

Background document BD9a

Strategic Environmental Assessment scoping document for the Wye with Hinxhill Neighbourhood Development Plan

Introduction

This [SEA scoping document](#) has been prepared to accompany the Wye with Hinxhill Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNP).

Paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) must meet the following basic conditions:

- (i) the draft NDP must have appropriate regard to national policies and advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- (ii) the draft NDP must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- (iii) the draft NDP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the local planning authority, in this case Ashford Borough Council's (ABC's) Core Strategy 2008 (CS) and the Tenterden and Rural Sites Development Plan Document 2010 (TRSDPD) and
- (iv) the draft NDP must meet the relevant EU obligations.

The report contains the following appendices

Appendix A Draft Neighbourhood Plan

Appendix B Background document BD3 on the local environment prepared for the WNP

Appendix C Ashford Borough Council's SEA Screening Report for the WNP

Appendix D Basic conditions statement prepared to show the accordance of WNP with the NPPF

Appendix E Sustainability Appraisal Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD (PDF)

Submitting Body

The Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan will be submitted by Wye with Hinxhill Parish Council, which is a qualifying body as defined by the Localism Act 2011.

Neighbourhood Area

In accordance with part 2 of the Regulations, Ashford Borough Council (ABC), the local planning authority publicised the application from the Parish Council and advertised a consultation period beginning on 9th November and ending on 21st December 2012. The application was approved by the Cabinet of ABC on 10th January 2013 and the Parish designated as the Neighbourhood Area.

The Parish Council confirms that this:

- Neighbourhood Development Plan relates only to Wye with Hinxhill Parish and to no other Neighbourhood Areas.
- It is the only Neighbourhood Development Plan in the designated area. No other Neighbourhood Plan exists nor is in development for part or all of the designated area.

The Parish is located in Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), between Ashford and Canterbury. Figure 1a and b show the general location of the district and the parish within it.

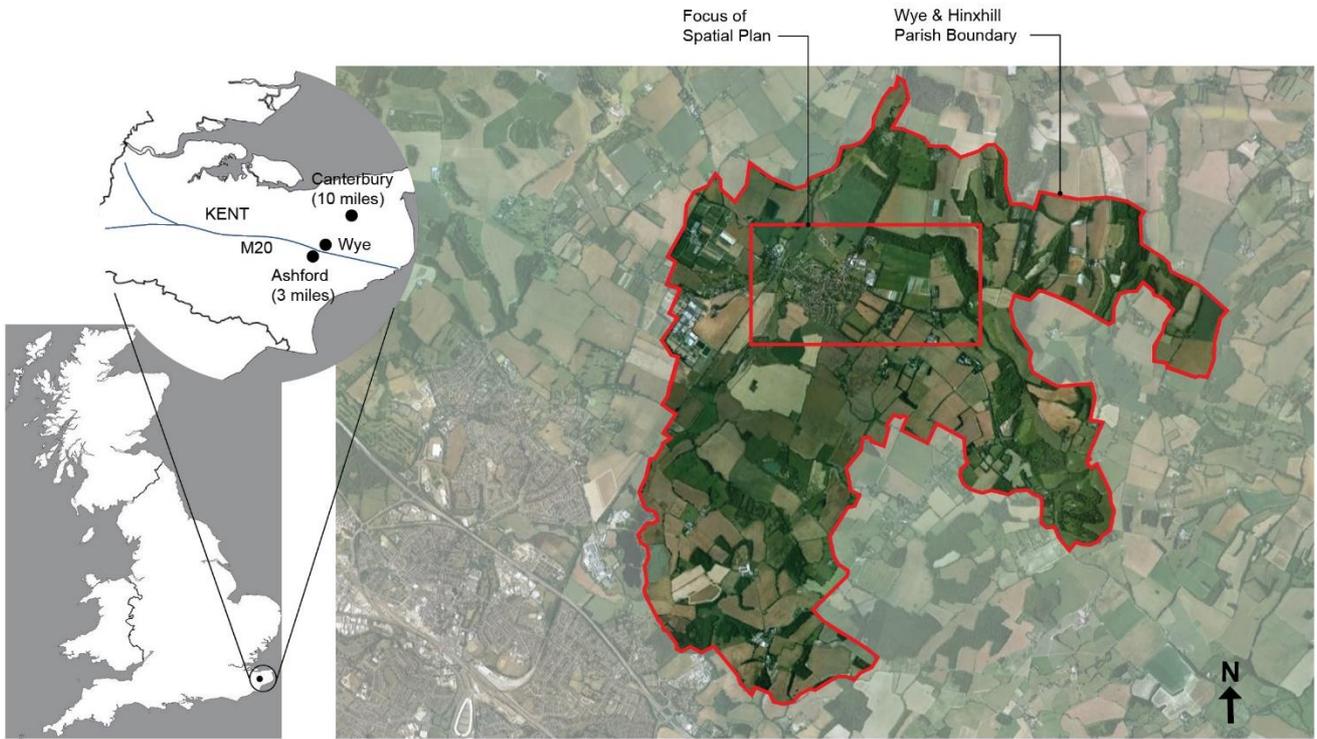


Figure 1a Location of the Parish and aerial view

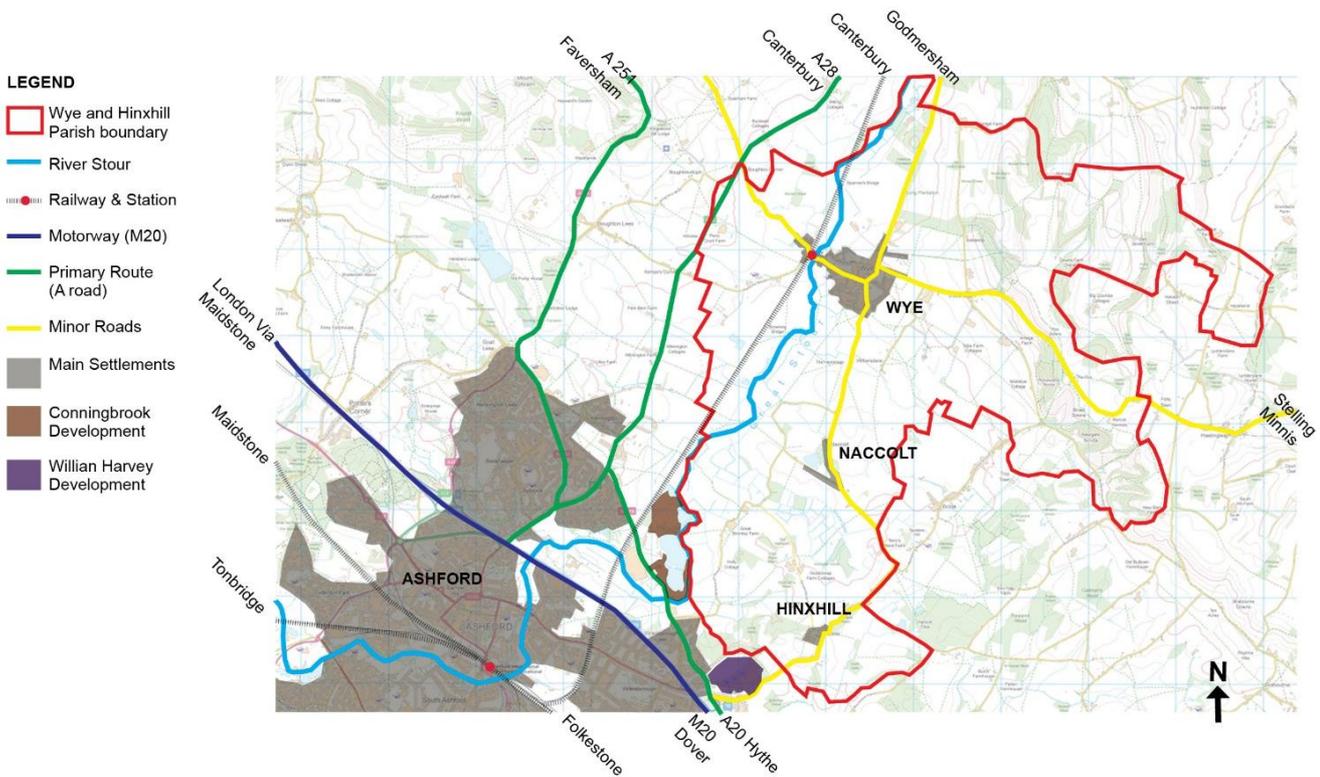


Figure 1b Wye with Hinxhill Parish boundary in local context with nearby major development allocations marked

Sites identified within the parish

The importance of the conservation area, heritage buildings, surrounding environment and AONB is embedded in the vision and principles that have been developed for the WNP. The latest draft of the plan is provided as Appendix A. The plan has been supported by a background document Appendix B (WNP BD3) on the environment and interaction with the AONB. The SEA screening report on the WNP completed by ABC is also appended.

The sites identified for development in Wye are shown in Figure 2.

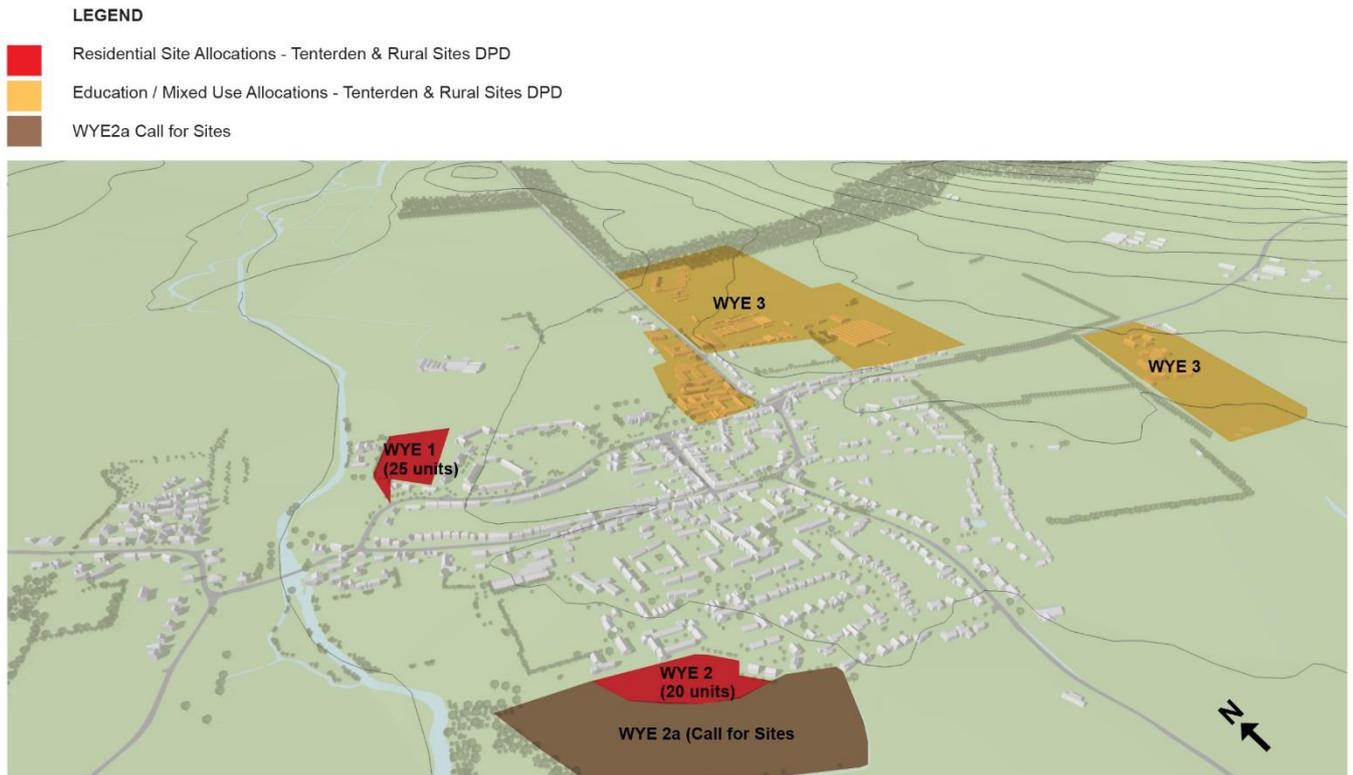


Figure 2 Location of potential development sites.

The WNP and TRSDPD

Although the requirement to carry out both an SA and SEA is mandatory, it is possible to satisfy the requirements of both pieces of legislation through a single appraisal process. The Government has produced guidance for both undertaking SEAs generally and for SAs on Development Plan Documents, and in particular sets out how SAs and SEAs can be integrated into one process. The appraisal process for the TRSDPD incorporated the requirements for both the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and the SEA Regulations. The TRSDPD SA covers all of the sites in the WNP. In the SA the sites are numbered as follows

Neighbourhood Plan	TRSDPD SA
WYE1	WYE08
WYE2	WYE06b
WYE2a	WYE06

WYE3	WYE08 East of Olantigh Rd including ADAS WYE14 Main campus WYE15 Withersdane
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Note that WYE1 and WYE2 have now received planning permission. The WNP covers these sites as they are not built and there remain design issues, but their impact on the environment has been addressed. WYE2a was named WYE06 in the TRSDPD which concluded that “*The site lies within the floodplain and development would be a significant intrusion into open countryside.*” It is not considered in detail in the WNP. Naccolt has been identified for a small development of 8 houses and is recorded as Other Sites 106 in the ABC SA document. The assessment made by ABC for these sites is to be found in Appendix E.

Main issues to be addressed in the SEA

The emerging WNP (Appendix A) has policies to protect the environment in conformity with both the NPPF (Appendix D) and local planning framework. Wye is a special place and the protection of its environment is an essential component of the WNP.

The ecological value of the chalk grassland within the parish, including rare species of plants and insects, is nationally recognised and afforded statutory protection for its ecological value and biodiversity. The Wye and Crundale Downs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Wye National Nature Reserve (NNR) run along the Kent Downs to the west of the village. The SSSI/NNR/SAC are characterised by fragments of ancient woodland and calcareous grassland, both UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) Priority Habitats. The woodland character varies depending on the soil type. On the steep chalk slopes Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) high woodland predominates; where heavy clay soils overlie the chalk, Ash, Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice occurs under Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards. Beneath this is a shrub layer containing Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*), Wych Elm (*Ulmus glabra*) and Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*). Within the field layer below the rare Green Hellebore (*Helleborus viridis*) and Lady Orchid (*Orchis purpurea*) are of particular note. The range of the latter being restricted in Britain to Kent.

The Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) the UK’s only native dormouse and a protected species (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Schedule 5) can be found in the woodlands around Wye. The calcareous rich grassland, embedded within the fragments of ancient woodland, is a habitat lost throughout much of Britain through intensive agriculture and lack of management. The grassland adjacent to Wye is rich in orchid species, including the specially protected (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Schedule 8) spider orchids *Ophrys sphegodes* and *O. fuciflora*. It also provides habitat for the Black-veined Moth (*Siona lineata*) a species that requires infrequently grazed/ungrazed chalk grassland. While its range was always restricted to Southern England it is now found only on a few sites around Wye. The Black-veined Moth is a protected species

The variety and extent of the ecological and biodiversity designations around Wye illustrate the complexity and fragility of the surrounding landscape. These designations are a material

consideration for planning and the WNP will emphasise protection of the surrounding environment and green spaces within Wye village itself (see Appendices A and B).

The built environment in Wye is a rich heritage of Grade I and Grade II listed sites, notably within the old Wye College campus. We have specific policies addressing the WYE3 sites that will ensure their maintenance and restoration to be active components of the village, not simply decaying unused assets.

Concluding remarks on the Scope of the SEA

The principal site covered by the WNP is WYE3. This is the site of the former Wye College, and an active Wye College represents extant planning permission. The activity of the College was very similar to that of Plumpton College in Sussex. Plumpton has therefore been used to estimate the traffic movements that would be acceptable from a development in Wye –representing equivalence to the activity generated through extant planning permission for educational use of the site (see Appendix A). The environmental impact of the development now proposed will also be considered in light of the earlier activity. Development will be constrained so that the impact will be no more than that from the active Wye College.

The WNP SEA will accompany the Pre-submission consultation Draft of the WNP. The consultation document is in preparation and is scheduled to be submitted in December.

Wye with Hinxhill Parish Council November 2014

Comments received on the Scoping Document and appended papers

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Dear Mr Mansfield

Thank you for consulting us on your SEA scoping report and draft Neighbourhood Plan (NHP). We have the following comments to make, which we hope you will find useful.

We have no major concerns with the SEA or your draft NHP, however we would recommend the following are incorporated in to your documents, to provide a complete picture of the potential environmental issues that development in Wye will need to consider.

Groundwater protection

The boundary of the proposed area where development may take place overlies a Principal Aquifer. The NHP allows for the development of brownfield sites. There is likely to be historic contamination at some of these proposed locations. As such we would recommend that reference is made to the Ashford Borough Council's (ABC) Core Strategy (CS) Policy CS21 requiring the protection of groundwater. We would expect any development applications where potentially polluting historic uses to be supported by a preliminary risk assessment and where appropriate, remediation of the site is carried out prior to any development taking place.

Water conservation

Water is one of our most precious natural resources, and the South East of England is "Water Stressed", so we are keen to ensure water is used wisely. As such, water conservation techniques should be incorporated into the design of all new development. All new homes should be designed to achieve a minimum water efficiency of 105 litres per person per day (this is also in accordance with the ABC CS 10. This policy also details the requirements for Non-residential developments.

Surface water drainage

All new developments (ABC CS 20) will be required to ensure that sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS) are implemented on site to reduce the risk of increasing surface water flooding off site. ABC have a SuDS Supplementary planning Document. Such schemes should be carried out in accordance with this SPD. It should also be noted that any application in excess of 1 hectare will be required to be supported by a site specific flood risk assessment.

We hope you find our comments useful.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Pieter

Pieter De Villiers B Art et Scientae
Sustainable Places - Senior Planning Advisor (KSL - Kent)

NATURAL ENGLAND

Attn - John Mansfield

Dear John

Thank you for consulting Natural England on your SEA Scoping document. My brief comments are as follows.

The document appears to deal reasonably with the natural environment although there seems to be limited reference to the AONB and to those SSSIs that are not also designated as European sites. Given the extent of the designated landscape, I trust that the AONB Unit has been consulted on the evolving plan. I see there are links to other documents that may deal with these matters, but due to the current pressure of consultations on land-use plans, I have only been able to undertake a quick review of the main document.

I look forward to formal consultation on the final version of the plan and the SEA.

If discussion would be helpful, please give me a call.

Yours sincerely

John Lister

Lead Adviser

Kent, West Sussex, East Sussex Team (Area 14)

Natural England