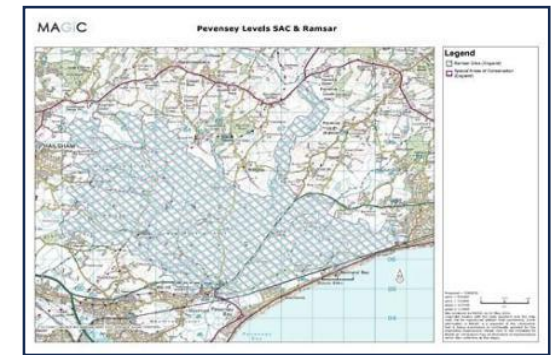
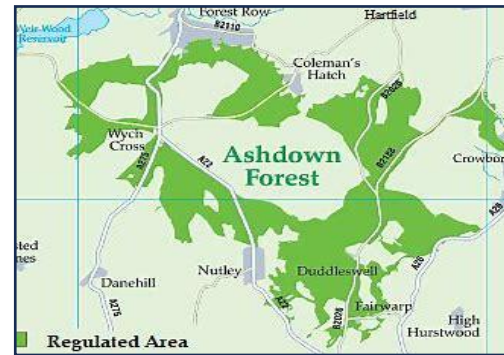


## Conservation and Enhancement and Local Nature Recovery Strategy policy.

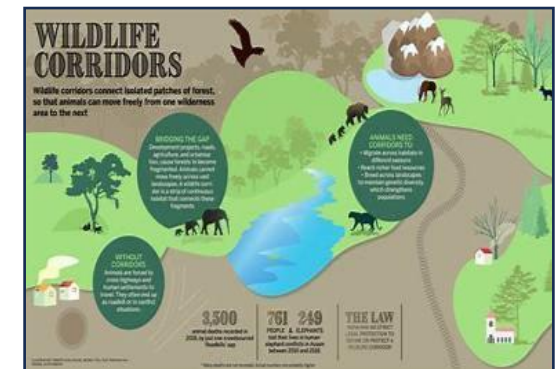
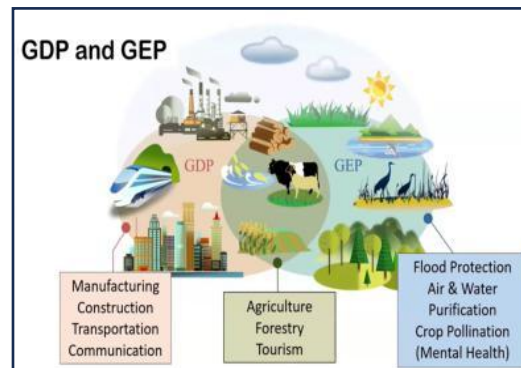
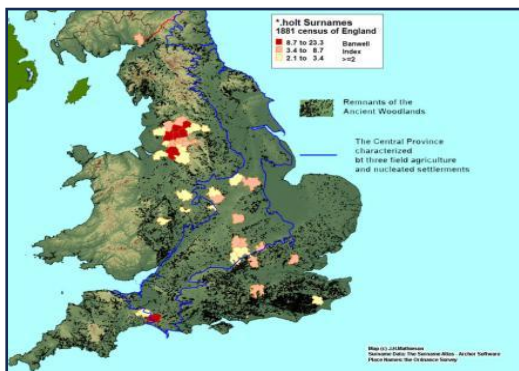
Proposed by the Wealden Independent Group for consideration at the Full Council meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2023 for the reason of including in the emerging Local Plan



Should cumulative impact of current approved unbuilt houses require assessment to ensure they meet the [OEP Call for Evidence Finding](#).

Should Wealden commission an Independent Reviews of other habitat sites. [OEP findings 25 year](#) - halting species decline, enhancing and conserving Habitats of Principal Importance and Species of Principal Importance in our most important habitats sites in Wealden – [Wealden Vision](#)

Reference – UK government [Ambitious proposals to strengthen our protected landscapes](#).



## Wealden the Heart of Sussex

## Executive Summary

***Conservation and Enhancement and Local Nature Recovery Strategy policy:***

A proposed policy to conserve and enhance the SSSI and Habitat Sites and their surrounding areas in Wealden, including the Ashdown Forest and the Pevensey Levels, by establishing a buffer zone around each site and a nature recovery corridor between them.

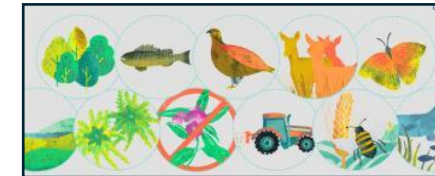
***Blue infrastructure policy:***

A proposed policy to conserve and enhance blue infrastructure in Wealden, such as rivers, lakes, and wetlands, by encouraging the use of sustainable drainage systems, green roofs and walls, permeable paving, and incorporating blue infrastructure features in new developments.



***Local Nature Recovery Strategy:***

A new system of spatial strategies for nature that will cover the whole of England, led by forty-eight responsible authorities, to agree on priorities for nature recovery and propose actions in the locations where it would make a particular contribution to achieving those priorities.



### Protected land policy:

A set of policies to conserve and enhance the natural and local environment including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Habitat and Ramsar sites, National Landscapes, and ancient and long-established woodlands, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and the 25 Year Environment Plan.



Note:- [See Diagram 1 for suggested buffer zones](#)

**Policy Title: Protection and Enhancement of SSSI and Habitat Sites and Nature Recovery Corridors in Wealden**

**Policy Objective:** To protect and enhance the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Habitat Sites and their surrounding areas in Wealden, including the Ashdown Forest and the Pevensey Levels, by establishing a buffer zone around each site. The policy also aims to promote landscape recovery in the sites and their buffer zones, while considering nutrient overload and invasive species. Additionally, the policy aims to promote the creation of a nature recovery corridor between the Ashdown Forest and the Pevensey Levels, in line with the UK Government's Nature Recovery Policy.

**Policy Statement:**

1. A buffer zone shall be established around each SSSI and Habitat Site in Wealden, including the Ashdown Forest (3km Zone) and the Pevensey Levels (1km Zone).
2. The buffer zones shall be established and maintained in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
3. The buffer zones shall be subject to the following restrictions:
  - No new development shall be permitted within the buffer zones, except for development that is necessary to support the conservation of the SSSI and Habitat Sites.
  - Any development that is permitted within the buffer zones shall be subject to strict environmental impact assessments, to ensure that it does not have a negative impact on the SSSI and Habitat Sites.
  - Any development that is permitted within the buffer zones shall be required to contribute to the conservation of the SSSI and Habitat Sites, through the provision of funding or other resources.
  - The buffer zones shall be subject to regular monitoring and review, to ensure that they continue to provide effective protection for the SSSI and Habitat Sites.
4. The policy also aims to promote landscape recovery in the sites and their buffer zones. This shall be achieved through the following measures:
  - Encouraging the restoration of degraded habitats within the sites and their buffer zones.
  - Promoting the planting of native tree species within the sites and their buffer zones.
  - Encouraging the creation of new habitats within the sites and their buffer zones, where appropriate.
  - Encouraging the removal of non-native invasive species from the sites and their buffer zones.
5. The policy shall consider nutrient overload and invasive species in the sites and their buffer zones. This shall be achieved through the following measures:
  - Conducting regular assessments of nutrient levels in the sites and their buffer zones and responding appropriately to reduce nutrient overload.
  - Conducting regular assessments of invasive species in the sites and their buffer zones and responding appropriately to control their spread.
6. A nature recovery corridor shall be established between the Ashdown Forest and the Pevensey Levels with regard for the River Ouse and Cuckmere.
7. The nature recovery corridor shall be established and maintained in accordance with the UK Government's Nature Recovery Policy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
8. The nature recovery corridor shall be subject to the same restrictions and measures as the buffer zones, as specified in points 3, 4, and 5 above.
9. The policy shall also consider the protection and enhancement of Ancient and Long-Established Woodlands in Wealden, as defined by the Woodland Trust Planners Manual, Natural England's standing advice, DEFRA's "Keepers of our Time 2022", Lords Amendment 100, and the presence of ancient woodland ground flora species indicators. A buffer zone of at least 50m, and preferably 100m, will be established around Ancient and Long-Established Woodlands. No changes to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) or hydrology will be permitted within these buffer zones.

**Policy Review:** This policy shall be reviewed every five years, or as necessary, to ensure that it remains up-to-date and effective.

Policy Title: Conservation and Enhancement of SSSI and Habitat Sites and Nature Recovery Corridors.

Summary of Objective: To conserve and enhance the ecological value and landscape quality of the SSSI and Habitat Sites and the Nature Recovery Corridors within the Wealden District, in line with the national and local planning policies and guidance.

- **SSSI and Habitat Sites:** The SSSI and Habitat Sites within the Wealden District are Ashdown Forest and Pevensey Levels. These sites are of national and international importance for their biodiversity and natural beauty. They shall be protected from any adverse impacts of development and enhanced through appropriate management and restoration measures. A buffer zone of at least 3km shall be established around Ashdown Forest and 1km around Pevensey Levels, **where only limited new development** shall be permitted, any new development that is necessary should support and enhance the conservation of the sites. Any development that is permitted within the buffer zones shall be subject to strict environmental impact assessments and mitigation requirements and shall contribute to the conservation of the sites through the provision of funding or other resources. The buffer zones shall be subject to regular monitoring and review.
- **Nature Recovery Corridors:** The Nature Recovery Corridors within the Wealden District are areas of land that connect the SSSI and Habitat Sites and provide ecological connectivity and resilience. They shall be created and maintained through the establishment of a nature recovery corridor between Ashdown Forest and Pevensey Levels, and the conservation and enhancement of ancient and long-established woodlands. New development shall only be permitted within the nature recovery corridor, for development that is necessary to support the conservation of the SSSI and Habitat Sites and to allow the enhancement of rural activities such as farming and green tourism where it has a connection with the purpose of conserving and enhancing nature and green and blue infrastructure (Example National Trust Volunteer Holidays). Any development that is permitted within the nature recovery corridor shall be subject to strict environmental impact assessments and mitigation requirements, and shall contribute to the conservation of the SSSI and Habitat Sites and the nature recovery corridor through the provision of funding or other resources. The nature recovery corridor shall be subject to regular monitoring and review.
- **Landscape Recovery:** The policy also aims to promote landscape recovery in the SSSI and Habitat Sites and the nature recovery corridor, by encouraging the restoration of degraded habitats, the planting of native tree species, the creation of new habitats, and the removal of non-native invasive species. The policy shall also consider nutrient overload and invasive species in the SSSI and Habitat Sites and the nature recovery corridor and conduct regular assessments and respond appropriately to reduce and control them. **Policy Review:** This policy shall be reviewed every five years, or as necessary, to ensure that it remains up-to-date and effective.



# Supporting UK Government Documents and Evidence to support the above policy

Conserving and enhancing blue and green infrastructure in Wealden is essential to ensure the sustainability of the Wealden's ecosystem. To achieve this, the following policy can be implemented

**\*\*Policy Statement:\*\*** Click the picture

The council will work towards conserving and enhancing blue infrastructure in Wealden by:

1. Identifying and mapping the existing blue infrastructure in the Wealden.
2. Developing a comprehensive plan for the conservation and enhancement of blue infrastructure in Wealden.
3. Encouraging the use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water runoff.
4. Promoting the use of green roofs and walls to reduce the impact of urbanisation the Wealden's water resources.
5. Encouraging the use of permeable paving to reduce the amount of surface water runoff.
6. Ensuring that new developments in Wealden incorporate blue infrastructure features.
7. Encouraging the use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) in new developments.
8. Ensuring that the conservation and enhancement of blue infrastructure is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

**\*\*Explanation:\*\***

Blue infrastructure refers to the network of water bodies, such as rivers, lakes, and wetlands, which provide a range of ecosystem services, including water supply, flood control, and habitat for wildlife. The policy aims to conserve and enhance the existing blue infrastructure in Wealden while promoting sustainable development practices.

The policy will be implemented by identifying and mapping the existing blue infrastructure in Wealden. This will help in developing a comprehensive plan for the conservation and enhancement of blue infrastructure in Wealden. The plan will include measures to encourage the use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS), green roofs and walls, and permeable paving to reduce the impact of urbanisation on Wealden's water resources.

The policy will also ensure that new developments in Wealden incorporate blue infrastructure features and sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS). This will help in reducing the impact of new developments on Wealden's water resources.

The policy is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) which provide guidance on the conservation and enhancement of blue infrastructure in urban areas. By implementing this policy, the council will be able to ensure the sustainability of Wealden's ecosystem while promoting sustainable development practices.

Source:

(1) [Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK.](#)



(2) [NORTHWEST LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL PLAN](#)

(3) [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK.](#)

(4) [Wealden District Council Response to National Planning Changes.](#)

### **Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

The UK government has made legally binding commitments to end the decline of nature and promote its recovery. One of the measures taken is the introduction of \*\*Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)\*\*\*, which are a new system of spatial strategies for nature that will cover the whole of England <sup>123</sup>.

Each LNRS will agree on priorities for nature recovery and propose actions in the locations where it would make a particular contribution to achieving those priorities. The responsible authorities and people involved in preparing a strategy can choose how they want it to look, but every strategy must contain a local habitat map and a written statement of biodiversity priorities <sup>1</sup>.

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has appointed forty-eight responsible authorities to lead on preparing a local nature recovery strategy for their area. Together these forty-eight strategy areas cover the whole of England with no gaps or overlaps <sup>1</sup>.

Responsible authorities will work with other organisations and partners in their area to agree on what should be included in their local nature recovery strategy. They will identify practical, achievable proposals developed with the input of people who know and understand the area, especially landowners and managers <sup>1</sup>.

The following link provides more information on LNRS and how to prepare them: <sup>2</sup>

Source:

(1) [Local nature recovery strategies - GOV.UK.](#)

(2) [Local Nature Recovery Strategies: how to prepare and what to ... - GOV.UK.](#)

(3) [Local Nature Recovery Strategies: how to prepare and what to include.](#)

(4) [Nature Recovery Network - GOV.UK.](#)

(5) [Shaping the future of Nature Recovery: Developing Local Nature Recovery](#)



### **Protected Land**

The UK government has several policies in place to conserve and enhance protected land. One of the key policies is the \*\*National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)\*\*\*, which provides guidance on how planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment <sup>1</sup>. The NPPF emphasises the importance of protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services <sup>1</sup>.

The NPPF also sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and listed building consent to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development <sup>4</sup>.

In addition, the UK government has recently announced ambitious proposals to strengthen protected landscapes, increase access to nature, and ensure protected landscapes can deliver more for climate, nature, people, and places for the next 70 years and beyond <sup>2</sup>.

Finally, the UK government has committed to increasing the amount of protected land in the UK to 30% by 2030 <sup>3</sup>.

Source: Click the picture

- (1) [National Planning Policy Framework - 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment](#)
- (2) [Historic environment - GOV.UK.](#)
- (3) [Ambitious proposals to strengthen our protected landscapes ... - GOV.UK.](#)
- (4) [Boris Johnson promises to protect 30% of UK's land by 2030.](#)



### **Assisting Farming**

The UK government has introduced several policies to promote sustainable farming practices and enhance farmland. The **\*\*Sustainable Farming Incentive\*\***, the **\*\*Local Nature Recovery\*\***, and the **\*\*Landscape Recovery Schemes\*\*** are some of the main mechanisms proposed by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs to tackle environmental challenges such as climate change, ecosystem and biodiversity recovery, and sustainable farm businesses <sup>2</sup>.

In addition, the government has also launched the **\*\*Environmental Land Management scheme\*\*** to incentivise sustainable farming practices, create habitats for nature recovery, and establish new woodland to help tackle climate change <sup>1</sup>. The scheme will be introduced over a period of seven years, starting from 2021, and will be designed to ensure that by 2028, farmers in England can sustainably produce healthy food profitably without subsidy, whilst taking steps to improve the environment, improve animal health and welfare, and reduce carbon emissions <sup>1</sup>.

These policies aim to transform the way farmers are supported and bring about a better, fairer farming system in England <sup>1</sup>.

Source:

- (1) [Sustainable land management: managing land better for ... - POST.](#)
- (2) [Government unveils path to sustainable farming from 2021 - GOV.UK.](#)
- (3) [England's farmers to be paid to rewild land - The Guardian.](#)
- (4) [Government unveils plans to restore 300,000 hectares of habitat across England... - Welcome to GOV.UK.](#)



### **Farming and the Environment**

The UK government has introduced several policies to promote sustainable farming practices and enhance farmland. The **\*\*Green Infrastructure Framework\*\*** is a set of principles and standards for good green infrastructure in England. It provides guidance on national standards for green infrastructure quantity and quality, mapped environmental and socio-economic datasets to support the standards, and practical, evidence-based advice on how to design excellent quality green infrastructure <sup>1</sup>.

The framework is part of the government's commitment to the **\*\*25 Year Environment Plan\*\*** and supports the greening of towns and cities and connections with the surrounding landscape as part of the **\*\*Nature Recovery Network\*\***. Networks of green and blue spaces and other natural features can bring big benefits for nature and climate, health, and prosperity <sup>1</sup>.

In addition, the government has published a series of policies, frameworks, and strategies on managing, protecting, and restoring green infrastructure to reach the targets set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environment Bill <sup>2</sup>. These policies aim to improve access to green and blue spaces, better manage these assets for the environment, and deliver a wider range of multifunctional benefits <sup>123</sup>. Click the picture



Source: click the picture

- (1) [Green Infrastructure Home - Natural England.](#)
- (2) [Recent green infrastructure policy changes and announcements in ... - TCPA.](#)
- (3) [Natural environment - GOV.UK.](#)
- (4) [Sustainable infrastructure - great.gov.uk international.](#)
- (5) [en.wikipedia.org. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green\\_infrastructure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_infrastructure)

## **Protected Landscapes and Habitats**

The UK government has introduced several policies to protect and enhance the natural environment, including **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**, **Habitat**, and **Ramsar** sites.

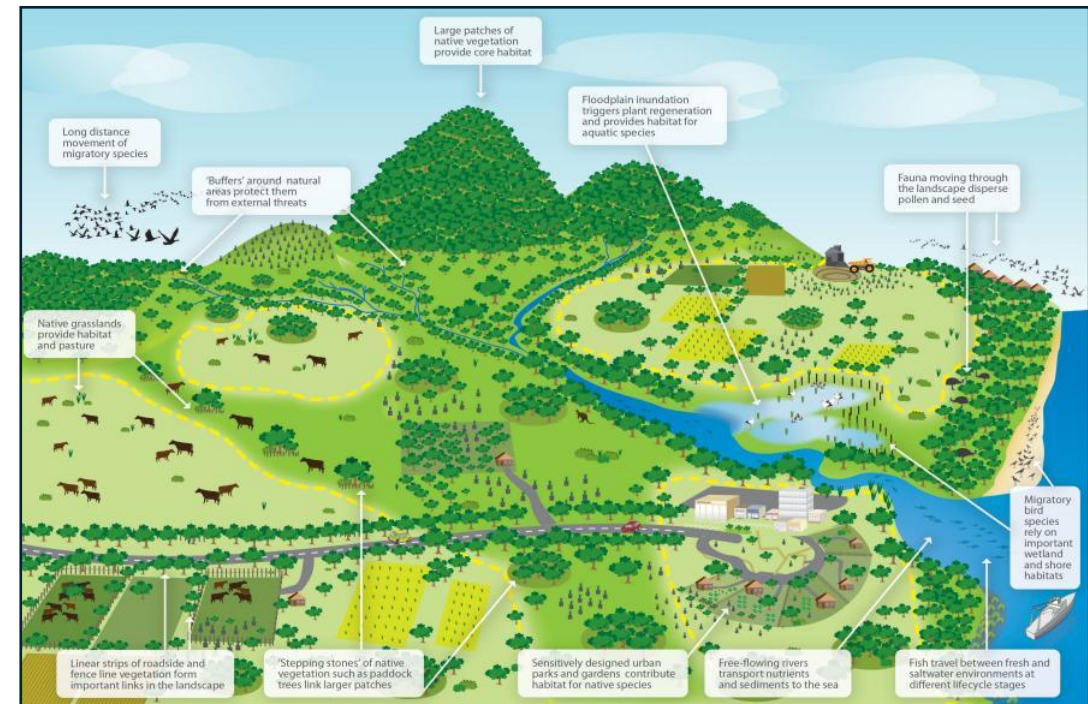
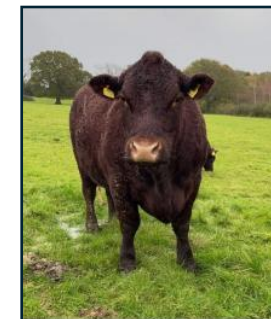
The **SSSI** is a statutory designation given to the best wildlife and geological sites in the country. The Natural England provides guidance on how to manage land within an SSSI, including how to achieve favourable condition status for all SSSIs <sup>1</sup>.

The **Habitat** regulations aim to protect and enhance habitats of European importance, including SSSIs, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) <sup>2</sup>.

The **Ramsar Convention** is an international treaty that aims to conserve wetlands of international importance, especially as waterfowl habitat. The UK is required to designate wetlands of international importance and promote the wise use of wetlands <sup>4</sup>.

Source:

- (1) [Sites of special scientific interest: managing your land - GOV.UK.](#)
- (2) [Designated Sites - GOV.UK.](#)
- (3) [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 - Explanatory Notes.](#)
- (4) [Conservation objectives for land-based protected sites in ... - GOV.UK.](#)
- (5) [UK Protected Areas | JNCC - Adviser to Government on Nature Conservation.](#)





## **Ancient and Mature Woodland**

The UK government has introduced several policies to protect and enhance the natural environment, including **ancient and native woodland and trees policy**. The **Keepers of Time** policy outlines the value of England's ancient and native woodlands and ancient and veteran trees. It states Government's commitment to evaluate the threats facing these habitats and sets out England's updated principles and objectives to protect and improve these habitats for future generations <sup>124</sup>.

In addition, the government has published a series of policies, frameworks, and strategies on managing, protecting, and restoring green infrastructure to reach the targets set out in the **25 Year Environment Plan** and the **Environment Bill** <sup>123</sup>. These policies aim to improve access to green and blue spaces, better manage these assets for the environment, and deliver a wider range of multifunctional benefits.

Source:

- (1) [Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy](#)
- (2) [Keepers of Time: How Government are protecting and improving ancient trees](#)
- (3) [Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy](#)
- (4) [How to benefit species and habitats biodiversity in your woodland](#).



## **Wildlife Corridors**

The UK government has introduced several policies to promote the conservation and enhancement of wildlife corridors. The **Nature Recovery Network** is a network of wildlife-rich places, stretching across the country, from doorstep to landscape, connected through wildlife corridors and stepping-stones that help threatened species to move and recover <sup>1</sup>. The network is part of the government's commitment to the **25 Year Environment Plan** and supports the greening of towns and cities and connections with the surrounding landscape <sup>1</sup>.

In addition, the government has published a series of policies, frameworks, and strategies on managing, protecting, and restoring green infrastructure to reach the targets set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environment Bill <sup>123</sup>. These policies aim to improve access to green and blue spaces, better manage these assets for the environment, and deliver a wider range of multifunctional benefits.

Source:

- (1) [England wide action for Nature. What we can achieve together.](#)
- (2) [DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICY GUIDANCE NOTE 2 Wildlife Links & Corridors.](#)
- (3) [The Biodiversity Gain Requirements \(Irreplaceable Habitat ... - GOV.UK.](#)
- (4) [UK roadsides on verge of becoming wildlife corridors, say experts.](#)
- (5) [UK Wildlife Law | The Wildlife Trusts.](#)

Example - [Creating a corridor for nature – Weald to Waves](#)



## **National Landscapes and National Parks**

National Landscapes are areas of exceptional beauty and distinctive character that are considered precious enough to be safeguarded in the national interest<sup>34</sup>. They are on par with National Parks and are protected and enhanced for nature, people, business, and culture<sup>34</sup>.

There are 46 National Landscapes in the UK<sup>2</sup>. These places hold national importance and are cared for by local teams with a deep understanding of the distinctive web of interconnecting factors that make these places special<sup>2</sup>.

In fact, 66% of people in England live within half an hour's journey time of a National Landscape<sup>12</sup>. These landscapes receive 170 million visits per year, offering plenty of space to explore and breathe<sup>2</sup>.

Previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, they were renamed as "National Landscapes" to highlight the importance of natural sites<sup>5</sup>.

Source

- (1) [What is a National Landscape? - Kent Downs.](#)
- (2) [What is a National Landscape - Surrey Hills National Landscape.](#)
- (3) [National Landscapes in Numbers.](#)
- (4) [National Landscapes - Home.](#)
- (5) [National Landscapes: New name for Areas of Outstanding Beauty](#)  
[National Habitat Network Maps User Guidance v.2](#)  
[High Weald National Landscape](#)



**Do you agree in principal to the above policy and its inclusion in the local plan for period 2023 – 2040.**

**Yes -                      No-                      Do not Know –**

**Do you have any comments on the above? –**

## Objective One : Table One Protected Land for Conservation Enhancement - Buffer Zones – see policy statements

Protected #	Description*
3km	Ashdown Forest (SSSI and Habitat Site Policy 3km)
Protected Corridor	Ashdown Forest LNRS to Pevensey Levels Nature Recovery
Protected Corridor	Ashdown Forest LNRS to the River Ouse and the Weald to Waves Nature Recovery
3km	National Nature Reserves (NNR)
1km	Pevensey Levels (SSSI and Habitat Site Policy 1km)
Minimum 400m	Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA)
Minimum 400m	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
Minimum 400m	National Monument
Minimum 400m	Rural Park and Garden (RPG) and Grade II* Designated Heritage Assets
Minimum 400m	National Trust, English Heritage, Nature Reserves, Sussex Wildlife Trust and Sussex Notable bird areas
Minimum 100m	Irreplaceable Habitat <u>Ghyll</u> or <u>Wet Woodlands</u>
Minimum 100m	Local Geological Site for earth Science (LGS) and undesignated geodiversity meeting same criteria
Minimum 100m	Woodland Trust and Forestry Commission Woodland Sites
Minimum 100m	Local Nature Reserves (LNR)
Minimum 100m	Conservation Areas
Minimum 50-100m	Irreplaceable Habitats, Ancient Woodland (AW) and Long-Established Mature Woodlands (LEW), and undesignated woodland meeting same criteria
Minimum 50-100m	Local Wildlife Site (LWS)
Minimum 50-100m	Commons and undesignated Commons from 1841
Minimum 25m	Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) and Woodland Management Plantation Schemes
SPI	Species; Conservation and protection of Species of Principal Importance (SPI)
CSZ Minimum 400m	Species; Protected habitat for Core Sustenance Zones for Sussex rare and notable bats
Minimum 400m	Species; Protected habitat for Sussex rare and notable birds
Protected Connectivity	Protect the functional connectivity between Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) also known as Priority Habitats and All Habitats Combined / High Spatial Biodiversity Priority. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and the Nature Recovery Network will be used to protect wildlife corridors and habitat corridors (Green and Blue Infrastructure). The NPPF 185 Stepping Stones will be used to identify ecological corridors and protect habitats that may be undesignated.
new	Marine Conservation Area
Good ecological Condition	All Wealden Watercourses: Protection, Restoration and Conservation returned to Good Ecological Condition (Blue Infrastructure)
Minimum 25m-50m	Rivers, streams and lakes protected groundwater and surface water catchments.

\*Subject to other national policies, rural character and landscape setting, buffers may be larger # Buffers 400m or less should have no new development

## Objective Two : Farming and Land Use Strategy

District Councillors have asked for a farming first and land-use strategy and for the ‘mapping systems’ to all be shown to demonstrate the land-use as it stands (designated assets heritage and environment, habitats, species, ecological corridors, landscape, BOA etc) informing a Sustainability Appraisal to the least sensitive sites AFTER the policy conditions have been exercised and to protect the ecological network for farming, land use and local nature recovery

### Objective Three : Access to Nature

A planning priority in the local plan to secure a network of **new nature reserves** for the local communities. Providing nature reserves for the community accessible by Active Travel (bus, walking, wheeling etc.) specifically accessible by sustainable means (no car parks) encouraging nature conservation and supporting health and well-being for our larger settlements and those with additional pressures placed due to cumulative development.

**Heathfield, Crowborough, Polegate, Hailsham, Uckfield, Horam, East Hoathly**

### Objective Four : Maintain Strategic Green Gaps protecting town, village and hamlet identity

**To conserve the rural character and landscape of Wealden towns, villages and hamlets.**

1. A strategic countryside green gap will be maintained to prevent coalescence of settlements, providing distinct separate identities between town and village settlements and the protection of small hamlets between settlements.
2. When leaving a settlement and travelling through the countryside, there should be a clear sense of having left the first settlement and travelled through countryside, farming land, a hamlet or undeveloped area before entering the second settlement. This helps conserve heritage landscapes (either designated or not designated but which are shown to be of historical importance).
3. The policy is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Dec 19 2023 and planning guidance PPG.

### Objective Five : Two Industrial Estates

**The current planning application for Ashdown Business Park is refused** on the grounds of several planning policy terms and environmental concerns. The application is premature and inconsistent with NPPF 15 and NPPF 16. The proposed development would cause significant harm to the agricultural land, the non-designated heritage assets of Ashdown Forest and the Iron Age, and the ecological integrity of the area. The development would also adversely affect the open rural countryside, the heritage landscape, the water courses (Batts Bridge Stream and WFD Shortbridge Stream), the woodlands and the species that depend on them, and the dark skies that support the ancient woodlands. The application has also received strong objections from the residents and the surrounding parish councils, who have cited various planning policies and material planning conditions in their responses.

Furthermore, there is no demonstrable need for the development, as Uckfield has 600 units available in a 20-mile radius, including several large units such as Maresfield Business Park (John Lewis closed distribution centre), Swallows, Clayhill, Bellbrook and the Ridgewood Farm extension to Bellbrook in the pipeline. The development would also disrupt the Local Nature Recovery Strategy that links the watercourses to internationally important Ashdown Forest for conservation and restoration of sea trout spawning and European eel migration from the Ouse and Sutton Hall Estate.

**Call For Sites – return the Industrial Area at Polegate Cophall Roundabout** to the plan – IF a further small Industrial Area is to be considered, the Boot Fair land (not in farming production) is in the call for sites at Cophall Roundabout. Accessible via the main roundabout and an employment area of Eastbourne, Lewes, Polegate, Hailsham within the main ESCC Highways network. Land use is currently a boot fair and not in production, nearer to unemployment areas in the South of district and Sussex.





## **A Policy to Conserve and Enhance Wealden the Heart of Sussex**



WFD Shortbridge Stream, Sussex