

High Halstow Parish Council



High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan

2020-2037

Submission Version, August 2022



HIGH HALSTOW NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2020 -2037

SUBMISSION VERSION, AUGUST 2022

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Foreword

Dear Residents,

This is the submission version of the statutory Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of High Halstow. It will, be the subject to a parish-wide referendum later this year. Once adopted, it will have the force of law behind it and development proposals will be required to comply with it, unless there is over-riding justification for not doing so.

The Government's Localism Act 2011 gave local residents the right to be involved in matters that affect them. With no up to date Local Plan from Medway Council and the record of poor quality development on the Peninsula, High Halstow Parish Council decided to make a Neighbourhood Plan.

A Steering Group was set up from Parish Councillors and local residents and the community was invited to various sessions to offer their ideas for the future of High Halstow. A consultant was engaged to help us progress the plan and surveys were held to get residents feedback. Every effort has been made to ensure the views and policies herein represent the views of the majority of High Halstow residents.

Our small and ancient settlement is surrounded on all sides by beautiful and valued landscapes and sensitive ecological habitats, some of which are meant to be protected by national and international treaties and designations. For that reason the plan identifies areas where development should not take place at all, or where very limited development that protects and enhances those sensitive and valued areas can take place.

Despite its environmental sensitivity, the Parish is under huge pressure to make space for substantial new housing to contribute to meeting need identified in the wider Medway area in the Medway Local Plan. The Parish Council has made no secret of its criticisms of the scale of development proposed for High Halstow and the Hoo Peninsula in the emerging Medway Local Plan. We continue to believe that building 780 new houses in High Halstow is not consistent with the principles of sustainable development. It will double the number of households, the population of the Parish and the number of vehicle journeys in the Parish.

The Neighbourhood Plan is expected to be consistent with the strategic policies in an up to date Medway Local Plan. Regrettably, Medway Council has still failed to draw up and adopt a Local Plan and the existing Local Plan dates from 2003 and is out of date. It contains no strategic policies. Therefore, rather than have applications for planning permission taking place in a policy vacuum, this Neighbourhood Plan is drafted to provide up to date policy guidance in the Parish of High Halstow, pending the publication and adoption of an up to date Local Plan for Medway. In the

meantime, we have sought to ensure that, as far as possible, wherever new development is proposed, if it is granted permission, it should meet the social, economic and environmental requirements for sustainable development, during the next five years, or whenever Medway Council finally adopts its Local Plan, when this Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed.

Rural communities need infrastructure; not just good roads, but jobs, services, and new public buildings, such as schools and medical facilities. If new housing development does come forward, these facilities should be provided alongside any new housing development, within easy reach of all parts of the Parish to avoid it being a further burden on already overstretched services.

Too often, new development of all kinds permitted on the Hoo Peninsula has been poor quality, poor design and sometimes poorly located; sprawling over treasured views of attractive and highly productive countryside, causing damage to rural communities, their health, their wellbeing and their quality of life. Much of the open land within the Parish is of the best and most versatile agricultural quality.

So, to avoid suburban sprawl, the Neighbourhood Plan is accompanied by a Design Guide to assist developers to provide high quality sustainable development to meet identified need, including the special needs of the High Halstow community. Good development should contribute positively to the distinctiveness of our Parish, not erode it.

In summary, the benefits of a Neighbourhood Plan are:

- Protect the village from unsympathetic new development.
- Maintain the character of High Halstow as a distinctive hill-top settlement.
- Minimise the loss of greenfield sites and agricultural land.
- Protect the environment and bio-diversity.
- Improve our infrastructure.

The Parish Council would like to thank the Steering Group, and our excellent consultants, who have worked on this project since June 2018 together with others who have readily given their time and input. Lastly thanks goes to the Parishioners without whose feedback this would not have come to fruition.

Cllr Raymond Collins

Chairman Neighbourhood Planning Group



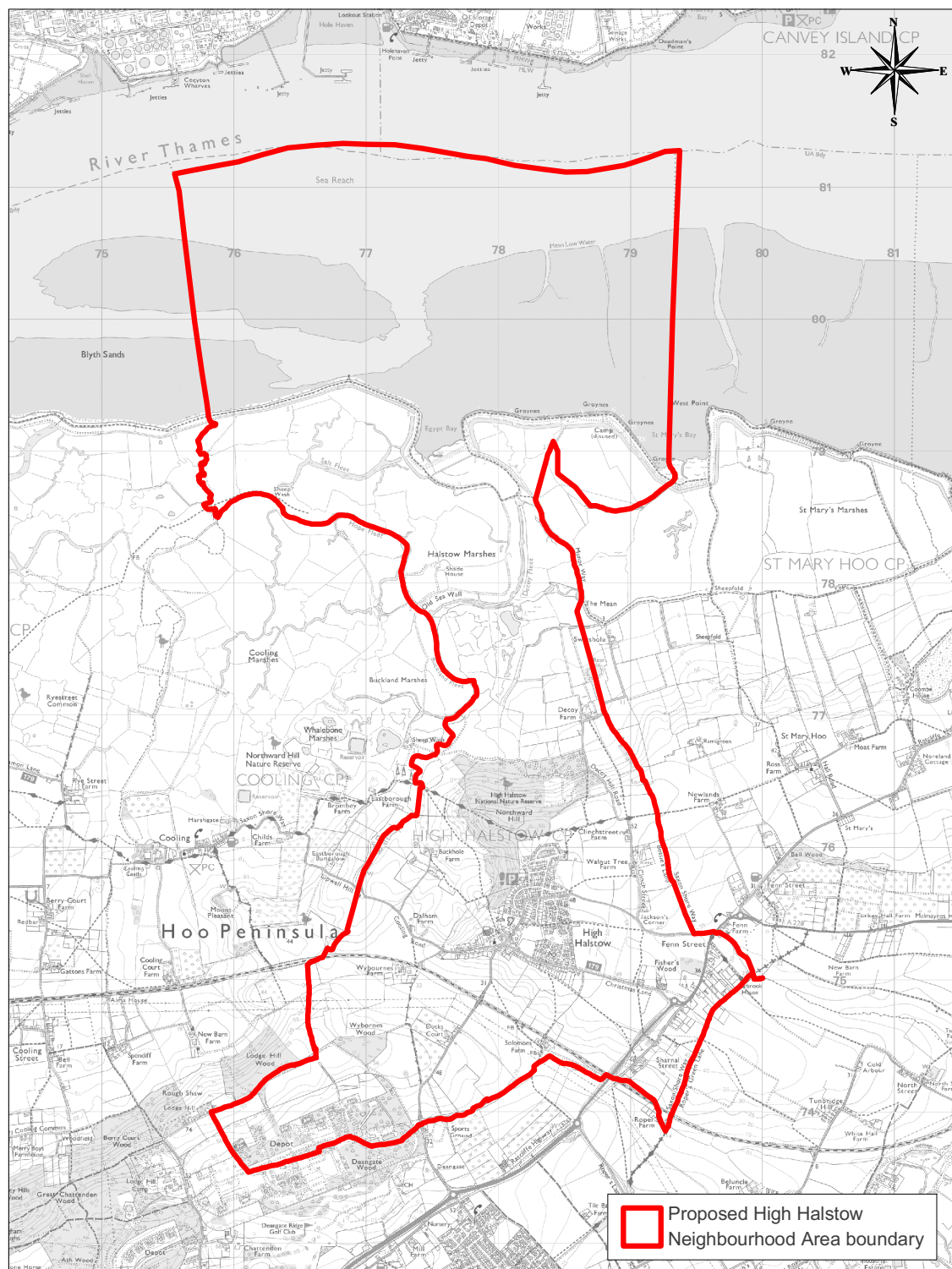
1. Introduction

A new plan for High Halstow

- 1.1 This is the draft Neighbourhood Plan for High Halstow. It covers the entire Parish, as illustrated in Figure 1. It sets out the local community's aspirations for High Halstow Parish over the period to 2037¹ and establishes policies relating to land use and development. These are policies that will influence future planning applications and decisions in the area. But the Neighbourhood Plan is much more than this. It represents the community's manifesto for the Parish, bringing together more than just traditional planning matters.
- 1.2 The purpose of neighbourhood planning is to give local people and businesses a much greater say in how the places they live and work should change and develop over time. Neighbourhood planning is designed to give local people a very real voice in shaping the look and feel of an area.
- 1.3 High Halstow Parish was formally designated as an area for neighbourhood planning purposes in June 2018². The High Halstow Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee has surveyed, spoken to and listened to members of the community, and has used the issues, and opportunities, raised during that process to help inform production of the policies and projects now presented in this draft Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.4 There are a number of stages involved in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. Following consultation, the Plan has been submitted to Medway Council for the purposes of independent examination. Following this, a referendum will be held, where all people of voting age residing in the Parish will be able to cast a vote on whether they think the Neighbourhood Plan should be brought into force ('made'). If more than 50% of those people who turnout vote 'yes', the Neighbourhood Plan will be used to help shape planning decisions and applications in High Halstow. The current status of the Plan and next steps in the process are presented in Figure 2.

¹ This aligns with the period covered by the emerging Medway Local Plan.

² The Localism Act 2011 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>) gave communities the power to develop neighbourhood plans, to be progressed by Town and Parish councils, or neighbourhood forums, as opposed to the local authority.



Proposed High Halstow Neighbourhood Area

Medway
COUNCIL

Serving You

Scale: 1:40000 02/05/18

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Figure 1: The High Halstow Neighbourhood Plan area, as approved by Medway Council, August 2018

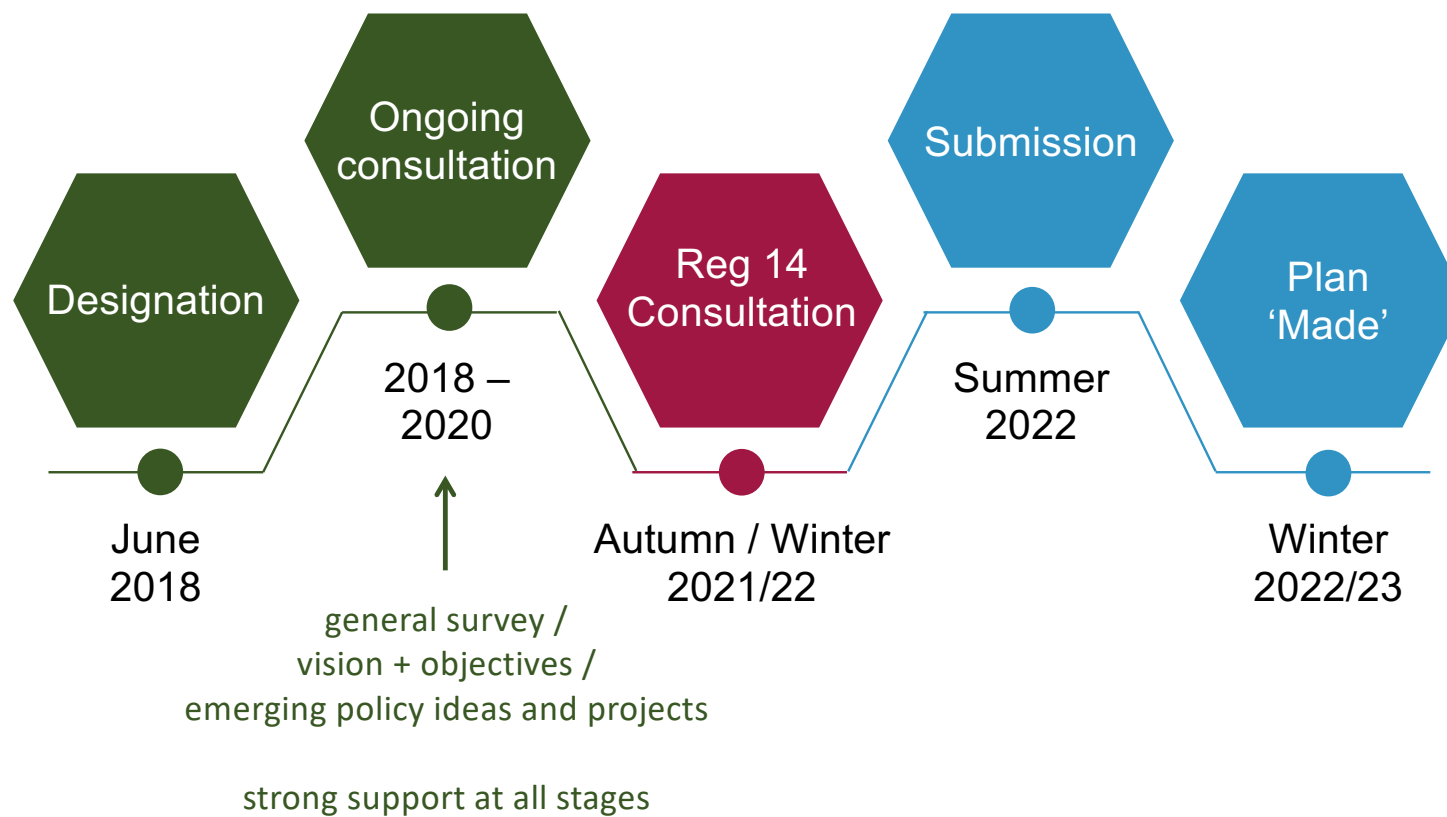


Figure 2: Neighbourhood Plan timeline

Structure of the plan

- 1.5 Following this introduction the draft Neighbourhood Plan comprises eight further sections. These are:
- Section 2: 'High Halstow today', presents an overview of the area covered by the draft Neighbourhood Plan, what existing planning policy says for the area, key issues and comments raised during consultation.
 - Section 3: 'High Halstow tomorrow', presents the vision and objectives for the Plan area.
 - Sections 4 – 7: These sections present the policies and associated projects for High Halstow. These are grouped based upon the objectives and themes outlined in Section 3.
 - Sections 8 - 9: 'Community Infrastructure' and 'Next steps', outlining the opportunities to influence delivery of infrastructure in the area and outlining the current stage in the plan making process, how to respond to the draft Plan, and what the future steps in the process are.
- 1.6 For the avoidance of doubt, within sections 4 – 7, each topic area includes some introductory and explanatory text, followed by one or both of the following:

Policy Box

The draft Neighbourhood Plan establishes land use and development management policies for High Halstow. These are contained in green shaded policy boxes, like this one, and will be used to help determine planning applications.

Project Box

The draft Neighbourhood Plan covers more than just traditional planning matters as it presents the community's vision for the area. Items that the community are seeking, but that cannot be delivered through planning policy, are identified and contained in blue shaded project boxes, like this one. These are included within the body of the report, rather than being presented in a separate chapter or appendix, because they relate to the objectives and form a clear and important part of the story.



2. High Halstow 'today'

The neighbourhood plan area

- 2.1 The Neighbourhood Plan area covers the entire parish of High Halstow. The Parish is located on the north side of the Hoo Peninsula in Medway. The neighbourhood boundary for High Halstow is quite expansive and extends to the River Thames to the north.
- 2.2 Despite the large neighbourhood area, the main concentration of existing development – the village of High Halstow itself - is located in the middle of the Parish, to the north of an existing freight railway that runs east-west through the parish.
- 2.3 The main access routes into the Village are via Christmas Lane, Britannia Road and Dux Court Road; they both merge with The Street where the main amenities and local facilities are located that serve the parish. These facilities include; the Primary and pre School, Village Hall, War Memorial Hall, Sport Field, Village Shop/Post Office, The Red Dog Pub and St Margaret's Church.
- 2.4 High Halstow is rural in character and benefits from open countryside that separates High Halstow from the other rural villages located on the Hoo Peninsula; Cooling, Cliffe & Cliffe Woods, Hoo, St Mary Hoo, Stoke, Lower Stoke, Grain and Allhallows. Its landscape encompasses areas of marsh and farmland. Unlike other parishes on the peninsula more strongly affected by the industrialisation of the Thames and Medway during the 19th and 20th centuries, its character remains predominately rural, with a number of dispersed farmsteads.
- 2.5 The northern third of the area is occupied by an expanse of low-lying reclaimed marshland. This area is the Halstow Marshes and is designated as a Special Protection Area (Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA), which further emphasises the important character and qualities of the environment in this area. Furthermore, the marshes surrounding the Hoo Peninsula are also designated as a Ramsar Site and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Medway Estuary & Marshes). Northward Hill and Dalham Farm are also designated as SSSIs. In addition, Northward Hill is also designated as a National Nature Reserve. This is a highly sensitive and protected environment, particularly for Herons, a colony of white-letter hairstreak butterflies and rare ruddy darter dragonfly, benefiting from international designations. It is noted in the Medway Landscape Character Assessment³ that Northward Hill already

³ Medway Council. March 2011, Medway Landscape Character Assessment

has rural fringe pressures to the south due to its proximity to the settlement of High Halstow village.

- 2.6 The main settlement of the village of High Halstow lies below the crest of Northward Hill and wraps around the southern edge of the nature reserve. This principal settlement within the Neighbourhood Area was established in the Saxon period. The name 'Halstow' signifies a holy place, while 'High' was adopted to distinguish it from Lower Halstow and it also describes the topographical situation of High Halstow. The village has a pronounced high point affording long distance views beyond the administrative boundary of High Halstow. Land to the rear of Marsh Crescent to the north of the settlement benefits from views of the Marshes and on a clear day views extend as far as London. To the south and west of the Parish lies the former Deangate golf course and part of the Lodge Hill former army camp. This area provides nesting for the largest population of breeding nightingales in the UK – a unique resource to be preserved and protected from the impacts of development.

Demographic profile

- 2.7 The parish has a population of 1,846 people living in 714 households⁴. This equates to an average household size of 2.56 people per household. Most households are either owned with a mortgage or loan (47.1% of all High Halstow Households) or owned outright (43.1% of all High Halstow Households). Cumulatively, that equates to 90.2% which is much higher than the national average, which is around 65%. The median house price in High Halstow, as of 2018, is £391,000, in comparison to £229,000 in 2015⁵. The most prominent household type in the Parish is a detached house or bungalow, comprising 51.6% of the total housing stock.
- 2.8 The largest age-group in the Parish is the 45 to 59 group, accounting for 24.3% of the total population of High Halstow³. As noted in the Medway Village Infrastructure Audit (2017)⁶ there is an ageing population across the rural areas on the Hoo Peninsula, and the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (2018) states that in Kent and Medway, the population over 65 is expected to increase by 81.5% in 2050. At present, the majority of residents in High Halstow are reported as being in good or very good health (combined total of 81.6% of the population). This is reflective of the national picture. However, the ageing population demographic

⁴ Office for National Statistics. High Halstow Parish Local Area Report. Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04001135>

⁵ Consumer Data Research Centre (CDRC). House Price 2015 and House Price 2018 (Median 1 Y rolling) maps. Available at: <https://maps.cdrc.ac.uk/#/metrics/ruralurban/default/BTTTTT/10/-0.1500/51.5200/>

⁶ Medway Council (2017) Medway Village Infrastructure Audit.

may bring about new and diverse need, some may require high levels of specialist care and housing, while others will live more active lives⁷.

- 2.9 Medway's total household population is expected to increase by more than 15,000 people between 2018 and 2043⁸, and the emerging Local Plan makes provision for significant future growth across the Hoo Peninsula, as well as in High Halstow.
- 2.10 In regards to educational attainment in the parish, the largest group of educational qualifications achieved by the population are level 4 qualifications (University Degree) and above at 23.87%, in comparison to 18.66% of High Halstow's residents whom are recorded as having no qualifications. Despite the majority of residents having a level 4 qualification or higher, this is lower than the national average (at 27.2%), but higher than that across Medway as a whole (with an average 19.1% of residents with a level 4 qualification). Thus, at the local level, High Halstow has a relatively high level of educational attainment.
- 2.11 The majority of the High Halstow population travel to work by car (76%) and the second highest form of transport being by bus (5%). The majority of residents work in either Wholesale, Retail Trade and Repair industries. In the Medway Employment Land Needs Assessment 2015 it states that the Hoo Peninsula is predominately characterised as an area of Power Stations, Petrochemical plants, specialised and heavy industries, although this has changed in more recent times with the de-commissioning and demolition of large coal fired power stations.
- 2.12 Wider analysis of Medway as a whole states that whilst some of the traditional manufacturing and port activities have been lost, a number of advanced manufacturing activities have remained and expanded. The area also has attracted a range of 'new' sectors from financial and business services through to software and gaming development. Overall, there is a need to deliver a mix of industrial and warehousing stock over the plan period to enable the borough to capitalise on the economic opportunities while also addressing the shifting nature of the Medway economy by providing a reasonable scale of office floorspace. Although the Employment Land Needs Assessment is a high level document and is not specific to High Halstow the changing economic market should be acknowledged to ensure future development within the neighbourhood area is sustainable.

⁷ Kent County Council and Arup, 2018, A 2050 Picture of Kent and Medway, Update of the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework. Available at: https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/79920/GIF-2050-Picture.pdf

⁸ ONS, 2018-based Population Projections for Local Authorities, Table 2

Growth and development

- 2.13 As noted in the previous section, the population of the Parish is 1,846. The village remained relatively small until just after the second world war when it experienced rapid growth, after which the population and extent of the built area has remained relatively stable, as illustrated in Figure 3.
- 2.14 The proportion of dwellings in High Halstow that were built after 1945 is around 85% and this growth was driven by power generation and the Isle of Grain oil refinery: the owners of whom built houses in the village to house their employees.
- 2.15 Since the Local Plan for Medway was adopted in 2003 two large power stations have closed and there has been more limited growth in the area. However, the emerging Local Plan envisages major change which is linked to Medway Council having successfully been awarded grant funding from Central Government through the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF).
- 2.16 Through the HIF Medway Council hopes to “unlock the potential” of the Hoo Peninsula. This envisages major new growth and development on the Peninsula, improved road and rail connections through upgrades to the existing freight railway line for use by passengers and potentially a new road to reduce pressure on the A228 and Four Elms roundabout. It is anticipated that these “improvements” will be in place by 2025. A new passenger station, located to the south of High Halstow parish, will provide a new means of access into London. Medway Council anticipate that the station will help facilitate new housing development elsewhere on the Peninsula, as well as within High Halstow.
- 2.17 Land to the east of High Halstow and Land at Walnut Tree Farm has been identified for growth and development by developers Redrow and an application for planning permission is expected imminently. Land at Walnut Tree Farm is now completed, providing 66 new homes. Land to the east of High Halstow is a strategic site where approximately 760 new homes and supporting infrastructure is proposed, doubling the size of the village and its community through a single development proposal. This site is located between the main settlement of High Halstow and Fisher’s Wood, and between Christmas Lane and Britannia Road.
- 2.18 There is concern within the community as to the scale of growth proposed and the impact this will have on High Halstow. However, this Neighbourhood Plan can, and does, seek to put in place policies that shape any future growth such that it best meets the needs of the community and responds to the identity and character of High Halstow.

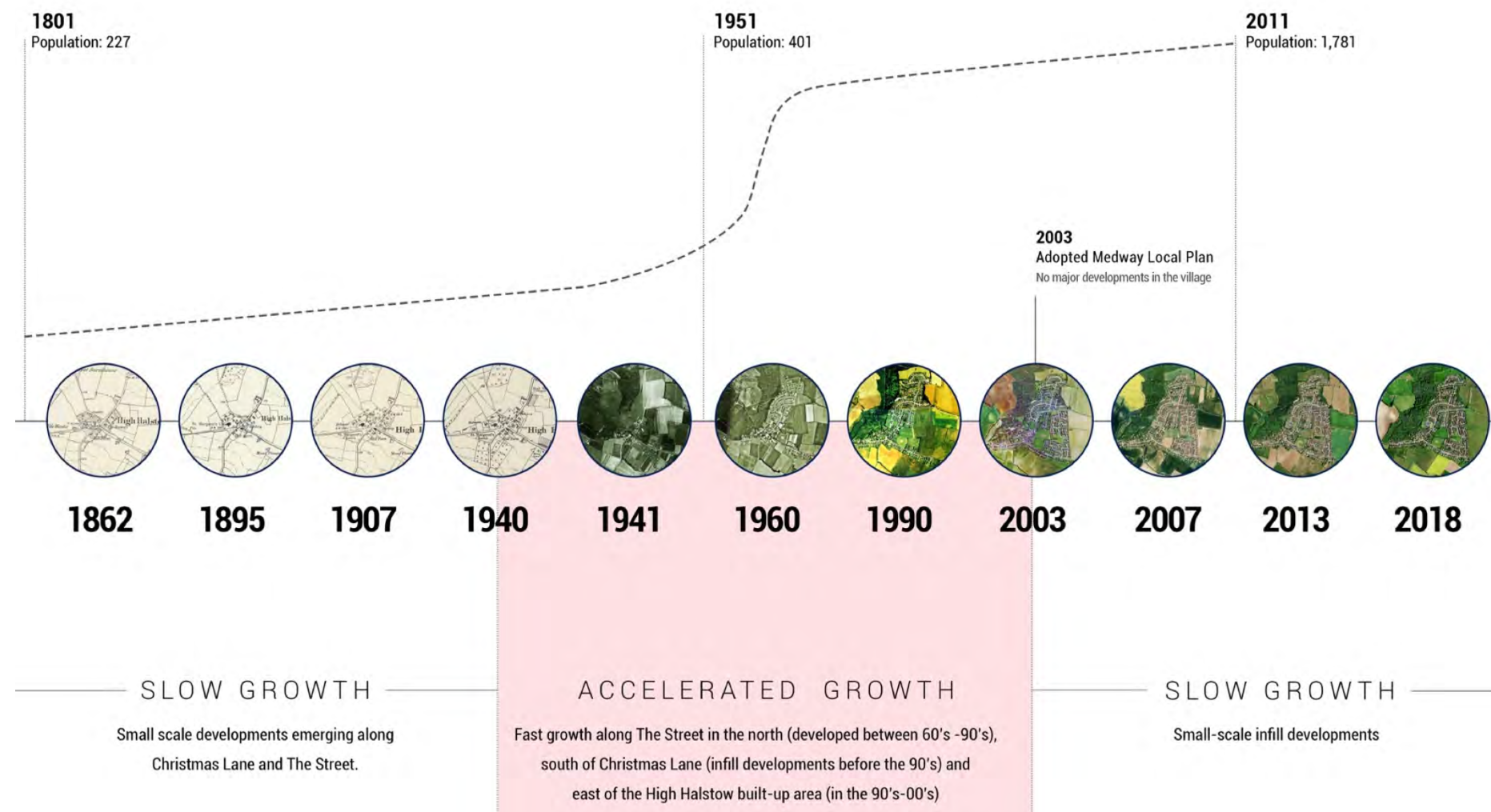


Figure 3: The growth and evolution of High Halstow over time

What you told us

- 2.19 The consultation exercises undertaken identified a range of issues of importance for addressing in the Neighbourhood Plan. Consultation exercises suggested that:
- The rural, village feel of High Halstow should be retained, with fields kept for agricultural use, and open spaces protected. Important environmental areas and designations, including parks and wildlife areas, should be retained.
 - Any new development should respect the village feel, should be of a high quality of design and meet local needs, including provision of a mix of types of homes, including houses, bungalows, affordable homes and opportunities for self-build.
 - Local services and facilities should be improved, including provision of a daily doctor's surgery with regular staff attendance, and an enlarged or new primary school which all pupils in the village can attend, reducing the need to travel to school outside of High Halstow
 - Accessibility and movement, by all modes of travel, should be improved, including improved bus services (particularly in the evening), traffic calming measures, better maintenance of access roads to the village, and better road access to the Hoo Peninsula.
- 2.20 Although not all of these are 'land-use planning policy' matters, they do reflect the community's concerns and hopes for the area, and are thus embedded in this Neighbourhood Plan through a combination of the vision, objectives and supporting projects.

The development plan

- 2.21 Neighbourhood Plans must be prepared in line with national guidance and legislation including the Localism Act (2011), the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012)⁹, the Neighbourhood Planning Act, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
- 2.22 Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan. The development plan for High Halstow is the Medway Local Plan, which was adopted by Medway Council in 2003.

⁹ Updated in 2015 and 2016

- 2.23 The Policies Map that sits alongside the adopted Medway Local Plan 2003 indicates that for High Halstow:
- Only minor development should take place within the settlement boundary.
 - Loss of shopping facilities and other supporting community facilities within village centres will be restricted.
 - Development should be avoided in areas of landscape value, international and national nature conservation sites or within close proximity to where such development would cause harm to those sites.
 - The impact on rural lanes, their amenity, landscape and historic significance should be minimised. Within the Parish, Cooling Road and Dux Court Road are both marked as rural lanes.
- 2.24 These policies will be superseded in due course as the Medway Local Plan is currently being updated, with consultation on the Regulation 18 version development strategy document undertaken between March and June 2018¹⁰. A pre-submission consultation version of the Local Plan was published in October 2021 for approval by Full Council but was subsequently withdrawn. At the time of writing, there are no updates on the timeframe for next steps although, once adopted, the new Local Plan will cover the period 2019 to 2037.
- 2.25 For the Neighbourhood Plan to remain relevant it is important that it aligns with the strategic policies established in the emerging Local Plan. However, as things stand there is no emerging Local Plan and therefore no strategic policies. Nevertheless, High Halstow may still need to accommodate additional growth; linked to the successful bid for HIF funding, as developers are now proposing to submit applications for planning permission for new housing to the east of the village (the Land East of High Halstow: "LEHH").
- 2.26 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to put in place policies that shape and influence any new growth and development, including that which is small in scale, within the current built envelope of the village, and in sustainable locations identified in the Local Plan. This is so that development responds to the qualities of High Halstow and concerns expressed by the community, including the importance of local infrastructure delivery and sensitivity to the landscape setting of High Halstow, its rich environment and important wildlife habitats.
- 2.27 This Neighbourhood Plan also includes site specific policies in respect of the LEHH site. However proposals for the LEHH site should not proceed in advance of the
-

¹⁰ See: https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200149/planning_policy/519/new_medway_local_plan/3

adoption of the Local Plan, and should be subject to commitment to delivery of the future strategic infrastructure proposals, and if the LEHH is to proceed, it should do so only when the Local Plan and the strategic infrastructure, including but not limited to the HIF projects, is in place.

2.28 Alongside the emerging Local Plan, and informing this, Medway Council has prepared a vision (March 2020) and subsequent development framework (September 2021) illustrating how growth could come forward on the Hoo Peninsula over the next twenty years¹¹. Growth is shown in the vision document as taking place to the east of High Halstow, with green buffers retaining the separate identity of High Halstow from growth to the south (beyond the natural crest of the village to the boundary of Hoo Parish running from the southeast High Halstow boundary to the southwest boundary) and thus retaining its tranquil landscape setting. It proposes that improved connections will be provided between the village and the new railway station, with relatively low density development on land to the east of the village, though with an area of high density development focused around new community facilities. The vision and associated framework are non-statutory documents and future development proposals will be subject to environment and other necessary assessments as appropriate to the scale and location of the proposal.

2.29 Other relevant policy documents include:

- National Planning Policy Framework: July 2021, sets out the Government policy. It is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- Medway Housing Design Standards, adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in November 2011, and which includes guidance on matters such as dwelling size, amenity space, circulation, storage, refuse, visual privacy, landscape and building management.
- Medway Guide to Developer Contributions and Obligations, adopted as SPD in May 2018, setting out the contributions to infrastructure required from developments of ten dwellings or more. Where a site triggers the requirement for affordable housing, but this cannot be delivered on site, then Medway Council has a commuted sums policy which should be used.
- The Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy, published in 2014, which sets out a strategy for resolving disturbance caused by development on the wintering and migrating birds in North Kent.

¹¹ Medway Council, March 2020, Planning for Growth on the Hoo Peninsula, and, Medway Council, September 2021, Hoo Development Framework

Climate Change

- 2.30 This Neighbourhood Plan is set in the context of the Climate Change Emergency declared by Medway Council in April 2019. Medway Council is committed to reducing its carbon footprint and to provide the local community with a clean, green future and to be a place that people want to work and live, and which has a sustainable future.
- 2.31 A Climate Change Action Plan was published by Medway Council in June 2021. This sets out eleven priority areas. For planning and development, these include the promotion of sustainable forms and patterns of development, supporting sustainable transport solutions, low carbon buildings and sustainable drainage. .
- 2.32 The importance of planning for change in High Halstow is emphasised through visualisation of the carbon footprint of the Parish which, on a per annum basis averaged across all households, far exceeds that for Medway as a whole, with road transport and housing accounting for 65% of all emissions in the Parish (see Figure 4)¹². Indeed, it is these two categories that account for the significant difference in the carbon footprints between High Halstow and the Medway area. Tackling these through a combination of planning policy and projects, as well as other initiatives outside of the planning framework, is key to reducing emissions and helping to mitigate against the impacts of climate change.
- 2.33 High Halstow is a village that was built to serve the oil industry but now aspires to be carbon neutral. This Neighbourhood Plan seeks to promote high quality, eco-friendly design and development that respects the environmental qualities and landscape setting of the parish, embedding sustainable design and construction techniques in new development and the retrofitting and refurbishment of existing buildings. It promotes walking, cycling and better public transport facilities and seeks to protect and enhance local environmental features, as well as the full range of services and facilities in High Halstow that serve the community and make this an attractive place to live.
- 2.34 Policies, projects and aspirations are included in the Neighbourhood Plan that seek to deliver a more environmentally responsible future. It is though recognised that this is a rapidly evolving area, with national policy and guidance emerging, as well as actions coming out from Medway Council. As these become formalised so the Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed.

¹² Data taken from IMPACT Community Carbon Calculator, developed by Centre for Sustainable Energy and partners. The footprint is expressed as 'carbon dioxide equivalent' tonnes and is a standard unit of measurement in carbon accounting. It expresses the impact of a number of different gases collectively as a common unit. More information can be found via the IMPACT website: <https://impact-tool.org.uk/>

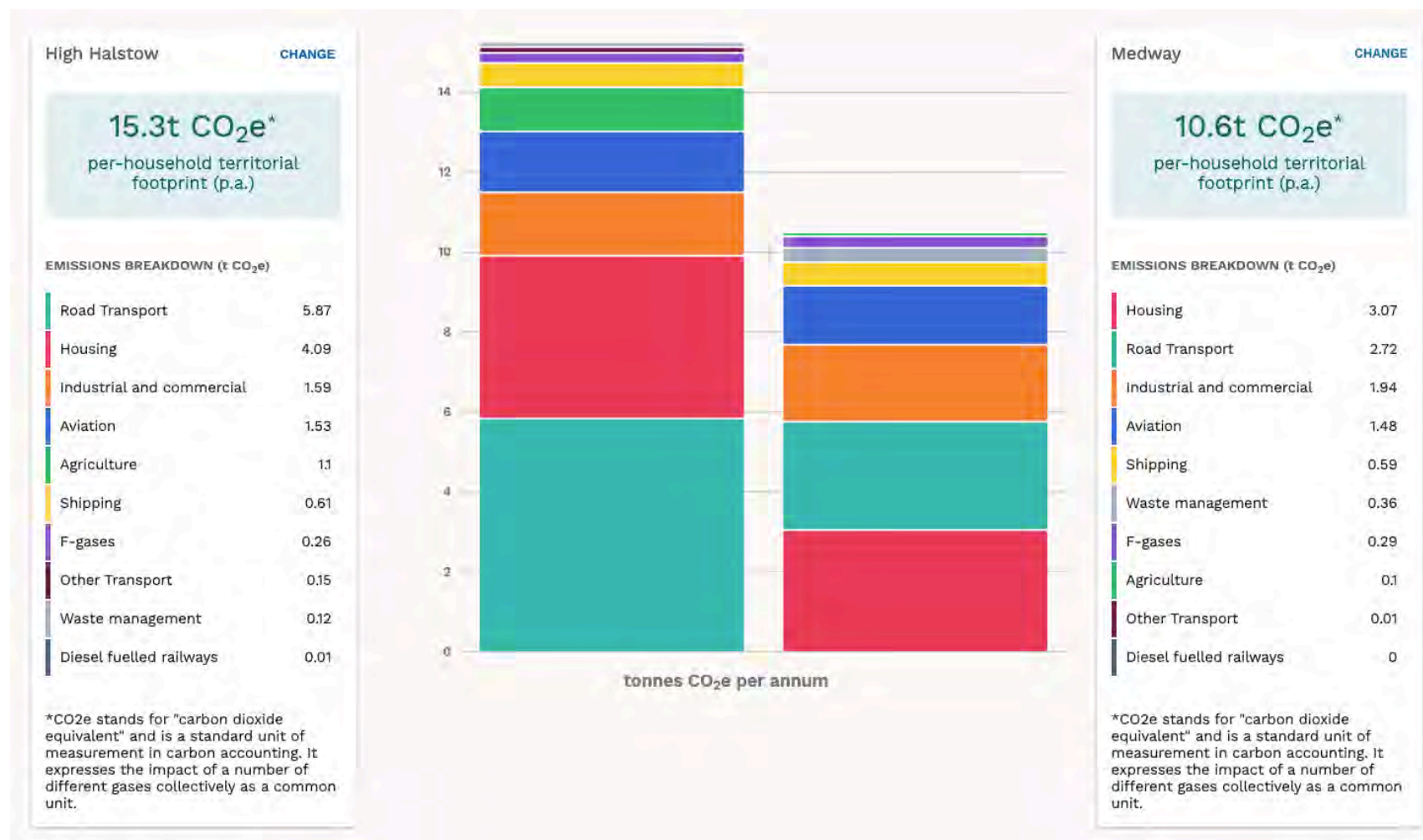


Figure 4: High Halstow carbon footprint (per household, per annum) in comparison with the footprint for Medway (source: IMPACT Community Carbon Calculator)

Reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.35 Notwithstanding the defined period of the Neighbourhood Plan to 2037, it is recognised that, with publication of the Local Plan at some point in the future and further national guidance likely, the Neighbourhood Plan will need to be reviewed periodically. This will enable the Neighbourhood Plan to remain 'current' and in conformity with the Medway Plan and National Planning Policy Framework.



3. High Halstow 'tomorrow'

- 3.1 This section of the Neighbourhood Plan sets out the vision and objectives for High Halstow. It has been informed through consultation and establishes the community's aspirations for the future of the area.

Vision

- 3.2 Our vision for how High Halstow will grow and develop over the period to 2037 is:

High Halstow's future will continue to be a vibrant community physically separate from neighbouring villages. It will remain an attractive place to live within the Peninsula and not a mere dormitory settlement for surrounding towns. Its rich landscape character and natural and heritage assets will have been protected and enhanced and It will be renowned for its wildlife and biodiversity, with local bird habitats strengthened.

Sustainable development will provide a range of housing choice and opportunity, with new and improved facilities having strengthened community cohesion. The village centre will remain the heart of community life, with green routes and links to and from this ensuring that areas of new growth are integrated with the existing settlement and enable new residents to fully participate in village life.

Development will have responded to the climate change emergency, with zero carbon homes and community facilities built in the village, including the retrofit and refurbishment of existing buildings. It will have transitioned from a place built in support of the oil industry to one whose green credentials are to the fore. Development will promote walking and cycling away from sensitive ecological sites on an improved network of footpaths and cycle ways, and embed new technologies that provide a range of sustainable travel choices.

Development will be of the highest design standards, responding to local character and context, with innovative housing design including a flourishing self-build sector.

Objectives

3.3 The objectives below provide a framework for the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Objective 01: Community well-being

To provide and enhance facilities that maintain and develop the wellbeing of the community.

Objective 02: Green Space

To preserve and improve sympathetic access to existing green spaces and further provide additional green spaces within the developed environment.

Objective 03: Community Identity

To maintain and enhance the strong sense of community and maximise the opportunity for engagement.

Objective 04: Rural setting

To keep High Halstow a rural village

Objective 05: Leisure and tourism

To maintain and develop High Halstow as an area rich in history and natural beauty, as well as supporting local leisure and tourism opportunities.

Objective 06: Traffic

Minimise the impact of vehicular traffic and improve opportunities for active and sustainable travel facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

Objective 07: Sustainable Environment

To provide a sustainable environment for the residents and wildlife of High Halstow whilst being mindful of conserving an ecological balance.

Objective 08: Health and well-being

To provide an effective locally based healthcare facility to suit the needs of the local population.

Objective 09: Housing for the community

Housing should be relevant to community need and sympathetic to local styles

Objective 10: Infrastructure

Provide infrastructure that is robust enough to support existing and future networks.

Themes

- 3.4 The objectives outlined above cover four main themes, recognising that the objectives cut-across a series of common topics. These are presented in the box below and are used as a means to structure the Neighbourhood Plan.

Theme 01: Community

This links objectives and ideas relating to community, health and wellbeing, local identity and local infrastructure. This links to Objectives 1, 3, 8 and 10.

Theme 02: Environment

This links objectives and ideas relating to the protection and enhancement of the rural green setting of High Halstow, as well as moving towards a more sustainable future for development and the village as a whole. This links to Objectives 2, 4 and 7.

Theme 03: Movement

This links objectives and ideas relating to walking, cycling, public transport and improved access for all. This links to Objectives 5, 6, 7 and 10.

Theme 04: Place Quality

This links policies and objectives relating to local design and character, housing type and mix, and the wider landscape of the village. This links to Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9.

- 3.5 The policies, and projects, within this Neighbourhood Plan intend to deliver on the themes and objectives. The next four sections of the Neighbourhood Plan present these, ordered in response to the objectives.
- 3.6 **It is important that the Neighbourhood Plan is read as a whole. All policies should be viewed together in the preparation and consideration of planning applications.**



4. Community

- 4.1 The policies and projects contained within this section of the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the objectives outlined below and are summarised in Figure 5:

Objective 01:

To provide and enhance facilities that maintain and develop the wellbeing of the community.

Objective 03:

To maintain and enhance the strong sense of community and maximise the opportunity for engagement.

Objective 08:

To provide an effective locally based healthcare facility to suit the needs of the local population.

Objective 10:

Provide infrastructure that is robust enough to support existing and future networks.

Village Centre and facilities

- 4.2 The presence of and provision of social and community infrastructure is critical to sustaining the life of a rural parish, providing access to essential services and facilities.
- 4.3 The heart of the village is along The Street and at the junction with Christmas Lane, Cooling Road and Dux Court Road (Figure 5). A range of facilities providing for day-to-day needs are found here, including High Halstow Primary School and pre-school, St Margaret's Church, the Village Hall, the War Memorial Hall, The Red Dog public House, High Halstow Sports Field and Cricket Club. The Village Hall is home to a range of clubs and societies, and is also used as a branch of the Elms Medical Practice, though this is only open three half days a week, with residents needing to travel to Hoo St Werburgh or Strood for appointments outside these days. Close by, on Christmas Lane, is the village store/post office.



Figure 5: Indicative concept plan showing summary of aspirations for the village centre and provision of new or improved facilities (image source: Google Earth)

- 4.4 The location of the village centre reflects the original, organic growth of the village, and thus its identity. It has a strong influence on local character and sense of place. The clustering of these facilities is also important for social cohesion and supports the general health and well-being of the community.
- 4.5 If future growth of High Halstow takes place of a scale envisaged by the HIF funding and vision for the Peninsula, new facilities and services will be required to support the new population. These facilities should support and reinforce the centre of the Village, with links provided that enable access to these from the new growth area (Figure 5). If significant development takes place on the LEHH, it will be necessary to provide new local infrastructure in the village. This may come forward on LEHH providing a new village centre.
- 4.6 The provision of new health facilities is important for the village. The Medway Infrastructure Position Statement (January 2017) notes that, across Medway as a whole, there is shortfall of GPs, as well as a need to attract new GPs to the area as a high proportion of the current cohort of GPs is reaching retirement age.
- 4.7 Although the Village Hall is used as a part-time surgery, purpose built facilities are required in close proximity to the population, particularly as the population is aging and, with growth to the east of High Halstow, expanding. New health facilities in the village that reduce the need to travel elsewhere will be supported.
- 4.8 Policy HH C1 lists important facilities within the village centre that should be protected from loss. Where appropriate, opportunities should be explored that support the ongoing maintenance and improvement of these facilities. This might extend to the provision of publicly accessible water fountains and bottle refill points, which are important for health and well-being, as well as being a positive response to the climate change agenda.
- 4.9 Located to the rear of the Village Hall car park are public conveniences. The Royal Society for Public Health has stressed the importance of public conveniences and the impact of poorly maintained facilities, or closure of such facilities, on public health. However, with continuing cuts to public funding there is a risk that such facilities may not survive. The Parish Council wishes to safeguard provision of the public conveniences but recognises that this might only be possible through expansion of the facilities, potentially incorporating them within changing facilities for the adjacent sports ground, such that they provide a wider function.

Policy HH C1: Village centre and facilities

1. Important local services and facilities in High Halstow are:
 - i. High Halstow Village Hall
 - ii. The War Memorial Hall
 - iii. High Halstow primary and pre-school
 - iv. St Margaret's Church
 - v. Red Dog Public House
 - vi. Village Store/Post Office
 - vii. Public Conveniences
 - viii. Cricket club
 - ix. Recreation/sports ground
 - x. Garage/shop
2. Applications that would result in the loss of important services and facilities in High Halstow will be resisted unless:
 - a) Alternative provision is made for that use, within the village.
 - b) Alternative provision is, as far as is possible, located within the village centre.
 - c) The application is supported by material which demonstrates the benefits to the community and which outweigh the harm created by the loss of that facility.
 - d) The use is no longer viable, as demonstrated by market evidence of at least six months vacancy despite reasonable attempts to let.
3. Applications to enhance and provide additional community facilities will be supported. These should be:
 - a) Accessible to all, capitalising on opportunities to promote walking, cycling and use of public transport.
 - b) Include provision of flexible space that can be used for a variety of community uses.
4. Where possible, new social and community facilities to be provided or contributed towards as a result of new growth should be located in the village centre. Where facilities are to be provided within areas of new development they should be as close as possible and well connected to the existing built-up area of High Halstow.
5. New facilities that would be supported include a health centre, café and employment hub. Provision of an employment hub, with online and video conferencing capabilities, as well as creche and primary school places, will help support local lifestyles arising from the Covid pandemic.
6. Proposals that incorporate the public conveniences within changing facilities for the sports ground will be supported. These shall remain accessible to the public.
7. Proposals for provision of water taps and water bottle refill points are welcome. They should be appropriately designed to reflect the setting and should not cause obstruction in the public realm. Potential locations for such facilities include the Village Hall car park.

Education

- 4.10 Medway Council notes that there is currently limited capacity for additional school places and new facilities are needed across all ages within the authority area. Therefore, any additional residential development would be expected to contribute to an expansion of existing educational facilities or the development of new facilities, to address the increase in demand.
- 4.11 The scale of growth envisaged in the developer's proposals for the land to the east of High Halstow (LEHH) will generate a demand for new school places, including an expanded or new primary school within High Halstow, as well as expansion of secondary school places elsewhere, with supporting transport infrastructure also put in place.
- 4.12 The delivery of new primary school places within High Halstow will be developed through the masterplan to be prepared by the developers for land to the east of High Halstow in discussion with the local education authority. The options are:
- Expand the existing High Halstow Primary and pre-school to accommodate new pupils.
 - Provide a new primary and pre-school including outside classrooms on land to the east of High Halstow to accommodate new pupils.
 - To provide a larger primary and pre-school including outside classrooms on land to the east of High Halstow that accommodates existing pupils at the High Halstow primary school and new pupils generated from the development, and which would result in the closure of the existing primary school.
- 4.13 The preference would be for a school presence either to be maintained in the village centre or a new school to be provided within the growth area, should the LEHH proposals be granted planning permission. This should be in close proximity to the existing community and with good access provided by foot and by bicycle. Schools often become a focus for community life and thus it is important that any new school is located in close proximity to the existing built-up area, supporting community cohesion and integration between existing and new areas.
- 4.14 Efforts that minimise the 'school-run' and the consequent traffic congestion associated with this will be supported. This includes the use of 'school streets', which restrict motorised traffic at drop-off and pick-up times, creating pedestrian friendly areas around the school. These are safer places for all, promote healthy lifestyles by

encouraging people to use alternative means of travel to the car, and improve air quality through reduced vehicle movements and idling¹³.

- 4.15 Should the existing school need to close and pupils relocate, the impact of that on the village centre will need to be considered. Re-use of the existing school site for alternative community facilities should be explored in the first instance, including opportunities for the co-location of facilities, such as nursery space and health facilities. Where the scale of growth on land to the east of High Halstow generates a need for other supporting uses, the current school site may be an appropriate location for these. This will help integrate the existing and new development area, foster social cohesion and support the vitality of the village centre.
- 4.16 Furthermore, and as outlined in Section 7 of the Neighbourhood Plan, the ageing population may bring challenges in terms of housing, with homes for elderly residents needed. Such housing should ideally be located in close proximity to community facilities. Reuse of the school site for such housing might be appropriate, subject to conformity with other policies in the Development Plan.



Figure 6: Entrance to High Halstow Primary School

¹³ More information on school streets can be found via <http://schoolstreets.org.uk/> (accessed July 2020)

Policy HH C2: Education

1. Where development is of a scale that triggers the need for new primary school places these should, in order of preference, take the form of:
 - a) Expansion of the existing High Halstow Primary and pre-school, unless the existing site is too small to accommodate additional forms of entry.
 - b) Delivery of a new primary and pre-school including outside classrooms on land to the east of High Halstow which caters for the pupil numbers generated by that development.
 - c) Delivery of a new primary and pre-school including outside classrooms that accommodates pupils at the existing primary school as well as those generated by new development.
2. In the event that a new school is provided that results in the closure of the existing primary school then that site should be used for alternative community facilities wherever possible, including those needed as a result of the new development of land to the east of High Halstow. Reuse of the existing school site to include housing may be acceptable, where that forms part of a mixed use scheme including community facilities and where the housing includes provision for senior residents.
3. Where located within new areas of growth, school buildings should be located as close as possible to the existing village, maximising connectivity and access for existing and new pupils.
4. Where a new school is to be provided, this should be delivered during the initial phases of development to help build community cohesion and minimise disruption for existing and new pupils.
5. The design and layout of the any new school should promote walking and cycling, minimising trips made by car. The provision of school streets around the school which minimise vehicular routes and traffic speeds will be supported.

Communication technology

- 4.17 Access to broadband is a vital component of digital infrastructure and is key to growing a sustainable local economy, vital for education and home working and increasingly central part of community cohesion and resilience, particularly in rural areas. Indeed, the NPPF states that:
- ‘advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social-wellbeing’¹⁴*
- 4.18 The importance of reliable and fast broadband services was highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, with many people required to work from home and undertake home schooling. And, with people unable to leave home other than for essential trips, the need for reliable broadband became ever more important, being a means for people to stay connected with friends and family, to access information, particularly in relation to health matters, and to arrange home deliveries.
- 4.19 From data provided by Ofcom the average broadband download speed in the centre of the settlement of High Halstow is 32 megabits (MBps) compared to 19Mbps on the outskirts¹⁵. These are relatively slow: faster broadband speeds of 50-100+Mbps support use by multiple devices in the home, allowing more than one person to access the internet at any one time, supporting home working, learning and wider social connectivity.
- 4.20 Kent County Council and Medway Council are working with the Government’s Building Digital UK team as well as BT Openreach to improve broadband speeds. This includes a rural fibre broadband project and top-up voucher scheme. Ofcom’s ‘outside in’ programme will also make funding available to improve fibre deployment in rural locations.
- 4.21 Along with improvements to broadband speeds there is also a need to improve mobile phone reception, the quality of which varies across the Neighbourhood Plan area depending upon network operator and which is limited in many places¹⁶. The Government has announced funding to improve mobile phone reception in rural areas¹⁷. Where necessary, improvements to reception may include the need for new mobile phone masts. Where provided, these should be designed to minimise visual intrusion and respond to the character of the area.

¹⁴ Para 114, MHCLG, July 2021, NPPF

¹⁵ Consumer Data Research centre (CDRC). Broadband Speed 2017:
<https://maps.cdrc.ac.uk/#/metrics/bband/default/BTTTTFT/13/0.5701/51.4556/>

¹⁶ See: <https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/mobile-coverage> accessed July 2020

¹⁷ See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/1-billion-deal-set-to-solve-poor-mobile-coverage> accessed July 2020

Policy HH C3: Communication Technology

1. Proposals for new development should be capable of receiving high, gigabit-capable speeds and reliable mobile and broadband connections.
2. The appropriate cabling and ducting shall be provided to the premises and linked to infrastructure networks to enable the fastest available connections.
3. Any above ground installations required to improve broadband speed or mobile phone reception shall be located and designed such that any potential adverse visual impacts are minimised.



5. Environment

- 5.1 The policies and projects contained within this section of the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the objectives below and are summarised in Figure 7:

Objective 02:

To preserve and improve sympathetic access to existing green spaces and further provide additional green spaces within the developed environment.

Objective 04:

To keep High Halstow a rural village

Objective 07:

To provide a sustainable environment for the residents and wildlife of High Halstow whilst being mindful of conserving an ecological balance.

Natural habitats and biodiversity

- 5.2 The landscape setting and character of High Halstow parish is defined by the network of open space habitats, fields, trees, hedges and streams. The Kent Historic Area Assessment (2014) characterises much of the parish as being marshland, farmland and woodland, with limited settlement areas.
- 5.3 The northern part of the parish, along the Thames, comprises marshland and is designated as a Special Protection Area, Ramsar Site and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) (Figure 8). Northward Hill and Dalham Hill are also designated as SSSIs. Furthermore, Northward Hill is a National Nature Reserve (as declared in 1951) managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. It is one of the higher points on the Hoo Peninsula and affords long distance views into London and across the greater Thames Estuary. Northward Hill is covered by a mixture of hawthorn scrub and ancient oak woodland, as well as a bluebell wood. It is the largest heronry in the UK with more than 150 pairs of grey heron nesting in the treetops and almost 50 pairs of little egrets. It is also home to nightingales, whitethroats and turtledoves¹⁸.

¹⁸ See <https://explorekent.org/activities/heron-cycle-trail-the-hoo-peninsula/> accessed July 2020



Figure 7: Indicative concept plan showing summary of aspirations for the environment, green space and landscape setting of High Halstow (image source: Google Earth)

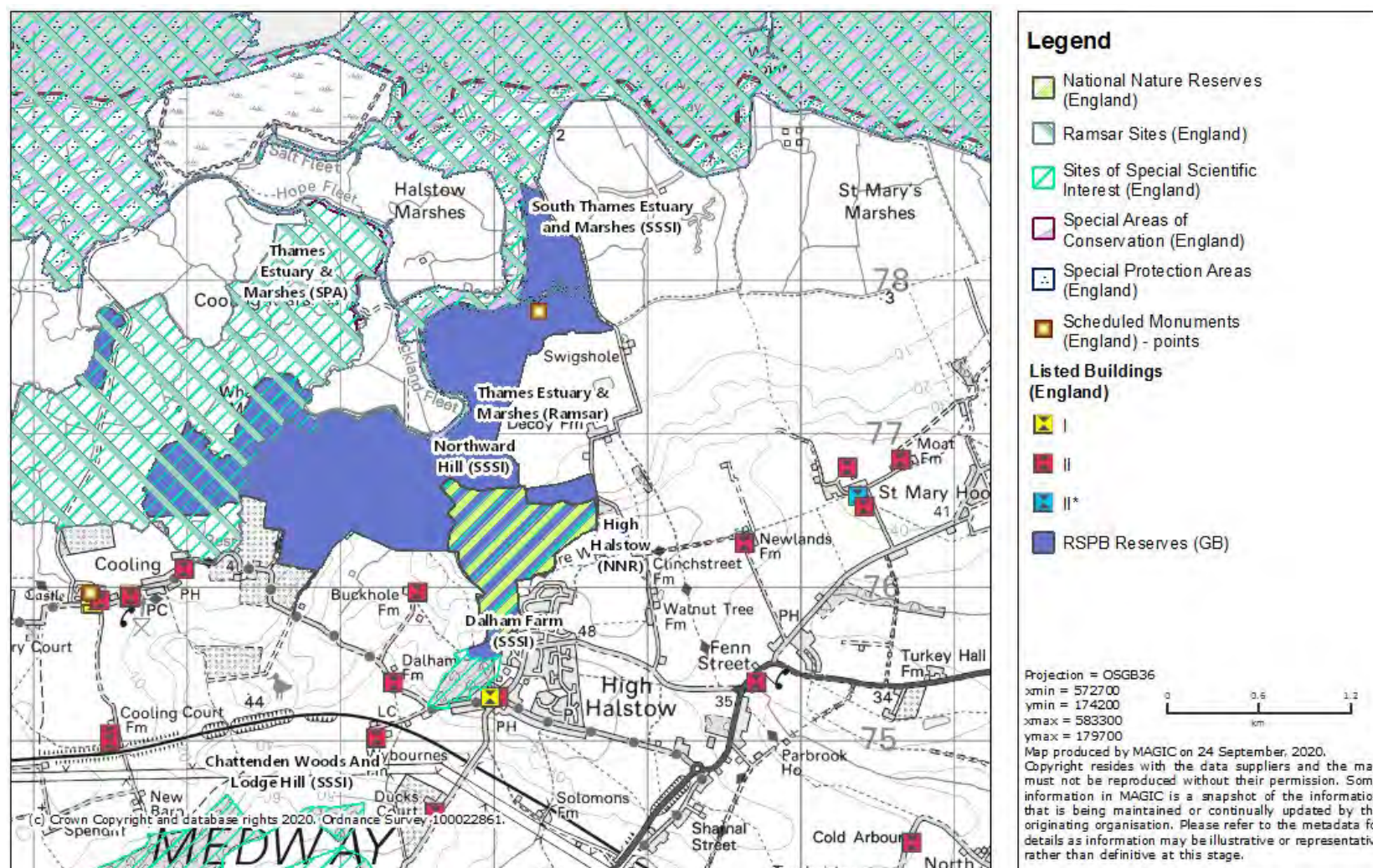


Figure 8: Environmental and heritage designations in and around High Halstow parish and the wider Hoo Peninsula (source: Defra / MAGIC)

- 5.4 To the south west of the Parish lies the former Deangate Golf Course and Lodge Hill former army camp, now designated as SSSI on account of it housing the largest number of breeding nightingales in the UK.
- 5.5 The Medway Landscape Character Assessment¹⁹ states that Northward Hill is already experiencing rural fringe pressures to the south due to its proximity to the settlement of High Halstow village. This Assessment goes on to state that any large scale strategic growth on the Hoo Peninsula farmland must protect the rural character and openness of the countryside between villages at Cooling, St Mary Hoo, Cliffe, Cliffe Woods, Hoo, High Halstow, Stoke, Lower Stoke and Allhallows. Dalham Hill is said to illustrate *'what is possibly the lowest angles slope failure in Great Britain and is important in demonstrating slope degradation in the absence of coastal erosion and removal of material from the base'*²⁰.
- 5.6 To the south-eastern edge of the village the Hoo Peninsula farmland is flat or undulating open farmland. The underlying clay soil, with a subsoil of gravel, has historically been used for arable farming, with grazing on the marshes.



Figure 9: Views out across the High Halstow countryside towards the Thames Estuary

- 5.7 The RSPB has advised that the Greater Thames Estuary is one of the most important wildlife sites in Europe and is home to nationally important populations of breeding waders, beach-nesting birds, nightingales and rare invertebrates. It is a major feeding hub for birds using the East Atlantic flyway, hosting the largest aggregation of

¹⁹ Medway Council, March 2011, Medway Landscape Character Assessment

²⁰ Medway Council, November 2008, State of Medway Report: Natural Assets and Open Space

wintering waterfowl in the UK with 75% of all the breeding waders in the South East of England found on the North Kent Marshes.

- 5.8 The Estuary is severely threatened by a combination of development, recreational disturbance, habitat fragmentation, sea level rise and other impacts of climate change. The Hoo Peninsula is one of the largest and most important parts of this landscape, with extensive areas of SSSI/SPA grazing marsh, saltmarsh and mudflats.
- 5.9 The RSPB's Northward Hill reserve has high densities of breeding lapwing and redshank, one of the largest avocet colonies in the UK, one of the UK's largest heron colonies and the second largest nightingale population on an RSPB reserve. The number of nightingales in the UK has dropped by 93% over the last 40 years according to the British Trust for Ornithology. As ground and scrub-nesting birds they are especially vulnerable to predation and disturbance by domestic animals and walkers. Buffer zones, free from development, around nesting areas at Northwood Hill are fully justified.²¹
- 5.10 The entirety of the parish is within the Impact Risk Zone of a SSSI as defined by Natural England. All proposals for development within the parish will thus be subject to consultation with Natural England and trigger the need for Habitats Regulation Assessment.
- 5.11 The entirety of the parish is also within a six kilometre catchment of the Special Protection Area. In this area the Interim Policy Statement adopted by Medway Council (2015) in respect of Strategic Access Management and Mitigation applies (and until such time as it is updated or replaced). A financial contribution is payable to the Council for all new homes built in this area, which will be used to mitigate the impacts of population increases on the SPA.
- 5.12 To preserve the quality of the natural environment any proposals impacting on the SPA will be required to demonstrate that any potential impacts have been assessed and identify any mitigation measures required to offset these. All development should result in a net biodiversity gain and improvement to the quality of habitats. A minimum 10% bio-diversity net-gain should be aimed for, based on use of the most up-to-date version of the Natural England Bio-Diversity Metric²² (version 3.1 at time of writing). Off-site provision is not preferred but where it is the only practical solution must remain as close as possible to the development site.

²¹ Information in this paragraph provided in correspondence from the RSPB, November 2020

²² <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720>

- 5.13 The natural environment of the parish and wider peninsula is highly sensitive and important nationally (and internationally). Until such time as the Medway Local Plan is updated a precautionary approach shall be taken to planning and development in the parish.

Policy HH E1: Natural Environment

1. All development in the Parish will be subject to payment of contributions as contained in the Medway Strategic Access Management and Mitigation Strategy. All proposals will be subject to consultation with Natural England and will need to demonstrate that the proposals, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of a designated European or RAMSAR site.
2. Development will be expected to retain and enhance well-established natural habitats, including mature trees, hedgerows and water features. All development will be required to result in a minimum net biodiversity gain of 10%, calculated based on use of the Natural England Biodiversity Metric v3.1 (or any subsequent updates to this) and submission of a biodiversity net gain plan submitted as part of the planning application. This applies to all developments, including smaller sites, which should make use of the Small Sites Toolkit published by Natural England as part of the biodiversity metric. The management plan should show how it is proposed to managed biodiversity net gains in perpetuity.
3. Any proposal involving the removal of natural environmental features must be justified and will be required to clearly demonstrate how the benefits from development will outweigh the negative impacts to the natural environment.
4. If there is significant loss of trees and shrubs as part of development, then new provision will be expected elsewhere on the site or, if not possible on site, then elsewhere within the parish, providing equivalent coverage and an acceptable contribution towards the natural environment and local character.
5. Development on the edges of the settlement must avoid abrupt edges that lack vegetation or landscaping. In sensitive environmental locations provision of comprehensive landscape buffering is encouraged. Native trees and shrubs must be used that reinforce the rural character of the area.

Policy HH E2: Countryside and Rural Landscape

1. The open countryside around the built up area of High Halstow is of high landscape value and will be treated as a “Valued Landscape” within the meaning of the NPPF and any development will be required to demonstrate how it protects and enhances its landscape character.
2. Much of it is of special importance because of landscape, archaeological and nature conservation interest, their local amenity value and their importance to the setting of historic, ecological or wider landscape features.
3. Within this area, development will be considered in relation to the extent to which its location, scale, design and materials would protect the local landscape character and enhance the future appearance of the landscape and its nature conservation interest.
4. Development proposals which would cause unacceptable harm to the local landscape character, archaeological or nature conservation interest will not be permitted.
5. Much of the local countryside is also Grade 1 and 2 Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, including traditional orchards. Development proposals that lead to the loss of such land will only be allowed where it has been demonstrated that land of lower landscape and agricultural value is not available elsewhere in the district. Development is expected to enhance local landscape character, archaeological and nature conservation where appropriate to the site.
6. Equestrian development will be permitted where it is shown that it will not cause harm to landscape character and biodiversity.

Settlement identity and views

- 5.14 High Halstow benefits from a clearly defined identity as a rural village. This is in part due to its settlement envelope being established by green “buffers” of woodland and fields. The importance of this in enhancing local distinctiveness is recognised in the Medway Landscape Character Assessment²³, which notes that within the Hoo Peninsula Farmland character area, the suburbanisation of villages and settlements should be resisted, and that the separation, rural character and openness of the countryside between villages shall be protected. Green wedges are identified (Figure 10) between Christmas Lane and the railway line, and along the A228 Ratcliffe Highway, which are intended to retain the separate identities of High Halstow village from Hoo St Werburgh and Sharnal Street respectively. This is supported in the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study²⁴ which notes that land to the south of High Halstow forms a *‘valuable functional role in separating and retaining local identity of communities at High Halstow and Hoo St Werburgh’*. It recommends that it is retained as an *‘anti-coalescent gap’*. To the east, the study notes the importance of retaining a separation between *‘an enlarged High Halstow and Sharnal Street’*, and that it offers a *‘potential anti-coalescent and Green Infrastructure buffer’*.
- 5.15 The parish is an area of undulating and predominantly arable farmland with extensive long distance views, and where there is a risk of settlement coalescence. Indeed, the dramatic setting of the village as a hill-top settlement contrasts with the extensive open marshland and rolling countryside across much of the parish.
- 5.16 This is reflected upon in the Medway Heritage Asset Review²⁵ which comments on the historic growth and evolution of the area, noting that *‘additional late twentieth century housing development infilled the north-east and eastern areas of the village, between Christmas Lane and Britannia Road, leaving much of the historical character of High Halstow evident within the dispersed upland farmsteads’*.
- 5.17 Key views in the parish which development should not intrude upon are illustrated in Figure 11 and expanded upon in Appendix 1. The Landscape Character Assessment recommends that where new development is proposed, it should respect and enhance biodiversity and local distinctiveness, providing new hedgerows and screening to settlement edges which help harmonise the development with the countryside. The importance of views is also highlighted in the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study, which notes the long, expansive and distinctive views extending to the estuary, its open landscape, distinctive and visually prominent topography.

²³ Medway Council, March 2011, Medway Landscape Character Assessment

²⁴ Medway Council, February 2019, Hoo Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study (draft)

²⁵ Medway Council, November 2017, Medway Heritage Asset Review 2017



KEY





-  Green Wedge
-  Road Network
-  Railway
-  Potential Railway Station

Figure 10: Green wedges in High Halstow (map source: Google Earth) Note: more recent plans prepared by Medway Council indicate that the location of the station is likely to be further east of the Ratcliffe Highway than indicated in this figure.



KEY

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>① Ropers Green Lane towards Belluncle Halt, Kingsnorth powerstation and River Medway</p> <p>② Ropers Lane Roundabout towards Solomon Farm</p> <p>③ Chattenden and Upnor railway line footpath towards High Halstow Village</p> <p>④ Christmas Lane across Solomons Farm</p> <p>⑤ From public right of way RS45 across Solomons Farm toward River Thames</p> <p>⑥ Wybournes Way towards River Thames and Lodge Hill Wood</p> | <p>⑦ Southern Water Spring, Cooling Road, towards Dalham Farm, Northward Hill and North Kent Marshes</p> <p>⑧ Lipwell Hill towards Buckhole Farm and North Kent Marshes</p> <p>⑨ RSPB Viewpoint, Northward Hill, towards North Kent Marshes and Cooling Radio Station</p> <p>⑩ Forge Common towards the River Medway, St. Mary Hoo and River Thames</p> <p>⑪ Bessies Land across the Thames Estuary</p> <p>⑫ Manor Way, in the Marsh, across the Marshes, Shades House and Northward Hill</p> <p>⑬ Saltfleet Flats, across the Marshes, River Thames, Northward Hill and Container Point</p> |
|--|--|

Figure 11: Key views in High Halstow (map source: Google Earth)

Policy HH E3: Settlement Identity

1. Proposals for development shall respect the separate identity of High Halstow village and Sharnal Street.
2. Green wedges, as indicated on Figure 11, between (i) Christmas Lane and the railway line, and (ii) from Fishers Wood, extending north and south alongside the A228, shall be retained.
3. Development adjacent to these areas will enhance biodiversity and local distinctiveness, and include screening at settlement edges that incorporate native species.

Policy HH E4: Important views

1. Proposals for development shall not have a significant adverse impact on the important views identified on Figure 11 and listed below. Any development proposed within the views shall demonstrate how any impacts on those views are minimised.
 1. Ropers Green Lane towards Belluncle Halt, Kingsnorth Power Station and River Medway.
 2. Ropers Lane roundabout towards Solomons Farm.
 3. Chattenden and Upnor railway line footpath towards High Halstow village.
 4. Christmas Lane across Solomons Farm.
 5. From public right of way RS45 across Solomons Farm towards River Thames.
 6. Wybournes Way towards River Thames and Lodge Hill Wood.
 7. Southern Water Spring, Cooling Road, towards Dalham Farm, Northward Hill and North Kent Marshes.
 8. Lipwell Hill towards Buckhole Farm and North Kent Marshes.
 9. RSPB Viewpoint, Northward Hill, towards North Kent Marshes and Cooling Radio Station.
 10. Forge Common towards the River Medway, St. Mary Hoo and River Thames.
 11. Bessies Land across the Thames Estuary.
 12. Manor Way, in the Marsh, across the Marshes, Shades House and Northward Hill.
 13. Saltfleet Flats, across the Marshes, River Thames, Northward Hill and Container Port.

Local Green Space designations

- 5.18 Under the NPPF, Neighbourhood Plans can designate Local Green Spaces which are of importance to the local community. The NPPF states that Local Green Spaces should only be designated where the green space is:
- a) *in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
 - b) *demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
 - c) *local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*²⁶
- 5.19 The Local Green Spaces listed in Policy HH E5 and mapped in Figure 12 are all considered to meet the criteria for designation outlined in the NPPF. More information on these is presented in Appendix 2.

Policy HH E5: Local Green Spaces

1. The following areas are designated as Local Green Spaces, as identified on Figure 12 and in more detail in Appendix 2:

1. Allotments	8. Hill Farm Close
2. Churchyard	9. Horsefield (adjacent to recreation Ground)
3. Cooling Road (Front of churchyard & triangle)	10. Recreation Ground and Cricket Field
4. Dalham Farmland (SSSI)	11. The Street (strip of land between it and Eden Road and grass verges to south)
5. Fisherwood	12. Topley Drive Recreation Area
6. Forge Common	
7. Heronsdon (Copse & frontage)	
2. Planning applications for development on the Local Green Space Designations will not be permitted unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated and where the proposed development performs a supplementary and supporting function to the Green Space. Exceptional circumstances are to be taken as those defined in relation to the Green Belt in the NPPF.
3. Proposals to improve and enhance the biodiversity value of the spaces will be welcome, including opportunities to deliver biodiversity net gains.

²⁶ Para 102, MHCLG, July 2021, NPPF



Figure 12: Local Green Space designations in High Halstow

New green space and sustainable drainage

- 5.20 Within areas of new development, open space and playing pitches should be provided in line with identified needs and local standards. These facilities play a vital role in creating a positive environment, fostering community cohesion and gathering. Furthermore, and in light of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of local and accessible green spaces for leisure and recreation was highlighted.
- 5.21 Where new spaces are to be provided principles set out in the High Halstow Design Code should be referred to and complied with in full. Such spaces should be safe, accessible and usable for all, and provide a range of open space types and play facilities that cater for all ages. Green spaces should be connected by a network of green infrastructure, including public rights of way, tree-lined and landscaped streets. This network of spaces should incorporate measures that help manage surface water run-off and include wildflowers enabling insect pollinators to extend their range.

Policy HH E6: New green spaces

1. Development of a scale that triggers provision of new green space should be provided in line with standards established by Medway Council. The design of this space should reflect the principles established in the accompanying High Halstow Design Code.
2. Development should:
 - a) Avoid creation of left over space that lacks purpose.
 - b) Integrate open space within the development rather than pushing this to the periphery.
 - c) Locate new green space within walking distance of as many residents as possible.
 - d) Link green spaces through a network of green routes wherever possible, including public rights of way and tree-lined or landscaped streets.
 - e) Provide a range of open space types, including areas of play, opportunities for growing food, and quieter areas for relaxation.
 - f) Ensure that play areas and public spaces are well overlooked wherever possible, providing natural surveillance of the space. Hidden spots must be avoided.
 - g) Enable play spaces to be accessible for all children and incorporate elements relating to nature and landscape as well as play equipment.
3. A connected network of green spaces that incorporates measures that minimise surface water run-off and which help extend the range of insect pollinators is supported.

- 5.22 Where sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) are provided they must be incorporated within the network of open spaces and green infrastructure linking these and can take a variety of forms, including attenuation ponds, rain gardens and other measures such as green walls and roofs that minimise surface water run-off. Guidance prepared on behalf of the lead local flood authorities in the South East of England²⁷ (and used by Medway Council) shall be referred to when designing SuDS.

Policy HH E7: Flood risk

1. Proposals for development must incorporate measures that manage and minimise flood risk and surface water run-off. SuDS should be incorporated in and form an integral part of new open space and the network of green infrastructure wherever possible. These should be designed in line with guidance from Medway Council and may incorporate, but not be limited to, the following measures:
 - a) Attenuation ponds.
 - b) Raingardens within the urban realm.
 - c) Green walls and roofs.
 - d) Permeable surfaces in areas of parking.
 - e) Planting of trees.
2. Where SuDs are to be provided they should be designed such that they are in harmony with the surrounding landscape.

²⁷ Aecom for the lead local flood authorities of the South East of England, Water, people, Places: A guide for master planning sustainable urban drainage into developments. See:
https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200150/planning_guidance/647/sustainable_drainage_systems (accessed September 2020)

Towards zero-carbon development

- 5.23 Most carbon dioxide emissions come from heating, cooling and powering buildings. Reducing carbon dioxide emissions and other air pollutants will contribute to efforts aimed at tackling the effects of man-made climate change. This is recognised by the declaration of the Medway Climate Emergency and publication of a draft Action Plan which seeks to reduce the Council's own carbon emissions and supports actions to help others work towards net zero emissions. At the same time, the Government is planning to introduce a 'Future Homes Standard', requiring new build homes to be future-proofed with low carbon heating and energy efficiencies. It is anticipated that the Future Homes Standards will be implemented by 2025.
- 5.24 The growth of High Halstow may represent an opportunity to provide housing that enjoys reduced emissions, potentially through the construction of highly energy efficient buildings, the provision of decentralised energy networks alongside, where possible, the retrofitting of existing homes to reduce their energy use and fuel bills. Opportunities for new homes and the retrofitting of existing buildings are set out in the forthcoming High Halstow Design Code.
- 5.25 All development in High Halstow will be expected to make use of the best available sustainable design and technology. Proposals for development are expected to minimise the use of resources, mitigate against and be resilient to the impact of climate change. Current sustainability standards for new construction will be used for assessing the sustainability of new, non-residential buildings. This includes those established by BREEAM²⁸. For new homes, the Home Quality Mark²⁹ developed by BREEAM is intended to provide an indication of the quality and environmental performance of those homes. Housebuilders are encouraged to use this assessment method. In particular, the Parish Council is particularly supportive of proposals for new buildings that achieve zero or near zero net energy consumption in line with the Passivhaus Standard³⁰.
- 5.26 Buildings should be designed to maximise solar gain and incorporate technologies that maximise the use of energy from renewable sources. Proposals for new development are encouraged to incorporate features such as solar photovoltaic panels, solar thermal panels, air source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps and biomass boilers³¹.

²⁸ BREEAM UK, 2014, Non-domestic Buildings (United Kingdom), Technical Manual SD5076 4.1

²⁹ See: <http://www.homequalitymark.com>

³⁰ See: <http://www.passivhaus.org.uk>

³¹ Proposals shall refer to the forthcoming Heath Mapping and Energy Masterplanning study to be prepared by Medway Council and the recommendations included in that

Policy HH E8: Towards zero-carbon development

1. Applications for new homes are expected, as far as possible, to meet Buildings Research Establishment "BREEAM" 'exemplary' standards and should be designed to reflect proposals in the Future Homes Standard and any policies in the Medway Climate Emergency Action Plan adopted at the time of application.
2. Schemes are strongly encouraged to meet Passivhaus standards. Development proposals which demonstrate that the proposed buildings have a net emissions rate of zero or below, or are proposed to be certified Passivhaus buildings, are strongly encouraged, and will be considered favourably subject to other policies.
3. Housebuilders are encouraged to register for assessment under the Home Quality Mark. This should demonstrate how resource efficiencies and climate change adaptation measures have been incorporated through aspects such as the layout of the proposed development, orientation, massing, landscaping and building materials. Developers should demonstrate they have taken reasonable steps to achieve zero carbon in construction methods and sourcing of materials.
4. Waste, recycling and storage areas must be provided within new development. Systems that reduce water consumption and allow for the reuse of grey water are also required .
5. Ground and air source heat pumps, or other similar options, should be used in place of gas or oil boilers and should be supplemented by photovoltaic and solar panels. Encouragement is given to proposals for development that maximise the opportunities for using on-site renewable forms of energy. Where such use is proposed the application will be supported where it can be demonstrated that there is no significant adverse effect on landscape and townscape character, biodiversity, heritage or cultural assets, or amenity value.
6. The retrofitting of existing properties is encouraged and any alterations that are carried out must be designed with energy reduction in mind. The retrofitting of historic buildings and heritage assets must safeguard the special characteristics of these assets.
7. Proposals for non-residential development should meet the Buildings Research Establishment BREEAM building standard excellent.

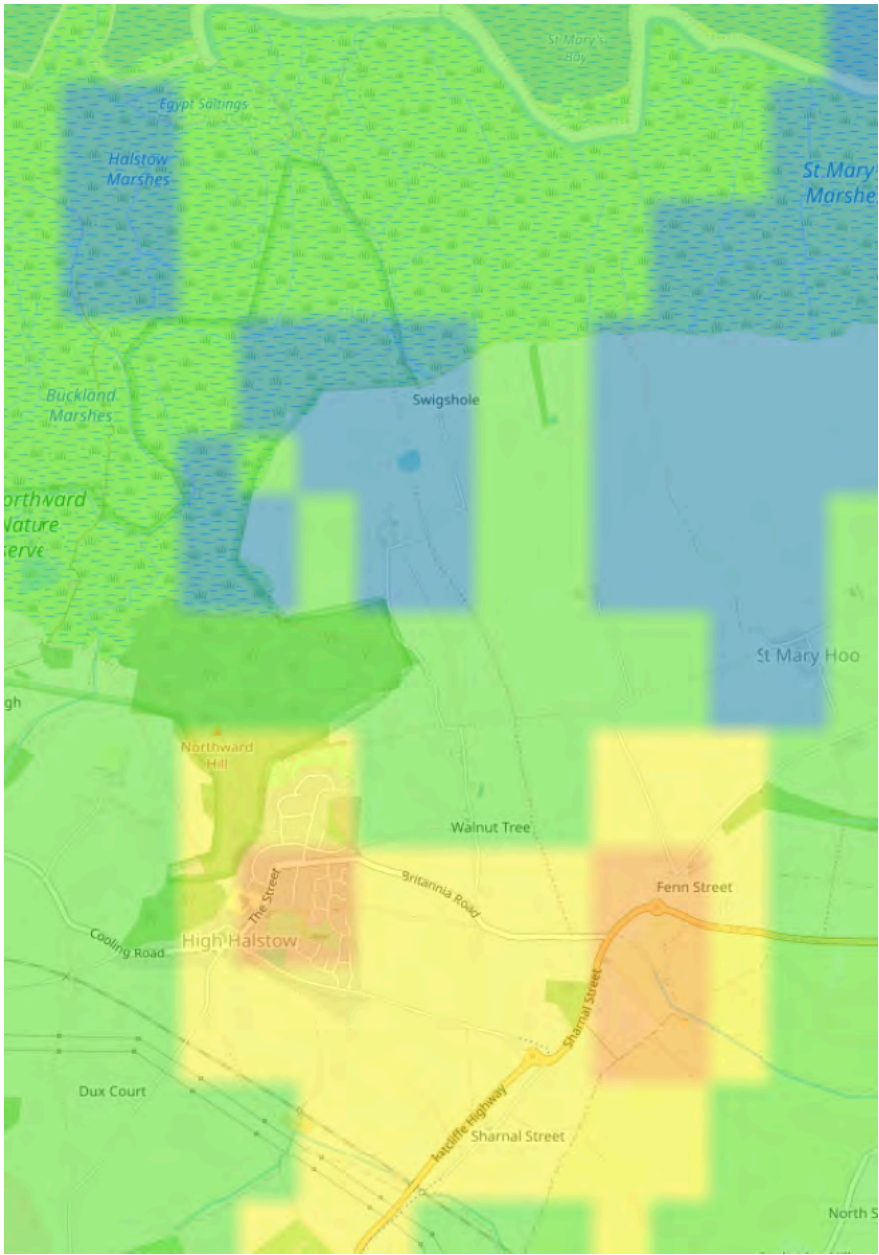
Dark skies

- 5.27 Through consultation, strong messages were made in respect of the rural character of High Halstow and the sensitive landscape and environmental setting of the village and wider parish. To protect the rural character, measures that protect and enhance the dark night sky through the Plan Area are welcomed, including minimising light pollution from new developments. Indeed, excessive lighting, particularly from security lights, floodlights and streetlights, wastes energy whilst also disrupting the behaviour patterns of people and wildlife³².
- 5.28 The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning policies and conditions should “*limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation*”.
- 5.29 Much of the parish benefits from dark skies (Figure 13), with areas of most light pollution in the existing built up area of High Halstow village, though this is still relatively low in comparison to much of urban Medway. Increased housing within the neighbourhood area, particularly on land to the east of High Halstow, may produce more light overspill, therefore harming the amenity of the surrounding landscape, including sensitive areas such as the Northward Hills SSSI.
- 5.30 High Kelvin rated lighting can create a harsh glare, disrupt sleep and disturb nocturnal wildlife and their habitats. The International Dark-sky Association (IDA) advises that outdoor lighting should not exceed a rating of 3000 Kelvins. Equally, the IDA recommends that any light fixtures with an output above 500 lumens should be fully shielded and pointing downward to minimise glare and skyglow.

Policy HH E9: Lighting

1. Proposals for development will be supported where it is demonstrated that, if external lighting is required, it protects the night sky from light pollution through:
 - a) The number, design, specification and position of lamps;
 - b) Full shielding (at the horizontal and above) of any lighting fixture exceeding 500 initial lumens and evidence of limited impact of unshielded lighting through use of adaptive controls; and
 - c) Limiting the correlated colour temperature of lamps to 3000 Kelvins or less.

³² CPRE Night Blight. See: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/>. Brightness values are measured in nanowatts: the higher the measure of nanowatts the brighter the light



Each pixel shows the level of radiance (night lights) shining up into the night sky. These have been categorised into colour bands to distinguish between different light levels.

Figure 13: Light pollution In High Halstow, (source: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/>)



6. Movement

- 6.1 The policies and projects contained within this section of the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the objectives below and are summarised in Figure 14.

Objective 05:

To maintain and develop High Halstow as an area rich in history and natural beauty, as well as supporting local leisure and tourism opportunities.

Objective 06:

Minimise the impact of vehicular traffic and improve opportunities for active and sustainable travel facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

Objective 07:

To provide a sustainable environment for the residents and wildlife of High Halstow whilst being mindful of conserving an ecological balance.

Objective 10:

Provide infrastructure that is robust enough to support existing and future networks.

Access to the countryside

- 6.2 The village of High Halstow is surrounded by attractive countryside, providing opportunities for leisure and recreation for all to enjoy, and it also benefits from an extensive network of footpaths and public rights of way. These complement the road network and connect the village to the surrounding countryside and neighbouring settlements. The Rights of Way network across the Parish is illustrated in Figure 15 and includes two rights of way running through land to the east of High Halstow allocated for development. These routes connect The Street with Britannia Road on an east west axis, and Britannia Road with Christmas Lane, running north south through the site.

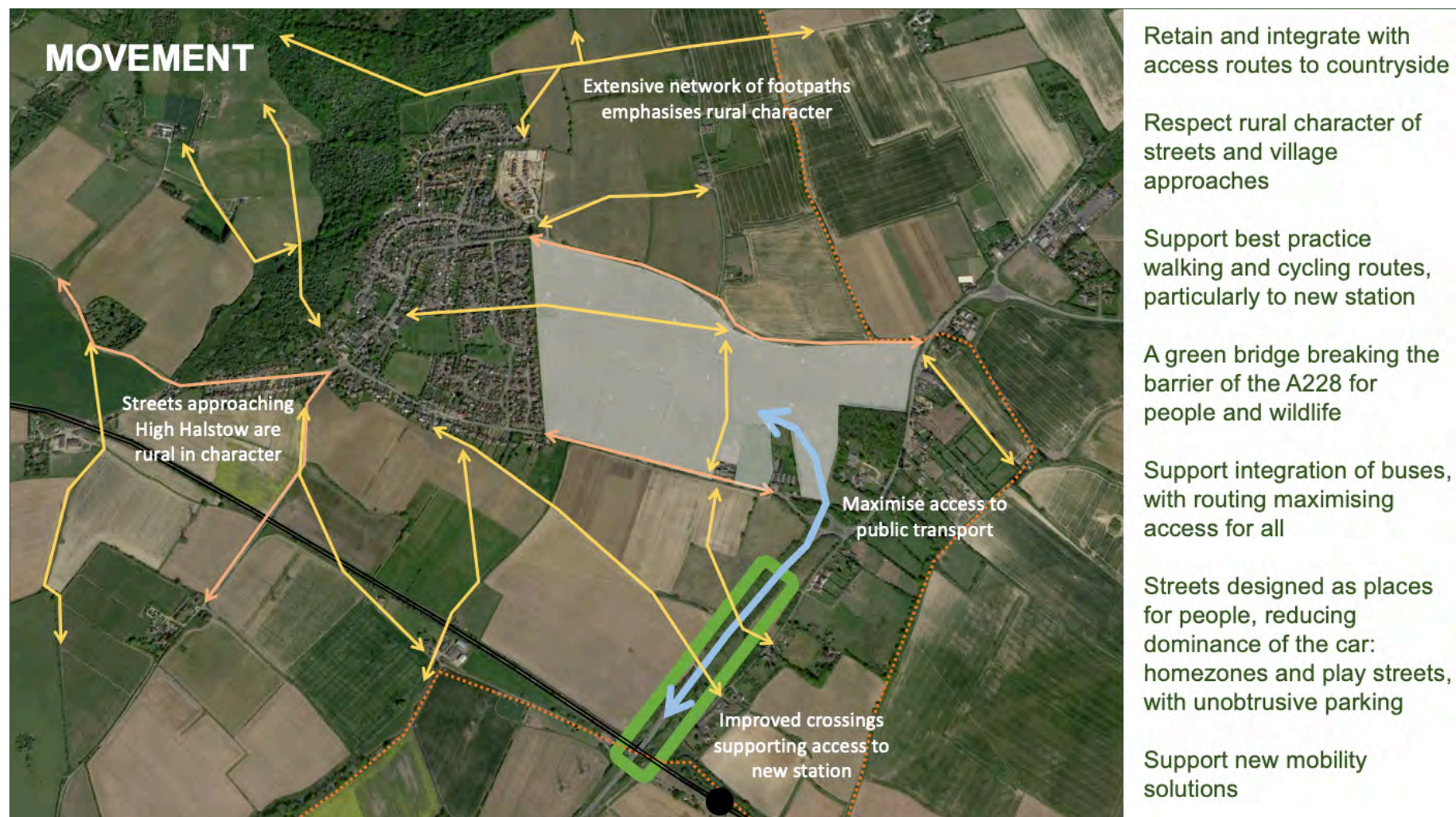


Figure 14: Indicative concept plan showing summary of aspirations for access and movement in High Halstow (image source: Google Earth).



Figure 15: Plan of existing rights of way network in High Halstow (source: Medway Council, May 2020, Medway Rights of Way Improvement Plan, 2020-2030)

- 6.3 Medway Council has prepared a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)³³. This sets out the priorities and actions for improving Public Rights of Way across the Medway administrative area over the ten year period 2020-2030, with a focus on providing opportunities for all to access the countryside as well as making active lifestyle and sustainable travel choices.
- 6.4 Public access routes in High Halstow include footpaths, bridleways, byways and cycle paths. For the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan, these are termed 'green routes'. These help promote healthy lifestyles and reinforce High Halstow's natural landscape character. All existing green routes should be retained and incorporated within proposals for development. Any diversion or stopping up on an existing route will be subject to an application for permission.
- 6.5 Any proposed new routes that complement the existing network of public rights of way in High Halstow, or improvements to existing routes, should be delivered in accordance with best practice principles for design and maintenance. Sustrans, for example, recommends that cycle routes should include a smooth surface with good drainage properties and long-term durability. Handbooks for cycle route design³⁴ and greenway management³⁵ published by Sustrans are a source of best practice for implementing and maintain routes for all. Reference as appropriate should also be made to Ramblers Advice and British Horse Society Advice notes.

Policy HH M1: Green routes

1. Where existing green routes run through proposed development sites the green route shall be retained and incorporated into the development proposals. Such routes should be fully integrated within the layout and form of development, with active frontages overlooking them, providing natural surveillance and encouraging use. The stopping up of green routes will be strongly opposed. Any proposal that would result in the loss of a green route or change which might undermine the quality of the route must be justified and any harm minimised.
2. The provision of improved green routes and new green routes, is strongly encouraged. Where new routes, or improvements to existing routes, are provided, they should accord with best practice design principles, including those established by Sustrans in the 'Handbook for Cycle Friendly Design' and 'Greenway Management Handbook'.

³³ Medway Council, May 2020, Medway Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020-2030

³⁴ Sustrans, April 2014, Sustrans design manual: Handbook for cycle-friendly design

³⁵ Sustrans, June 2016, Sustrans design manual: Greenway management handbook

- 6.6 The Parish benefits from the presence of the coastal path which runs along the coastal marshes and provides a strong east west link. This is however undermined by poor north south connectivity to villages on the Peninsula, including High Halstow. This is recognised in the Medway landscape Character Assessment which notes that the footpath network, and in particular north south links to the coastal path, should be improved. At present, because of the gaps in the network, as well as topography which can be challenging in parts, access to the coastal path is restricted for some, with the car being used by others. The Parish Council is keen to explore opportunities to improve connectivity with the coastal path for people on foot and bicycle. This is identified as a Project / Aspiration in the blue box labelled HH Ma below.

Project / Aspiration HH Ma: Links to Coastal Path

1. The Parish Council is keen to work with partner organisations to explore the feasibility of delivering new links between the village and the Coastal Path. The feasibility exercise will need to include assessments of the environmental impacts of any proposed routes.
2. Routes shall be well-signed and useable in all weathers. As with Policy HH M1: Green routes, such a link should be designed in accordance with best-practice principles.

Active travel (walking and cycling)

- 6.7 High Halstow is relatively isolated from main towns and settlements within Medway, and it is recognised that, given this context, many journeys will still take place by car. However, and set in the context of the Climate Emergency, alternative forms of movement will need to be explored. Indeed, this message was made through feedback to community consultation and extends to include support for an increase in walking and cycling, particularly for short journeys within the Parish, public transport (both bus and rail), and use of E-vehicles. This is reflective of the hierarchy of movement established in national policy and the emerging Local Plan for Medway. Furthermore, and as indicated in the breakdown of the carbon footprint for the parish (Figure 4), transport is a major generator of carbon dioxide emissions. Introducing more sustainable and active forms of travel, and which are attractive to all to use, will help contribute to reduce the carbon footprint.
- 6.8 The main built-up area of High Halstow is relatively compact, with walking possible across much of the area, with good links existing between homes, parks and community facilities, and with a network of public rights of way extending into the countryside.



Figure 16: The Saxon Shore Way

- 6.9 With future growth to the east of High Halstow the village, and distances travelled, will increase. However, with the provision of a good network of connected walking and cycling routes it should be possible to walk between the existing and new development area and, for slightly longer journeys, cycling distances should remain comfortable for all.
- 6.10 Efforts to make walking and cycling the 'norm' for short journeys should be prioritised. Indeed, this is now required by the Government, with the updated Traffic Management Act³⁶ requiring local authorities to introduce new measures that make walking and cycling safer and more attractive propositions for all people of all ages and abilities.

³⁶ Department for Transport, May 2020, Statutory Guidance, Traffic Management Act 2004: network management in response to COVID-19

- 6.11 The Government's Cycling and Walking Investment strategy³⁷ points to the importance of and need for investment in new infrastructure to support active travel. It is recognised that encouraging a mode shift from private vehicles to walking and cycling has many benefits, with research showing that this is good for the environment, for health and social well-being, and for the economy³⁸.
- 6.12 Although there are numerous public rights of way in the neighbourhood plan area, there is only one signed cycle route: route number 179, also known as the Heron Trail, forms part of the National Cycle Network, linking High Halstow with Cliffe, Hoo St Werburgh, Higham and Strood.
- 6.13 New development should be based around the idea of filtered permeability, allowing people to walk and cycle conveniently between the home and other destinations. Such an approach also allows connections for deliveries and emergency services, but car access is less direct, reducing through traffic and encouraging a shift away from the car for shorter journeys. Routes should be designed with safety in mind, both from motorised traffic but also from crime and concern for personal safety. Where new routes are created within development, these should be overlooked, with active frontages, created by windows and doors, opening onto the street. They should also be well-lit to allow safe movement at night time. Routes that are located to the rear or between properties, and which are enclosed by garden fences, vegetation or blank walls are discouraged.
- 6.14 To make cycling an attractive proposition new and existing routes must be segregated from motorised traffic on high-volume roads. Safe crossing points should be provided at junctions. In quieter residential areas cycling may be incorporated within the street, though streets should be designed with slow speeds and the mixing of users in mind. Shared space schemes in quieter residential areas may be appropriate, and should form part of a landscape-led approach to the design of the space. Cycle parking should be located close to the entrance of new homes and other buildings, with changing facilities provided where appropriate. The design of new cycle infrastructure should be appropriate to place, reflecting local character and identity.

³⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy> accessed July 2020

³⁸ See, for example, the Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT) developed by the World Health Organisation (Europe) which is designed to help conduct economic assessments of the health benefits of walking or cycling by estimating the value of reduced mortality that results from specified amounts of walking or cycling (<https://www.heatwalkingcycling.org/#homepage>). Also, see, London School of Economics, 2011, The British Cycling Economy: Gross Cycling Product (<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/38063/>), and Arup for Victoria Walks, 2018, The economic case for investment in walking

Policy HH M2: Active Travel

1. All applications for major residential and commercial development as well as community facilities must demonstrate how they support active travel through delivery of new walking and cycle routes, and or improvements to existing routes, reducing reliance on motorised vehicles.
2. Where new walking and cycling routes are provided they must be direct, safe and convenient to use. They must be designed for use by all people, of all ages and abilities, including those with baby-buggies, using frames or wheelchairs.
3. The layout of proposed development will allow for the natural surveillance of routes through overlooking with active development frontages.
4. Where there are existing walking and cycling routes within or adjacent to a development site, proposals for development are required to show how they link into these networks. Proposals must not result in the loss of existing walking or cycling routes, nor reduce the capacity or safety of that infrastructure.
5. Where new cycle routes are provided, they will reflect best practice principles and should be designed such that they can be used in all weather conditions.
6. Proposals for residential development shall provide secure cycle storage assigned to the dwelling. This must be located within or immediately adjacent to the property, fully-enclosed and at ground-level.
7. Proposals for commercial, leisure and community uses should support and enable active travel through inclusion of safe, secure and convenient cycle parking and changing facilities where appropriate. This must include provision of dry and secure cycle parking.

Project / Aspiration HH Mb: New walking and cycle routes

1. The Parish Council is keen to work with partner organisations to explore the feasibility of delivering new and or improved walking and cycling routes in the Parish, including:
 - a) Routes between the existing settlement area, development on land to the east of High Halstow and the proposed new railway station.
 - b) A green bridge across the A228 that provides safe crossing for people and for wildlife.
 - c) Improved connections to the coastal path from the existing settlement area.

Public transport (bus and rail)

- 6.15 It is recognised that not everybody will be able to walk and cycle, and that for some purposes, it will be necessary to travel longer distances, particularly for work and other activities that have a wider regional function, including, for example, universities, hospitals and cultural activities. Bus services can provide a viable and sustainable alternative to the car. However, where bus services are limited then it can result in disconnected communities, reliance on the car (thus contributing to pollution and congestion), increased isolation and cost of living. Perhaps most significantly the Campaign for Better Transport states that:

The loss of good bus links can undermine whole communities, creating places where non-car households cannot easily live. Loss of bus services hinders people's access to work, learning, healthcare, choice of shops and social, cultural and sporting activities, and makes vital services, such as doctor's surgeries, more difficult to reach'.³⁹

- 6.16 The importance of the bus network to social cohesion and inclusiveness is emphasised in statistics from the Department for Transport which show journey times to services in rural areas are around double that in urban areas⁴⁰, and that 60 percent of all road fatalities occur on country roads: almost eleven times higher than on motorways⁴¹. People in rural areas are thus being asked to travel further and potentially at greater risk.
- 6.17 Public Transport provision to and from High Halstow, and the Hoo Peninsula as a whole, is limited. Bus (and Coach services) are infrequent and include 'specialist services' as listed below, as well as school and long distance commuter services⁴².
- Route 10: High Halstow – The Hundred of Hoo Academy (school service)
 - Route 191: Grain – Lower Stoke – Allhallows – Hoo – Rochester – Chatham
 - Route 193: Cliffe – Hoo – Rochester – Chatham (Sundays only)
 - Route 692: Lower Stoke – Allhallows – Hoo – Rochester Grammar Schools (school service)
 - Route 765: Kingsnorth – Hoo – Strood – London (coach/commuter service)
 - Route 796: Grain – Lower Stoke – Allhallows – Chatham

³⁹ Campaign for Better Transport, September 2019, The Future of the Bus: policy and fiscal intervention as part of a National Bus Strategy

⁴⁰ Department for Transport, 2014, Journey Time Statistics: Access to services

⁴¹ Department for transport and Robert Goodwill MP, 14 October 2014, Country roads deadlier than you THINK! Press release

⁴² <https://www.arrivabus.co.uk/kent-and-surrey/floating/medway/medway-bus-routes/?tax=112681> and <https://bustimes.org/localities/high-halstow>

- 6.18 The limited nature of the bus service was raised by the community in consultation events, stating that, for the majority of the day, there is only one bus every two hours and that if there is a cancellation (as is often the case) then it can mean a four hour wait for the next bus. This clearly disadvantages many people, including all those who do not have access to a private car.
- 6.19 In High Halstow it is therefore important that investment in walking and cycling infrastructure is matched by a commitment to improving the quality and frequency of the bus service for the benefit of all residents. Indeed, this echoes recommendations in the Governments 'Bus Back Better' strategy⁴³.
- 6.20 Any future growth of High Halstow to the east must allow for the incorporation of bus routing through the site and into the existing village, such that all residents are within walking distance of a bus stop. Comfortable walking distances to bus stops for able-bodied people are around 300-400 metres, equivalent to a five minute walk. Bus stops within any future growth area on land to the east of High Halstow shall be located to minimise walking distances to these. This also means providing for a permeable network of walking routes to and from the bus stops, as well as good waiting facilities and service information that encourage their use.
- 6.21 From the future growth area on land to the east of High Halstow bus routes are likely to make use of Christmas Lane, Britannia Road and Ratcliffe Highway. Junction improvements and bus priority measures that help support more efficient services at these points are welcome. Best practice guidance on bus routing and infrastructure within new housing developments should be referred to⁴⁴.

⁴³ DfT, 2021, Bus Back Better, National Bus Strategy for England

⁴⁴ CIHT, January 2018, Buses in Urban Developments

Policy HH M3: Bus services, routes and infrastructure

1. Proposals for development should respond to the need to reduce the generation of road traffic and help reduce air and noise pollution. Development will, where appropriate to the scale of proposals, incorporate sustainable transport measures, including new bus routing, new or improved waiting facilities, including real time information, and or accessibility to services, which may include new crossing points next to bus stops.
2. Infrastructure for new bus services should be provided that links development on land to the east of High Halstow with the existing village area and the proposed new railway station to the south of the Parish.
3. As part of development on land to the east of High Halstow provision for bus routing must be made from the site. Bus stops should be located so that all residents are within walking distance of a bus stop. Streets must be carefully designed to balance the needs of competing users and avoid conflicts between bus users, pedestrians and cyclists.
4. The provision of bus priority measures will be supported as part of the growth area, enhancing bus access and service efficiencies between High Halstow and the new railway station. This may involve the remodeling of the Christmas Lane / Ratcliffe Highway roundabout.

- 6.22 The Housing Infrastructure Fund awarded to Medway Council will support the provision of a new rail passenger station at Sharnal Street, located immediately outside the parish boundary. Although the Neighbourhood Plan can only set policies for land within the Neighbourhood Area, it is important that development of the station and any major growth in High Halstow is undertaken holistically.
- 6.23 To be an effective and attractive transport option the station will need to be easily accessible and integrated with the wider movement network, allowing for journeys to and from the station by foot, bicycle and public transport. Convenient step-free access combined with secure and covered cycle storage should be provided, with bus stops located close to the station entrance.
- 6.24 Access by foot or bicycle to the station will require users to cross the A228 Ratcliffe Highway. This is a busy road with fast moving traffic and a record of accidents (see Appendix 3). Safe crossing points are thus required and, for these to be used as the default choice must be available upon opening of the station. Various options for provision of safe crossings exist, though the preference would be for a green bridge, allowing seamless foot and cycle access across the A228, connecting with the existing network of public rights of way. This could also make use of the existing topography

along the A228. Indeed, the Medway Council publication, 'Planning for Growth on the Hoo Peninsula', envisages provision of a green bridge along the A228 to 'provide easy access across the A228'.

- 6.25 A green bridge would also have wider benefits in providing safe crossing points for local wildlife and linking in with wider ecological networks. This is recognised by Natural England⁴⁵ whom welcome provision of such bridges as they allow wildlife movement, stop species from becoming isolated, and reduce traffic accidents. Research for Natural England draws upon the green bridge across the A21 at Scotney Castle which is in Kent in the High Weald Area of Natural Beauty and relatively close to High Halstow. This provides access, landscape and habitat connectivity.

Policy HH M4: Rail services, routes and infrastructure

1. Proposals for growth to the east of High Halstow shall incorporate provision of new walking and cycling links between the village, growth areas and railway station.
2. These routes should be direct, well-lit (with low level lighting) and available to use in all weather conditions.
3. Safe crossing points must be provided across the A228 Ratcliffe Highway for pedestrians, cyclists and, as far as possible, wildlife, facilitating safe movement between High Halstow and future railway station. This crossing point should connect as seamlessly as possible to existing public rights of way and should take the form of a green bridge.
4. The crossing point shall be provided at the same time and ready for use upon opening of the station.

⁴⁵ Natural England, 2015, Green Bridges: A literature review

Street design and safety

- 6.26 The sense of connection to the main towns within Medway (such as Rochester) is key to the rural character and identity of the Parish and the main built-up area of High Halstow. Country lanes are more typical than dual carriageways and main roads in the road network on the Peninsula.
- 6.27 Access to and from the Hoo Peninsula is restricted to the A228 which leads into Strood and then on to Rochester. From High Halstow access to the A228 is via Christmas Lane or Dux Court Road.
- 6.28 Although the junctions of Christmas Lane and Dux Court Road with the A228 comprise key gateways into the village they can equally be points of congestion. The nature of these junctions and the presence of traffic travelling at higher speeds on the main road helps explain why there have been several recorded traffic incidents across the two access points since 2015. There have also been several recorded traffic incidents along The Street, which is the main route running through High Halstow⁴⁶.
- 6.29 Initiatives that improve traffic safety are thus welcome, including reconfiguration of existing road and junctions, as well as designing roads and streets within areas of new development that allow for the safe movement of all. This is recognised by Medway Council in the 'Planning for Growth on the Hoo Peninsula' document, which states that:
- Certain forms of street layout are more likely to be conducive to walking and cycling. Design considerations are also important factors for specific groups and contribute to making high-quality places.*
- 'Home-Zones' can encourage more street and community activities through the integration of play, socialising and car parking. Parking for bicycles and large vehicles including commercial vans will also be a vital part of the key design process and not introduced as an afterthought'.⁴⁷*
- 6.30 Indeed, the updated Traffic Management Act published by the Government in May 2020⁴⁸ expects local authorities to make significant changes to road layouts to give more space to pedestrians and cyclists and, by extension, make them safer places for all, supporting active and healthy lifestyles.

⁴⁶ CrashMap: <https://www.crashmap.co.uk/Search>

⁴⁷ Medway Council, March 2020, Planning for Growth on the Hoo Peninsula

⁴⁸ Department for Transport, May 2020, Traffic Management Act 2004: network management in response to COVID-19

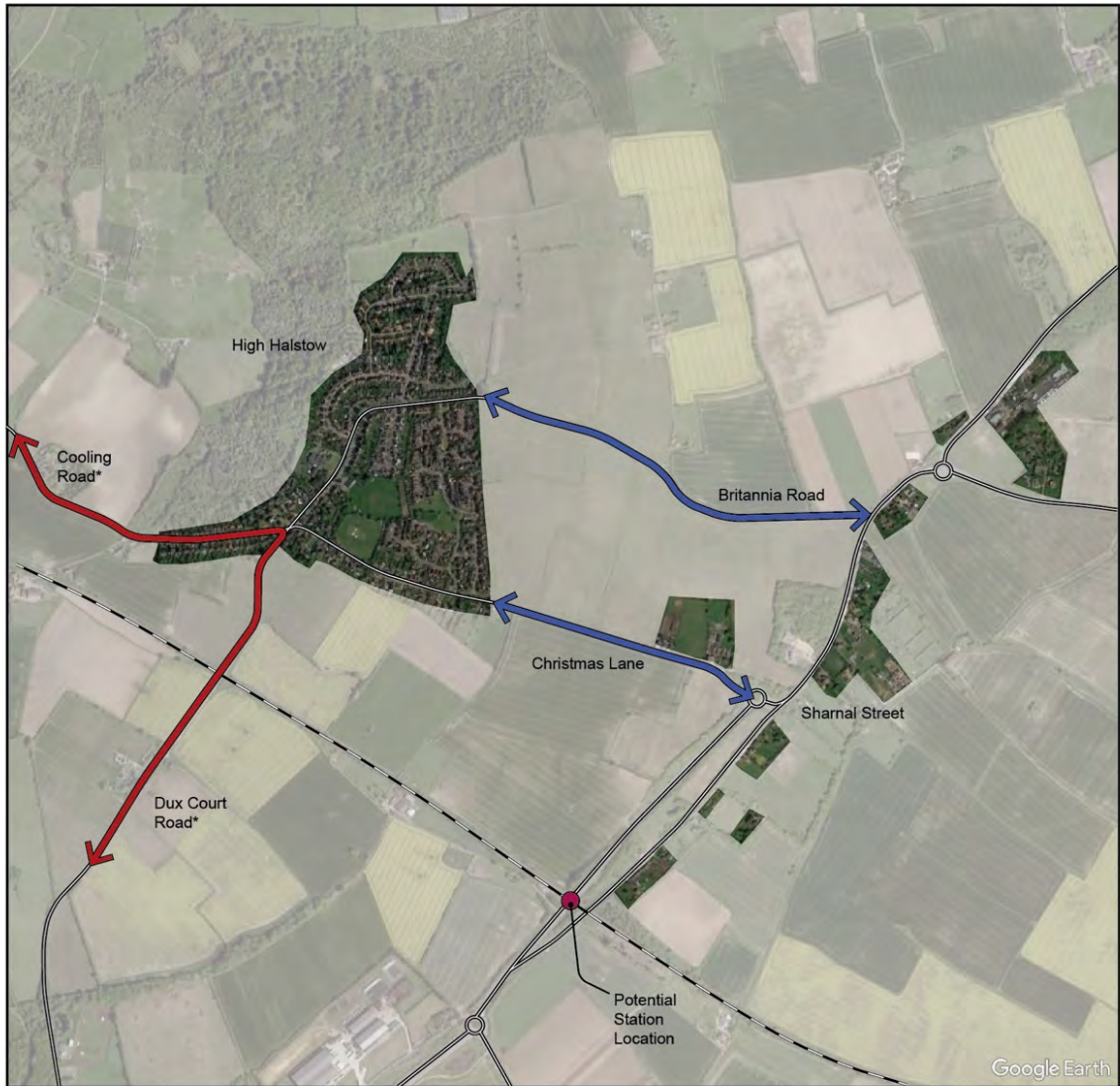
- 6.31 The safety of the highway network, for all users, is of paramount importance to the Parish Council. The Parish Council is keen to work with Medway Council, as highway authority, as well as other relevant organisations, to identify and deliver traffic management measures that improve safety for all.
- 6.32 Within the future growth area at land to the east of High Halstow the application for development should include a street hierarchy, illustrating cross-sections through different street typologies. Streets should be designed to facilitate safe movement by all and reflect guidance as outlined in Manual for Streets. Design features should be incorporated that discourage speeding. A set of example street types area illustrated in the High Halstow Design Code and should be used to inform proposals for new development areas. Equally, these examples can be used as a basis for thinking about retrofitting existing streets in High Halstow.
- 6.33 All four roads into the village (Dux Court Road, Christmas Lane, Britannia Road and Cooling Road – see Figure 17) are rural in character and all being of varying width with passing places. Dux Court Road and Cooling Road in particular are historic routes and reflect the rich heritage of the ancient movement network in rural Kent. Those parts of both routes within the parish are protected rural lanes. All are an important and defining characteristic of the village’s rural identity. This identity can be easily lost by the addition of highway paraphernalia, such as lighting, bollards, signage, road markings etc or by engineered improvements or the loss of rural features such as hedges, verges and ditches. It is recognised that there is a need for provision of safe routes for cyclists and pedestrians to access the new station proposed at Sharnal Street. Where new routes are to be provided they should be well integrated with the landscape and seek to preserve and enhance the natural character and landscape of the rural lanes. Urbanising features shall be avoided wherever possible, except where that road section already incorporates such features (e.g.: footways) or where required for road safety purposes.

Policy HH M5: Street design

1. Proposals for land to the east of High Halstow shall be based around a permeable street network that is safe for people to travel around by foot and by bicycle. Culs-de-sac should be avoided where possible.
2. A hierarchy of streets shall be integrated within the growth area, reflecting different characteristics and responding to guidance illustrated in the forthcoming High Halstow Design Code. Blank frontages to streets must be avoided.
3. Proposals for play streets and homezones within new development areas will be supported, including shared spaces, greenery, traffic calming and low speed limits.
4. Proposals for development and engineering works, including proposals for development which obtain access from the existing rural roads (Dux Court Road, Christmas Lane, Britannia Road and Cooling Road) must ensure that they are designed to protect and enhance the rural character of them. Schemes for development east of High Halstow will seek to provide off line, segregated cycle and pedestrian routes adjacent to Britannia Road and Christmas Lane where possible. The character of Britannia Road and Christmas Lane, reflected in its width and presence of vegetation along it, shall be retained, but with a segregated pedestrian and cycle route running parallel to though set back from the road alignment.
5. Those parts of Dux Court Road and Cooling Road within High Halstow parish are protected rural lanes. They will be protected and enhanced. Any proposal that would result in harm or loss must be justified. Any alterations to the protected rural lanes should not adversely impact upon the landscape value nor historic significance of the lane and must make use of materials that reflect the character of the lane. Urbanising features shall be avoided wherever possible.

Project HH Mc: Traffic management and safety

1. The Parish Council will liaise with Medway Council to prioritise improvements to the highway network across the Parish which include the redesign of (i) key junctions to make them safer for all, and (ii) roads, particularly those through the built-up areas, to reduce traffic speeds and provide improved conditions for pedestrians.



- KEY**
-  Protected Rural Lanes
 -  Other Rural Roads
 -  Routes Extend Beyond Parish Boundaries
 -  Road Network
 -  Railway
 -  Potential Railway Station

Figure 17: Rural roads in High Halstow (map source: Google Earth). Note: more recent plans prepared by Medway Council show the station being located further east of the Ratcliffe Highway than indicated in this figure.

New technology and transport solutions

- 6.34 Technological solutions associated with mobility are evolving at a rapid pace. With Medway Council having announced a Climate Change Emergency it is important for new development to embrace new ideas that provide wider choice and opportunity for people to access a range of greener transport options.
- 6.35 The House of Commons cross-party Science and Technology Select Committee has reported⁴⁹ that, if the UK is to meet climate change targets, then transport solutions are required. It reports that *'in the long-term, widespread personal vehicle ownership does not appear to be compatible with significant decarbonisation'*. Improvements in public transport, walking and cycling are supported.
- 6.36 The Government is committed, through the 'Road to Zero' Strategy⁵⁰, to half of all new car sales being ultra-low emission vehicles by 2030 (with the sale of all petrol and diesel vehicles phased out by 2040), whilst also rolling-out the necessary infrastructure to support provision of electric vehicles. The National Infrastructure Audit⁵¹ goes further than this and includes recommendations that are based on preparing for the sale of all new cars by 2030 to be electric. More recently, the Government has launched a consultation⁵² on proposals to make it mandatory for all new homes to be fitted with an electric car charging point.
- 6.37 It is recognised that people in High Halstow will continue to own cars, and that they will continue to be used for some journeys. The provision of new technology and mobility solutions though is intended to provide wider choice and opportunity for all, reducing reliance on private car ownership and use, contributing to an improved environment.
- 6.38 Support will be given to projects and proposals that embed new technologies, providing a wider range of choice and opportunity for all. Such technology must be designed such that it does not cause obstruction within the public realm (e.g.: e-vehicle charging points and cables placed on the footway which impede pedestrian movement).

⁴⁹ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/science-and-technology-committee/news-parliament-2017/clean-growth-report-published-17-19/>

⁵⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-road-to-zero-strategy-to-lead-the-world-in-zero-emission-vehicle-technology>

⁵¹ <https://www.nic.org.uk/our-work/national-infrastructure-assessment/>

⁵² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/electric-car-chargepoints-to-be-installed-in-all-future-homes-in-world-first>

- 6.39 Mobility as a Service (MaaS) is an emerging transport model that challenges the traditional concept of private car use and ownership. In its current form, MaaS is an app-based product that enables customers to access a journey planner to show which routes and combination of travel modes are available to them, including public transport, docked hire vehicles or on-demand services. Research published by the Government⁵³ acknowledges that MaaS will transform the way in which people travel, and that this needs reflecting policy decisions. The research states:

'MaaS potentially offers a paradigm shift from transport being fundamentally provider-led (i.e.: where fixed capacity is provided to service a predictable demand), to being a fully user-led system whereby the level and type of transport supply continually adjust in response to the specific desires of individual travellers.'

- 6.40 Such services can be provided within publicly accessible mobility hubs, providing choice and opportunity, but also integrated with other services, such as parcel collection points, responding to the increase in home delivery arising from the Covid Pandemic.
- 6.41 Proposals for new development in High Halstow should be future-proofed and embed new technology and mobility solutions that provide wider choice and opportunity for all, which reduce reliance on private car use and ownership, and which contribute to an improved environment. All new homes should be supplied with super-fast charging points, reflecting guidance from the Institute of Air Quality management and as consulted upon by the Government in proposed changes to Building Regulations.

⁵³ Foresight, Government Office for Science, December 2018, Mobility as a Service (Maas) in the UK: change and its implications

Policy HH M6: E-vehicles, Mobility as a Service and Mobility Hubs

1. Proposals for communal e-vehicle charging points, including super-fast chargers, and shared mobility infrastructure within the public realm are encouraged.
2. Where proposed, such infrastructure should be located sensitively to ensure that there are no harmful impacts upon pedestrian circulation or the immediate appearance of the street scene and wider townscape. Wherever possible, EV charging infrastructure, such as cabling, should be provided in such a way that it can be expanded in the future to provide additional charging points and accommodate faster charging technology.
3. Proposals for EV infrastructure and mobility hubs will be supported in the following locations, subject to compliance with wider policies in the Development Plan and any forthcoming EV Strategy to be published by Medway Council:
 - a) Within the car park adjacent to the Village Hall.
 - b) Within the area of land allocated for development to the east of High Halstow, including any new 'community hub' areas.
 - c) At the proposed new rail station to the south of the Parish.
4. All new homes shall be fitted with e-vehicle charging points.



7. Place Quality

- 7.1 The policies and projects contained within this section of the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the objectives below and are summarised in Figure 18.

Objective 02:

To preserve and improve sympathetic access to existing green spaces and further provide additional green spaces within the developed environment.

Objective 03:

To maintain and enhance the strong sense of community and maximise the opportunity for engagement.

Objective 04:

To keep High Halstow a rural village.

Objective 05:

To maintain and develop High Halstow as an area rich in history and natural beauty, as well as supporting local leisure and tourism opportunities.

Objective 07:

To provide a sustainable environment for the residents and wildlife of High Halstow whilst being mindful of conserving an ecological balance.

Objective 09:

Housing should be relevant to community need and sympathetic to local styles

High quality design

- 7.2 Good design has a major role in contributing to quality of life and creating attractive, livable places. This goes beyond the look of buildings and considers: the mix of uses and activities that help create lively and interesting places; the local character and distinctiveness of a place, reflected through its landscape and building materials for example, contributing to healthy lifestyles by making it easy for people to move on foot and by bike; fostering a sense of community through well designed, functional and attractive public spaces; and enhancing the quality of environment.



Figure 18: Indicative concept plan showing summary of aspirations for design quality in High Halstow (image source: Google Earth)

- 7.3 The achievement of high quality design is a core principle of the NPPF. It states, at paragraph 126, that *'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps makes development acceptable to communities'*. The importance of the design of the built environment and its contribution to making better places for people is emphasised. It goes on to note that *'Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development'* (paragraph 127).
- 7.4 In short, good design will help create high quality, safe and successful places where people enjoy living, working and visiting. This is emphasised in the National Design Guide⁵⁴, which should be referred to by all involved in the planning system when shaping, responding to and considering applications for planning permission. This recognises the importance of local character and the role of the community in the design process. It states (at paragraph 17) that:

'Local communities can play a vital role in achieving well-designed places and buildings and making sure there is a relationship between the built environment and quality of life'.



Figure 19: Street scene showing recent housing development in High Halstow

⁵⁴ MHCLG, September 2019, National Design Guide: Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places

- 7.5 Alongside and in support of this Neighbourhood Plan a Design Code has been prepared. This sets out design guidance, principles and codes for development that may come forward over the Plan period. The codes are informed by an understanding of the local characteristics and qualities that define the area and the qualities that future development should respond to.
- 7.6 The design code provides a point of reference for design standards in High Halstow. It is expected that all new developments will follow the guidance contained in the Design Code and that applicants will demonstrate how they have taken account of them. This approach is in line with proposed changes to the planning system which emphasise the importance of design and role of design codes⁵⁵.
- 7.7 Within the framework of the High Halstow Design Code innovative design, which raises the standard of design in High Halstow, but which also promotes and reinforces local distinctiveness, is welcome. This includes the use of contemporary design approaches where they respond positively to context.
- 7.8 Architectural competitions are encouraged, providing interest and variety whilst reflecting the key qualities and design cues identified in the High Halstow Design Code and reflecting principles established in Building for a Healthy Life⁵⁶. Such an approach is particularly supported on proposals for larger schemes and where the scheme can be broken down into different parcels or phases, each creating their own character.

Project / Aspiration HH PQa: Architectural variety and innovation

1. Site promoters and developers are encouraged to run architectural competitions that lead to variety and interest whilst responding to the positive characteristic features of High Halstow outlined in the High Halstow Design Guide.
2. Where larger schemes are capable of being delivered in phases and or include several development outlets, support is given to use of multiple architectural practices, each leading on the design detail for one parcel or outlet, but operating within an overarching masterplan for the site that establishes key principles, such as layout, connectivity and green infrastructure.

⁵⁵ MHCLG, January 2021, National Model Design Code (Consultation version)

⁵⁶ Design for Homes, July 2020, Building for a Healthy Life: A design toolkit for neighbourhoods, streets, homes and public spaces.

Policy HH PQ1: Design

1. Proposals for new development will be expected to respond positively to the setting and character of High Halstow, and reflect the guidance and principles outlined in the High Halstow Design Code (Appendix 4).
2. Proposals for new development shall meet the following criteria:
 - a) Design-led approach: All development should take a design-led approach underpinned by good design principles and reflecting a thorough site appraisal.
 - b) Context: Development should create a positive relationship between the site and the existing built-up area, including use of materials and architectural details.
 - c) Plot width: Plots should be of sufficient width so as not to cause overlooking and to allow for the separation between dwellings to a scale that reflects the positive character of the immediate vicinity and rural setting of the parish.
 - d) Building Line: Where the set-back from the road or pavement of existing buildings is a feature of the area, new development should respect that building line.
 - e) Visual separation: New buildings must have similar spacing between buildings to that commonly found on the street frontage.
 - f) Building height: New buildings should reflect the height of existing buildings in the immediate vicinity.
 - g) Daylight and sunlight: New buildings should not adversely affect neighbouring properties by seriously reducing the amount of daylight available.
 - h) Boundary treatment: Boundary treatments along the frontage of the scheme should reflect the immediate area.
 - i) Access: Applications for infill developments must have direct access to the highway.
3. Applicants are required to demonstrate how proposals for development have been informed by the guidance within the Design Code and guidance set out in Building for a Healthy Life.
4. Development proposals that establish bespoke design solutions and residential typologies that demonstrate an imaginative sense of place whilst respecting the local context are actively encouraged.

Heritage assets

- 7.9 High Halstow has been occupied since at least the iron age. The Parish Boundary of High Halstow includes several important historic features, some listed and some not. The village was established in the Saxon period, with the historic core of the village found in the area round the Church of St. Margaret and The Red Dog Public House. Both are listed buildings. The Church is a Grade I listed building thought to date from the thirteenth century, remodelled and enlarged in the fifteenth century. The Public House is Grade II listed. In addition, the Halstow Marshes Decoy Pond is a designated Scheduled Monument. It dates from the late seventeenth century and is a very rare example of a well-preserved, near complete duck decoy and the only surviving example of such in Kent.
- 7.10 Very close to, but just outside the parish boundary, are the remains of the Cooling Radio Station⁵⁷, which was constructed in 1938 as a short wave radio station and housed 'Multiple Unit Steerable Antenna'. This system was the most advanced and last major technological development in the short-wave communication era. Other than Cooling, there were only two other radio stations built in the world using this system. The Radio Station was used as a means to find and track U-boats in the Second World War.
- 7.11 Policies set out in the NPPF and Medway Local Plan in respect of listed buildings and designated heritage assets apply for proposals impacting on them. In addition, non-designated heritage assets in the parish shall also be protected and enhanced. Shade House (Figure 20) is particularly significant to the history of the area and is identified in this Neighbourhood Plan as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 7.12 Shade House was built in the eighteenth century specifically to aid the landing of contraband associated with smuggling activity that was once rife in the area. The windows of this box-like building all face inland, which enable good views of anyone approaching the building. The building is isolated within the marshes, reflecting the malarial conditions once prevalent in this area. Further information is provided in Appendix 5.

⁵⁷ More can be found in research published by English Heritage, Research Department Report Series no. 110-2010, Cooling Radio Station, Hoo Peninsula Kent, An Archaeological Investigation of a Short-Wave Receiving Station



Figure 20: Shade House, Halstow Marsh. Source: <http://highhalstow.org.uk/our-village/>

- 7.13 The area also has a strong aeronautical connection. Amy Johnson, the first female pilot to attempt a solo flight between Britain and Australia crashed and passed away in the Thames Estuary. Geoffrey de Havilland, testing the Swallow aircraft also crashed in the area, with the wreckage of the plane landing in the mud at Egypt Bay. There are also thought to be the remains of one or several Spitfire planes in High Halstow. All have significance as part of the history of High Halstow.

Policy HH PQ2: Non-designated Heritage and Archaeological Assets

1. Development proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets and their settings within the Parish Boundary shall be permitted only if they protect and enhance the historic or architectural interest of the asset and their settings. Shade House, on the High Halstow marshes, is specifically identified as being of importance in respect historic smuggling activities in the area and is a non-designated heritage asset.
2. Where the remains of any military or other plane crashes are discovered they shall be excavated in line with best practice and records of the damage recorded and published.

Land to the east of High Halstow

- 7.14 Land to the east of High Halstow is likely to be allocated in an emerging Medway Local Plan for the development of new homes and supporting community facilities. This is reflected in the Hoo Development Framework⁵⁸ and linked to delivery of new road and rail infrastructure through the Housing Infrastructure Fund awarded to Medway Council. Until such time as the new Medway Local Plan is adopted, with the site allocated for development and the required infrastructure delivered to support development, the site continues to be considered unsuitable in principle for large scale development, on account of its poor transport link, the loss of open and productive high quality agricultural land and the absence of necessary and essential infrastructure. Applications for large scale housing development will be considered premature ahead of the new Medway Local Plan being adopted.
- 7.15 Land identified for growth immediately adjoins the eastern edge of the village and is bound to the north by Britannia Road, to the south by Christmas Lane, and to the east by Sharnal Street and Fisher's Wood. Britannia Road and Christmas Lane comprise the main points of entry into the site, though both these roads are narrow and currently lack provision for pedestrians and cyclists. The topography of the site slopes towards the east. The site presents a number of opportunities that should be reflected in its design and layout.
- 7.16 Opportunities for improvement, for High Halstow as a whole, will include:
- Provision of new community facilities and amenities, including new school places and health facilities, to serve High Halstow residents, and which are accessible to and well-integrated with the existing built-up area. Such facilities should be located in the village centre or, where this isn't possible or practicable, in close proximity to the existing community.
 - Presence of landscape features that give character to the site and which could be connected with the existing village and wider countryside through a network of green infrastructure.
 - A network of ditches which present opportunities to integrate SuDS.
 - A network of footpaths existing across the site which can form the basis of links with the existing village and towards the new railway station to the south of the Parish.

⁵⁸ Medway Council, September 2021, Hoo Development Framework

- Improvements to the movement network that provide opportunities for people to walk and cycle.
- 7.17 In the event that the site does come forward it should meet the principles of sustainable development, achieve architectural and design excellence, and protection and enhancement of the local ecology.
- 7.18 Development on the site should aim to minimise and mitigate negative impacts on the rural setting as far as possible and seek to maximise the opportunities that benefit the community as a whole. Existing site features should be incorporated within the site and inform a landscape and design-led approach to development, creating usable green space for leisure, recreation and biodiversity purposes. The provision of new community facilities required by the scale of development will help support the quality of life but should be located to maximise accessibility and use by all, strengthening community cohesion. It is important that such uses complement the existing village centre at the heart of the village.
- 7.19 The scale of growth and rate of delivery will likely see a phased approach to development, with multiple outlets being developed in parallel. Architectural variety is encouraged, with a mix of housing types and products delivered.
- 7.20 Future development of the site has been subject to a workshop facilitated by Design South East (March 2021) which recommended that proposals for land to the east of High Halstow should:
- Be set in the context of wider growth proposed across the Hoo Peninsula and show how links can be made between the site and proposed new railway station to support aspirations for increased movement by active travel modes.
 - Respond to the existing settlement pattern, built form, landscape and rural setting, showing how this is reflected in a place-specific masterplanning response.
 - Ensure maximum connectivity and permeability between the site and existing village, such that it is well-integrated with and becomes part of the village, optimizing connectivity to and the viability of the village centre.
 - Develop a varied street typology to define character and identity, and thus housing typologies and densities in different parts of the site.
 - Design green spaces such that they can be actively used, follow desire lines and provide for a range of recreational uses, including opportunities for play and growing (e.g.: allotments) spaces.
- 7.21 Key principles to which growth should conform to are set out in Policy HH PQ4. This should be read in conjunction with all policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and which apply equally to land east of High Halstow.

Policy HH PQ4: Land to the east of High Halstow

1. Applications for development of the site will be considered premature ahead of the new Medway Local Plan being adopted and HIF strategic infrastructure being in place.
2. A comprehensive masterplan for land to the east of High Halstow shall be prepared prior to the submission of a planning application. The masterplan shall be for a residential-led mixed-use development, with supporting facilities to include a new primary and pre-school. The masterplan shall indicate the location of such uses and provision, either on or off-site, of these, as well as new health facilities and other supporting uses, including a café. Provision of an employment hub is required. The proposed layout and spatial distribution of uses should integrate well with the existing built-form and strengthen the centre of High Halstow.
3. The masterplan shall take a landscape-led approach to design, responding to the character and setting of the site. It is expected that the masterplan and associated proposals for development shall be based on delivery of bespoke housing types that add to local distinctiveness and positively contribute to the identity of the village.
4. Development on land to the east of High Halstow should have a sensitive and well-developed relationship with the surrounding countryside at the edge of the site, linking of spaces within the site to the countryside, landscaping within the site, and building form. It should relate well to transport infrastructure, providing access to the surrounding countryside and urban areas by a range of modes and with excellent links to the proposed railway station
5. The following principles shall be incorporated within the proposals for development on land to the east of High Halstow:
 - a) Development shall be integrated into and relate well to the existing Village of High Halstow, strengthening the separate identity of the village as a rural settlement and contribute positively to its distinctive character. It will incorporate a clear and substantial landscape buffer between High Halstow and the Ratcliffe Highway with extensive tree planting and enhancement of the landscape character.
 - b) The masterplan shall identify a series of character areas, each with their own identity and a place within a hierarchy of development, which bring richness in design through variety and interest. The use of standard house types is not encouraged. The Character areas shall respond to the overall spatial framework created by the masterplan but allow for each to be

designed by different architects or developers. The running of design competitions for different character areas or development parcels is strongly encouraged.

- c) Housing growth will be supported by delivery of community facilities including new pre and primary school places. New primary school places will be delivered either by way of expansion of the existing primary school or delivery of a new primary school on the growth area. Where a new school is provided this should be located in close proximity to the existing village area.
- d) A network of permeable and well overlooked streets, walking and cycle routes shall be provided across the growth area, with all homes in easy walking distance of community facilities and green space, including play space. Cul-de-sac and backland development shall be avoided. Parking shall be unobtrusive and respond to good urban design and placemaking principles. A mix of housing types set around pedestrian and cycle friendly streets and spaces, including mews type streets, play streets and homezones shall be provided. A central route through the site which can incorporate bus movements shall be provided. Wherever possible, bus stops should be located so that all residents are within walking distance of a bus stop.
- e) Existing footpaths shall be extended through the growth area, providing an integrated movement network allowing ease of access by foot and bicycle between the growth area, village, Sharnal Street and new station. Safe crossing points shall be provided along the A228 Ratcliffe Highway and delivered at the outset of development. Equally, safe junctions into the site shall be provided at the commencement of development.
- f) Segregated cycle lanes shall be provided to support safe movement, both within the growth area and along Christmas Lane and Britannia Road.
- g) The biodiversity of the site shall be maximised, including the retention of mature trees and provision of open spaces with enhanced biodiversity, including wildflower meadows and new tree planting. A mix of green spaces shall be provided, including a central green space providing a focal point within the new growth area, and which connects with the existing network of green infrastructure. Allotments shall be provided on site and within walking distance of all new homes. New tree planting shall take place within the site, including along new streets, increasing the canopy cover and responding to the existing character of the village with the built form nestled within the landscape.

- h) Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs) should be fully incorporated within the site and integrated with the existing network of ditches and provide a series of north south corridors as part of the network of on-site green infrastructure. SUDs should be multi-functional delivering a range of environmental benefits, adding character and enhancing biodiversity.
 - i) Proposals for public art will be supported and encouragement will be given for a percent of the development costs to be allocated for public art. Proposals for public art will be subject to consultation and are expected to contribute to the local distinctiveness of the village and its wider landscape.
- 6. The masterplan should respond to the guidance outlined in the High Halstow Design Code. Applications for the development of the site should be subject to the submission of a comprehensive Masterplan for the site and its surroundings, including any off site infrastructure, which should provide the layout of the site and the associated highway, pedestrian, cycle and public transport links and improvements, and any other “off-site” facilities and provision.
- 7. It is expected that a Green Travel Plan will be prepared as part of the application material, demonstrating how transport measures within the proposed growth area will contribute towards achievement of zero carbon development.
- 8. It is expected that the masterplan, subsequent planning application and any associated design codes will be subject to design review. The panel should include representatives nominated by the local community.

Design review

- 7.22 The NPPF states (at paragraph 133) that Local Planning Authorities should have access to and make use of tools and processes to assess and improve the design quality of development, including making use of design review arrangements.
- 7.23 Design review is a way of assessing the design quality of new developments by an independent panel of experts to support high standards of design. Guidance on the Design Review process can be found via the Design South East website⁵⁹. The requirement for design review shall be determined by Medway Council.
- 7.24 In High Halstow, it is envisaged that major applications for development, as well as smaller schemes in sensitive or important locations, should be subject to design review. This might include residential, commercial and mixed-use development proposals, infrastructure, community facilities, public realm and open space proposals.
- 7.25 Design review should take place at the pre-application stage to inform the design process and again following submission of the application, helping to inform officer recommendations. The final proposals submitted should show how comments made during the design review have influenced the proposed development.

Project / Aspiration HH PQb: Design review

1. Emerging schemes for major development should be assessed through design review. Design review of smaller schemes is also encouraged, including those in sensitive or important locations.
2. It is envisaged that schemes will be referred to Design South East for review until such a time that Medway Council runs and operates a Design Review Panel.
3. Encouragement is given to early engagement with the Design Review panel, allowing scope for input into emerging designs. The final schemes submitted to the Council should include a report on the design review process and show how the scheme has responded to this. Design Review of live applications is also encouraged.

⁵⁹ <https://designsoutheast.org/services/review/> accessed July 2020

Housing mix and type

- 7.26 Proposals for new development will need to be cognisant of the housing mix and needs established in the Medway Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)⁶⁰ 2015. This is a high level document that has strategic headlines for the authority area as a whole, noting that approximately half of all new homes should be two-bed properties.
- 7.27 Although Policy H2 of the emerging Medway Local Plan does not digress into specified thresholds of different types and sizes of houses that are required in large development sites, Policy H3: Affordable Housing does outline that on housing and mixed use development sites of 15 or more residential units the Council will require the delivery of affordable housing. These requirements are; in rural Medway 30% of all residential units of developments of 15 or more dwellings and in urban Medway 25% of all residential units of 15 or more dwellings. As such, in High Halstow, all development sites of 15 or more dwellings shall be required to provide 30% of these as affordable homes.
- 7.28 The Government has also recently published the 'First Homes' Planning Practice Guidance⁶¹, requiring a proportion of all new homes on major sites to be available for first-time buyers at a discounted price and that, in the first instance, these should be available to those people who are in need and can demonstrate a local connection to the area. The Neighbourhood Plan supports delivery of new homes in line with the principles of the 'First Homes' product. For High Halstow, local connection refers to those whom:
- Have chosen to live in High Halstow and have done so for three of the last five years, or
 - Have immediate family (parents, children or siblings) who live in High Halstow and have done so for at least five years, or
 - Have regular employment in High Halstow.
- 7.29 In addition to matters of affordability, the aging population of High Halstow manifests itself in challenges for the housing market, with a need for housing for the elderly to be provided. The Medway Village Infrastructure Audit as well as the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework point to a significant increase in the proportion of population aged 65 plus in coming years. Where established in evidence to the emerging Medway Local Plan, proposals for housing in High Halstow

⁶⁰ GVA & BILFINGER. North Kent Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment. Strategic Housing Market Assessment. November 2015

⁶¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes>, accessed May 2021

should incorporate homes for senior residents. This is reflected in feedback from the community, with consultation responses noting a need for smaller properties for first time buyers and opportunities for older residents to downsize.

- 7.30 Planning Practice Guidance⁶² notes that there are a variety of specialist housing types that can meet the needs of older people. This includes, but is not limited to, (1) age-restricted general market housing, (2) retirement living or sheltered housing, (3) extra care housing or housing with care, and (4) residential care homes and nursing homes.
- 7.31 Housing for the elderly in High Halstow should ideally offer easy access to community facilities, services and good public transport. The design of homes for the elderly should reflect the principles of inclusive design outlined in Planning Practice Guidance⁶³ and those established in the HAPPI (Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation) report⁶⁴ which are applicable to housing for elderly people and age-friendly places.

⁶² MHCLG, June 2019, PPG: Housing for older and disabled people, accessed July 2020

⁶³ MHCLG, June 2019, Housing for older and disabled people

⁶⁴ <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/HAPPI/> accessed July 2020

Policy HH PQ5: Housing type and mix

1. New housing within High Halstow will be supported where the following criteria are met:
 - a) The size and mix of the housing units and tenure of the affordable housing units must, where viable, be consistent with the most up-to-date evidence of housing need.
 - b) Subject to Local Plan thresholds for the provision of affordable housing, the scheme must provide the maximum viable amount of affordable housing.
 - c) All affordable housing must be designed such that it is tenure-blind, i.e.: of an equal quality in terms of its design and use of materials compared to the market element and it should be well integrated into the overall proposal.
 - d) At least 25% of all affordable homes delivered as part of a development shall be First Homes. In the first instance (a period of three months) these will be made available to those able to demonstrate a local connection to High Halstow, defined as:
 - i. People in need of affordable housing who have chosen to live in High Halstow and have done so for three of the last five years, or
 - ii. People in need of affordable housing who have immediate family (parents, children or siblings) who live in High Halstow and have done so for at least five years, or
 - iii. People in need of affordable housing who have regular employment in High Halstow.
 - e) Where there is an up-to-date evidenced need, the proposal should provide units suitable for senior residents. Such housing provision should be located in easy access of shops, facilities and public transport services. Housing should be well-integrated within the wider neighbourhood and be designed in accordance with the HAPPI principles.
2. Proposals for new loose-fit, flexible residential typologies that respond to changing lifestyles and demographic life cycles, will be supported. This includes the ability for people to work at home separate from the main living space, as well as opportunities for multi-generation homes that enable part of the home to be subdivided as a separate stand-alone unit with its own entrance, allowing older children and elderly family members to live independently. The concept of Lifetime Homes, live/work accommodation and provision of flexible internal layouts are encouraged.

- 7.32 To support diversification of the housing offer and the ability of people to access a home, the Parish Council promotes opportunities for self-build and custom housebuilding within the village. The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act came into effect in 2015 and places a duty on certain public authorities, in this case Medway Council, to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who wish to acquire serviced plots of land to bring forward self-build and custom housebuilding projects. The Act places a duty on those public authorities to have regard to those registers in carrying out planning and other functions.
- 7.33 Currently, the Medway Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Register shows a requirement for 105 plots. This is based on the period 1st April 2016 to 30th October 2021. High Halstow accounts for just under 4% of all the total applications as a preferred location for a plot. Nationally, the interest in self and custom-build housing opportunities continues to grow, with Government data for the period October 2020 – October 2021 showing that the total number of individuals on local authority registers increase by 25% over the previous year. The number of groups on registers also grew over the same period.
- 7.34 In the emerging Medway Local Plan, Policy H2: Housing Mix, states that large development schemes must demonstrate that sufficient consideration has been given to custom and self-build plots as part of housing mix.
- 7.35 Where self or custom build plots are to be made available a set of plot passports should be produced. These will provide a summary of the design parameters for any given plot and help private housebuilders understand what they are allowed to build on the plot. They capture key information from the planning permission or the site, design constraints and procedural requirements. The passports clearly show permissible building lines within which the new dwelling can be built as well as height restrictions and other details such as parking requirements. Aspects such as materials, roof styles and fenestration are usually left for the plot owner to decide.
- 7.36 A range of housing and delivery models might come forward on the self and custom build plots, including shared delivery through collaboration. To allow for this, any area of self and custom build should be no smaller than ten plots in size. All plots should also be connected to the utilities network to enable private housebuilders to plug directly into these.

Policy HH PQ6: Self and custom build housing

1. Provision of plots for self and custom build homes in suitable locations within the village envelope will be supported. Where provided as part of development on land to the east of High Halstow the location of the plots shall be determined through the masterplanning and planning application for that site.
2. The following criteria shall apply:
 - a) Where viable, a minimum of 5% of the plots at land to the east of High Halstow shall be for self and custom building.
 - b) Areas for self and custom build housing on land to the east of High Halstow should be no smaller than ten plots in size, allowing opportunities for co-housing and other collaborative delivery models to come forward.
 - c) Plot passports shall be prepared by the applicant for approval by the Local Planning Authority. These will establish the form of development and building parameters for each plot, including building heights, footprint, frontages, density and parking requirements.
 - d) All plots for self and custom build housing shall be provided with connections to utilities (electricity, water and waste water) and communication infrastructure.
 - e) All plots must have access to the public highway.



8. Community infrastructure

- 8.1 Medway Council is not a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging authority. Until such time as CIL is adopted Medway Council will continue to negotiate Section 106 agreements with applicants that provides funds or works to make development more acceptable in planning terms.
- 8.2 The Medway Guide to Developer Contributions and Obligations was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in May 2018 and establishes requirements for those schemes which qualify for a Section 106 Agreement.
- 8.3 Contributions from qualifying developments that help minimise bird disturbance may also be sought, and would be subject to either the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) Mitigation Contribution Agreement, or a Unilateral Undertaking.
- 8.4 Through production of the Neighbourhood Plan and in consultation with the community a list of projects has been identified. These are referred to through the Neighbourhood Plan and highlighted in the blue project boxes. These are projects towards which funding, either by way of a Section 106 agreement or through other arrangements, including funding streams available through partner organisations, might be directed. They include, but are not limited to:
- Refurbishment of the toilet block and provision of new changing facilities.
 - Refurbishment of the village hall as an exemplar green facility (potentially including a dedicated health care facility) with electric car charging facilities and other shared mobility services.
 - Improving walking and cycling routes and access to the coastal path.
 - A safe pedestrian and cycle crossing on the A228 Ratcliffe Highway, providing a seamless connection between the village, potential growth area and new railway station. This will preferably take the form of a green bridge.
 - Redesign of streets around the village to slow traffic.



9. What Happens Next?

- 9.1 This is the submission version Neighbourhood Plan for High Halstow. It has been subject to a period of formal consultation (known as 'Regulation 14' consultation) and, following review and amendment, has now been submitted to Medway Council who will start the 'examination process'.
- 9.2 Medway Council will formally consult on the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan and appoint an independent examiner to review the Plan and any comments made in response to it. Following this, the examiner will issue a report to the local authority advising whether:
 - The Plan should proceed to referendum.
 - The Plan should proceed to referendum subject to modification.
 - The Plan should not proceed to referendum.
- 9.3 For the examiner to advise that the Plan proceed to referendum it will need to be demonstrated that the Plan meets what are called the 'Basic Conditions'. These include showing that the Plan is in general conformity with the strategic objectives of the Local Development Plan (i.e.: the Medway Local Plan).
- 9.4 Medway Council will organise the referendum. All people of voting age in the Parish are eligible to vote on whether the Plan should be brought into force ('made') or not. If more than 50% of all people who turnout vote in favour of making the Plan, then it will become part of the suite of planning policies used by Medway Council to help shape and determine planning applications in the Parish.



Appendix 1: Key Views

This section provides further information on key views in the Neighbourhood Plan area and is expanded upon in the supporting 'Important Views' document submitted alongside the Neighbourhood Plan. Further information on important viewpoints is presented in the Hoo Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study⁶⁵.

⁶⁵ Medway Council, February 2019, Hoo Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study, Draft

Location	Latitude	Longitude	General Direction	Approx width of view	Features seen	Importance
Intersection of Ropers Green lane with RS44	51.441423	0.582082	West	180°	Belluncle Halt, Kingsnorth power station' River Medway	The southern extremity of High Halstow Parish with views to the industrial site of Hoo St Werburgh once MOD land
Start of RS46 at Ropers Lane roundabout	51.436501	0.567341	North West	90°	Solomons Farm' site of Chattenden & Upnor railway line, south flank of High Halstow	An important feature of High Halstow is its prominent position on the eastern escarpment of the North Kent Downs overlooking the North Kent Marshes and River Thames. A branch line linked Sharnal Street Station with the oil refinery at Berry Wiggins which closed in 1977. Berry Wiggins had purchased the site from the MOD which used the site for an Air Ship base in WWI. Solomons Farm and buildings mark the railway intersection between the Hundred of Hoo Railway and the old Chattenden & Upnor, and was the main railway connection for Lodge Hill the Munitions storage facility for Chatham Naval Dockyard. The working Farm included an example of one of the original bridges across the railway line and access for Public Rightof Way (no. RS347) and is adjacent to the site of the old Sharnal Street railway station and two further examples of railway bridges, at one time, carrying the main road traffic on and off the peninsula. In recent years this valley has been used to route the main electrical feed from the Peninsula's power stations.
Intersection of RS46 with south of old Chattenden and Upnor railway line	51.439764	0.563543		360°	Site of old Chattenden railway views of Solomons farm, the village and farmland	Provides for a historical look at the past when munitions were made on the peninsula. This railway line would have been the height of activity during the two world wars. This view point is situated on the site of the old Chattenden & Upnor branch line who's route is visible Westwards towards the site of the old bridge at Dux Court Road and Lodge Hill beyond.
RS46 Rear of Christmas Lane	51.446304	0.565667	South	180°	Views across Solomons Farm, Orchards, Dux Court road towards Ratcliffe Highway	This shows the 'green wedge' between High Halstow and Hoo St Werburgh which is important to retain to reinforce the separate sense of identity of these places. It provides a view across Solomons Farm where the route of the Hundred of Hoo Railway and its bridges across Dux Court Road. The line of the Chattenden & Upnor branch is visible as well as the old site of Sharnal Street Station.
From RS45 highest point	51.442279	0.550518	North	360°	View of the south side of the village across orchards. Solomons farm, Wybournes Farm, River Thames towards Gravesend, Lodge Hill	Views give an indication of the isolation of High Halstow village from other major communities surrounded by the farms that initially made the community
Intersection of Wybournes way with western boundary of Village	51.4456358	0.53948879	West	360°	Solomons Farm. River Thames. Lodge Hill Wood Spendif towards Higham.	An important Landscape feature here shows the escapement of the North Kent Downs and its connection with the Marsh and the river Thames Beyond
Adjacent to the Southern water Spring on Cooling Road	51.448859	0.552471	North	270°	Dalham Farm, Dalham Farm SSSI Northward Hill, Buck hole Farm East borough Farm River Thames North Kent Marshes SPAs	Shows clearly the relationship between Northward Hill and the North Kent Marsh, and specifically how this creates a natural roost in the wooded hill for the colony of breeding Herons and Little Egrets close to the rich feeding ground of the Marsh.
Top of Lipwell Hill at boundary of Village	51.4523221	0.54536819	North west	270°	Buck hole Farm. East well Farm North Kent Marshes, River Thames.	Open view of the marsh land contrasting with the high ground of Northwood Hill. Also shows the barrenness of the marshes compared to the major international port and oil terminal on the Essex side of the River Thames.
On The Saxon Shoreway half way up Northward hill at RSPB Viewpoint	51.458366	0.555625	North West	180°	North Kent Marshes SPA's River Thames Eastborough Farm Cooling Radio station	View point gives a birds eye insight of the view of the Marsh and river, and the importance of Northward Hill as a protected roost. Probably the best view of the Cooling Radio station which is otherwise shielded from view.
Forge Common	51.455291	0.565238	South	180°	River Medway, St Mary Hoo.River Thames	Located at on the south side top of Northward Hill, the village sits seemingly nestled amongst woodlands across the top of which glimpses of the River Medway are possible.
On Bessies Land at the Spring on top of the hill	51.458713	0.577168	North	270°	Thames Estuary, St Mary Marsh, Halstow Marsh, Decoy, Decoy Farm. Swigshole House. Canvey island, Southend Tilbury, Gravesend.	Walking North along Bessies Lane to this view it is clear to see the extent of the Cliffe, Cooling, Halstow, St. Mary's and Allhallows marshes to the North and the Medway Estuary marshes to the South and the part Northward hill has to play. Much of the peninsula and its surrounding intertidal habitat is heavily protected under the Bern Convention. Like the North Norfolk coast the Peninsula forms an important and vital link on one of only five migratory routes for Artic wildfowl, it plays host to over 300,000 wintering wildfowl every winter.
On Manor Way in the Marsh	51.474861	0.569572		360°	In the heart of Halstow Marsh SPA, Northward Hill, Shades House, St Mary's Marsh	Walking Manor Way you get a feeling and view of the importance of the grazing marsh so vital for wintering wildfowl when the tide rises and the inertial habitat becomes hidden.
Saltfleet flats	51.485338	0.552063		360°	River Thames Egypt Bay The Halstow Marshes, Cooling Marshes Northward Hill National Nature reserve Shades House Container port.	Sitting and watching wildfowl feeding the waters edge as the tide rises then making the short flight over the sea wall to continue uninterrupted feeding on the grazing marsh, give an insight to the importance of the seemingly barren and forbidding landscape. This landscape as a raw beauty once so famously described by Charles Dickens in his open words of Great Expectations, "Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things, seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain, that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard;; and that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond, was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea"

Appendix 2: Local Green Space Designations

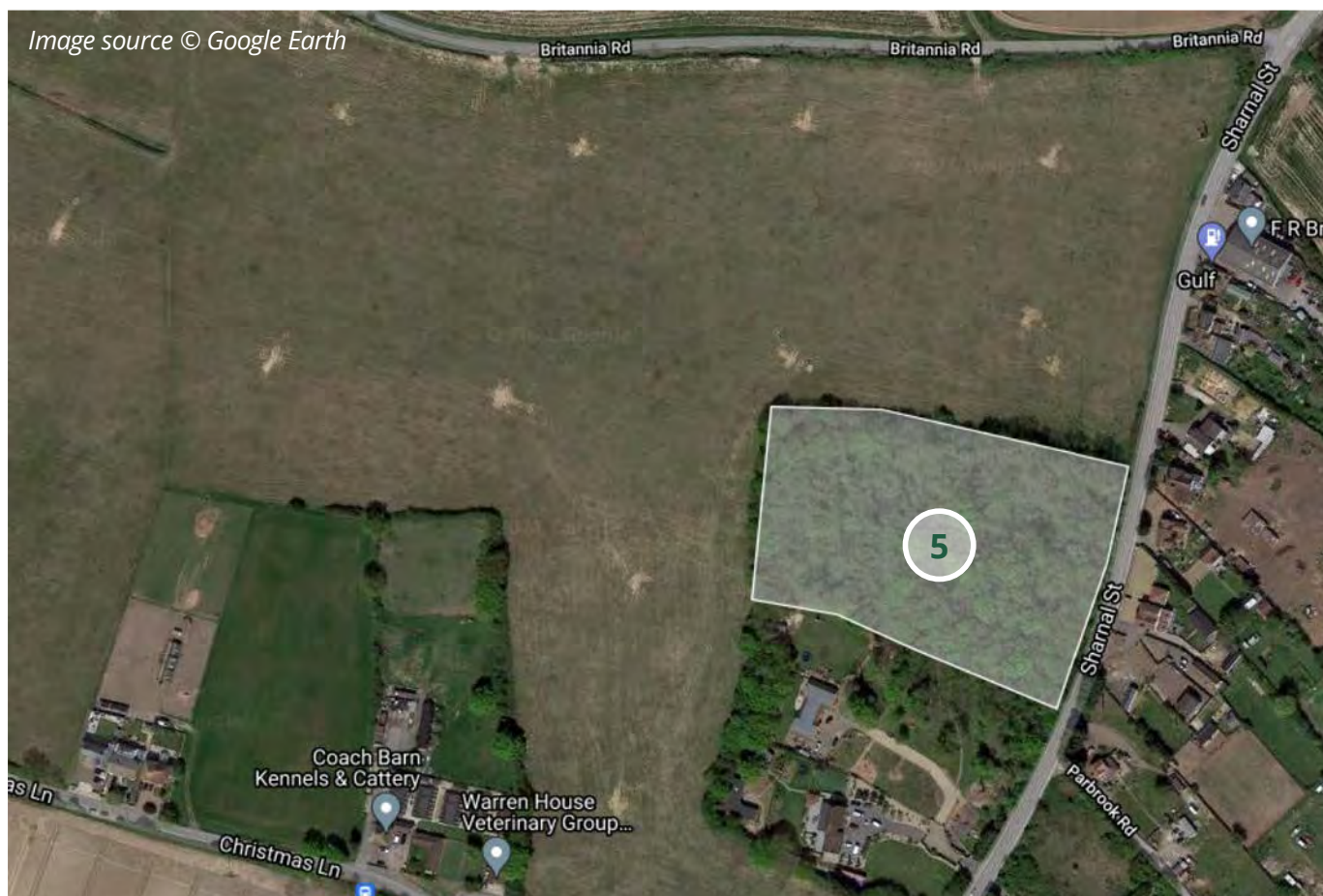
This section including mapping of each site designated as a Local Green Space in the Neighbourhood Plan.



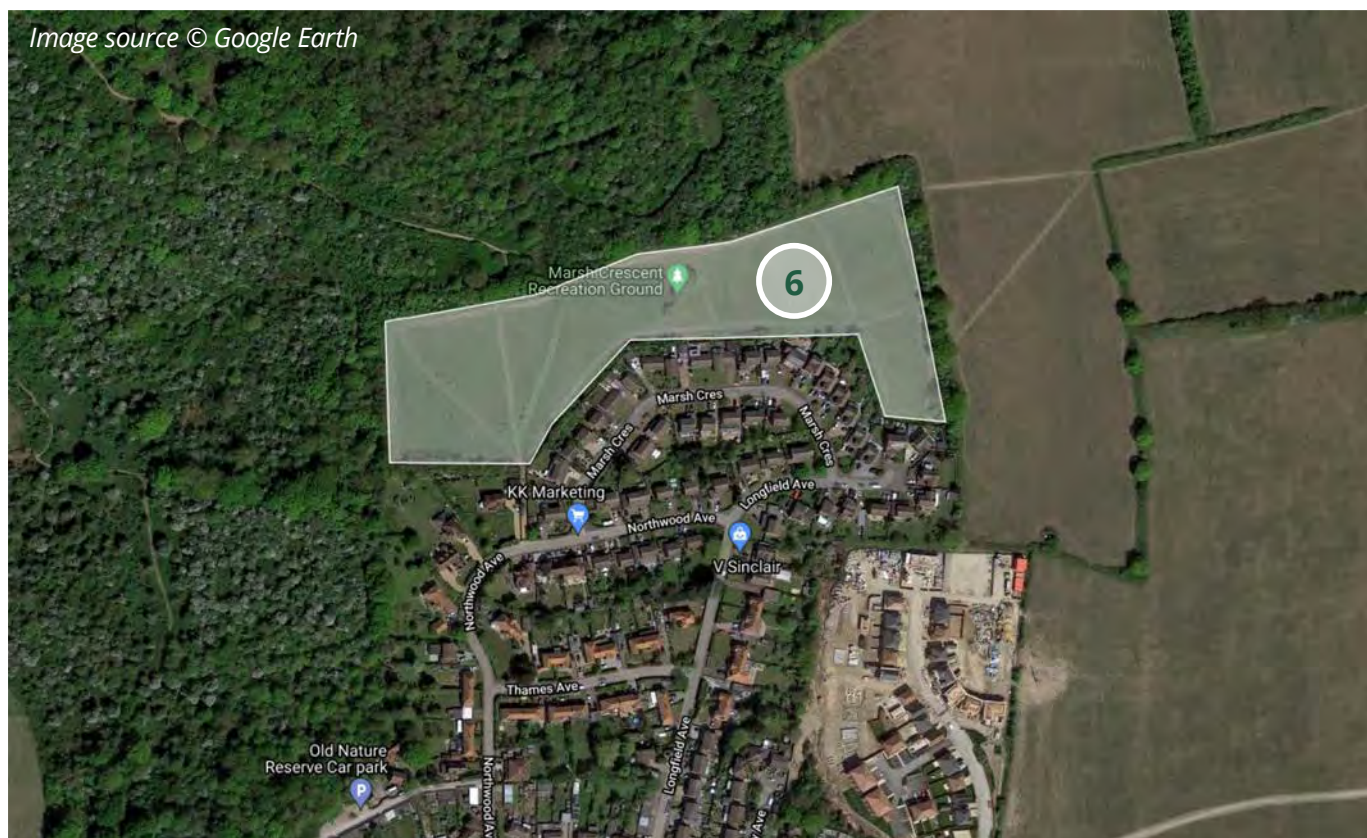
LGS 1: Allotments / LGS 8: Hill Farm Close / LGS 9: Horsefield / LGS 10: Recreation Ground / LGS 12: Topley Drive Recreation Area



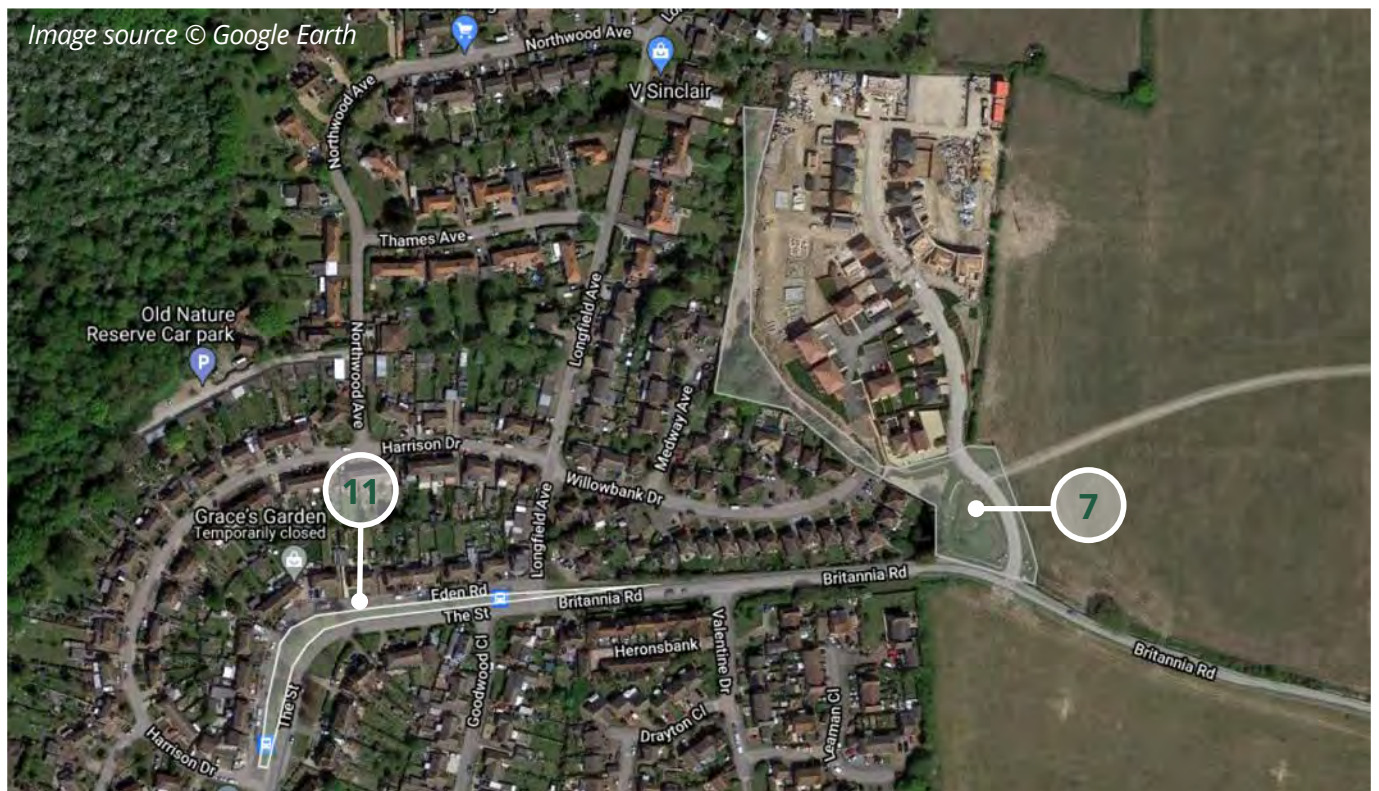
LGS 2: Churchyard / LGS 3: Cooling Road / LGS 4: Dalham Farmland



LGS 5: Fisher's Wood



LGS 6: Forge Common



LGS 7: Area of Heronsdon (Cope and frontage) / LGS 11: The Street

Appendix 3: Traffic Accident Mapping

This section includes maps extracted from [Crashmap.co.uk](https://www.crashmap.co.uk) plotting the location and severity of all reported traffic accidents over the ten year period 2010-2019 inclusive, with a particular focus on the stretch of the A228 Ratcliffe Highway north from the location of the proposed new railway station in the Medway Hoo Peninsula Planning Framework.

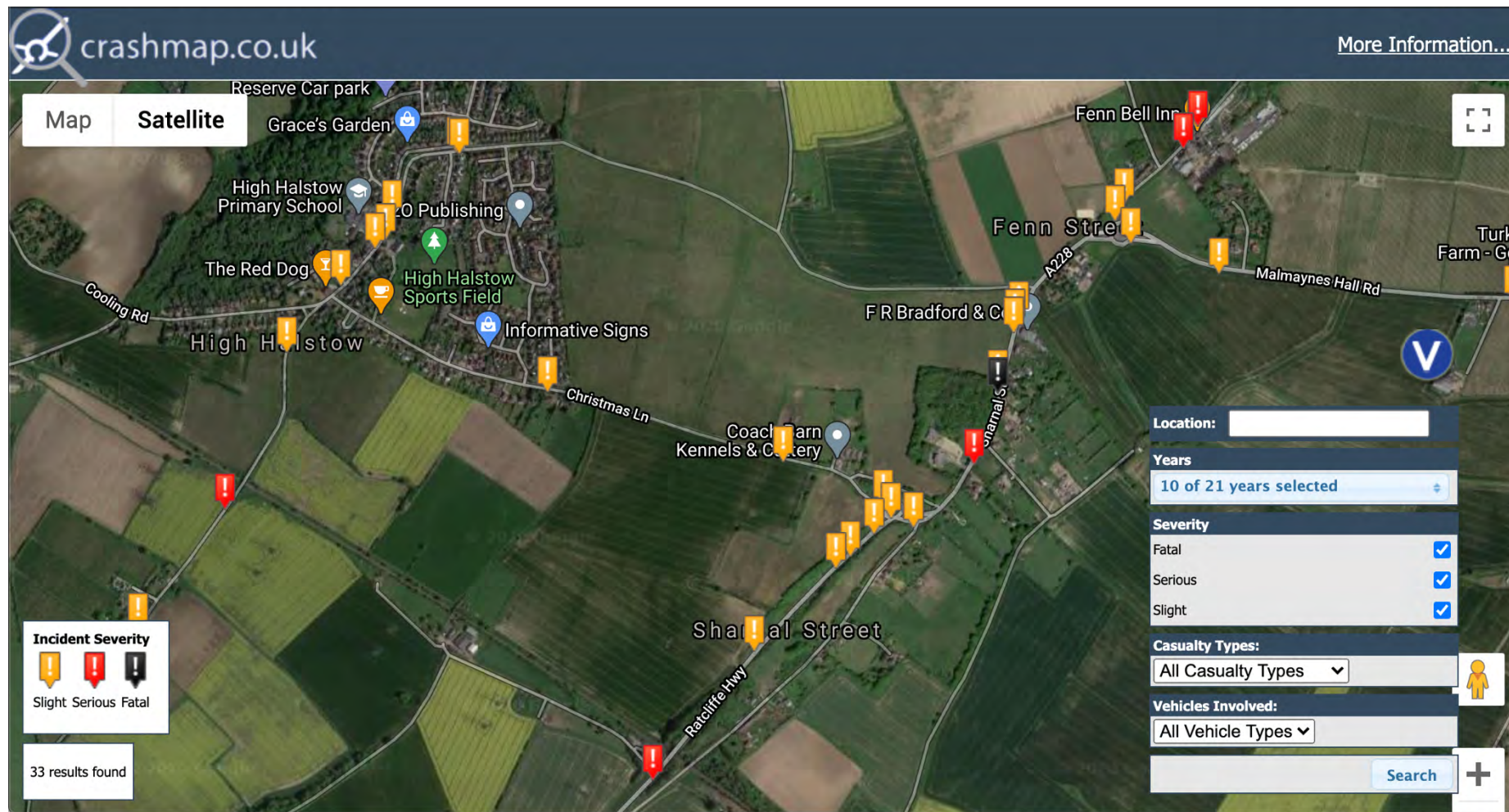


Figure 21: Traffic accident data for period 2010-2019, sourced from crashmap.co.uk

Appendix 4: Design Code

The High Halstow Design Code forms a free-standing appendix to this Neighbourhood Plan. It must be referred to by applicants for new development in High Halstow.

Appendix 5: Shades House

This text appears with thanks to Ian Jackson and Keith Robinson, contributing editors of "The North Kent Marshes".

In times past, outside the seawall areas of the saltings at Higham, Cliffe, Egypt and St. Mary's Bay and Dagnam, there was easy access and evidence of the landing of smuggled goods in this area of the North Kent Marshes.

The Ship and Lobster at Gravesend, the churches at Higham and Chalk, Shades House, the Lobster Inn at Allhallows and the Hogarth Inn at Grain are the most commonly mentioned smugglers haunts along the South bank of the Thames, each conveniently located near the saltings.

Shades House stands in the heart of Halstow marsh south of Egypt saltings a bleak isolated brick built box with parapet roof, now shorn of its attendant barn and out buildings, unoccupied for more than half a century though modernised in the 1970's as a weekend retreat but now vandalised. A constant landmark for shepherds, fowlers and birders, shades maintains an air of mystery and foreboding, brooding on its shady past.

It is said to have been built for the purpose of smuggling with its windows facing landward for early warning of approaching strangers. Persistent rumours name Shades House as a one-time inn which is not as outrageous a suggestion as it seems. The Lobster Smack on Canvey Island and the Shipwrights Arms at Hollow shore (Faversham) are obvious examples of licensed premises which in years past have derived a major part of their trade from bargemen. To Shades advantage the sale of beer gave an excuse for boats to be visiting Egypt bay. This activity may have provoked the preventative service of HMS Kite mooring as a watch vessel at Egypt Bay joining those at Cliffe Creek and Yanlet creek.

Shades could be sighted from the 'Norrad' but as that woodland was known hiding place for contraband on its journey inland it would not have been a safe place for excisemen to linger. However, well known incidence of the Norrad being used for smuggling is that of Edward Roots of Chatham and his friends who landed smuggled tea and fabric at Holy Haven (Hole-haven Creek) west of Canvey Island in 1726. They brought cargo across the Thames and up into the Norrad where things began to go wrong for them. Some goods were stolen from their hiding place and more seems to have been 'traded' with customs officers who 'stumbled' upon the smugglers. Though the trip was ill fated — almost certainly because of a traitor in the company

— Roots was successful enough in his activities to have been able to replace his vessel, The Mermaid, when she was confiscated as punishment for his smuggling.

From 1851 to 1901 shepherd William Wellard and his family were listed in the census as being resident at Shade. Williams son Dusty recalled that his father was paid by the smuggling fraternity to drive his sheep through the marsh gate to hide their passages of contraband.

Glossary of Terms

Adoption – The final confirmation of a development plan by a local planning authority.

Affordable housing – Includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. A full definition is available in the NPPF.

Brownfield Site – see Previously Developed Land (PDL).

Conservation Area - An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is preserved by local planning policies and guidance.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) – is the Government department with responsibility for planning, housing, urban regeneration and local government. Previously known as the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and, prior to that, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Development Plan - Includes the adopted Medway Local Plan and any future adopted Local Plan which may replace it, and Neighbourhood Development Plans which are used to determine planning applications.

Evidence base - The background information that any Development Plan Document is based on and is made up of studies on specific issues, such as housing need for example.

Greenfield site - Land where there has been no previous development, often in agricultural use

Green-space - Those parts of an area which are occupied by natural open space, parkland, woodland, sports fields, gardens, allotments and the like.

Heritage Asset – A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated assets (e.g.: listed buildings) and assets identified by the local planning authority, which may include a local list of assets.

Housing Associations / Registered Social Landlords / Registered Providers – Not-for-profit organisations providing homes mainly to those in housing need

Independent Examination - An assessment of a proposed Neighbourhood Plan carried out by an independent person to consider whether a Neighbourhood Development Plan conforms with the relevant legal requirements.

Infill Development – Small scale development filling a gap within an otherwise built up frontage.

Infrastructure – Basic services necessary for development to take place, for example, roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.

Listed Building – Building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II or II*, with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building.

Local Plan – The Plan for future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority. This forms part of the Development Plan.

Local Planning Authority (LPA) - Local government body responsible for formulating planning policies and controlling development; a district council, metropolitan council, county council, a unitary authority or national park authority. For High Halstow this is Medway Council.

Made – Terminology used in neighbourhood planning to indicate a Plan has been adopted.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The current version of the NPPF was published in July 2021.

Neighbourhood Development Plan – A development plan prepared by a Parish Council for a particular Neighbourhood Area, which includes land use topics. Once made this forms part of the Development Plan.

Outline Application – A general application for planning permission to establish that a development is acceptable in principle, subject to subsequent approval of detailed matters. Does not apply to changes of use.

Passivhaus development – Passivhaus is the world's leading fabric first approach to low energy buildings. The core focus of the Passivhaus standard is to dramatically reduce the requirements for space heating and cooling, whilst also creating excellent indoor air quality and comfort levels. See <http://www.passivhaus.org.uk> for more information.

Permitted Development – Comprises certain categories of minor development as specified in the General Permitted Development Order, which can be carried out without having first to obtain specific planning permission.

Planning Permission - Formal approval granted by a council (e.g. Medway Council) in allowing a proposed development to proceed.

Previously Developed Land (PDL) - Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

Public Open Space - Open space to which the public has free access and which fulfils, or can fulfil, a recreational or non-recreational role (for example, amenity, ecological, educational, social or cultural uses).

Public Realm – Those parts of a city, town or village, whether publicly or privately owned, which are available for everyone to use. This includes streets, square and parks.

Public Right of Way (PRoW) – Paths on which the public has a legally protected right to pass and re-pass.

Registered Social Landlords (RSL) – See Housing Associations

Section 106 Agreement – Planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, secured by a local planning authority through negotiations with a developer to offset the public cost of permitting a development proposal.

Settlement Development Limits Boundary – Settlement or development boundaries (village envelopes) seek to set clear limits to towns and villages. They are designed to define the existing settlement and to identify areas of land where development may be acceptable in principle, subject to other policies and material planning considerations.

Soundness – The soundness of a statutory local planning document is determined by the planning inspector against three criteria: whether the plan is justified (founded on robust and credible evidence and be the most appropriate strategy), whether the plan is effective (deliverable, flexible and able to be monitored), and whether it is consistent with national and local planning policy.

Stakeholder – People who have an interest in an organisation or process including residents, business owners and national organisations and government departments

Sustainable Communities – Places where people want to live and work, now and in the future.

Sustainable Development – An approach to development that aims to allow economic growth without damaging the environment or natural resources. Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainability Appraisal – An appraisal of the economic, environment and social effects of a Plan to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.

Urban Design – The art of making places. It involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, in villages, towns and cities, to create successful development.

Use Classes Order – The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) regulations 2020 puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'. These regulations came into force on 1st September 2020 and effectively nullify the former use class definitions used within the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.

It is generally the case that you will need planning permission to change from one use class to another, although there are exceptions where the legislation does allow some changes between uses. It should be noted that the recent regulation changes led to former Use Class A (shops, financial and professional services and food and drink establishments) becoming part of the new Use Class E.

B2 use class: Refers to general industry

B8 use class: Refers to storage and distribution

C1, 2, 2A, 3, 4 use class: Refers to hotels and residential institutions, secure residential institutions, dwellings and House in Multiple Occupations (HMOs)

E use class: Refers to shops, restaurants, financial and professional services, indoor sport, recreation or fitness (not involving motorised vehicles or firearms, health or medical services, crèche, nursery or day centre principally to visiting members of the public, an office, research and development, or any industrial process that can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to amenity.

Acknowledgements

High Halstow Parish Council would like to thank everyone who participated in consultation and engagement events to help shape and inform the Neighbourhood Plan.

We are also grateful to members of the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group, who have committed their time, energy and passion to preparing the Neighbourhood Plan and helping to shape a better future for High Halstow.

We would also like to thank consultancy Troy Planning + Design for their help in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan (www.troyplanning.com).

High Halstow Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan for High Halstow, 2020-2037

(Submission version: August 2022)



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