

Dormansland Neighbourhood Plan



Vision Paper - November 2015

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to capture the outcome of the Dormansland Neighbourhood Plan (DNP) visioning workshop held with the Steering Group on 19th August 2015 and to make recommendations for the consideration of the Steering Group. These recommendations relate to:

- The vision, key objectives and land use planning policy scope of the DNP
- Further community engagement activities and evidence analysis
- The project plan through to the submission of the DNP

The recommendations reflect not just the outcome of the workshop but also initial insights into the national and local planning policy context of the DNP. Specifically, the DNP must meet a series of 'basic conditions' relating to its general conformity with that policy context. The examination of the DNP in due course will focus on how those conditions have been met, before it goes to referendum.

The context indicates very clear environmental and social – natural, heritage, community facilities and green infrastructure - parameters that should be used to guide modest growth and change within the Parish and prevent isolated growth elsewhere disconnected from the Parish's needs. It appears from the workshop that these parameters are likely to match the views of the local community on where and how change should happen.

The Draft DNP will provide an outline of the policy context and the environmental parameters as a justification for its emerging policies. It will also be shaped by the recommended engagement activities set out in this paper and influence the forthcoming review of the Tandridge Core Strategy.

Finally, the paper avoids a discussion at this stage about the number of houses to be planned for in the DNP. It is estimated that the vision outlined below could provide a number of options for the delivery of an appropriate number of new homes over the plan period, but this will be dependent on there being an identified and agreed local need, and there being sites that are available and in acceptable locations. There has been no review of those capacities or of potential sites. This work will be done as part of the Draft DNP preparation.

Key findings of the vision workshop

Planning Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in April 2012, contains a number of key policy principles that will shape the policies of the DNP, including the following paragraphs:

- The quality of development (58)
- Promoting healthy communities (69)
- The designation of Local Green Spaces (76/77)
- Protecting the Green Belt (79-92)
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (109-115)
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (126-141)

These policies are likely to be those of most relevance to the DNP but many other principles in the framework will have some bearing on the preparation of the neighbourhood plan in due course. Importantly too, Para 198 of the NPPF states that, *“where a planning application conflicts with a neighbourhood plan that has been brought into force, planning permission should not normally be granted”*.

Given the current status of the strategic policies of the development plan – that is the Tandridge Core Strategy 2008, which predates the publication of the NPPF – the provisions of the NPPF are especially important in shaping how the DNP will consider its policies.

Tandridge DC is proposing to publish details of the Core Strategy Review in Autumn/Winter 2015. This is likely to be based on updated evidence on housing needs and quantum. In addition, TDC commenced a Green Belt Review in June 2015. Dormansland Parish falls within four Green Belt parcels (GBA035, 043, 044, 045) which have implications for the neighbourhood plan given the parish is entirely within the Green Belt.

In the settlement hierarchy (Tandridge Local Plan Part 2 Policy DP12), Dormansland village is classified as a Category 2 settlement - a ‘defined village’ in the Green Belt - where development will be permitted where it is appropriate to the needs of the rural community. The village currently has no housing allocation but defined villages are suitable for limited infilling and limited affordable housing.

Dormans Park and the remaining parish is ‘washed over’ by Green Belt where Policy DP13 (Building in the Green Belt) applies. DP13 states ‘New building is inappropriate unless in very special circumstances. These circumstances include non-residential buildings directly related to agriculture or forestry; facilities for outdoor sport and recreation.

In addition to the two Greenbelt related policies above, Policy DP7 sets out a series of criteria covering the design of new development and Policy DP3 is intended to safeguard A1 retail uses in village centres.

Parish structure

Dormansland Parish is structured around two main settlements; Dormansland and Dormans Park which sit either side of the north-south railway line 1.5km apart with Dormansland on the eastern side and Dormans Park further to the south on the western side of the railway line. Both settlements are located a similar distance from Dormans station. The A22 to the west is the main north-south road and the A264 to the south is the main east-west road connecting East Grinstead to Tunbridge Wells.

East Grinstead, which is the main local service centre, sits adjacent to the southern boundary of the parish, with Lingfield, a smaller local service centre sitting alongside the western parish boundary. Both East Grinstead and Lingfield have railway stations on the same line and are within 3km of Dormansland and Dormans Park.

Landscape and green infrastructure play a significant role in defining the setting of Dormansland and Dormans Park and the quality and character of the parish as a whole. The whole of the parish is within the Green Belt and the eastern side is within the High Weald AONB. The landscape character of the parish is defined by the patchwork of woodland, copses, arable and pasture fields that wrap around the settlements of Dormansland and Dormans Park. The topography of the High Weald contributes to the setting and undulating character of the landscape and creates local views, there are also attractive longer views of the Surrey Hills to the north.

Lingfield Park Racecourse and golf course form a significant landscape element adjacent to the western boundary and a buffer between Dormansland and Lingfield. The separation between these two settlements is reinforced by the railway line and the established tree belts that run alongside it.

The landscape includes water features that are part of its character and also of biodiversity value. These include the River Eden and Eden Brook which runs eastwards across Lingfield and isolated water bodies to the south including Wilderness Lake. There are a number of footpaths and bridleways within the parish that provide access to the wider landscape and a number of National Trails and Long Distance recreation routes through the High Weald AONB. In the parish there are 46 properties registered with English Heritage as Listed from Grade II up to Grade I and 35 on Tandridge District's list of Buildings of Character.

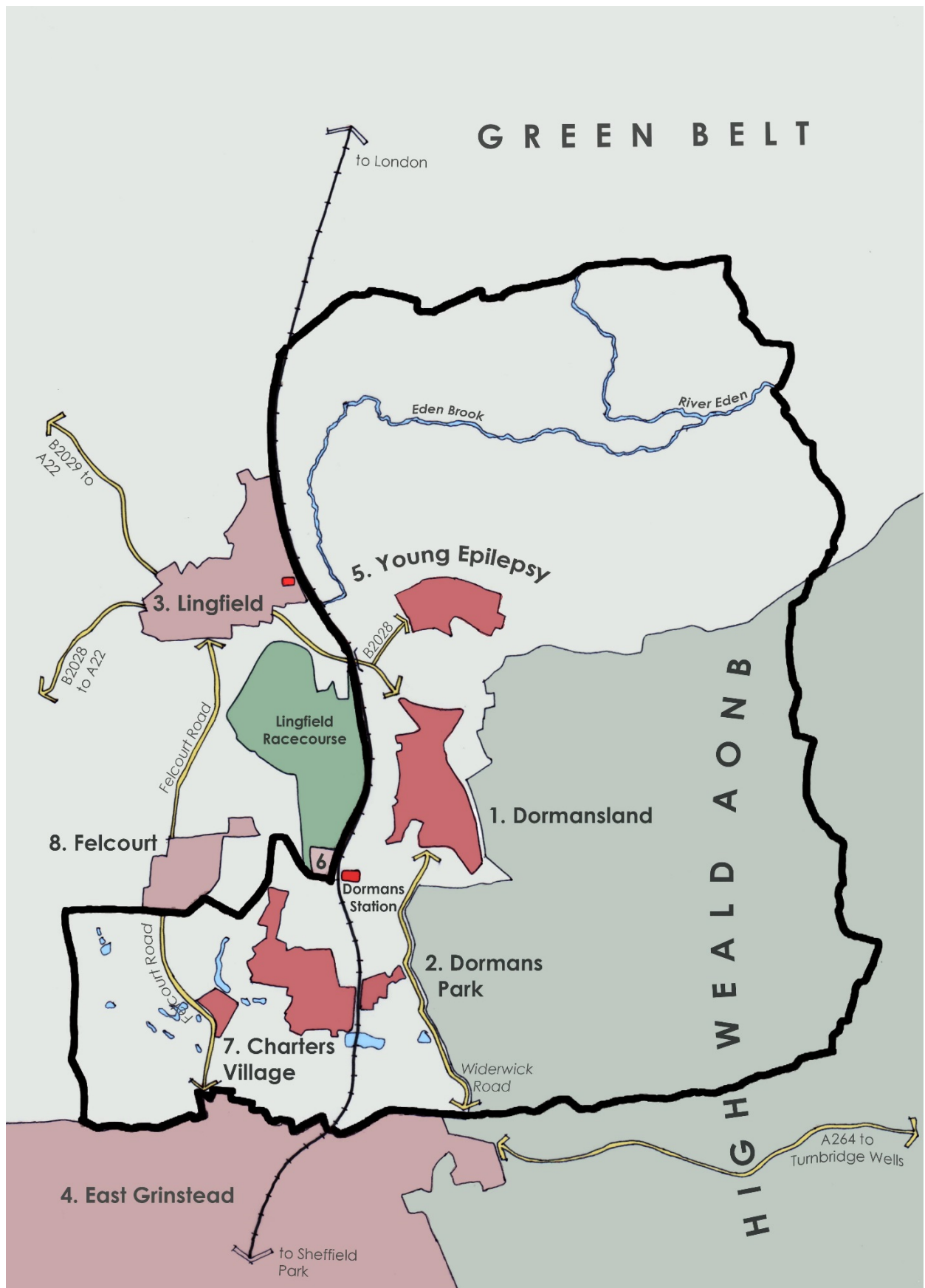
Apart from the main settlements of Dormansland and Dormans Park there are other, smaller developments within the parish: to the north of Dormansland and separated by a defined group of fields, Young Epilepsy is a charitable organisation and a significant employer providing on-site residential education and care. The College of St Barnabas adjacent to Dormans station is residential community for retired Anglican clergy dating back to the late nineteenth century. Charters Village is an age restricted retirement development off Felcourt road in the south-western corner of the parish. Felcourt is a standalone residential development of predominantly bungalows on large plots in a wooded setting adjoining the western boundary of the parish.

These are illustrated on the Parish Structure Diagram with the following key:

1. Dormansland
2. Dormans Park
3. Lingfield
4. East Grinstead
5. Young Epilepsy
6. College of St Barnabas
7. Charters Village
8. Felcourt

Summary

1. The parish has a landscape setting that defines its character and provides assets to be protected and enhanced, and these should be considerations for guiding change and development within the parish.
2. The landscape setting provides separation and buffers to adjacent settlements but also green infrastructure and biodiversity assets that extend beyond the parish and should be protected and enhanced through shared efforts, particularly with Lingfield.
3. The parish includes and interacts with a number of other settlements, organisations and land uses including Young Epilepsy, the College of St Barnabas, Chartham Park, the Lingfield Racecourse, golf club and associated activities. Engaging with them should also be a consideration for guiding change and development within the parish.



Parish Structure Diagram – Dormansland Parish

Dormansland

Structure:

Dormansland is structured around a north-south High Street with peripheral loop roads and dwellings planned around a predominantly cul-de-sac road layout. The High Street has a focus around the Village Store, Post Office and The Royal Oak Public House which provide amenities and a village centre. This is reinforced by the recreation ground tennis courts and Church of St John churchyard which are also the key open spaces within the village. Dormansland primary school sits opposite on the eastern side of the High Street but is hidden behind residential development.

The southern section of the High Street beyond the Church of St John becomes more rural and has no pavements or street lighting up to the junction with Dormans Station Road. The station is 0.5km to the west along Dormans Station Road, but has limited parking and no cycle facilities. Parking along Dormans Station Road is a problem.

Character:

The general architectural character is a combination of mid to late C20th 'estate' development which has infilled between the more rural, earlier parts of the settlement along the High Street, West Street to the west and Hollow Lane to the east which is also the boundary to the High Weald AONB.

The High Street with its tighter street frontages, architectural variety and non-residential uses has a recognisably different character to the main body of the settlement with the Church of St John playing a role in establishing this as the village centre.

There have been a number of recent developments in Dormansland including housing along the High Street, opposite the Church of St John and the redevelopment of the garage site along the western side of the High Street next to the post office. These developments have sought to replicate the materials and style of the early C20th architecture in the settlement.

Overall there is a fairly consistent and well maintained character in terms of public realm and frontages with hedging and grassed verges characterising the main body of the settlement, and the surrounding areas being more rural in character with lanes contained within denser planting with drainage ditches and embanked verges. The lack of pavements and street lighting are significant factors in the quality of this rural character.

Entrance and gateways:

The main approach to the settlement from the north is eastwards along the B2028 with the traffic lights and single carriageway beneath the railway bridge playing a part in the approach. This splits into two: Dormans Road leads up towards the High Street with the Memorial Club and the grassed island at the junction giving a stronger sense of arrival into the village. The second sweeps into Plough Road from the east and west with the old pub, The Plough, and wide verges framing the entrance.

There is a stronger sense of arrival from the south with a more marked transition from the rural character of the southern end of Dormans High Street and the start of built development marked by the Church of St John. This approach and route along the High Street has long distance views northwards to the Surrey Hills which act as a backdrop.

A subsidiary entrance is along Hollow Lane, with glimpses into the village at Beacon Hill and New Farthingdale and then into the older built up area on the eastern edge.

Edge conditions:

Along Racecourse Road the northern settlement boundary is not strongly defined and includes some development along the northern side of the road within the group of fields that separate it from the Young Epilepsy campus.

The southern boundary is predominantly a residential back garden edge with some definition provided by the tree line along the garden boundaries, although this is not continuous and disrupted by the detached buildings on large plots which sit in the area down to Dormans Station Road and Mutton Hill.

There is a well-defined eastern boundary along Hollow Lane with single sided development un-paved in parts, a consistent rural character and a well-established tree line.

The western boundary is also mostly a back garden edge with groups of trees but no continuous tree line between the back garden edges and the fields that back onto the railway line acting as a landscape buffer to the railway and to Lingfield.

Issues and observations:

Dormansland has a 'village centre' which has some facilities and is recognisable as a focus. However, the facilities are not extensive and opportunities for adding to them and reinforcing the village centre should be considered.

1. Dormansland also has different architectural character areas and a quality of public realm that contribute significantly to its overall character. Measures to preserve and enhance these should be considered.
2. The surrounding area has a rural character which provides a setting for the settlement and is also important to its overall character. Measures to preserve and enhance this should also be considered along with the views of the Surrey Hills and the High Weald AONB which are part of the wider setting and form a backdrop to the settlement.
3. There are issues with parking relating to the use of the station and consideration should be given to how to address these without compromising the character of the setting, including improving facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, improving provision for car parking and options for parking controls.
4. The strength of definition to the settlement's edges varies and may be a factor when considering any future change or development. The function of the existing open spaces and landscape structure act as buffers between adjoining

settlements and development, in particular Lingfield and the Young Epilepsy campus should also be a factor when considering any future change or development

5. Given the historic growth of the Young Epilepsy campus and its significance as an employer, it will be essential for the neighbourhood plan to engage with them and to understand their plans for the future.

Dormans Park

Structure:

Dormans Park is a private estate of large detached dwellings structured around an informal grid road layout with outlying arms. It is a wholly residential development with the only facilities being a noticeboard, a post-box and a telephone kiosk that has been converted into a community library that are located at the junction of East Hill and Hill Crest.

The estate is accessed on the western side from Swissland Hill that connects to Blackberry Lane and the station, and on the eastern side from The Approach which crosses the railway line connecting with the main body of the settlement.

Dormans Park is a standalone development with no through route to other settlements in a setting that is defined by wooded boundaries with open pockets adjacent to northern and eastern sides.

Character:

The original "new Bungalow Town and Club" character of the Dormans Park Estate, of large plots in a wooded setting has been eroded by the redevelopment and subdivision of plots. The ongoing redevelopment and subdivision of plots with larger properties has increased plot ratios and reduced garden sizes, and introduced a variety of other architectural styles, largely bland pastiches of pseudo rural vernacular. The subdivision of plots has increased the overall density.

There is however still a consistent and well maintained character in terms of the private roads and plot frontages with a strong landscape structure, including mature trees as part of plots, and to the frontages and streets with mature trees, hedging and verges.

The surrounding areas have the same rural character as the setting of Dormansland of lanes contained within denser planting with drainage ditches and embanked verges. The lack of pavements and street lighting are significant factors in the quality of this rural character. The setting includes water bodies with a stream along the western edge of the settlement and Wilderness Lake along the southern edge.

Charters Village retirement development to the south east off Felcourt Road is the closest development, but is not connected by road and is separated by a woodland buffer.

Entrance and gateways:

Both approaches to Dormans Park are marked out by a fenced access with notices stating that the roads are private.

Edge conditions:

The development is enclosed by a woodland belt with a group of open fields adjacent to the northern boundary. The definition of the settlement boundary is generally blurred by the overlap between the woodland belt and the extensive tree coverage on the plots. The exception to this is the western part of Furzefield Chase which is single sided development.

Issues and observations:

1. Dormans Park has very limited facilities.
2. It is physically remote from Dormansland, and although not a great distance away, pedestrian access is unlikely given the nature of the roads
3. Despite its physical separation from Dormansland and its different character, the neighbourhood plan should consider Dormans Park as an intrinsic part of the parish and seek to balance its needs with those of Dormansland, particularly where they share common interests.
4. Dormans Park has been subject to change through plot redevelopment and subdivision which could have significant impacts if it continues. Measures to identify and protect the overall character including the setting and landscape should be considered.
5. The architectural character and style are changing due to plot redevelopment and subdivision and measures to control this should be considered.
6. Where development in future is deemed appropriate more high quality contemporary Architecture should be encouraged.
7. The surrounding area has a rural character which provides a setting for the settlement and is important to its overall character. Measures to preserve and enhance this should also be considered.
8. The issue relating to the use of the station is shared with Dormansland and options for addressing these should be aimed at benefitting both settlements.
9. Although any further development or change will be limited by the Green Belt designation, the strength of definition to the settlement's edges may be a factor when considering any future change or development.

Vision

At this early stage, it is possible to identify some key elements of the vision of the parish in 20 years or so based on the workshop discussions and analysis outlined:

"The Parish of Dormansland has retained its character and identity as a rural village within the Greenbelt, with a strong sense of community and strengthened relationship to the landscape setting, the safeguarding of important views and heritage assets, the development of new open space amenities and the enhancement of its biodiversity and landscape assets.

Within the Parish, Dormansland and Dormans Park retain their own distinctive characters. New homes have respected this character and helped sustain the demand for community facilities, which in turn have expanded and become more varied to meet the changing needs of residents, with the school, village hall, shop, and recreation amenities all thriving and creating a stronger village centre.

Homes are purpose designed to meet local needs including older people who wish to downsize and young families. They provide a balance of dwelling types and ownership structures to serve the community over the long term. These new homes have been provided in small clusters on sites that do not detract from the character and setting of the Parish.

The Parish's natural assets will provide benefits for pedestrian and cycle movements through improved connectivity and additions to the network of footpaths, bridleways and public rights of way, many of which will directly connect new development. Traffic in the village is better managed and access to Dormans Station now meets everyone's needs.

The Parish has a strong, positive and supportive working relationship with Lingfield Racecourse and Young Epilepsy, which in turn has led to the Parish benefitting through an increase in visitors, support for local businesses and a greater range of facilities available to local people.

The Parish continues to support local employment businesses and has facilitated new employment opportunities within the Parish for local people and to support local services. It enjoys a positive relationship with the High Weald Partnership and the AONB is more accessible to the community for recreation and leisure. The Parish and Partnership have worked together to protect their shared setting and have defined a role for the Parish as a gateway to the AONB."

Key Objectives

In addition to providing a general development plan for the parish, the vision translates into a framework of key objectives for the DNP:

1. Protect the character, qualities and identity of the landscape setting to manage the impacts of any future growth and maintain the spatial and qualitative relationships between the areas.

2. Balance the potentially competing interests of the rural area - with farming and other country pursuits; the village and residential community; local economy and services with large and small employers and a commuter village for London and surrounding towns.
3. Identify and enhance the village centre to protect existing community services, heritage assets and amenities and to support the provision of a wider range of services and amenities to meet Parish needs and reinforce the identity and purpose of the village centre with Potters and The Royal Oak at its core.
4. Plan for the improvement, expansion or redevelopment of other amenities including the Memorial Club and school as part of a long-term plan for improving Parish amenities.
5. Identify sites for the delivery of the DNP that are sympathetic to the scale, topography and character of the Parish and that will not have a detrimental impact on the setting.
6. Plan for some housing to meet local needs, in particular for young families and elderly downsizers.
7. Secure the future of the existing employment uses within the Parish and plan for their growth to serve Parish needs.
8. Work with major employers and landowners (e.g. Racecourse, Young Epilepsy, etc.), to ensure their longer term plans are compatible with and can be incorporated satisfactorily into our vision and objectives.
9. Work with Lingfield PC to develop a shared approach to green infrastructure and biodiversity, and to protect and enhance the wider setting of both parishes.
10. Plan for increased public access to, and enjoyment of local green spaces, the High Weald AONB and the wider parish setting whilst recognising that some areas of significant biodiversity should only have limited public access.
11. Integrate the existing network of rural lanes, bridleways and footpaths, to improve and extend safe pedestrian and cycling routes.
12. Identify local green spaces, safeguard and improve their biodiversity and integrate them with the pedestrian and cycle network
13. Identify local buildings of heritage value
14. Protect the character of Dormans Park
15. Create Design Guidelines that encourage high quality and appropriate contemporary Architecture, which incorporate the best environmental and "green" credentials and which secures and enhances the character of the Parish.

Planning for change

Given the Greenbelt policies that apply to the parish there has been relatively little housing growth in the area, with a small number of high profile planning applications in Dormansland Village and significant change in Dormans Park through redevelopment of existing dwellings and subdivision of plots.

The Steering Group confirm there is high resistance to new development locally with a view that this is due in part to the pressure development brings to local infrastructure which is already under strain, alongside the high value placed on the countryside and landscape sensitivity.

However, like many rural communities, the Parish does have limitations in its mix and type of housing. In particular, due to smaller properties having been extended over the years, there are few properties suitable for young cost conscious families and there are few properties suitable for the needs of an ageing population.

The Local Plan and Greenbelt review offers opportunities to consider new areas for housing or community infrastructure outside of the existing Dormansland Village boundary where there is evidence of need.

The challenge for the Dormansland Neighbourhood Plan will be to safeguard and enhance existing resources whilst planning for change and growth through new development, not just for housing, such that it does not diminish the character of the Parish, its setting, open spaces and biodiversity. Any new development will need to be evaluated as part of this wider context and not on an insular site-by-site basis.

This paper concentrates on Dormansland as the focus for any change as Dormans Park and the remaining parish are washed over by Greenbelt which restricts any new development making it acceptable only in very special circumstances.

The diagram on the page 14 illustrates the structure of Dormansland as described in the spatial analysis on pages 4 and 5 and includes sites that might be considered to help meet the key objectives set out above. These sites fall into three categories:

1. Sites within the settlement boundary

Four sites were put forward in the 2011 SHLAA, one of which (DOR 001) has already been developed. The remaining sites (DOR 002, 003 & 004) are located adjacent to the school and close to the village centre. These three sites, although small, may have potential to help reinforce the village centre, provide housing to meet local needs and contribute to the longer-term plans for the school.

Although not put forward in the 2011 SHLAA, the Memorial Club site has been included in this group as it could contribute to a longer term plan for securing community facilities within the parish

2. Sites adjacent to the settlement boundary

A larger site to the north alongside West Street was put forward in the 2015 HELAA. This site has not yet been assessed by TDC in terms of its suitability or capacity, but the neighbourhood plan can consider its potential in whole or part.

3. Sites that could help address existing issues

Two further sites on Dormans Station Road adjacent to the station have been included in the diagram which could help address issues relating to the use of the station in particular facilities for pedestrians and cyclists but because of bio-diversity and access issues an alternative site for parking may need to be considered to the south of Dormans Station Road.

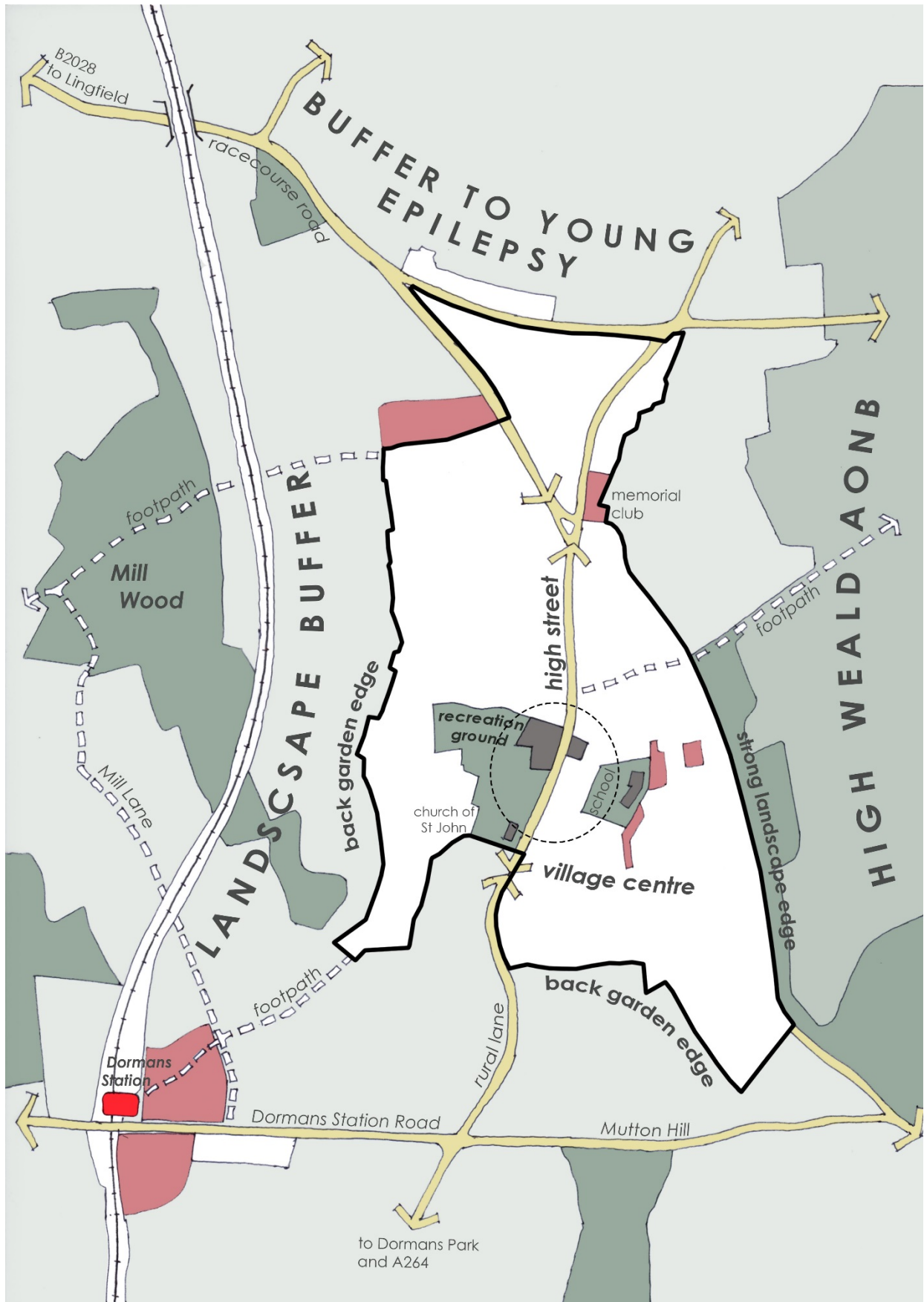
In addition to these sites, a number of others put forward in the 2011 SHLAA and 2015 HELAA. These should be considered as part of the site assessments exercise along with any others that come through the local call for sites. Site assessments will be needed to establish the potential of these sites and they should be considered collectively, not individually, so that opportunities can be balanced across the sites to achieve the best solution for the Parish.

For sites allocated in the neighbourhood plan it will be necessary to demonstrate that any technical constraints can be resolved, that they are viable and deliverable and that their development would be acceptable to a majority of the local community. The onus should be on the landowners to carry out or meet the cost of this work if they wish their land to be considered as part of the neighbourhood plan.

Consideration should also be given to the level of detail required and the need for any allocation policies to address the layout, design, and type of dwellings.

A community right to build order

It is possible to carry out a Community Right to Build Order (CRtBO) alongside the neighbourhood plan and this might be appropriate for the Memorial Club site if it is to be included in the neighbourhood plan. A CRtBO has the benefit of providing a greater level of detail for a proposal than would normally be available through a neighbourhood plan and can be very helpful in explaining proposals to the community, particularly where they are sensitive or an important part of the plan. Additional funding is available for a CRtBO.



Dormansland: planning for change diagram

Outline Policy Scope

The following issues have emerged from the workshop and the DNP should consider policies with the following intent:

- Developing spatial guidelines to protect local gaps between existing and new developments and settlements and define the settlement boundary of Dormansland Village to incorporate any proposed site allocations of the DNP
- Making site allocations for housing, community uses, recreation/leisure and employment/tourism. Establishing housing need and types suitable to meet the different local needs, including low cost housing and homes suitable for downsizers.
- Undertaking design appraisals to develop into design policy for both Dormansland and Dormans Park character areas
- Defining strategic views within the parish to establish sensitive areas where visual impact of planning applications should be considered.
- Using existing and new assets, establishing a green infrastructure network of paths, cycle ways and wildlife corridors within which sites allocated will fit and will support improved access to the countryside.
- Proposals that will enhance the viability and availability of community infrastructure such as local shops, GP surgery, school places and other community assets and use of CIL contributions
- Defining opportunities for traffic calming in Dormansland Village and Parking at Dormans Station

Engagement Activities

The Steering Group have established four topic groups:

1. Environment – Built and Natural, open space, allotments, conservation areas and biodiversity
2. Community facilities and Infrastructure – Existing community assets and new facilities
3. Local economy and Transport - employment types and tourism, home working transport and traffic and pedestrian and cycle ways
4. Housing and Development – Local housing needs, sites for development, housing types, design and energy saving.

The Topic Groups should inform the Draft DNP by testing the vision and objectives. The output should be 1 to 2 sides of A4 bullet points summarising insights, opinions, data etc.

There should also be consultations with the following:

- Tandridge DC Planning – keep updating as the DNP progresses through meetings set in project plan (Action: NPSG/AirS)

- Tandridge DC Housing – Discuss outcome of local housing need survey data (April 2015) and supply/affordability (Action: NPSG/AirS)
- High Weald AONB team - notify of DNP direction and programme and request positive input to help achieve key objectives (Action: NPSG/ AirS)
- Young Epilepsy, Lingfield Racecourse, Charters Village, Chartham Park – as above
- Adjoining parishes to identify common interests and manage boundaries/interfaces (Action: NPSG)
- Adjacent Parishes including Lingfield Parish Council
- Surrey County Council
- Local employers and businesses to notify of DNP direction and programme and request positive input to help achieve key objectives: (Action: NPSG)
- Landowners of preferred sites, once agreed (Action: NPSG/AirS)
- Local organisations and other stakeholders – exhibition and/or open meeting to comment on Draft Plan (Action: NPSG/AirS)
- The Statutory Consultees for the SA/SEA scoping report, the Reg. 14 Consultation period of the Pre Submission Neighbourhood Plan and the Reg. 16 the publicity period on the Submission Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Highways Agency
 - Natural England
 - Historic England
 - Environment Agency
 - Surrey County Council
 - Tandridge DC and the High Weald AONB

Project Plan: Key Milestones

The detailed project plan was revised and re-issued in July 2015 (attached). The Steering Group propose to informally test a number of plan options with the community in early 2016, followed by consultation on the Regulation 14 Pre-Submission plan in Spring 2016.

RCOH August 2015 (updated Nov 2015)