and the distinctive features that contribute to the special character of its landscape and its biodiversity will be protected and enhanced where possible”. In addition, “particular regard will be given to the condition and sensitivity of the landscape character ... to ensure that all development conserves and enhances the local landscape character.”

Similarly, in the SDC Allocations and Development Management Plan 2015, Policy EN5 states that “proposals that affect the landscape throughout the District will only be permitted where they would conserve the character of the landscape, including areas of tranquillity”.

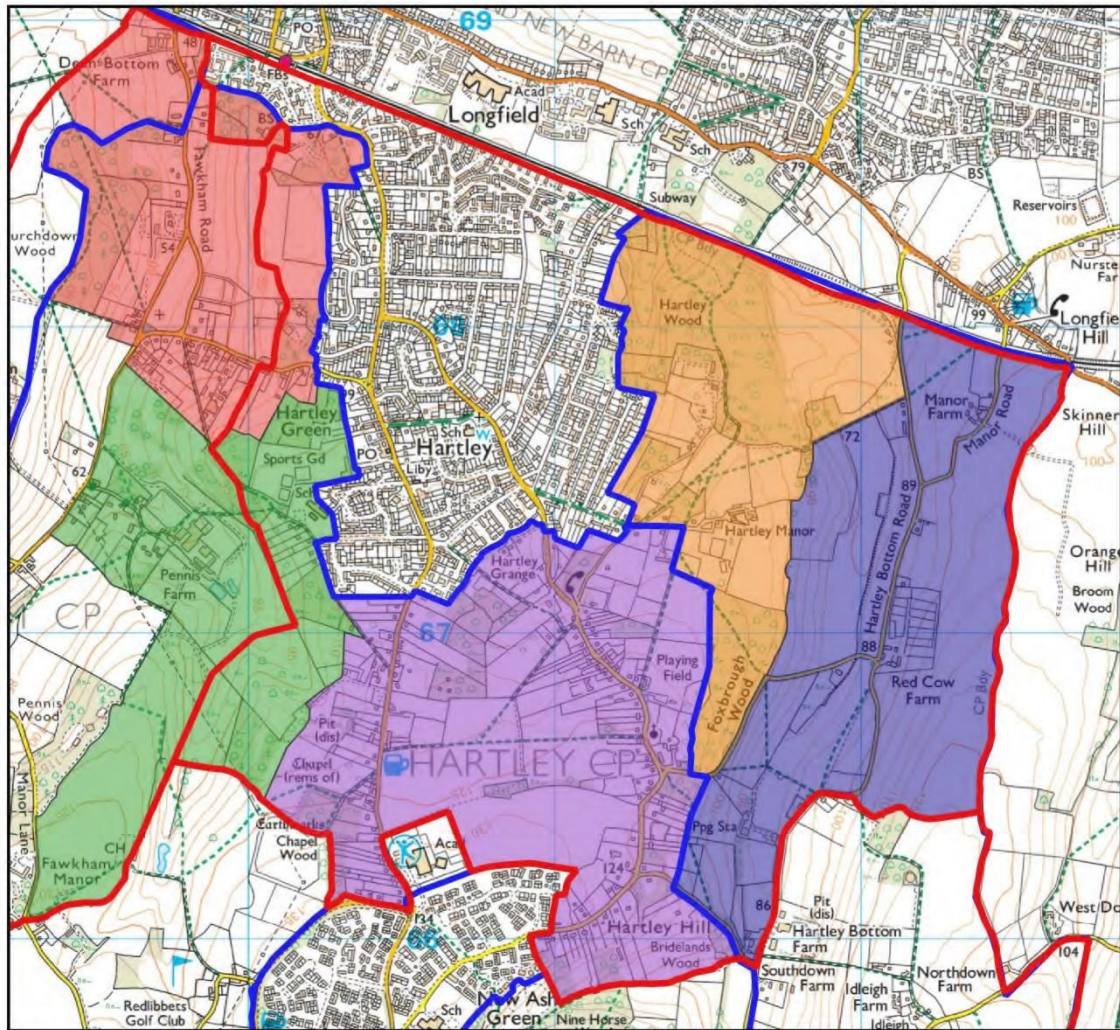
Protection and enhancement of LGS is covered in Policy ENV4 of the HNP.

The HPLCA identifies five distinct local LLCA areas within the Parish and offers a more detailed local assessment on each. These areas are shown on Map 6 “Local Landscape Character Areas” and are as follows :-

Pennis Valley LLCA (extends into Fawkham Parish)
Lower Fawkham Valley LLCA (extends into Fawkham Parish)
Hartley Hill Plateau LLCA
Hartley Eastern Wooded Plateau LLCA
Hartley Bottom LLCA

Landscape Character Assessments have been conducted at National, County and District level. The Sevenoaks District Landscape Character Assessment, which was conducted in 2017, identifies Hartley in two “Settled Downs” areas. This analysis was refined into the five areas listed above by the HPLCA compiled in 2022. It should be noted that the HPLCA is more detailed than the Sevenoaks District Landscape Character Assessment as it subdivides the areas used by SDC.

MAP 6 – Local Landscape Character Areas



Hartley Landscape Character Assessment

Map 6: Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs) in Hartley

March 2022

Key

-  Parish Boundaries
-  Sevenoaks Landscape Character Areas
-  Pennis Valley LLCA
-  Lower Fawkham Valley LLCA
-  Hartley Hill Plateau LLCA
-  Hartley Eastern Wooded Plateau LLCA
-  Hartley Bottom LLCA



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POLICY ENV1 PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the natural environment and biodiversity within the Parish and protecting the area from inappropriate developments.

Proposals for new development will only be supported if they comply with all of the following requirements:-

- 1 The proposed development does not visually intrude onto the undeveloped horizons and slopes in the valleys to the east and west of the Parish of Hartley and does not significantly harm Local Wildlife Sites, Natural Landscapes and the Local Nature Reserve.
- 2 The proposed development protects and, where possible, enhances the woodland areas within the HNP area and does not significantly harm the Local Ecological Network. Any development should not reduce the existing hedgerows and trees especially those protected by TPOs.
- 3 Proposals for external lighting should seek to minimise their effect on existing, established wildlife and biodiversity habitats and where ecological surveys and assessments indicate that it is required to protect species this protection must be put in place.
- 4 The proposed development minimises the visual impact of built extensions, conversions or development on the surrounding landscape and natural environment.
5. Where possible, the proposed development should promote sustainable onsite soil management and minimise the import of sub-soil and top-soil and the export of any ground materials.
6. Proposed new developments should provide a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in accordance with National Policy requirements, unless they are within categories of development that are exempt from providing BNG.

POLICY ENV2 PROTECTION OF THE METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT

National Policy

The Metropolitan Green Belt was established around London in the 1950s. The Metropolitan Green Belt was originally established as a:-

1. Check against the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas such as London.
2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
3. To assist in the safeguard of the countryside from encroachment.
4. To preserve the setting and distinctive character of historic significance.
5. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

These five purposes remain the same today. In assessing whether a site is suitable for inclusion in the Metropolitan Green Belt only one of the five purposes needs to be satisfied, and each of the five purposes listed above have equal weight. As neither Hartley nor New Ash Green can be regarded as large built up areas or an historic town, the first and fifth purpose will not apply.

Evidence about the important contribution that the area of the Metropolitan Green Belt around Hartley meets the purposes as set out above, is found in the HPLCA and the Green Belt Assessments conducted for the HNP by external consultants. These documents have confirmed that much of Hartley's Metropolitan Green Belt satisfies at least two of the remaining three purposes listed above.

Grey Belt (Reference paragraphs 1.19 & 1.20 of the emerging SDC Local Plan)

“The concept of ‘Grey Belt’ was introduced through the NPPF (2024) and is included in the SDC Local Plan as follows:

‘Grey Belt’ land in the Metropolitan Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of the following purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

‘Grey Belt’ excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets (e.g. National Landscapes) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.

The NPPF states that “Where it is necessary to release Metropolitan Green Belt land for development, plans should give priority to previously developed land, then consider Grey Belt, which is not previously developed, and then other Metropolitan Green Belt locations.” The Council has followed this approach”

Objectives

- To reflect the desire of Hartley residents to protect and enhance the Metropolitan Green Belt along its existing boundary, to ensure access thereto for recreation and enjoyment, and to prevent the loss of arable farmland and woodland.
- To prevent neighbouring communities merging with one another.
- To assist in the safeguard of the countryside from encroachment and urban sprawl

Justification

The principal natural environment in Hartley is the large extent of open space which makes up the Metropolitan Green Belt that surrounds the developed area of Hartley on three sides. The Metropolitan Green Belt covers approximately three quarters of the Parish as shown on Map 7 "Metropolitan Green Belt." The Metropolitan Green Belt contains significant areas of open spaces, farmland, and woodland, including Ancient Woodland.

Successive consultations for the HNP have shown that residents regard the protection of the Metropolitan Green Belt, along its historic boundaries as very important. In the most recent survey in 2023, 97% of the 559 replies supported protecting the current Metropolitan Green Belt boundaries. The Government's policy on the Metropolitan Green Belt provides that, once established, boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified and, clearly, there is overwhelming local support to retain the present boundaries.

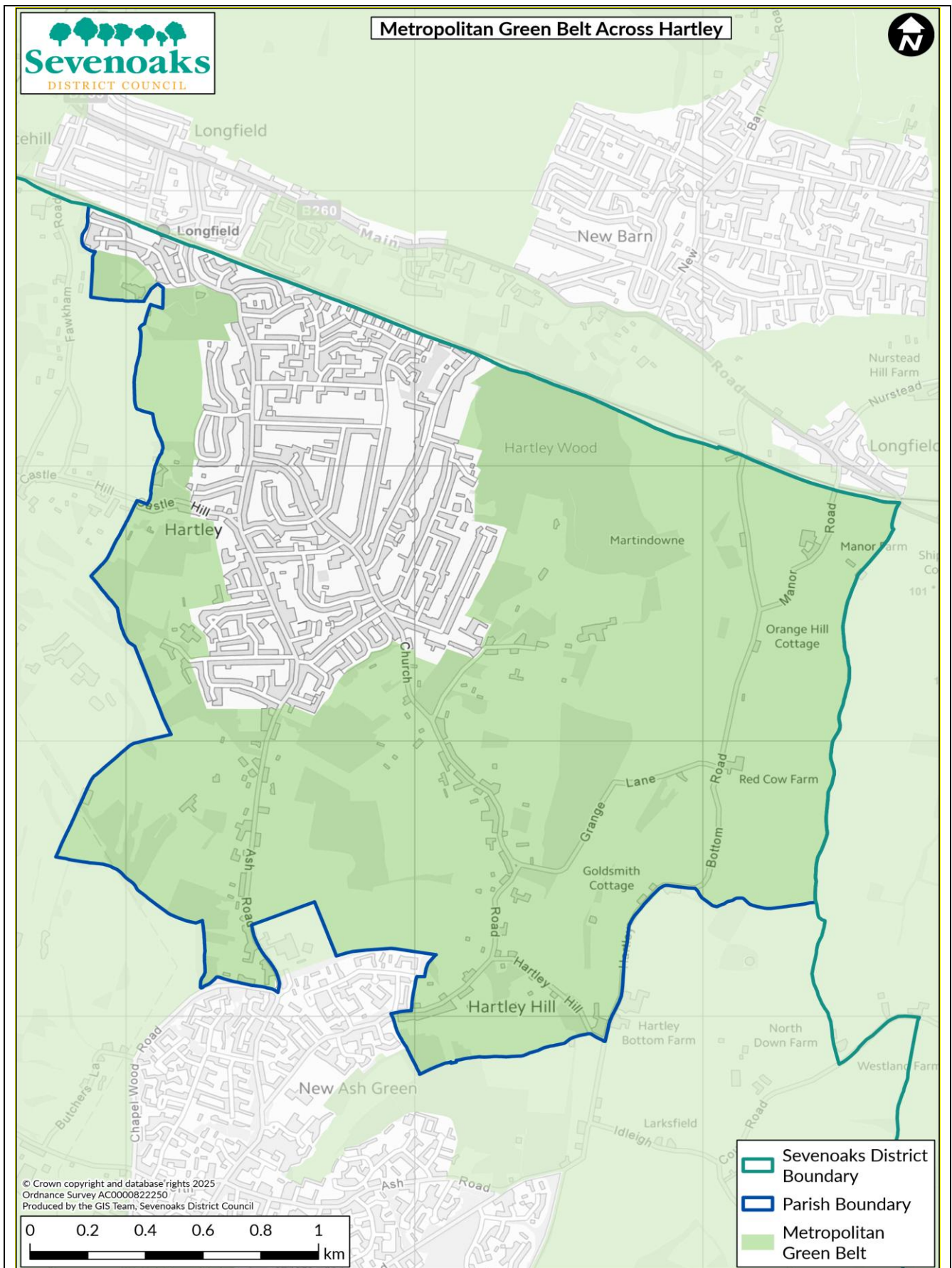
Much of Hartley's Metropolitan Green Belt contains areas of arable farmland. The CPRE report dated 20th July 2022 indicated that arable farmland developed for housing and industry, between 2010 and 2022, rose from 60ha to more than 6,000ha per year. Evidence from another CPRE report dated 1st November 2023 also confirmed that "between 6,000 and 10,000 houses are being built on current and former Green Belt land every year". Clearly, this loss cannot be sustained in the long term.

Moreover in 2023, the Government issued guidance to assess development proposals on agricultural land which contained policies to protect such land and the soil. The HPLCA shows that the arable land on either side of the Parish is highly fertile and the HNP would therefore object to the release of any such fertile land for development.

Residents of Hartley have expressed a clear desire to retain the present Metropolitan Green Belt boundary to ensure that such land remains accessible for recreation, enjoyment, and to preserve arable farming and woodlands.

The Metropolitan Green Belt around the Parish also contains a network of well used and designated Public Rights of Way (PROW) and other footpaths linking the Parish to Ancient Woodland, open spaces, and farmland. These footpaths are very well used and highly valued by residents. In light of this, the HNP seeks to preserve the present Metropolitan Green Belt boundary around Hartley.

MAP 7 - Metropolitan Green Belt



POLICY ENV2

PROTECTION OF THE METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT

1. The HNP seeks to protect the present Metropolitan Green Belt boundary around the built-up area of Hartley, so that the Metropolitan Green Belt is preserved for recreation, enjoyment, and the protection of farmland and woodlands.

2. Proposals for development in the designated Metropolitan Green Belt within the Plan area, on sites that do not constitute potential 'Grey Belt' land, will only be supported where they fulfil the policy test of demonstrating the very special circumstances that justify the proposals, and where they comply with Policy HBE4 (Hartley Parish-Wide Design Guidelines and Codes). Extensions to existing buildings in the Metropolitan Green Belt will be supported where they are proportionate in size and scale to the existing building and also comply with the requirements of Policy HBE4."

3. Development proposals within the Plan area that are on sites categorised as being 'Grey Belt' will be assessed for their impacts upon the Parish of Hartley and upon the character and qualities of the landscape and the natural and historic environment within the area. Such proposals will not be supported where it is clear that the proposals would lead to adverse impacts that could not be mitigated.

POLICY ENV3 PROTECTION OF THE SPECIAL VIEWS IN THE PARISH

Objectives

- To preserve and enhance the Special Views in the Parish along and across the dry chalk valleys on the east and west sides of the central plateau, together with the centre of the Hartley Hill Plateau (as shown on Map 6 “Local Landscape Character Areas”).

Justification

Residents of Hartley place a high value on the local landscape and environment around the Parish, for the distinctive, picturesque, and timeless character of its landscapes. This is exemplified by the special views (identified by residents) within the Parish from locations as shown on Map 8 “Special Views” and in the subsequent photographs.

In all there are three locations as described below and which are detailed in the HPLCA. All views are strongly rural in character.

View 1 - Hartley Bottom Valley

These views encompass the highly valued landscape along Hartley Bottom, which should be respected for its long views along the valley and its sense of openness, together with its strongly rural and agricultural character. This view can be observed from footpath SD217 in the field between Hartley Wood and Longfield Hill recreation ground. The abundant hedges in the valley floor, along with historic farmsteads (some of which are Listed Buildings) together with their settings, create an open and undeveloped skyline on both sides of the valley. The hedges and the wildlife they sustain should be retained to prevent soil erosion.



Hartley Bottom Valley taken from Grange Lane looking northeast.



Hartley Bottom Valley taken from Grange Lane looking southeast.

View 2 - Fawkham Valley

These views can be seen from the west side of the Parish and includes a highly valued landscape, which should be respected for its prominent undeveloped slopes, and contribute to treasured views giving a strong sense of place. The valley is strongly rural in character, and its open well wooded horizons reinforce its rural character. Properties on the west side of Hartley are not visible from the valley floor and only limited rooftops can be observed from Churchdown Wood on the western side of the valley. The Baldwins Green Conservation Area on the valley floor contains the Listed Building of St Mary's Church and its setting creates a strong and much appreciated sense of place and history.



Fawkham Valley from near Downs Valley, Hartley looking southwest.



Fawkham Valley from near Downs Valley, Hartley looking northwest.

View 3 – Hartley Plateau

These views can be seen from the Northfield Open Space between Hartley and New Ash Green comprising a plateau of relatively flat land sloping downward to the north. The land forms a tranquil gap between the communities of Hartley and New Ash Green. Early 20th Century development along the two roads which bound this area has resulted in linear development along the two roads with undeveloped land in the centre. The land includes areas of woodland and public open spaces crossed by a number of well used PROW. Residents much treasure this area.



Northfield (looking east from Ash Road)

POLICY ENV3 PROTECTION OF THE SPECIAL VIEWS IN THE PARISH

Priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the visually rural and predominantly undeveloped landscapes from inappropriate development in the three locations referred to in this Policy and shown on Map 8 “Special Views” and in the photographs above.

Proposals for development will be assessed and only supported where it would:-

- (a) take account of the Hartley Parish Landscape Character Assessment, which is a supporting document to this Plan, and ensure that the proposed development reflects the local character of the area in which the site is situated
- (b) respect the landscape qualities of Hartley Bottom Valley, the Hartley Plateau and Fawkham Valley as set out and shown on Map 8 “Special Views”.
- (c) where applicable, ensure that development does not intrude onto the undeveloped horizons of Hartley Bottom Valley or Fawkham Valley.
- (d) where applicable, protect and enhance the distinctive pattern of woodland on high ground and along the upper valley sides.
- (e) retain and enhance existing hedgerows as landscape features.
- (f) minimise the visual impact of conversions or redevelopment so that they do not have a materially greater impact on the landscape than the current development
- (g) protect and not adversely impact the distinctive views of the surrounding countryside from public vantage points and, in particular the special views of Hartley Bottom Valley, Fawkham Valley and Hartley Plateau that are defined on Map 8 and described in the supporting text to this Policy.

Any development proposals having a negative impact on the local landscape character will not be supported.

POLICY ENV4 PROTECTION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Objective

- To preserve, protect and enhance Local Green Spaces which are special to the community and have a particular local significance.

Justification

The designation of Local Green Spaces was introduced for Local and Neighbourhood Plans as part of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012 and then updated in the NPPF (2024) . Once designated, Local Green Spaces receive protection broadly consistent with National Metropolitan Green Belt Policy thereby only development in exceptional circumstances may be permitted. If a site identified is already in the Metropolitan Green Belt, its inclusion as a Local Green Spaces can be considered if there are any additional benefits such as the need to protect a space if it is special to the community.

The NPPF (2024) lists the criteria for designation as follows:

The site is:

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land

Land for which there is no public access can be included as a Local Green Spaces (with the landowner's approval) as the designation does not confer any additional rights of public access over what exists at present.

The HNP has identified 22 locations within Hartley as set out in Appendix 1 which meet the requirements for designation as a Local

Green Spaces. They all have a special significance to Hartley residents and are within easy walking distance of the main community served.

POLICY ENV 4 PROTECTION OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The following 22 locations in the Parish are designated Local Green Spaces as they all have a special significance to Hartley residents and in all cases:

- a) The green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves and within walking distance of the local community, and
- b) The green space is demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance, and
- c) The green space concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

The following sites designated as Local Green Spaces in the HNP:

LGS01	Billings Hill Shaw Open Space
LGS02	Bramlings (or Bramblefield) Wood
LGS03	Chapel Wood
LGS04	Foxbrough Wood
LGS05	Gorse Wood
LGS06	Northfield Open Space
LGS07	Old Downs Wood (aka Westlands Wood)
LGS08A	Rectory Meadow
LGS08B	Woodland adjacent to Rectory Meadow
LGS09	Woodland west of Hartley Country Club
LGS10	Manor Field Recreation Ground
LGS11	Longfield Hill Recreation Ground
LGS12	Leigh Academy Hartley School, Playing Field
LGS13	Our Lady of Hartley Catholic Primary School, Playing Field
LGS14	Hartley Country Club, Playing Field
LGS15	Chantry Avenue Green
LGS16	Woodland Avenue Recreational Ground

- LGS17 Woodland Avenue Allotments
- LGS18 Allotments east of Black Lion Public House
- LGS19 Hartley Green
- LGS20 Burial Grounds, Church of All Saints
- LGS21 Hoselands Green

Each of the Local Green Spaces is described with a photograph and map in Appendix 1 to the HNP.

Any development proposed in any of the 22 designated Local Green Spaces listed above and defined in Appendix 1 will be protected in accordance with National Policy for Green Belts.

POLICY ENV5 CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

Objective

To preserve, protect and enhance the settings of the heritage assets contained in the Parish.

Justification

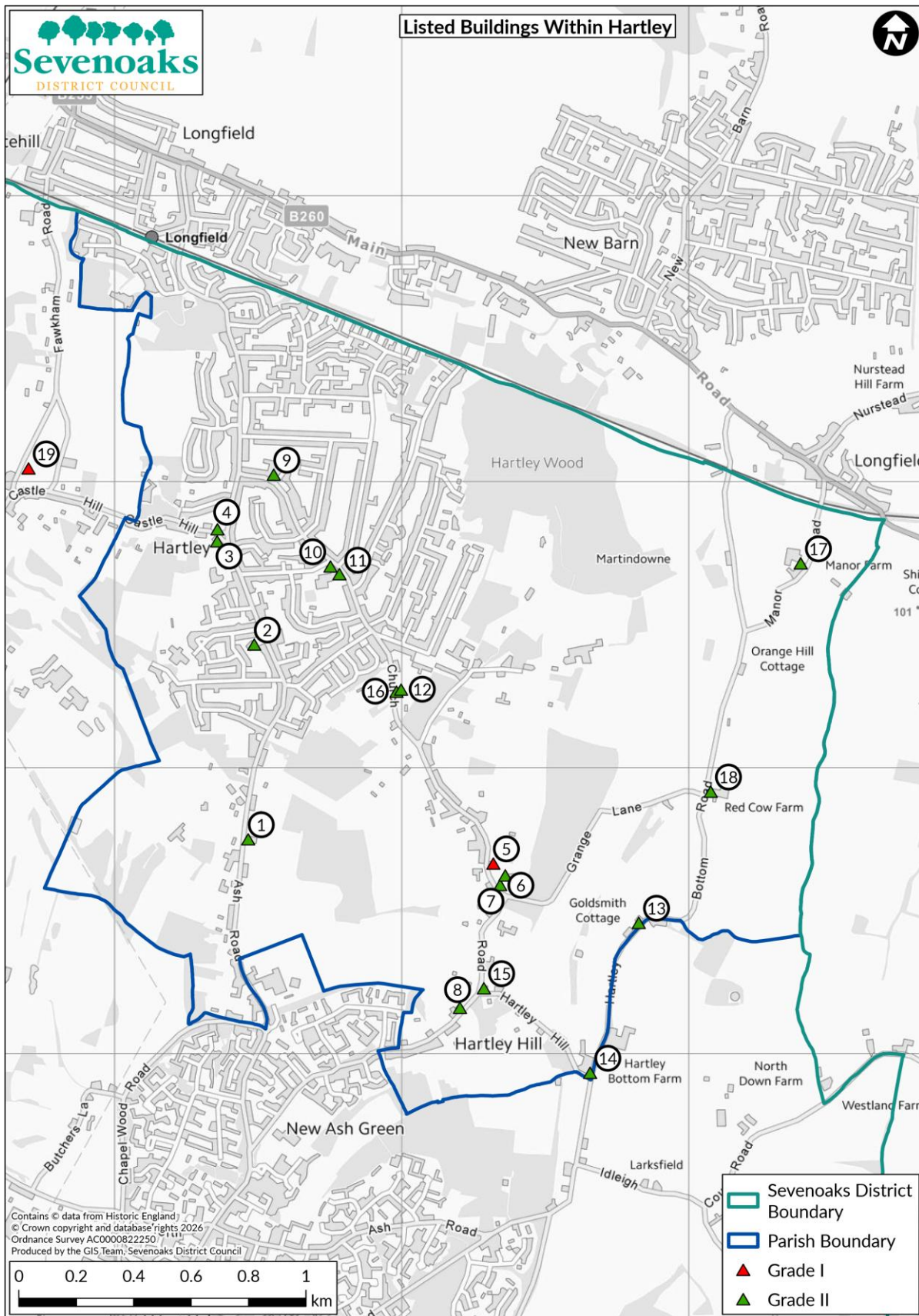
(a) Listed Buildings

The Parish contains 18 Grade I and II listed buildings as listed in Appendix 2 and shown on Map 9 “Listed Buildings”. In addition, there is one listed building, the Church of St Mary, situated in the Parish of Fawkham which is included in our list as it forms part of one of the Special Views seen from Hartley. These buildings have Statutory protection by virtue of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This HNP lists the buildings for reference purposes to ensure that they are properly protected, and where development or alterations are proposed on adjoining or nearby sites, particular attention is paid to the “Setting” of these historic buildings as required by legislation.

(b) Archaeological Sites

The HNP has identified a number of archaeological sites, which are important for their contribution to the layout and mix of development in Hartley and have formal protection. There are four sites of archaeological sites in Hartley as listed in Appendix 3 (and shown on Map 10 “Archaeological Sites” below), and which are included on the Kent Sites and Monuments Record.

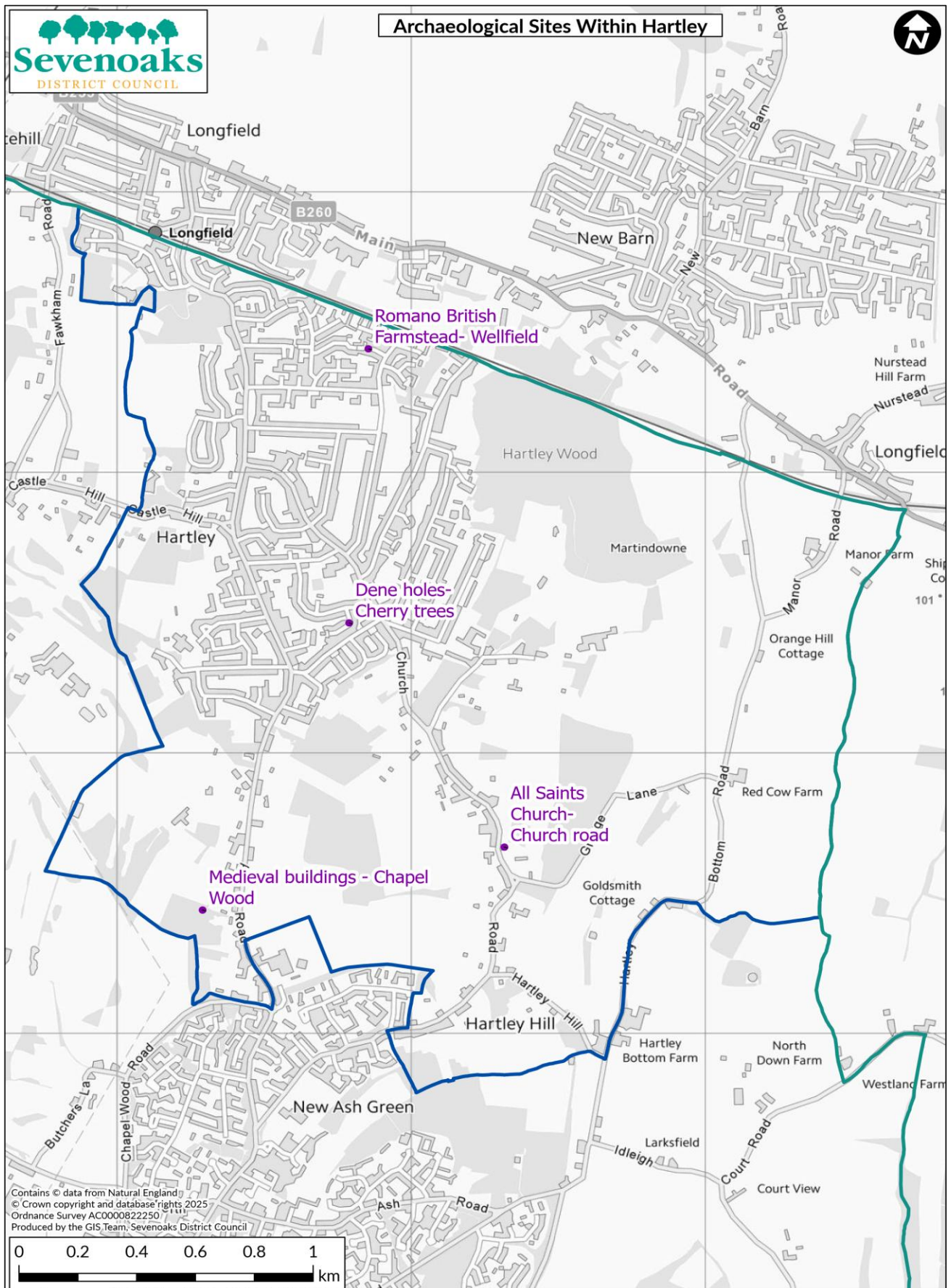
Map 9 - Listed Buildings



Map 9 – Listed Buildings - Location References:

1. Hartley House, Ash Road (Grade II)
2. Fairby Grange Convalescent Home, Ash Road (Grade II)
3. Hartley Cottage, Hartley Green (Grade II)
4. Yew Cottage, Hartley Green (Grade II)
5. Church of All Saints, Church Road. (Grade I)
6. Hartley Court, Church Road (Grade II)
7. Barn south-west of Hartley Court, fronting Church Road (Grade II)
8. Goodwin's Cottage, Church Road (Grade II)
9. Woodins, Church Road (Grade II)
10. Church of St Francis de Sales (Grade II)
11. Middle Farm, Church Road (Grade II)
12. Brickend, Church Road (Grade II)
13. Goldsmith Cottage, Hartley Bottom Rd (Grade II)
14. Hartley Bottom Farmhouse, Hartley Bottom Rd (Grade II)
15. Hartley Hill Cottage, Church Road (Grade II)
16. Barn at Brickend, Church Road (Grade II)
17. Manor Farmhouse, Longfield Hill (Grade II)
18. Red Cow Farmhouse/ attached oasthouse, Hartley Bottom Rd (Grade II)
19. Church of St Mary, Fawkham

Map 10 - Archaeological Sites



POLICY ENV 5

CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

1. Development proposals should seek to protect and, where appropriate, enhance, the settings of the Listed Buildings Assets within the HNP area. Development proposals which affect a Listed Building should outline the historical significance and local importance of the asset to the character and appearance of Hartley and should clearly assess the impacts of the proposed development on the Listed Building and its settings.

2. Development proposals within an Archaeological Notification Area or suspected area of archaeological importance, including those identified on Map 10, which has the potential to affect archaeological assets may require an archaeological assessment to understand the potential impact on archaeological remains.

Preservation in situ will be expected unless clear justification is provided to demonstrate that the recording of remains, assessment, analysis report and deposition of archive is appropriate.

Whenever practicable, opportunities should be taken for the enhancement and interpretation of archaeological remains.

Developers will be required to record any Heritage Assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their significance and the potential impact of the proposals, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. This includes the recording of historic buildings where features will be lost through alteration or demolition.

POLICY ENV6 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Objectives

- Protect and enhance existing PROW network in the Parish and ensure that they continue to be open for public use and are kept in a well maintained and usable condition. In particular, where necessary to ensure that sensitive surfacing is provided to keep them passable and prevent erosion.
- To ensure that the PROW network is well publicised and widely known across the Parish.
- Promote PROW status and look at promoting PROW status on other historic and well used routes.
- To ensure that any new development proposal within the Parish does not have a detrimental effect on the PROW network.

Justification

The HNP welcomes and endorses the Kent County Council's (KCC) PROW policy to "provide a high quality, well-maintained Public Rights of Way network, which is well used and enjoyed." The use of the network will support the Kent economy, encourage active lifestyles and sustainable travel choices that support health and wellbeing, and contribute to making Kent a great place to live, work and visit ".

The Parish of Hartley has a network of approximately nineteen designated and numbered Public Rights of Way (PROW) that either originate within or enter the Parish with some leading into the surrounding countryside. Of the nineteen, seventeen are Footpaths and two are Byways (Manor Drive and Stack Lane). Most are marked with signposts or coloured way markers (see photographs below).



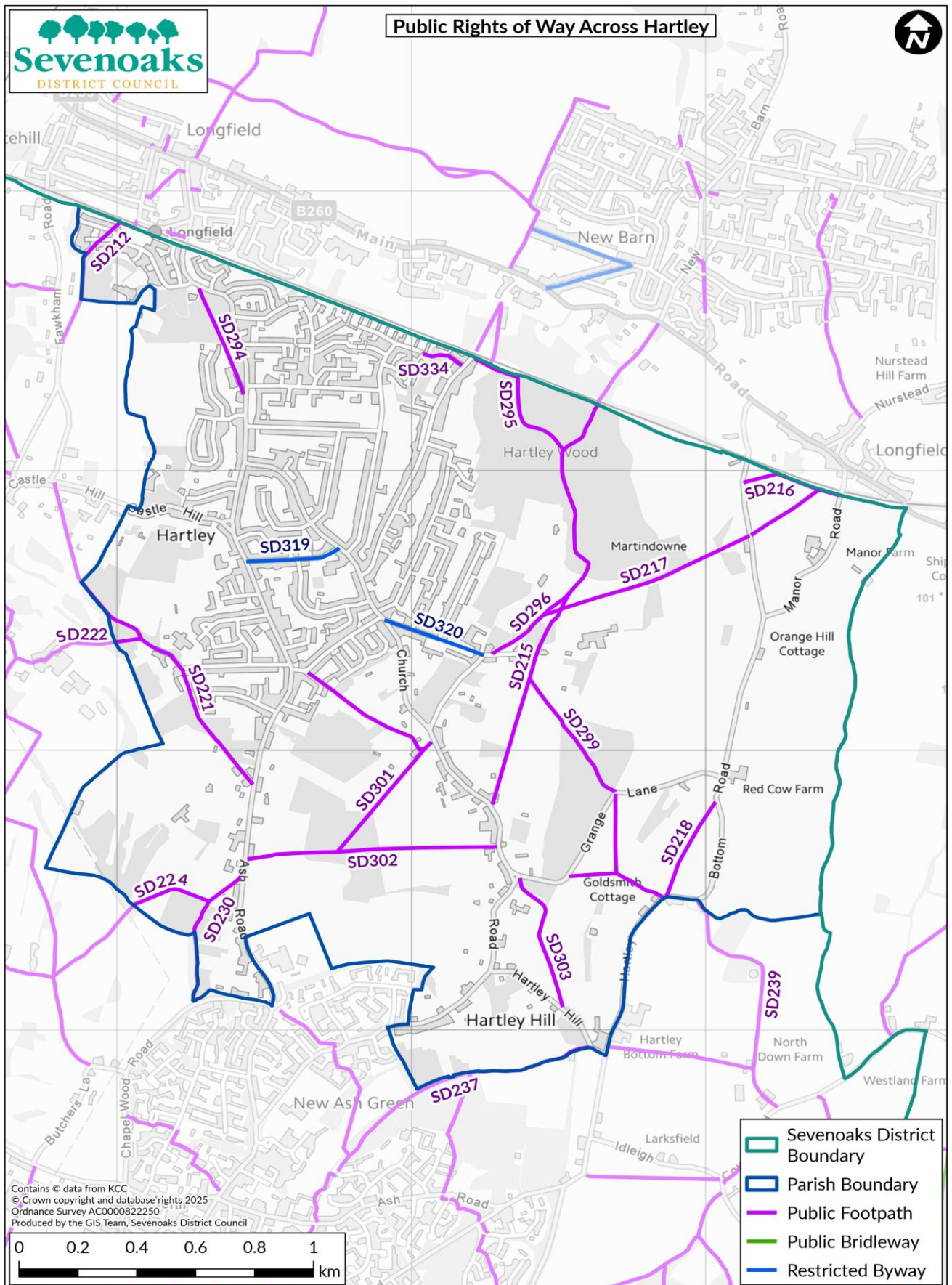
Footpath SD 222 at the end of Fairby Lane



Yellow Way Marker

The majority are well used and in good order. The PROW's and their designation numbers within the Parish are shown on Map 11 "Public Rights of Way".

MAP 11 - Public Rights of Way



As well as the definitive/ sign posted paths in the PROW network there are many other informal paths. Some are called permissive, permitted, or concessionary paths. These do not constitute formal PROW's but can be used with the landowner's permission.

A definitive PROW is a right by which the public can pass along linear routes over land at all times. Although the land may be owned by a private individual, the public have a legal right across that land along a specific route.



An informal path in Gorse Wood

The PROW network within the Parish provides important links for residents to access the wider countryside and elsewhere; and provides access to outstanding local views. The network also provides an excellent outdoor environment for residents to exercise and enjoy the local flora and fauna.

The HPLCA was commissioned to provide a fine grain study focusing on the variations in landscape character within the Parish and describes the nature and importance of the PROW network within the Parish.

POLICY ENV6

PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

The provision, character, and biodiversity of existing PROW (as shown on Map 11 “Public Rights of Way”) will be protected and enhanced, including within new developments. New development should incorporate and enhance the intrinsic character and biodiversity of existing PROW. Where appropriate, developer contributions will be sought linked to planning permissions granted for new developments in the HNP area in order to secure off-site improvements to the PROW network in the vicinity of new developments.

ENV7 GROUNDWATER SOURCE PROTECTION ZONE (GSPZ)

Objective

- To ensure any developments in the Parish comply with the GSPZ requirements as set out by the Environment Agency.
- To protect and safeguard drinking water quality in the Parish.
- To ensure any new development provides attenuated storage of surface water run-off to prevent infiltration and contamination unless it can be evidenced that the development would not result in contamination .
- To ensure any new development that proposes non-mains drainage complies with the Environment Agency regulations and permit requirements.
- To preclude any new development where foul water discharges to ground.

Justification

The Environment Agency defines Groundwater Source Protection Zones (GSPZ) in the vicinity of groundwater abstraction points. The purpose of GSPZs is to provide additional protection to safeguard drinking water quality through constraining the proximity of an activity that may impact on drinking water.

There are three abstraction points where the GSPZ's cover parts of Hartley. One is located within the Parish at Hartley Bottom Road just north of Hartley Bottom Farm (see photograph below), and two are outside of the Parish. One of these is located in Fawkham Valley Road, Fawkham (just south of the rail viaduct), and the other is located south of the Parish boundary at Ridley in the Parish of Meopham. As such, the Parish of Hartley is classified as a GSPZ

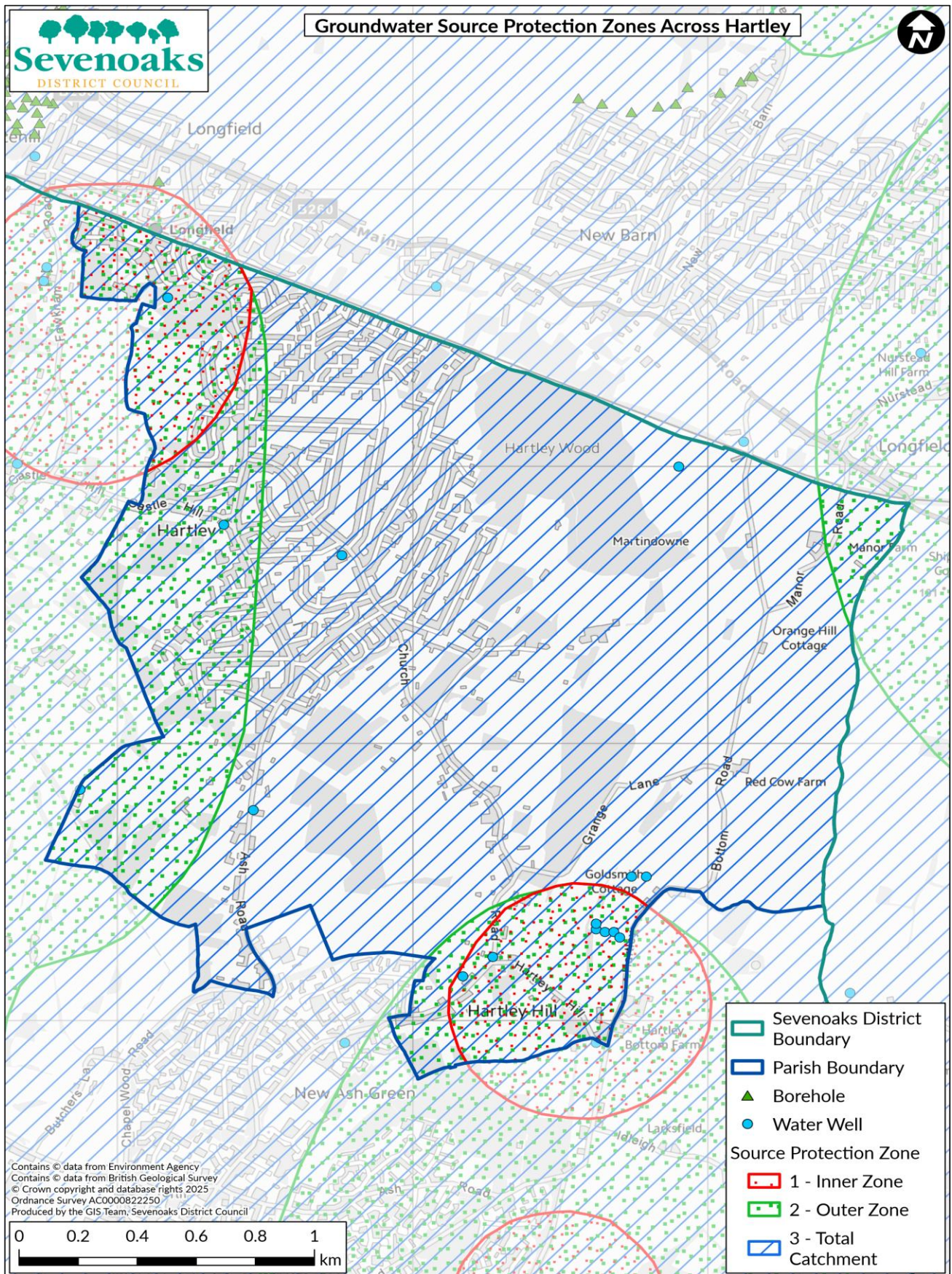
and Map 12 “Groundwater Source Protection Zones” shows the various zones:

- a) Inner Zone – this zone is 50 day travel time of pollutants to source with a 50 metres default minimum radius.
- b) Outer Zone - this zone is 400 day travel time of pollutants to source. This has a 250 or 500 metres radius around the source depending on the amount of water taken.
- c) Total Catchment – This is the area around a supply source within which all the groundwater ends up at the abstraction point. This is the point from where the water is taken. This could extend some distance from the source point.



Water Abstraction Point at Hartley Bottom Road

MAP 12 - Groundwater Source Protection Zones



The GSPZ requires any new development to provide attenuated storage of surface water run-off to prevent infiltration and contamination.

Any development which proposes non mains drainage should ensure that the permitting regime is adhered to, and ideally foul drainage is connected to a public mains sewer. Any foul system discharging to ground in this area may require an environmental permit, unless it is discharging via a BS6297 drainage field and meets the general building rules for small scale sewage discharges. If a permit is required, the applicant should submit sufficient information to the Environment Agency, including the Environment Agency's Foul Drainage Assessment form (FDA1), to show that a permit could be achieved for this design of foul drainage in this locality. Discharges are not normally allowed in a GSPZ or direct to groundwater in areas of shallow water tables.

Foul system discharges to ground in areas where there is a high water table will always be precluded and, in these areas, alternative arrangements for discharges to any available watercourses may be considered if proposals meet the general building rules. Where this is not possible an environmental permit may be required, or foul arrangements will have to involve a septic tank or modern sealed cess pits, with tankering away of effluents on a regular basis.

Any development or alterations on land known or suspected to have potentially contaminative past uses should be fully evaluated, if necessary, by intrusive investigations, and be appropriately addressed prior to the commencement of the development. An assessment into the past uses of buildings/land and any potential risks arising from the buildings/grounds for the proposed end use and wider environment should be carried out prior to the change of use and/or development works proposed. In particular investigations should take account of any oil/fuel storage tanks, septic tanks, drainage systems, and materials storage.

POLICY ENV7 GROUNDWATER SOURCE PROTECTION ZONE

The Parish of Hartley is a Groundwater Source Protection Zone as shown on Map 12 “Groundwater Source Protection Zone” and is subject to the following Policies:

- 1) All new developments must comply with the groundwater and drainage requirements set out by the Environment Agency.
- 2) No new developments will be supported that unacceptably impacts the quality of drinking water in the Parish.
- 3) All new developments must provide attenuated storage of surface water run-off to prevent infiltration and contamination unless it can be evidenced that the development would not result in contamination.
- 4) All new developments that propose non-mains drainage complies with the Environment Agency regulations and permit requirements.
- 5) No new development will be supported where foul water discharges to ground.

6.2 HOUSING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Four policies are included in this category as follows:

- Policy HBE1 Settlement Boundary
- Policy HBE2 Housing Needs in Hartley
- Policy HBE3 Affordable Housing
- Policy HBE4 Hartley Parish-Wide Design Guidelines and Codes

The NPPF makes clear that the preparation of plans and policies should be underpinned by relevant and up to date evidence that should be proportionate to support and justify the policies concerned. The NPPF also makes clear that the social objective should support a strong, vibrant, and healthy community by ensuring that a sufficient range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of the present and future generation.

A Housing Needs Survey for Hartley was undertaken in 2024 for the HNP and has reported the need for 20 Affordable Homes (of appropriate tenures, including Social Rented homes) in the Parish. Details of this survey can be found in the Consultation Statement on the HNP website (www.hartleynp.org.uk).

It is acknowledged that any development site allocated in the finally adopted SDC Local Plan will be capable of development. However, , because of its Metropolitan Green Belt zoning and Hartley residents' clear desire to retain the present boundaries of the MGB, no further residential allocations have been identified in the Parish as part of the HNP consultations.

POLICY HBE1 SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

Objectives

- To support development within the Settlement Boundary if it is in accordance with the HNP, local and national policies .
- To resist the expansion of the built environment beyond the present Settlement Boundary unless it is in accordance with the HNP, local and national policies.

Justification

The Parish of Hartley has a clearly defined boundary between the Metropolitan Green Belt and the built environment , the Settlement Boundary, as shown on Map 7 “Metropolitan Green Belt”. The Metropolitan Green Belt boundary for Hartley was originally established in 1955, and Government Policy provides that once established such boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances apply. Much of the ribbon development which has taken place in the Metropolitan Green Belt along the two roads which link Hartley to New Ash Green in the south took place prior to 1955 with additions to existing buildings since that time.

After the Second World War, Hartley grew in size until 1990, filling in most of the area zoned for housing within the Settlement Boundary. Since then, more modest building has taken place on windfall sites, mainly with the demolition of a single dwelling on a large site and its replacement with several other residential units together with many extensions to existing properties.

In the October/November 2023 community consultation of the HNP, residents expressed a clear desire to protect the present Settlement Boundary for future generations.

POLICY HBE1 SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

1) Development proposals will only be supported within the Settlement Boundary where they comply with other relevant Policies in this HNP.

2) Development proposals on land outside of the Settlement Boundary and within the designated Metropolitan Green Belt, will not be supported unless they comply with other policies in this HNP and local and national strategic policies regarding appropriate developments within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

3) In all cases, approved development proposals must comply with Policy HBE4 (Hartley Parish-Wide Design Guidelines and Codes).

POLICY HBE2 HOUSING NEEDS IN HARTLEY

Objectives

- To facilitate local people staying within the Parish through a mixture of housing including Windfall Development, the adaptation of existing homes and any other approved development.
- All approved housing development to be in accordance with the Hartley Parish-Wide Design Guidance and Codes set out in Policy HBE4 including the protection and setting of Heritage Assets.
- To provide a suitable mix of housing to meet the needs identified in Hartley including those identified the Housing Needs Survey conducted in 2024.

Justification

Hartley is currently built to its Settlement Boundary within the Metropolitan Green Belt and, apart from any change included in the forthcoming adopted SDC Local Plan, any new development in the Parish will largely be on Windfall sites which are defined in the NPPF as ones which have not been specifically identified in the local planning process.

The need for the continuation of a mix of housing in the Parish is confirmed by the results of the 2021 National Population Census where the population of those 65 and over in Hartley had risen from 1,479 in 2011 to 1,728 in 2021. The ageing population profile raises significant questions about the continuing need for smaller properties. Priority will therefore be given to a mix of housing within the Settlement Boundary and by maintaining the character of properties in the particular location. This requirement was emphasised in the Hartley Housing Needs Survey 2024. Home ownership levels remain high at nearly 83% as per the 2021 Census, with Social/Rented properties amounting to just over 10%.

The consultations with residents have made it clear that the community wishes to retain a mix of housing in the Parish.

**POLICY HBE2
HOUSING NEEDS IN HARTLEY**

1) Any new residential development within the Hartley Settlement Boundary as identified in the Hartley Housing Needs Survey 2024 should provide a mix of housing types to meet local needs, having regard to the character of the existing houses nearby.

2) Developments must comply with the Hartley Parish-Wide Design Guidelines and Codes contained in HBE4,

POLICY HBE3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Objective

- To promote a suitable supply of Affordable Housing within the Hartley Settlement Boundary which meets the needs of the Parish as per the Hartley Housing Needs Survey of 2024.
- Any Affordable Housing should be indistinguishable within any approved development in Hartley.

Justification

Affordability is a housing consideration for the Parish where some local households may not be able to afford housing costs on the open market. To help meet this need, any housing development of more than 10 units, shall include a proportion of Affordable Housing at a level in line with the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document and the emerging Local Plan.

Subject to SDC's approval of a site-specific Local Lettings and Sales Plan, eligible applicants with a proven local connection to the Parish may be given priority

A Housing Needs Survey of Hartley was undertaken by the Kent Rural and Community Housing Enabling Service in early 2024.

The Survey investigated the housing needs for residents who live in or who have close ties with the Parish. This Survey is valid until March 2029.

Only residents with a housing need were asked to respond to the Survey and there were 24 returns. Of these nine returns were seeking an Affordable Housing unit, four of which lived in Hartley and five outside but claiming a close connection to Hartley. In addition, there were 11 valid returns indicating the need for a smaller or more suitable property by older homeowners. Four of the respondents did not meet the criteria.

This demonstrates the need to ensure a mix of housing in any future development proposals in the Parish.

Although there are 215 Social Rented Houses in the Parish, the SDC Allocations Policy does not give preference to local families. Therefore, the tenant does not necessarily have to have a close connection with Hartley.

POLICY HBE3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 1) Affordable Housing for local people must be an integral part of any development of 10 units or more and should be visually indistinguishable from other housing on the site.
- 2) In exceptional circumstances, when Affordable Housing on the site cannot be provided, a commuted sum must be paid by the developer.
- 3) Subject to SDC's approval of a site-specific Local Lettings and Sales Plan, eligible applicants with a proven local connection to the Parish may be given priority

POLICY HBE4 HARTLEY PARISH-WIDE DESIGN GUIDELINES AND CODES (2023)

Objective

To ensure all future development complies with the approved Hartley Parish-Wide Design Guidelines and Codes (2023).

Justification

The NPPF notes that *“good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps to make development acceptable to communities.”*

The HNP includes, as Appendix 6, the Hartley Parish-Wide Design Guidelines and Codes (2023) developed by AECOM Planning Consultants specifically for the HNP. The document sets the scene in the Executive Summary as follows:

Section 1 sets the scene by explaining the importance of good design, followed by a brief summary of the scope of this report as well as the steps followed up its completion (Final report).

Section 2 outlines the local context and key characteristics of Hartley by exploring green infrastructure, built environment, streetscape, heritage, local architecture, views and topography. The analysis will begin with a parish-wide focus to understand the wider context and then, have a closer look to Hartley Village settlement. The findings will then inform and shape the design guidelines and codes (included in Chapter 3) influencing future development. These design guidelines will also be consulted with the wider community by the NP Steering Group.

Section 3 presents two sets of design guidelines. The first is a set of general design considerations that should be addressed by applicants and their design teams, appropriate

for Hartley’s character. The second is a set of design guidelines and codes regarding key characteristics of Hartley. Both sets have been informed and shaped by the local character analysis of the Parish aiming to guide any future development, of any scale, including infill developments and house extensions.

Section 4 explains why this report is a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high quality development in the Parish and offers recommendations of various ways that this document could be used by each Stakeholder in the planning and development process.

Proposals for new development in the Parish should also take account, where relevant, of the National Design Guide (NDG) (2019) and the National Model Design Code (NMDC) (2021) which set out national design guidance, and of the Sevenoaks District Character Study (2022), published by Sevenoaks District Council, in the planning and design of development proposals.

**POLICY HBE4
HARTLEY PARISH-WIDE DESIGN GUIDELINES AND CODES**

Proposals for all new buildings in the HNP area, including new or replacement dwellings or extensions to existing buildings, will only be supported where they meet the requirements of the Hartley Parish-Wide Design Guidelines and Codes (2023) as set out in Appendix 6.

6.3 COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY AND ASSETS

One Policy is included in this category.

POLICY CA1 – RETENTION OF COMMUNITY ASSETS

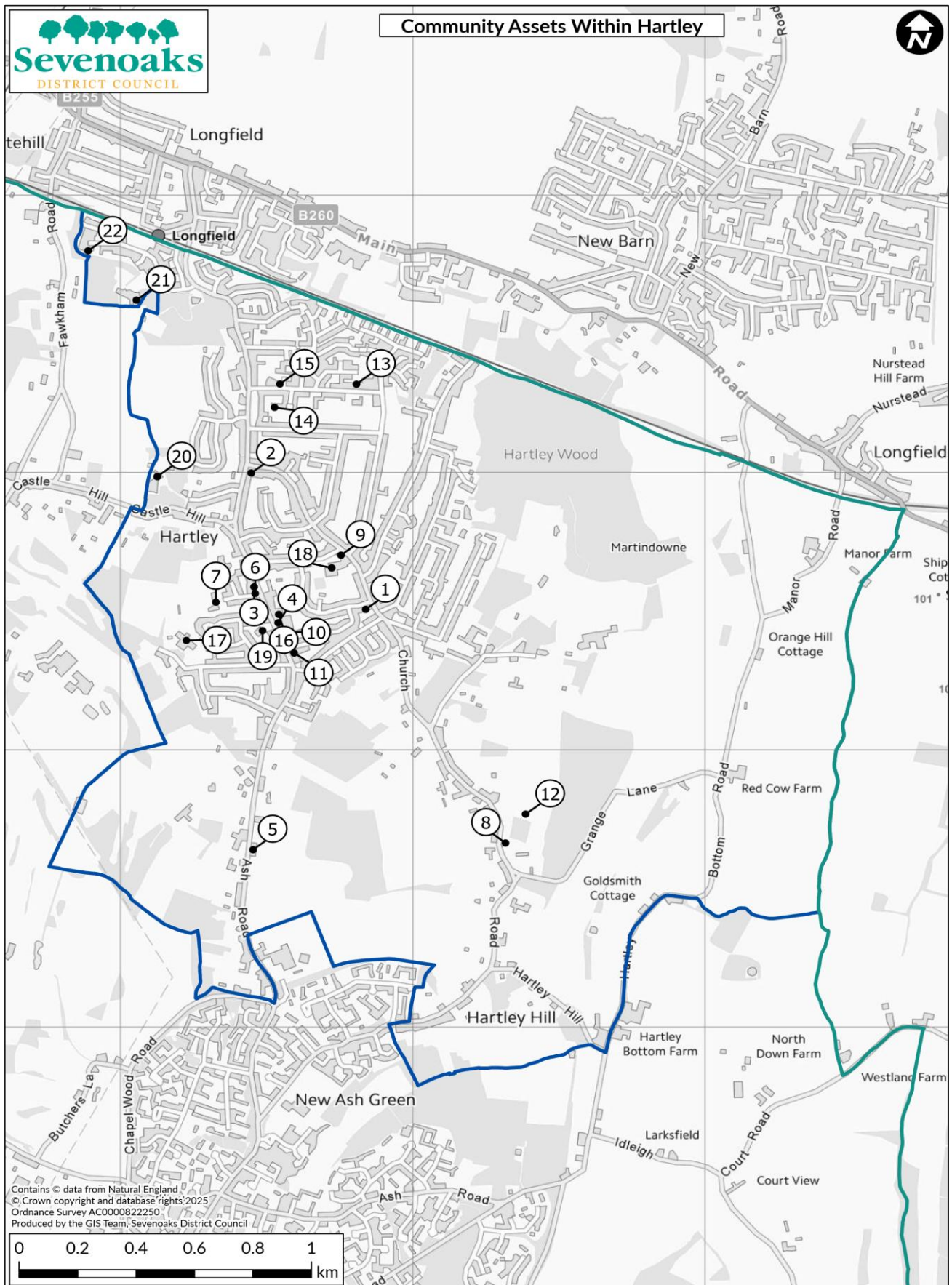
Objective

- To retain existing Community Assets in the Parish, as identified in Appendix 4, which provide a significant contribution to the wellbeing of the community and a sense of vitality.

Justification

Hartley Parish has 22 Community Assets (as Listed in Appendix 4 and shown on Map 13 “Community Assets”) which provide a wide range of services and amenities. They include a variety of shops in two primary locations, together with a Post Office, a garage, a public house and two Private Members’ clubs. In addition, there are two Churches, several Community Halls, a Library, a Parish council office, two Primary Schools and four Care Homes. These assets are well appreciated and supported by Parish residents.

Map 13 - Community Assets



Map 13 – Community Assets - Location References:

1. Six retail Shops and Services, including parking, at Cherry Trees
2. Five Retail Shops and Services, including parking at the Junction of Ash Road and Church Road
3. Post Office/general Store and adjoining business in Ash Road
4. Hartley Garage Centre, Ash Road
5. The Black Lion Public House, Ash Road
6. Hartley Social Club, Culvey Close
7. Hartley Country Club, Culvey Close
8. All Saints Church, Church Road
9. St Francis de Sales RC Church, Church Road
10. Hartley Village Hall, Ash Road
11. All Saints Church Centre, Ash Road
12. Manor Field Pavilion, Church Road.
13. Community Centre, Wellfield
14. Longfield and Hartley Scout HQ, Larkfield Lane.
15. Hartley Dental Practice, Wellfield
16. Hartley Library and Parish Council Offices
17. Leigh Academy Hartley (Primary School), Round Ash Way
18. Our Lady of Hartley Catholic Primary School, Stack Lane
19. Fairby Grange Care Home, Ash Road Hartley
20. Old Downs Residential Care Home, Castle Hill
21. Bramlings Residential Care Home, Ash Road
22. Russell Court Nursing Home, Ash Road

POLICY CA1 RETENTION OF COMMUNITY ASSETS

Development proposals that would lead to the loss of Community Assets (as listed in Appendix 4) will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that: -

- (i) There is no longer any need or demand for the existing Community Asset, or
- (ii) The existing Community Asset is demonstrably no longer economically viable or able to be supported by the community.

Any development proposals should make alternative provision for the relocation of the existing Community Asset to an equally and/or more appropriate and accessible site within the HNP area, and which also complies with the other Policies in the HNP.

6.4 BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

One Policy is included in this category.

POLICY B1 – SUPPORT FOR EXISTING BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Objective:

- To support business and employment opportunities in Hartley

Justification

A Business Survey was undertaken in 2024 of the 30 businesses that operate within the Parish. Of these, 16 are retail units (including three light commercial) which provide a variety of services for local residents and people visiting the Parish. Many of the retail units are located in small groups situated at Cherry Trees and also on the corner of Ash Road and Church Road. In addition to retail, there are:

- Two local Primary Schools serving people from within and outside of the Parish,
- Two Churches both situated within Church Road,
- Four Care Homes for the care of the elderly, and,
- Four farms situated within the Parish.
- Two Private Members' Clubs

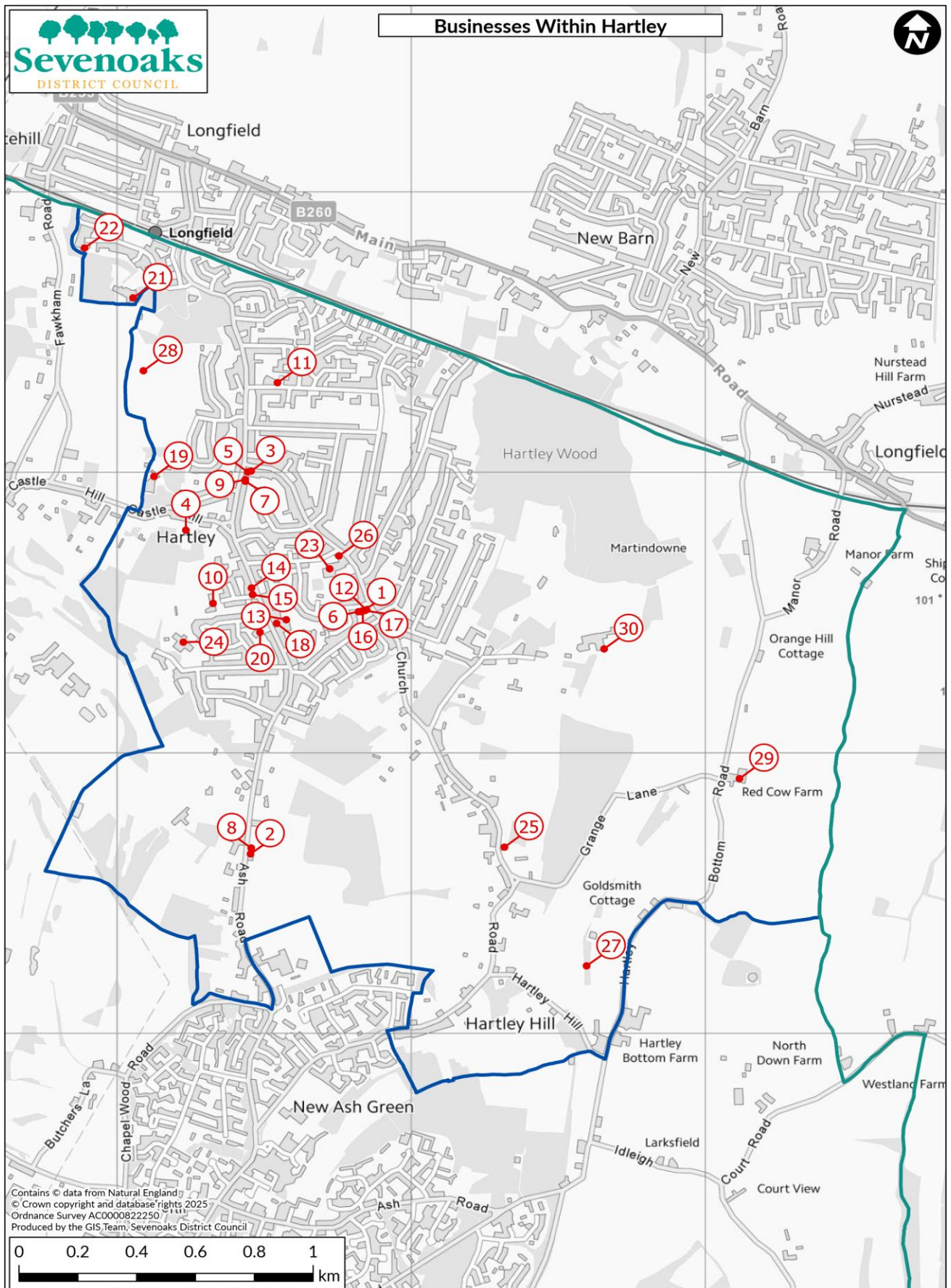
All of these businesses, which provide valued services to the local community, employ people from within and outside the Parish and have occupied their current premises for many years.

The Business Survey revealed that, most businesses expect to remain in business in Hartley for at least the next five years, and that these businesses think Hartley is a satisfactory or good place to operate their business.

A list of the businesses in the Parish can be seen in Appendix 5 and are located as shown on Map 14 – “Businesses within Hartley”.

Home working - Working from home has become increasingly popular over the last few years and the HNP is supportive of the provision of facilities to enable sustainable homeworking which will improve locally based employment, support local services, and reduce traffic movements. Small scale businesses which are incidental to the enjoyment of the home do not require planning permission.

Map 14 - Businesses within Hartley



Map 14 – Businesses within Hartley - Location References:

1 Blue Ocean Financial Planning	9 Cherry Trees
2 Black Lion Public House	Ash Rd Hartley
3 Bottle & Basket	2 Church Rd
4 The Cattery at Rose Cottage	Castle Hill
5 Clifton Estate Agents	1 Church Rd
6 Co Op	11-13 Cherry Trees
7 Cost Cutter	1 The Parade Ash Rd
8 Golden Dragon Chinese	Black Lion Ash Rd
9 Graham Simpkin Planning	2 The Parade Ash Rd
10 Hartley Country Club	Culvey Close
11 Hartley Dental Practice	Well Field
12 Hartley DIY & Hardware	1 Cherry Trees
13 Hartley Garage	Ash Rd
14 Hartley Post Office	Ash Rd
15 Hartley Social Club	Ash Rd
16 Image Hair Studios	7 Cherry Trees
17 Perfect 10 Nail Studios	5 Cherry Trees
18 Westwood Car & Commercial Ltd	Ash Rd
19 Old Downs Nursing Home	Castle Hill
20 Fairby Grange	Ash Rd
21 Bramblings Nursing Home	Bramblefield Close
22 Russell Court Nursing Home	Ash Rd DA3
23 Our Lady of Hartley Catholic Primary School	Stack Lane
24 Leigh Academy Hartley	Round Ash Way
25 All Saints Church Hartley	Church Rd
26 St Francis De Sale Catholic Church	Church Rd Hartley
27 Glovers	Hartley Bottom
28 Billings	Gay Dawn Pennis Lane
29 Red Cow Farm	Hartley Bottom Rd
30 Ingomar Hartley Manor Farm	Hartley

POLICY B1

SUPPORT FOR EXISTING BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Development proposals that would involve the loss of existing business premises and sites within the HNP area, including those falling within Class E of the Uses Classes Order 1987 (as amended), will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that: -

a) The premises or site have not been in active use for at least 12 months, and

b) The premises or site have no potential for reoccupation or redevelopment for employment-related uses. This can be shown by proof of a valuation and viability report and that a marketing exercise has taken place for a continuous period of at least six months.

The HNP recognises the benefits of home working within the Parish which promotes locally based employment, supports local services, and reduces traffic movements.



SECTION 7

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

This section cannot, by the regulations covering the production of Neighbourhood Plans, be included in that part examined by the external Examiner but is included here as there are two issues which were raised during the early consultations as matters of major concern by the residents of Hartley.

The two issues are:

- (1) The volume and speed of traffic along Ash Road, the major route through the Parish of Hartley, and
- (2) The provision of Health Services to residents of Hartley

7.1 Traffic Volume and Speed through Hartley Parish

The volume and speed of traffic along Ash Road, which is the main route running through the middle of Hartley from Longfield to New Ash Green, has been a matter of concern for residents for many years. The volume of traffic has had a detrimental impact on the lives of residents, many of whom need to cross the road to reach local Primary Schools, buses and shops.

The last major road improvement works on Ash Road was carried out in 1967 with the reconstruction of the railway bridge at Longfield, followed by some footway improvements and a pedestrian crossing in the 1970's. More recently the Parish Council funded a second, light controlled, crossing on Ash Road near Parkfield to assist children gaining access to buses serving Secondary Schools outside the Parish.

A significant proportion of the traffic along Ash Road emanates from New Ash Green and further afield to the south of Hartley. Ash Road is used to gain access to the railway station and shops at Longfield and onto the A2, the M25 and to the Bluewater shopping centre. Past measurements of traffic in 2013 and 2018 (when the last survey was conducted) showed an approximate fourfold increase in traffic movements during that period. That has undoubtedly increased since 2018.

Clearly, any further significant development in the Parish and/or in the parishes south of Hartley would show significantly increased traffic flows along Ash Road and through the Parish. The Parish Council has been asked to seek up to date traffic figures and to raise concern with the Kent County Council (the Highways Authority) about traffic volumes and capacity.

7.2 Health Services

The comments about the Health Services mainly relate to concern about the difficulty in obtaining appointments at the General Practice Surgeries and will be drawn to the Parish Council's attention for further consideration.

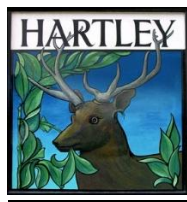
In more recent consultations with residents, two further issues were identified by the Steering Group. These relate to a review of Heritage Sites and Informal Paths.

7.3 Review of Heritage Sites

During the latter preparation of the HNP, the possibility of including a number of buildings and structures to the SDC Local List of non-designated Heritage Assets and the creation of two new Conservation Areas within the Parish was discussed. These will be further explored by HPC with SDC and the land and building owners.

7.4 Informal Paths

Some residents have asked about the ability to include currently well used informal paths into the PROW network. This will be further explored by HPC and KCC.



SECTION 8

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Monitoring is an essential component in achieving sustainable development and sustainable communities. Monitoring provides crucial information to establish what is happening now and whether policies are working.

The HNP sets out the long-term vision for the Parish with agreed objectives and policies for delivery over the period to 2040.

The HNP will be reviewed by HPC every five years to ensure its continued relevance.

The SDC Local Plan is currently under review, and Regulation 18 was consulted upon by SDC in the Autumn of 2025 with the intention to adopt the Local Plan by 2027. Liaison with SDC will continue to ensure that the emerging Local Plan and HNP are compatible.