

Protecting and Restoring Maidstone Borough's Rural Character

To promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of the rural nature of Maidstone Borough ensuring the future of the borough as a green and pleasant space and to support rural communities.

Introduction

The Local Plan Review has drawn to a close. The objections to parts of the scheme have been raised, and unfortunately have not resulted in any amendments. This document seeks to look at parts of the Borough assess the existing protections and what further protections could be investigated, and what mitigation could be put in place before the Local Plan is reviewed again.

Maidstone Borough is at the heart of Kent. It proudly is home to the Men of Kent as well as Kentish Man. The verdant fields, full of hops, apples, strawberries and rich character that comprise a shared history.

The increasing need for housing across the UK is something that Maidstone Liberal Democrats acknowledge. Targets from central government have, we feel, been unfairly allocated to parts of Kent, including Maidstone Borough.

The suburban area of Maidstone town is now on a population density on par with Manchester; at 4,463 people / km² in Maidstone against Manchester's 4,716 (2021 census). At 24.5km² the suburban area of Maidstone is far smaller, but not insignificant.

When looking at the borough with large sections sitting in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or in the Weald the figure drops to 446.9 people / km². This is above the England average of 434 and places Maidstone Borough approximately halfway in the list of most densely populated districts in Kent. With close districts of Medway at 1,445 people / km², Gravesham at 1,080 people / km² and Tonbridge and Malling at 551 people / km², these numbers can if unchecked ramp up.

Ready access to nature has been shown to improve both mental and physical health, increasing quality of life. Building a strong rural communities must not be at the expense of the inherent benefits that these landscapes provide but must go hand in hand for the benefit of all residents.

The effect of the 2011 Localism Act places protection in the hands of the borough and the parish or designated area. Maidstone Liberal Democrat Borough and County councillors therefore make a commitment to work with all groups to promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of the rural nature of Maidstone Borough ensuring the future of the borough as a green and pleasant space and to support rural communities.



Background

Current legislation and roles regarding development are complicated. To cover all of them is beyond the scope of this document. At a simplistic level they have in recent times fallen into either:

National Statutory Designations whose protections are defined by law e.g. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Local Non-Statutory Designations whose protections are guiding e.g. Special Landscape Areas, Landscapes of Local Value, and Neighbourhood Plans.

Over time which bodies hold which responsibilities have also changed. In 1983 the first Special Landscape Areas (SLAs), were created by Kent County Council. Legislative support for these has gradually been withdrawn with Maidstone Borough Council taking on this responsibility through Landscapes of Local Value (LLV), and by helping parishes define Neighbourhood Plans.

Within Maidstone Borough there are two large contiguous national designations. The Kent Downs National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), that runs across much of the north of the borough. Metropolitan Green Belt that covers Nettlestead Parish.

The local designations set by Maidstone Borough Council that are in the borough comprise of five Landscapes of Local Value, increased from the previous three Special Landscape Areas. These are:

- The Medway Valley
- The Len Valley
- The Loose Valley
- The Greensand Ridge
- The Low Weald

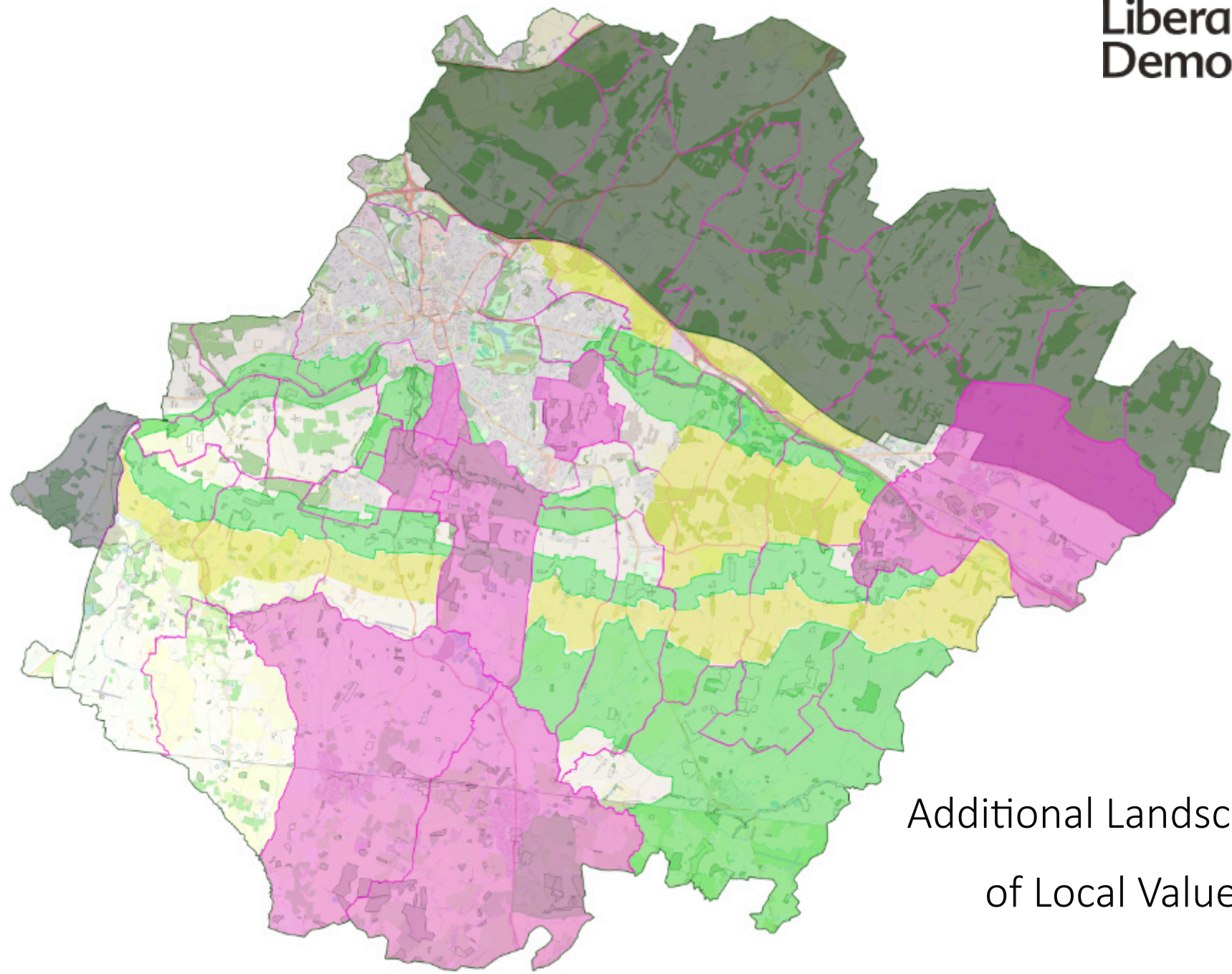
At a borough level and at a first review there appears to be merit in increasing the number of Landscapes of Local Value before a new local plan is created in the future.

In addition to locally set Landscapes of Local Value the 2011 Localism Act allowed neighbourhoods, often in the form of parishes, to establish their own Neighbourhood Plans. The outcome of this is that of the 41 possible parish areas and North Loose:

- There were 16 designated areas.
- Seven plans have been adopted since the designations started in 2013 (North Loose, Loose, Marden, Staplehurst, Boughton Monchelsea, Lenham, Otham).
- Five have not moved beyond designation according to the MBC Local Plan website (Bearsted, Boxley, Sutton Valence, Tovil, Yalding).
- Two have not made it passed MBC / Examiner suitability tests (Broomfield and Kingswood, Headcorn).
- Two have subsequently withdrawn from the process (Coxheath, Harrietsham).

The creation and control of these Neighbourhood Plans sits with the communities these represent. The local Maidstone Liberal Democrats support this, but also acknowledge that they are complex. We therefore make the commitment to work with all groups should they wish to pursue a Neighbourhood Plan.





We have also created overview maps for all parishes not fully in the AONB or that do not have Neighbourhood Plans so certain protections can be seen at a glance in Appendix A.

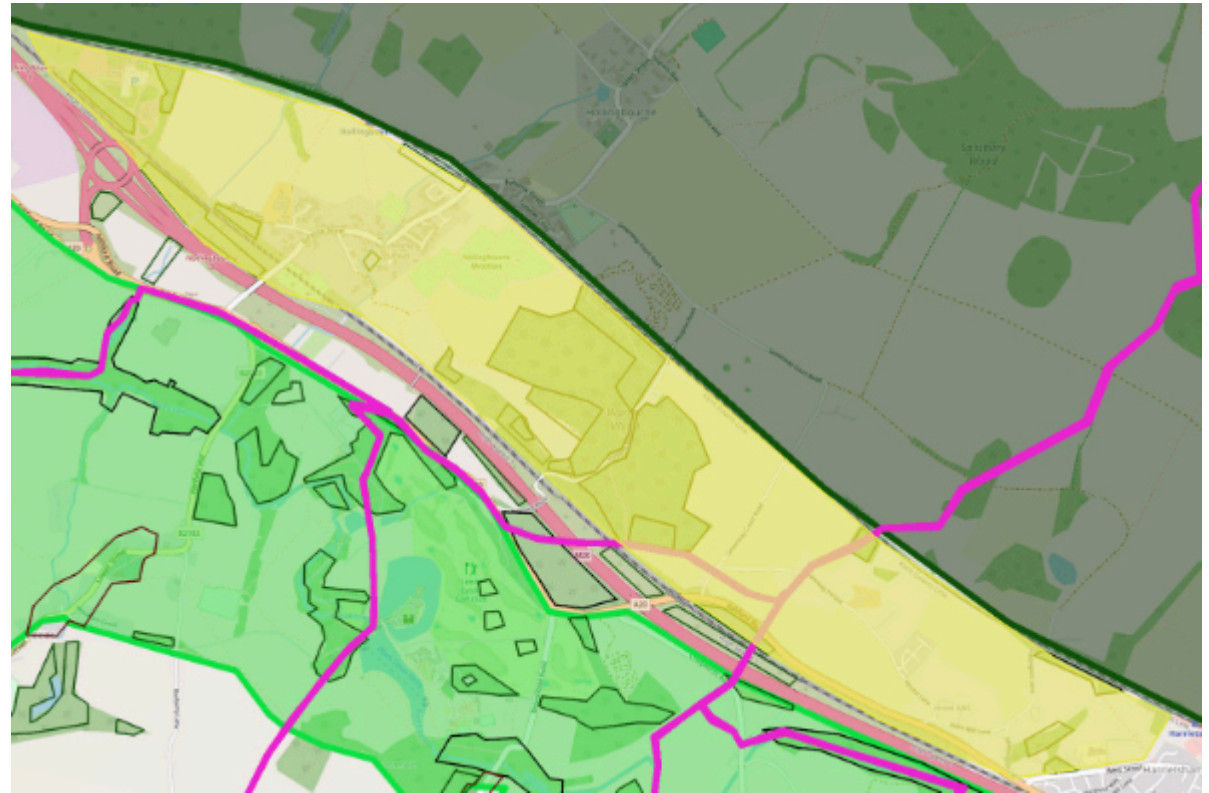


Boundaries are only indicative

Additional Landscapes of Local Value

Lower Downs East

-  Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Landscapes of Local Value
-  Proposed Landscape of Local Value
-  Parish Boundary
-  Parish with Neighbourhood Plan
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Site
-  Priority Habitats
-  Conservation Area







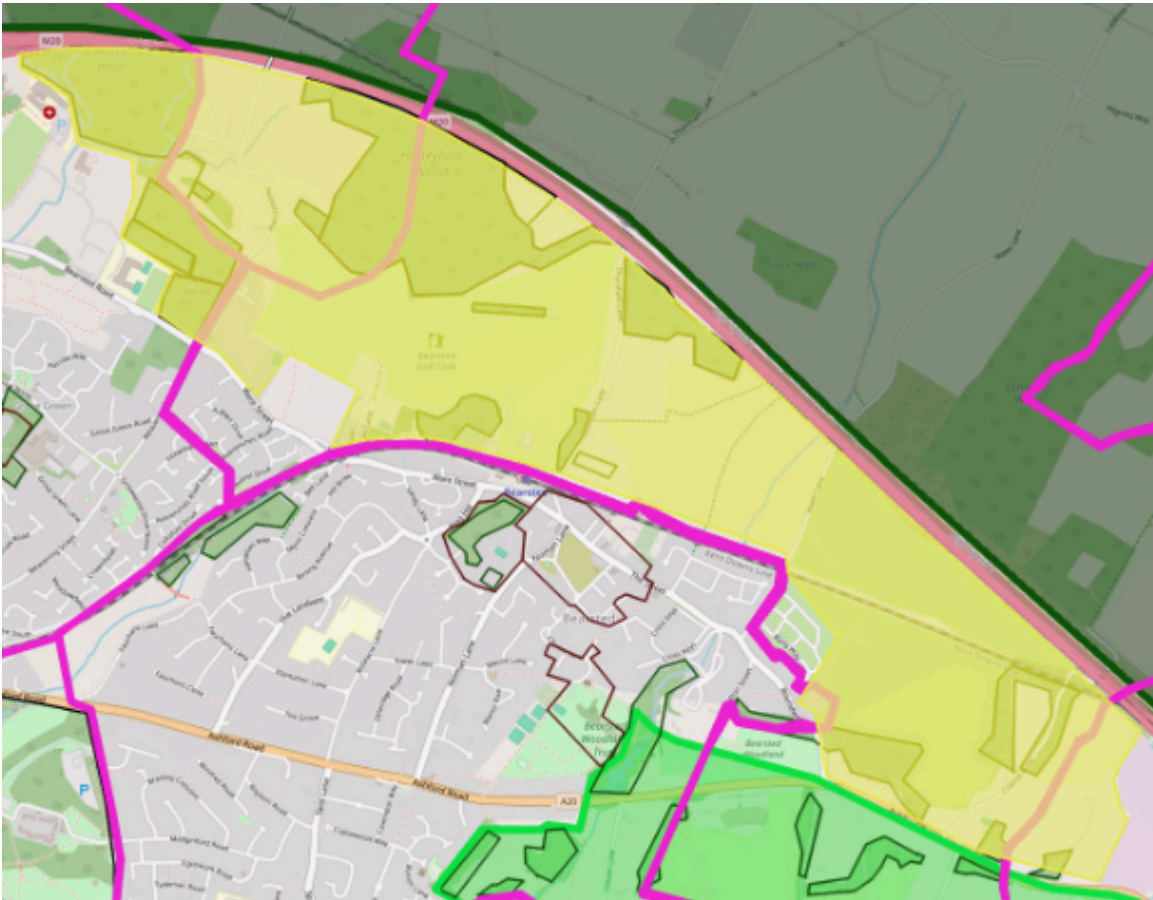
Notes

Running north of the M20 this proposed Landscape of Local Value contains multiple Ancient Woodlands, Local Wildlife Sites and Priority Habitats. It also seeks to provide a contiguous zone between the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Len Valley Landscape of Local Value.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Lower Downs West

-  Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Landscapes of Local Value
-  Proposed Landscape of Local Value
-  Parish Boundary
-  Parish with Neighbourhood Plan
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Site
-  Priority Habitats
-  Conservation Area











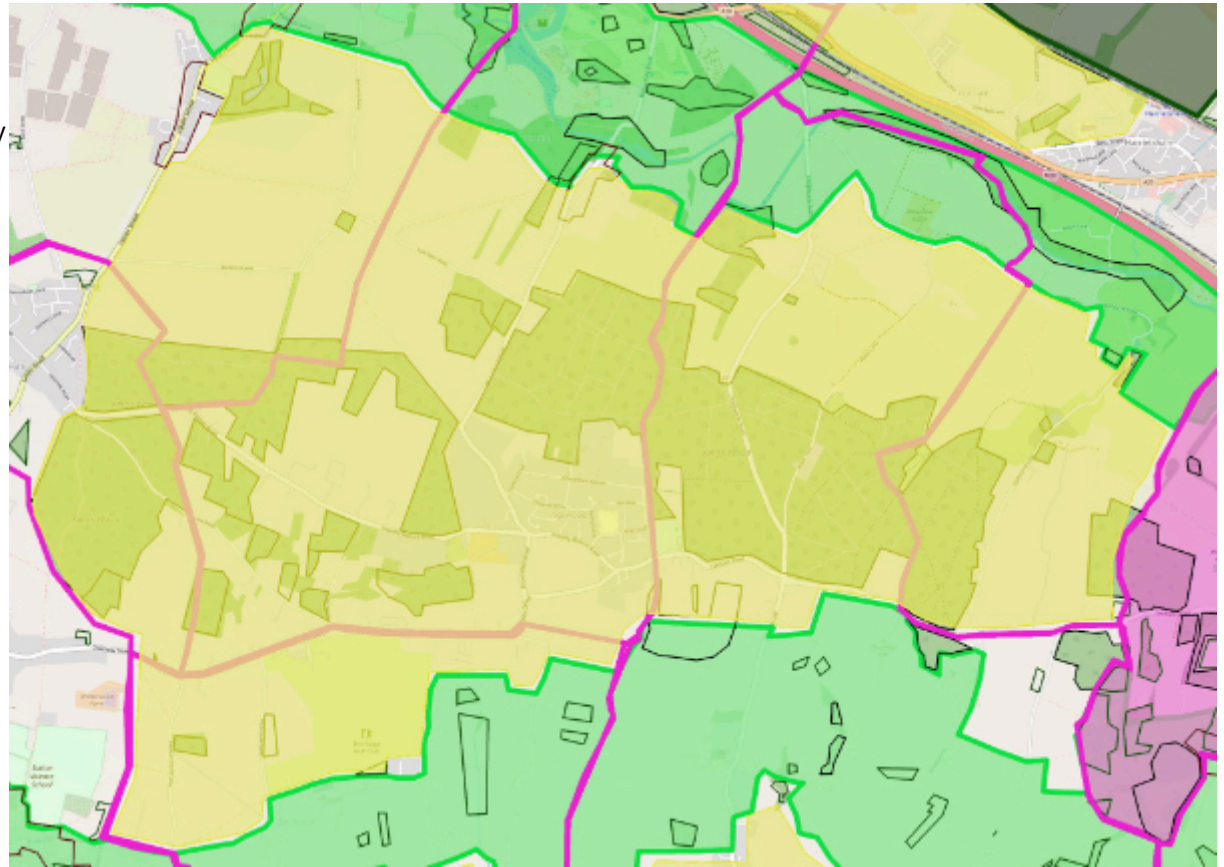
Notes

Sitting outside of the Maidstone Urban Zone and south of the M20 and Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty this proposed Landscape of Local Value seeks to create and protect a buffer available to the residents of urban and suburban Maidstone. It is widely covered by Ancient Woodland, Local Wildlife Sites, and Priority Habitats.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Kingswood

-  Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Landscapes of Local Value
-  Proposed Landscape of Local Value
-  Parish Boundary
-  Parish with Neighbourhood Plan
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Site
-  Priority Habitats
-  Conservation Area











Notes

Much of the Ancient Woodland that was Kingswood has now been given over to arable usage. This proposed Landscape of Local Value seeks to protect that which remains and connect the Len Valley Landscape of Local Value with the Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value. It sits to the east of the suggested Leeds Langley Relief Road Corridor.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Lower Greensand West

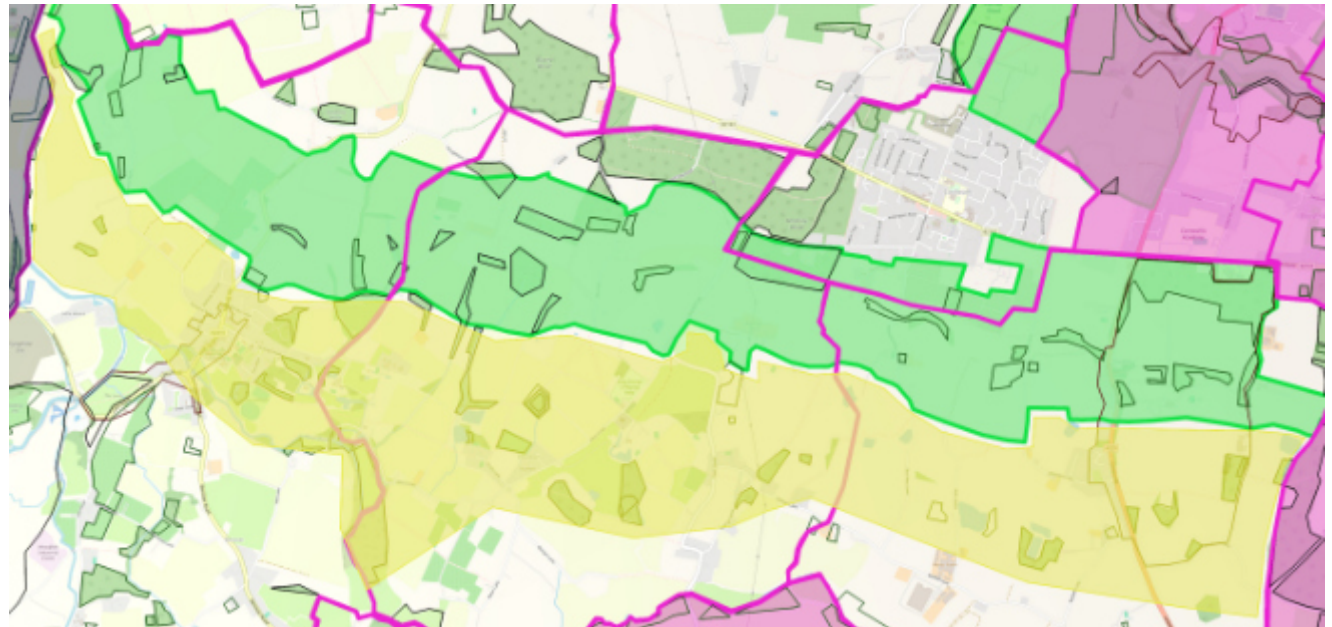
-  Metropolitan Green Belt
-  Landscapes of Local Value
-  Proposed Landscape of Local Value
-  Parish Boundary
-  Parish with Neighbourhood Plan
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Site
-  Priority Habitats
-  Conservation Area

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Notes

This proposed Landscape of Local Value sits to the south of the Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value and north of land covered by Zone 3 flooding.

The Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value provides famous views across the Weald that unsuitable development would damage without further protection.










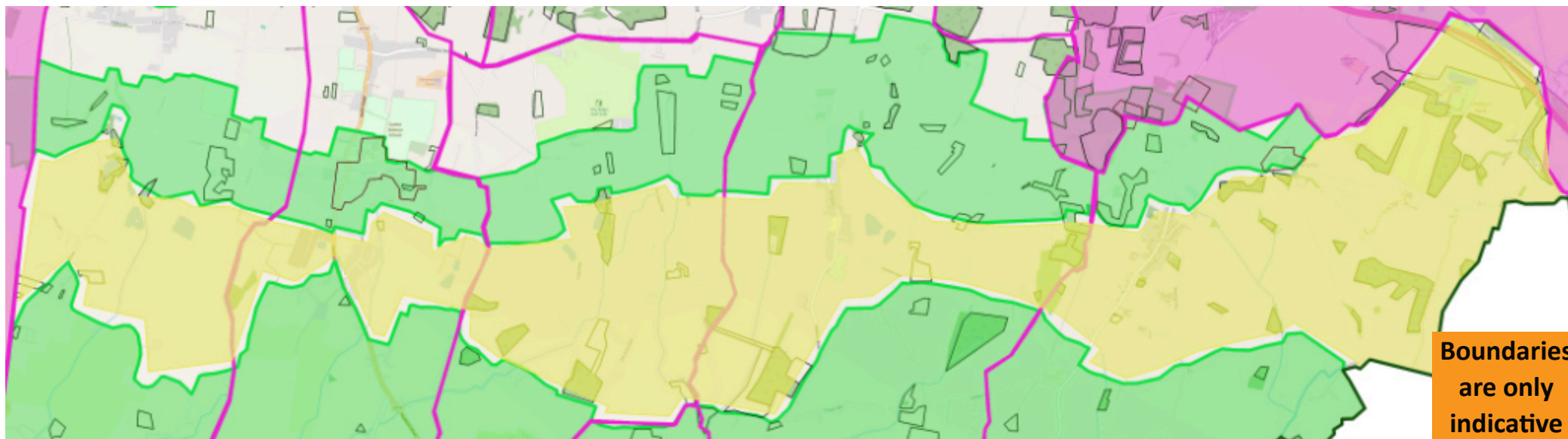
Lower Greensand East

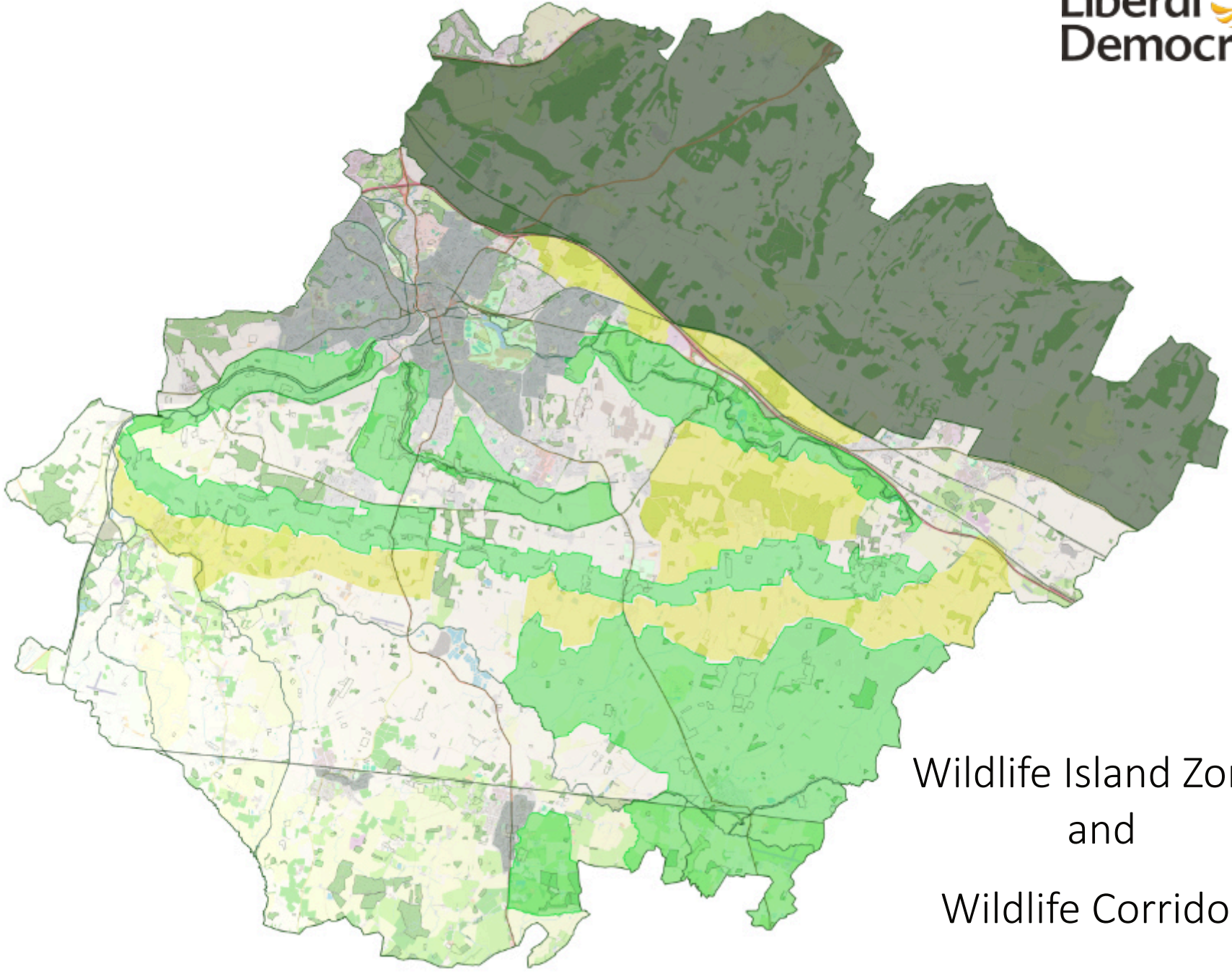
Notes

This proposed Landscape of Local Value seeks to connect the Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value to the Lower Weald Landscape of Local Value.

Small patches of Ancient Woodland, Local Wildlife Sites and Priority Habitats dot much of this proposed LLV. The easternmost part is bound by Chilston Park.

-  Landscapes of Local Value
-  Proposed Landscape of Local Value
-  Parish Boundary
-  Parish with Neighbourhood Plan
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Site
-  Priority Habitats
-  Conservation Area





Wildlife Island Zones
and
Wildlife Corridors

Boundaries
are only
indicative

Wildlife Islands and Corridors

When aiming to restore the rural nature of Maidstone Borough consideration for wildlife is an essential part. Whilst the Kent Downs National Landscape, Lower Weald and Medway Valley provide rich bio-diverse environments, suburban and urban parts of Maidstone are not so lucky. This needs to be addressed.

Wildlife Corridors

Wildlife corridors are defined as being linear features in the landscape that link habitats and allow wildlife to disperse and migrate. This reduces isolation and strengthens wildlife populations and biodiversity. Maidstone Borough Council's "Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy" contains many wildlife corridors, but not enough to reverse the declining levels of wildlife, including pollinators in the urban areas.

Steps to create wildlife corridors can be as simple as letting verges grow to wildflower and ensuring that any planning applications do not create any non-permeable barrier to wildlife. The first saves money, the second requires a little extra thought, but will likely lead to improved aesthetics.

Maidstone Liberal Democrats propose the following wildlife corridors be considered with expansion in the future:

- All 4 train lines that run through the borough.
- M2, M20, A20, A26, A229, A249, A274, B2010, B2163.
- Rivers Medway, Len, Teise, Lesser Teise, Beult, and Loose Stream.

Wildlife Island Zones

In the urban and many parts of suburban Maidstone widespread corridors are not possible because of existing buildings and infrastructure.

It is however possible to seek to create pockets of nature to allow

wildlife to hop between. For example in our Town Centre Vision we have put the aim no never be more than 50 metres from a green space. Other steps could be as simple as:

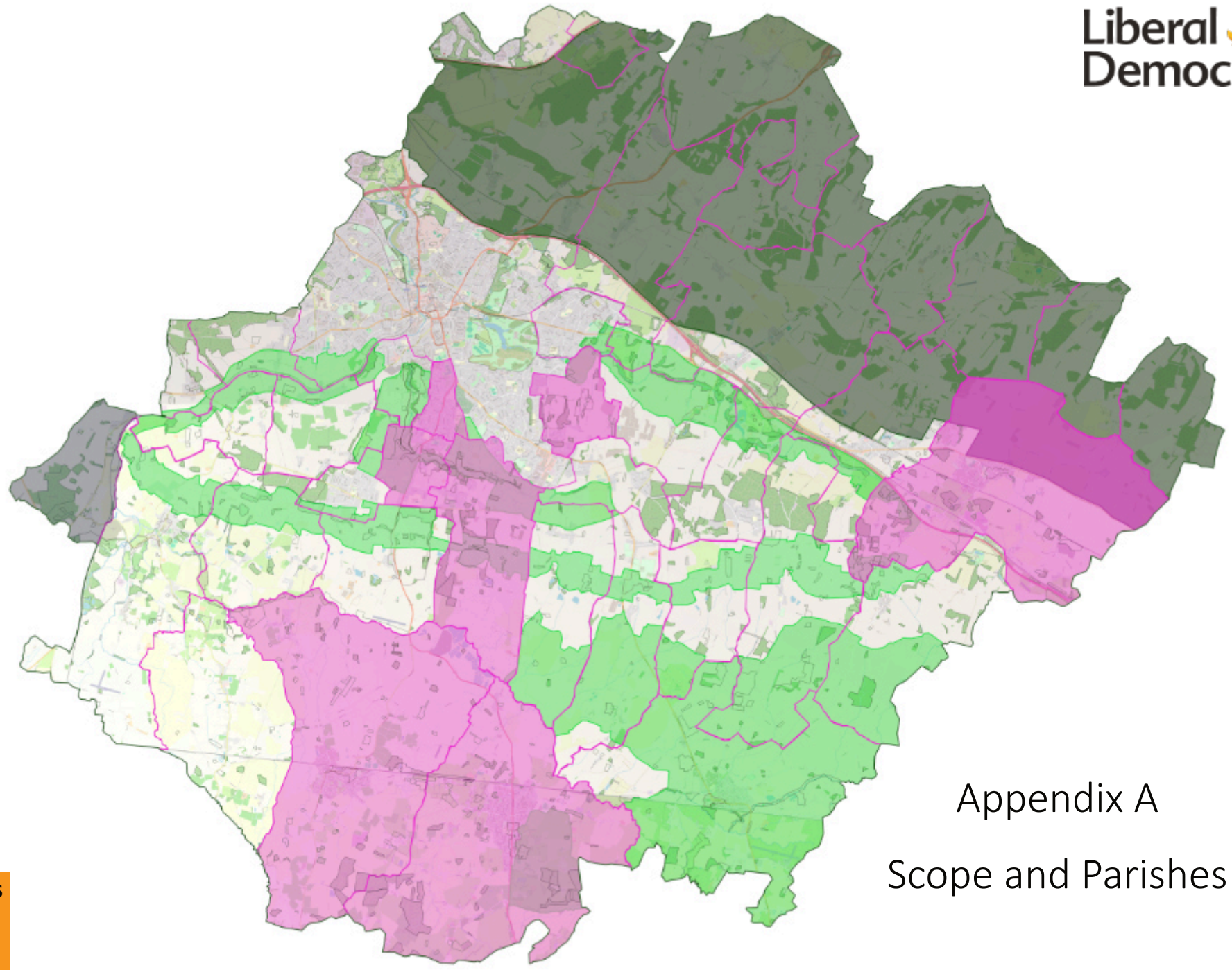
- Additional elements in Maidstone's Developer Plan Documents to encourage green walls and rooftop gardens.
- Allowing sections of MBC's estate that are presently lawns to be given over to controlled wild flowering (which when the correct native species are select is good news for hay fever sufferers).
- Planting on the tops of bus stops as can be seen in other parts of Kent and abroad.

There are many steps on a micro level that can be taken. A proactive approach in both idea and implementation is the first of these steps. Once in place however they not only help wildlife, but improve air quality, capture pollution, and improve the visual character of the area.

Maidstone Liberal Democrats propose that the following areas become wildlife island zones:

- Urban and Suburban areas to the north and west of the Medway Valley LLV.
- Urban and Suburban areas of the East of Medway from Penenden Heath, through the town centre, to North Loose and Shepway.
- Suburban areas to the west of the Len Valley LLV from Bearsted to Senacre.
- Staplehurst and Marden Village Centres

Neither the island zones or the corridors are overnight solutions. They require ongoing effort that will take years and multiple organisations. Starting to put in a borough wide plan now is an important first step.



Boundaries are only indicative

Appendix A
Scope and Parishes

Scope

Planning applications have many considerations when looking at their merits. For the purpose of a borough wide review eight have been chosen that have the relevance to development protection and cover the greatest area. These are:

- The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Metropolitan Green Belt
- Landscapes of Local Value
- Neighbourhood Plans
- Ancient Woodlands
- Local Wildlife Areas
- Priority Habitats

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and **Metropolitan Green Belt** are set nationally. Parishes that fully sit within these have not been reviewed. Greater protection can not be raised at a borough level.

Landscapes of Local Value (LLV) are created by Maidstone Borough Council in the Local Plan. They are how MBC can define areas they wish to protect.








Neighbourhood Plans are defined at a parish level (with the exception of North Loose). If they are technically sound they are voted in by residents of that parish.

Ancient Woodland are woodlands that have existed since at least 1600. They have irreplaceable, complex ecosystems and have increased planning protections.

Local Wildlife Sites are defined by MBC in the Local Plan and there is a commitment to preserve these.

Priority Habitats are defined by Natural England. They are protected by the Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006).

Conservation Areas each have their own policies to preserve them from undesirable changes.

	Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
	Metropolitan Green Belt
	Landscapes of Local Value
	Parish Boundary
	Parish with Neighbourhood Plan
	Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Site
	Priority Habitats
	Conservation Area

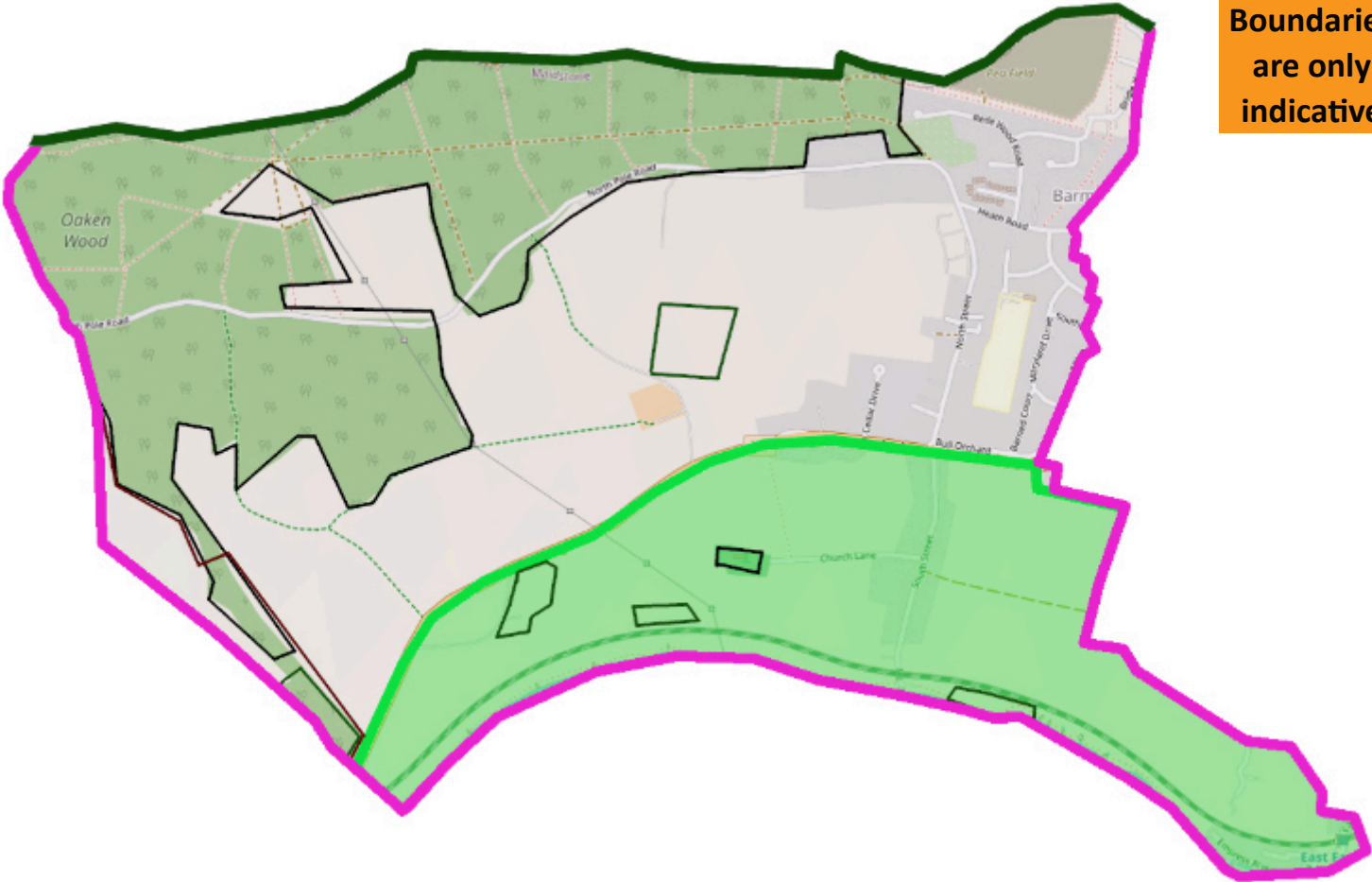
Further definitions of each of these designations, their legislation and policies can be found in Appendix B.





Outside of Scope

Parishes contained fully in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the seven designated areas of the borough that have Neighbourhood Plans have been excluded from this review.

Barming

Boundaries are only indicative



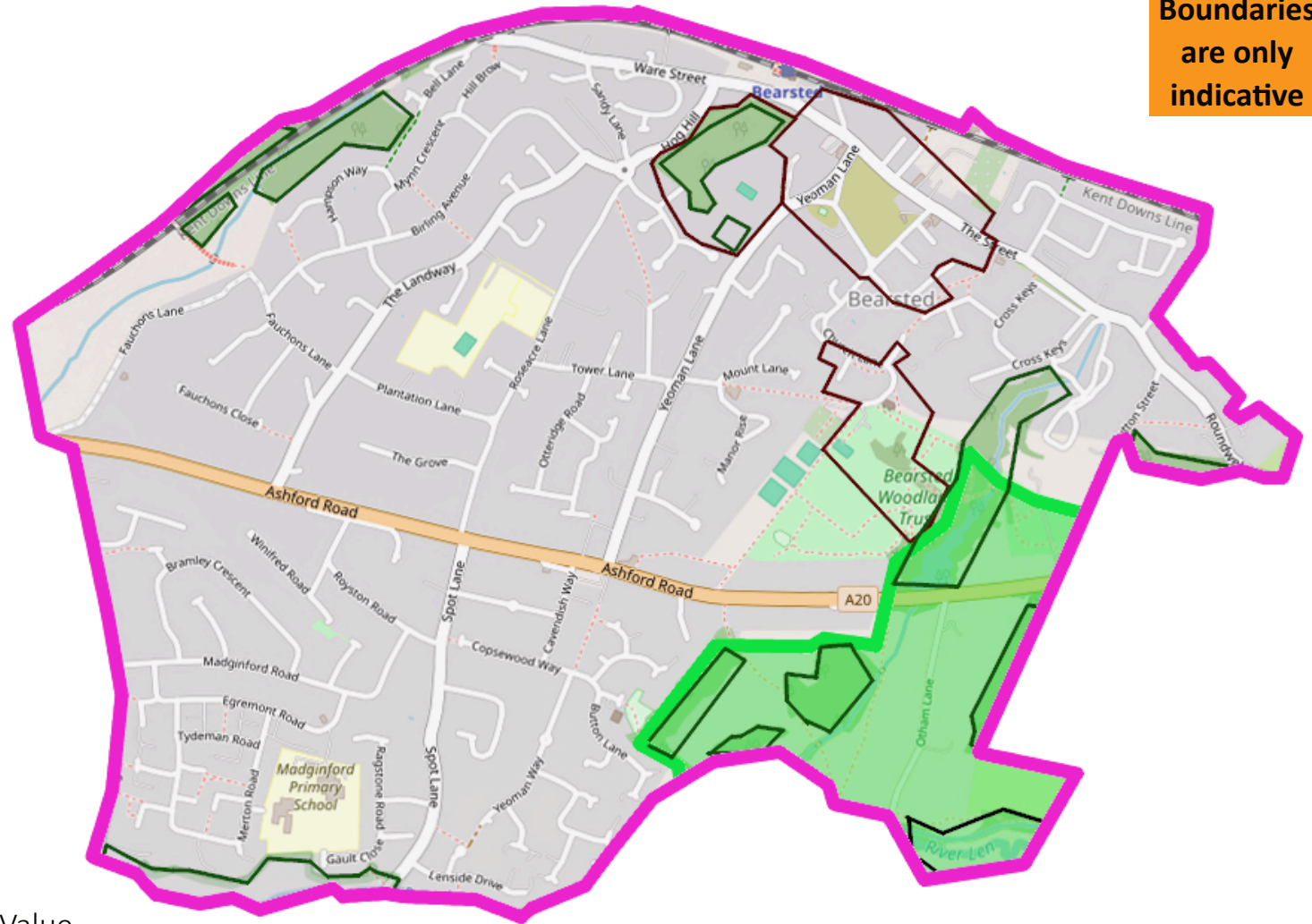
-  Medway Valley Landscape of Local Value
-  Parish Boundary
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats

Notes

The south of the parish has the Medway Valley Landscape of Local Value. Oaken Wood Ancient Woodland covers much of the north.

Bearsted

Boundaries are only indicative



 Len Valley Landscape of Local Value

 Conservation Area

 Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites

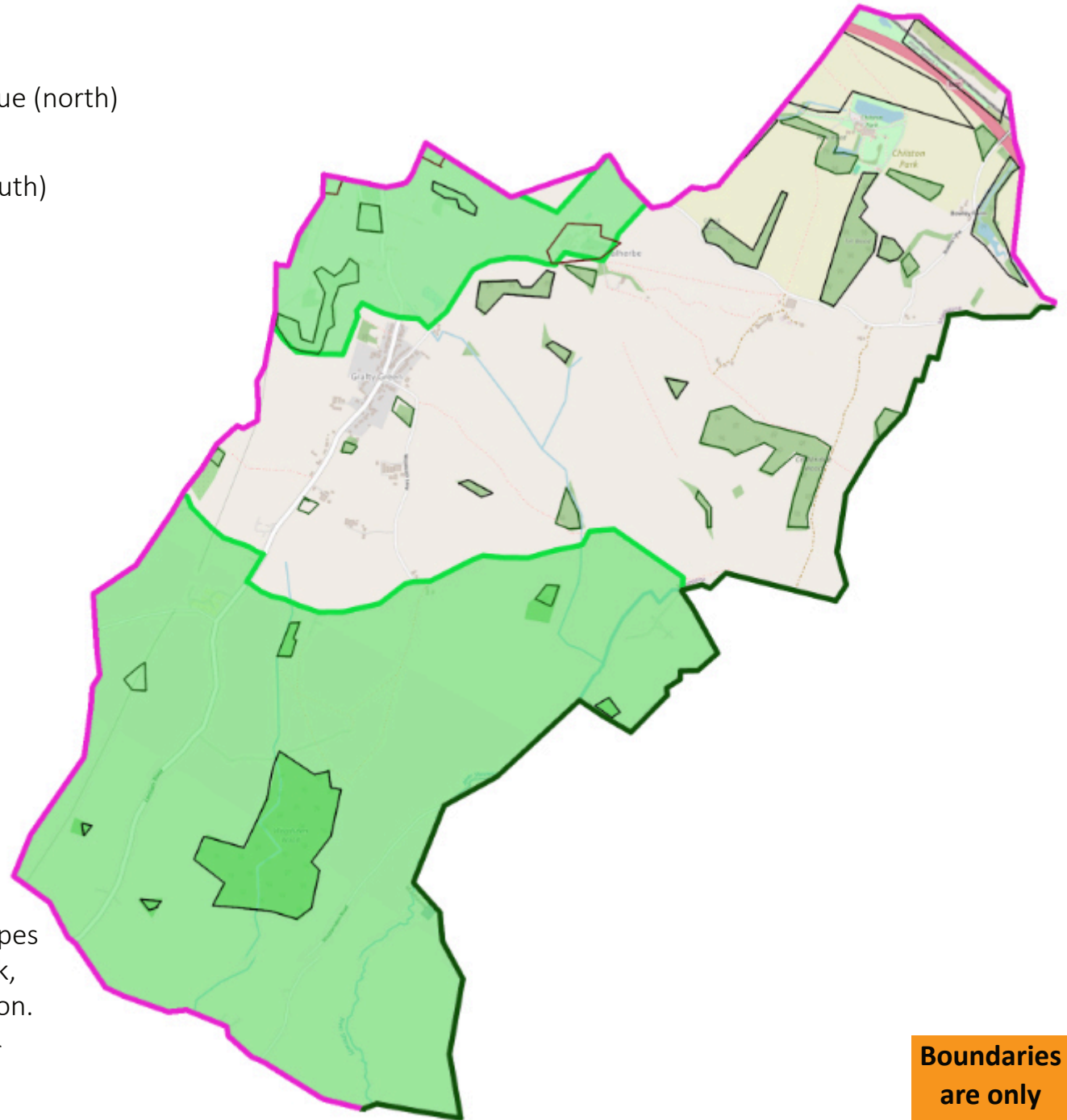
 Priority Habitats

Notes

Much of the parish is already suburban. There is a small parcel of land to the west of Fouchon's Lane that doesn't appear to have any statutory or non-statutory protections. To the north and east of the parish of Thurnham.

Boughton Marlherbe

-  Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value (north)
-  Low Weald Landscape of Local Value (south)
-  Conservation Area
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats






Notes

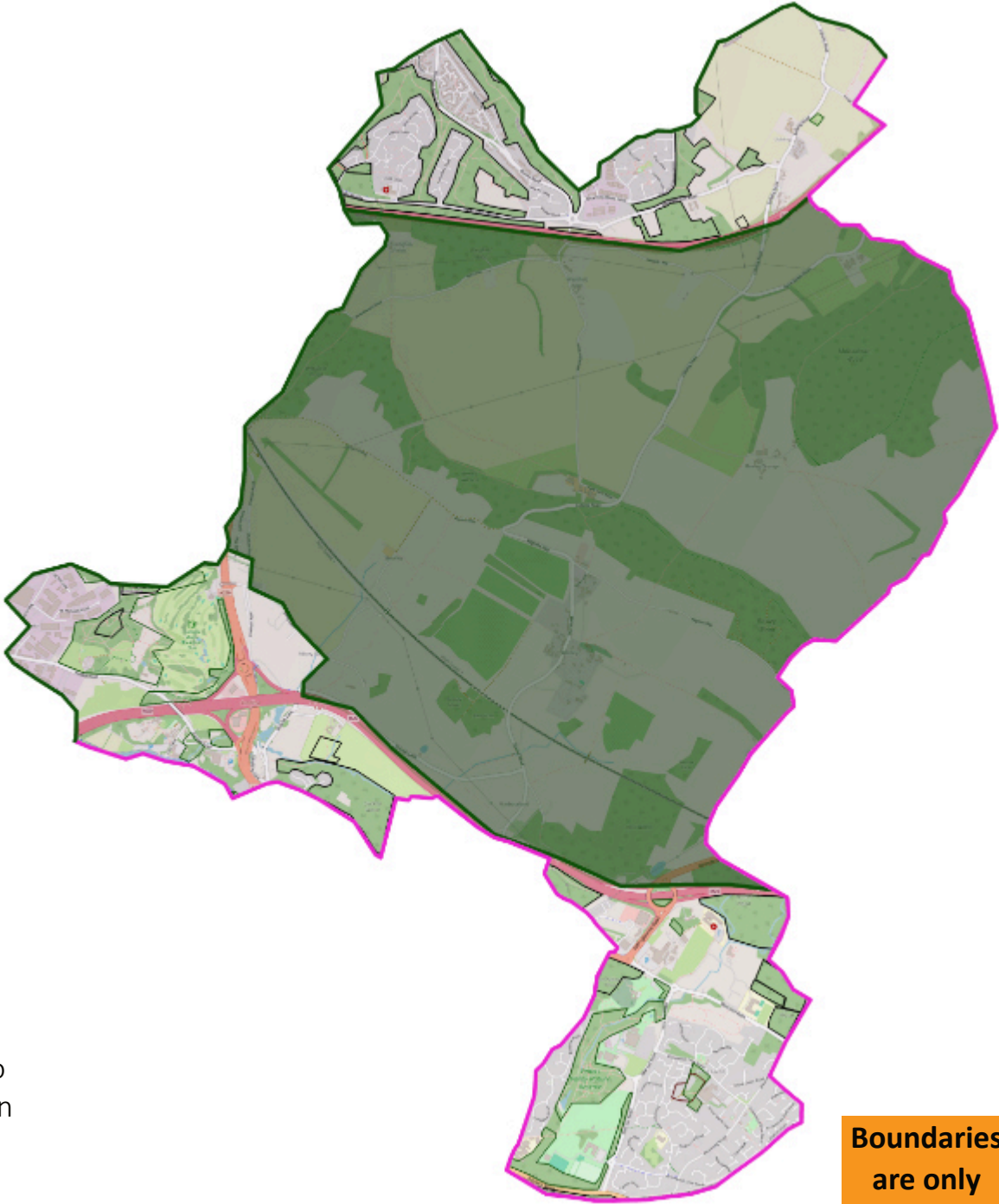
Approximately half the parish is covered by landscapes of local value. To the north east is also Chilton Park, as a registered park and garden it has legal protection.

There are no site allocations in the Local Plan under review. To the north east is the proposed Lenham Garden Village.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Boxley

-  Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats






Notes

Most of the parish is covered by the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Of the non-suburban sections to the most has additional protections with the notable exception of part of Vinters Valley Nature Reserve. The lesser protected area to the north east is already the proposed site for the Lidsing Garden Village.

**Boundaries
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Broomfield and Kingswood

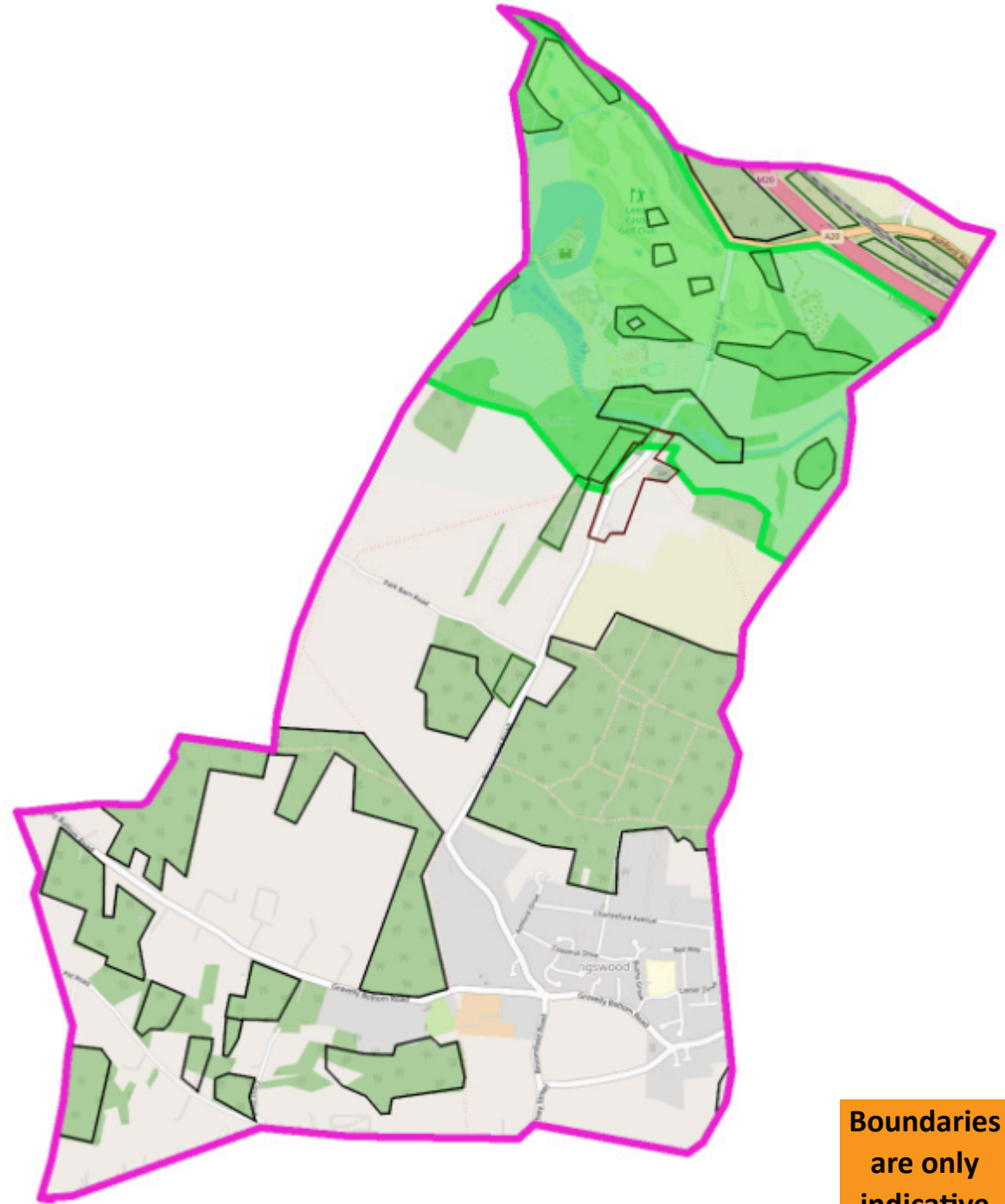
-  Len Valley Landscape of Local Value
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats
-  Broomfield Conservation Area

Notes

Approximately one third of this parish sits in the Len Valley Landscape of Local Value. Ancient Woodland comprises much of the south. There are no site allocations in the Local Plan presently under review.




It should be noted that to the west is the suggested Leeds Langley Relief Road corridor. The Local Plan previously contained policy LPRSP5(A) which states:

“Land within the corridor defined on the policies map, will be safeguarded for potential future development, which will be required to provide a quantum of enabling development.”



**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Chart Sutton

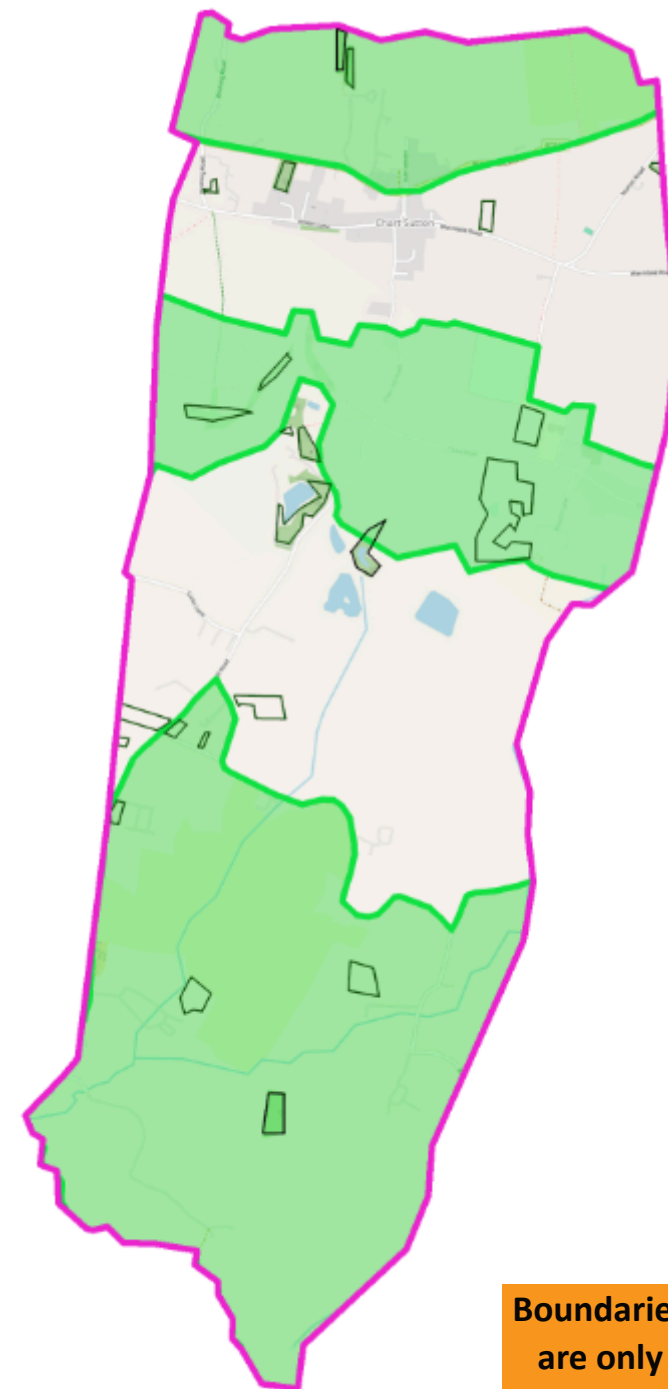
-  Loose Valley Landscape of Local Value (north)
-  Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value
-  Low Weald Landscape of Local Value (south)
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats

Notes

The parish is striped by three Landscapes of Local Value. Ancient Woodland comprises much of the south. There are no site allocations in the Local Plan presently under review.



It should be noted that to the east is the Leeds Langley Relief Road corridor. The Local Plan previously contained policy LPRSP5(A) which states:

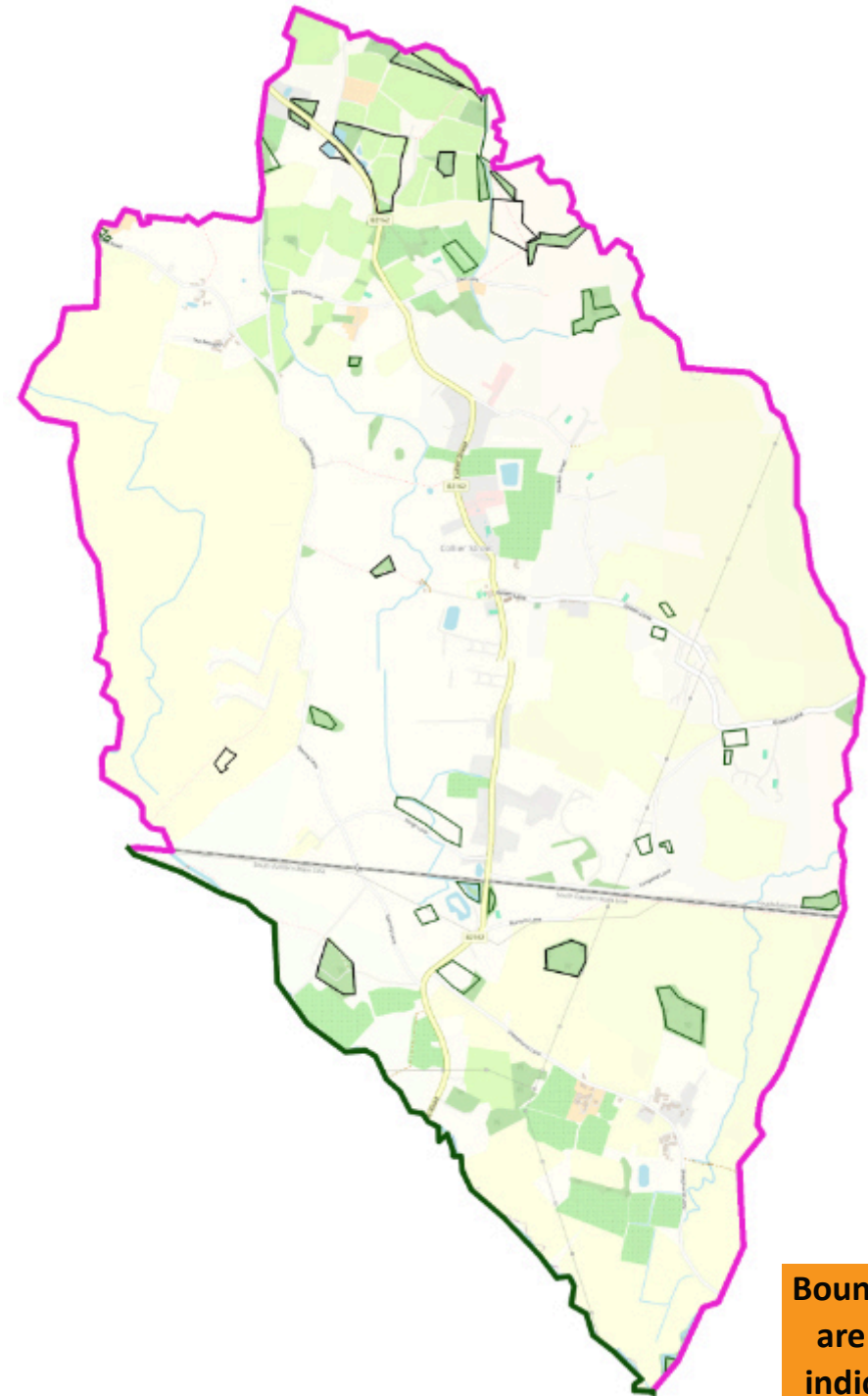
“Land within the corridor defined on the policies map, will be safeguarded for potential future development, which will be required to provide a quantum of enabling development.”



**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Collier Street

-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats






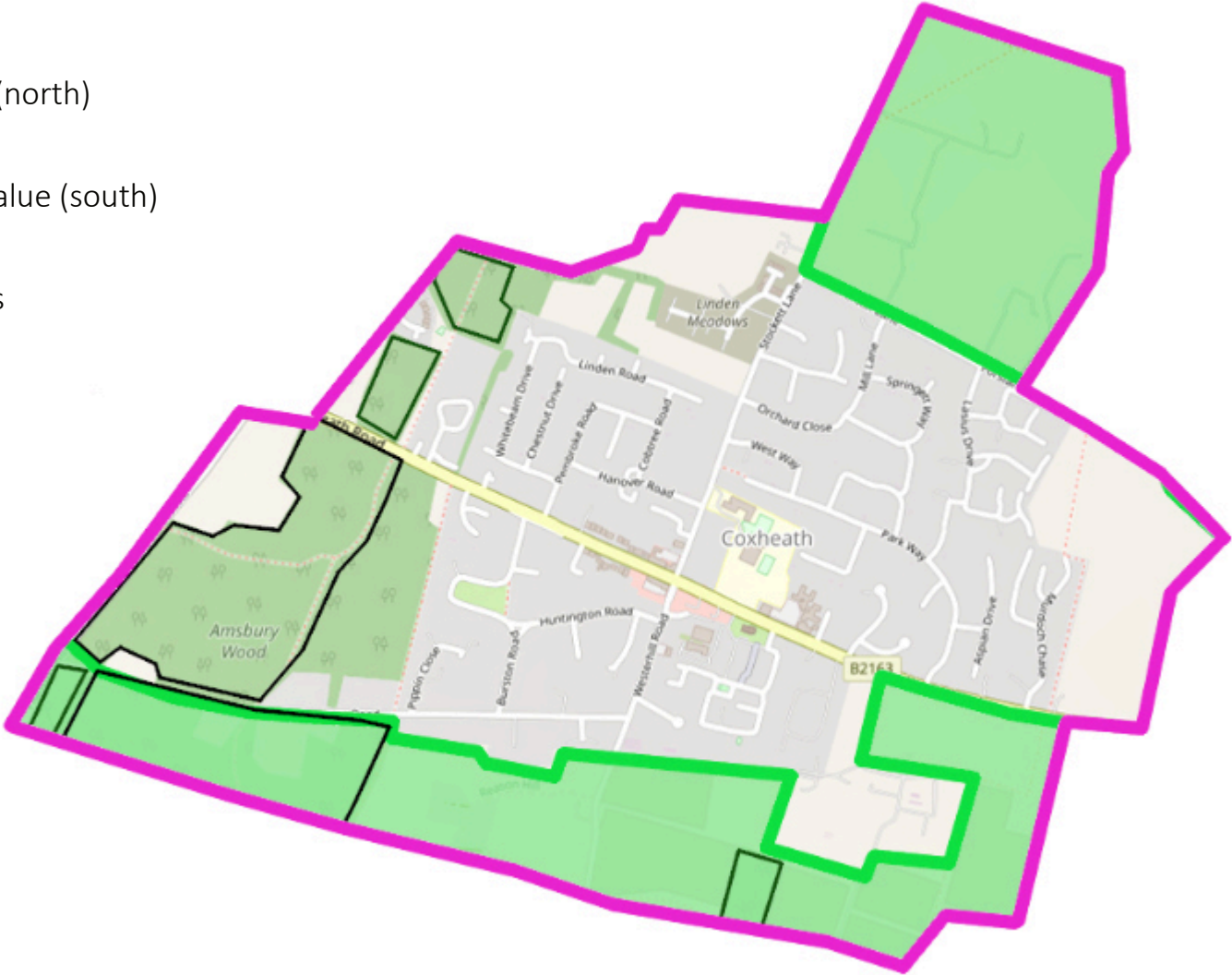
Notes

Although not mapped a large proportion of this parish is covered by Flood Zone 3. This comprises of 3a, land that is considered high risk to build upon, or 3b, floodplain that cannot be built upon. There are no site allocations in the Local Plan presently under review.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Coxheath

-  Loose Valley Landscape of Local Value (north)
-  Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value (south)
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats






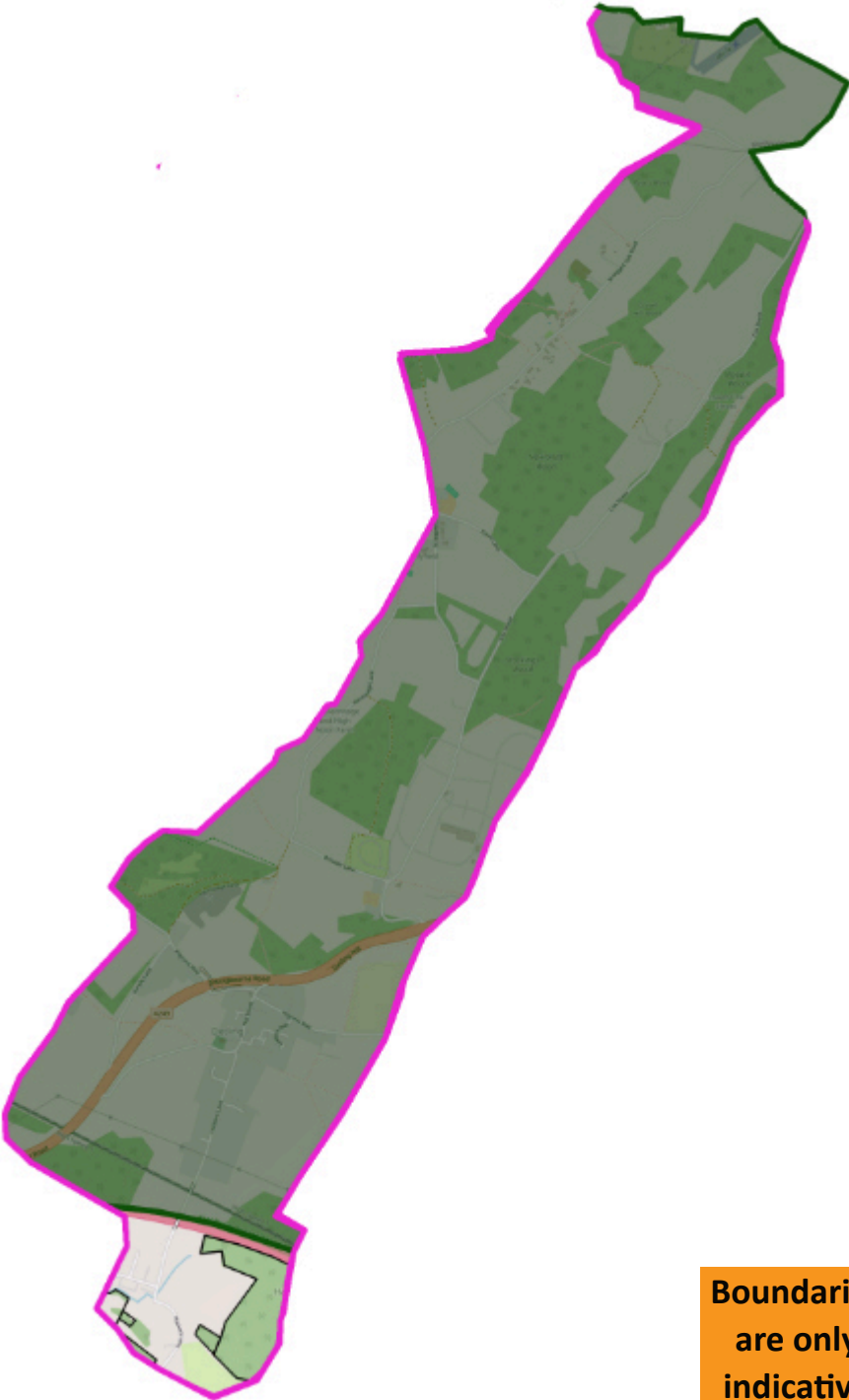
Notes

Much of the parish that does not sit either of the two Landscapes of Local Value is already urban. The open patch to the east is subject to LPRSA312 (85) homes.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Detling

-  Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats



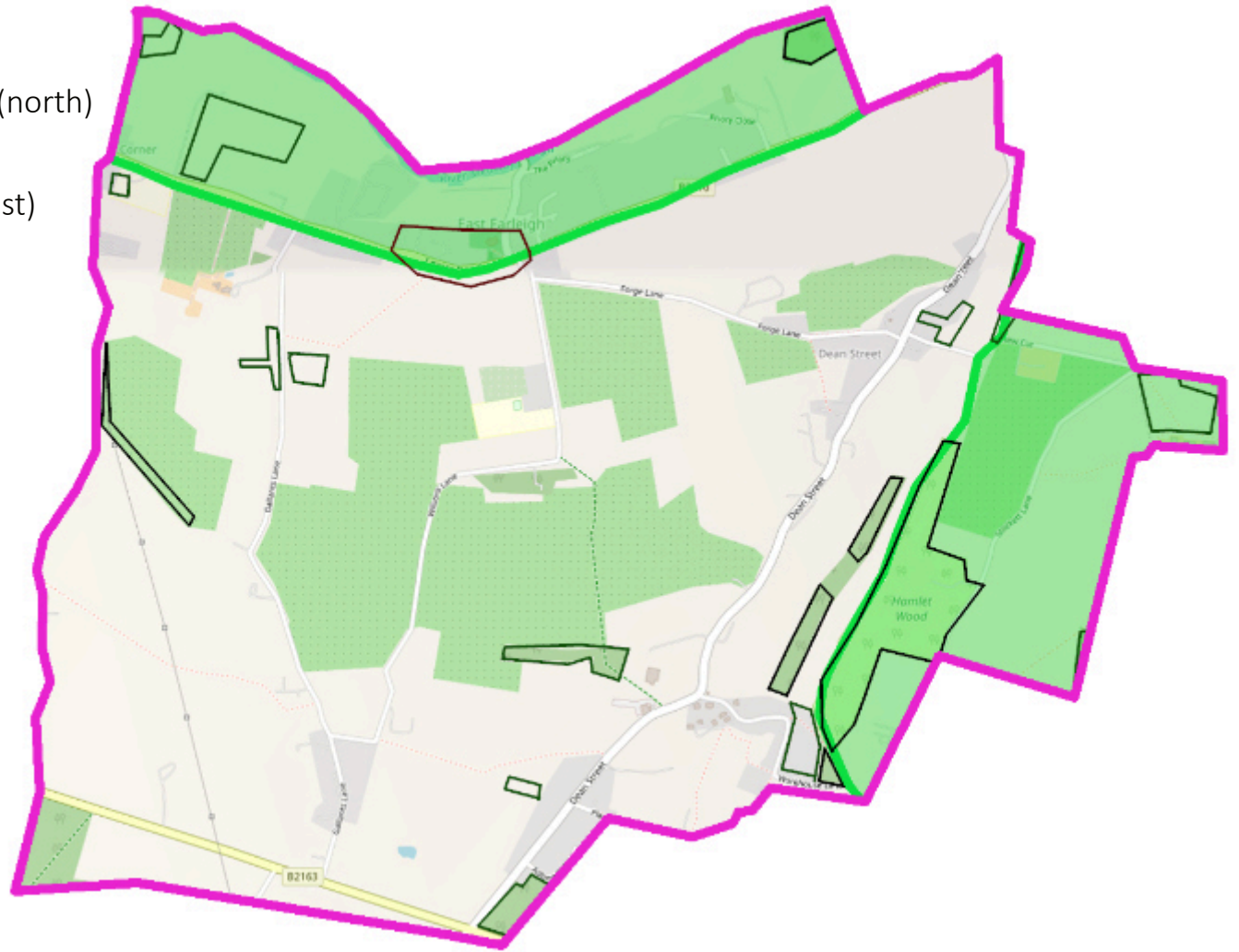
Notes

Most of the parish sits within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are no site allocations in the Local Plan presently under review.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

East Farleigh

-  Medway Valley Landscape of Local Value (north)
-  Loose Valley Landscape of Local Value (east)
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats







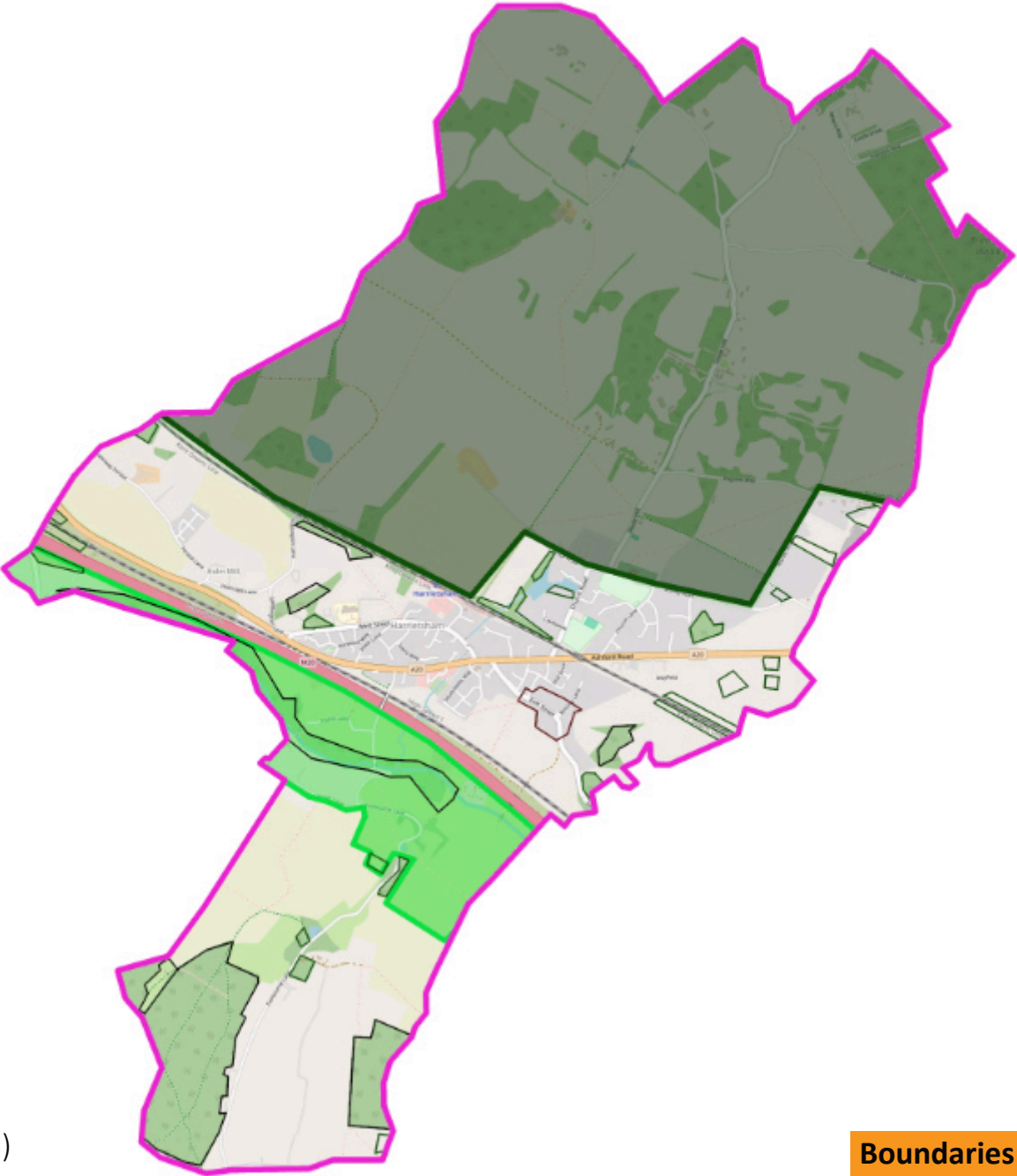
Notes

Although the Medway Valley Landscape of Local Value sits to the north and the Loose Valley Landscape of Local Value sits to the south there are few other designations within the parish. There are no site allocations in the Local Plan presently under review. Proposed Site Allocation LPRSA265 would see 250 homes placed in Tovil on the border.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Harrietsham

-  Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Len Valley Landscape of Local Value
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats






Notes

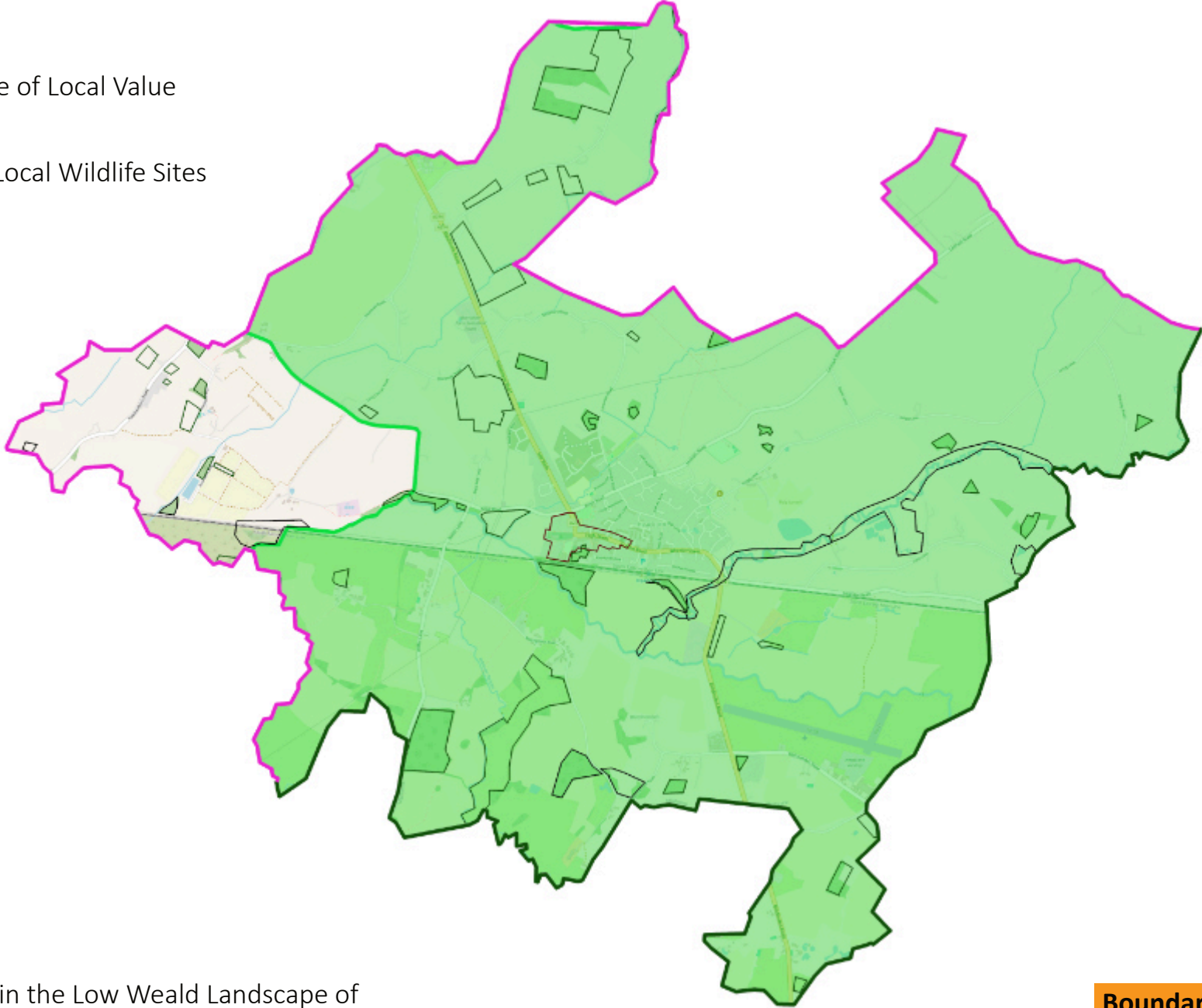
Large parts of the parish sit either within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the Len Valley Landscape of Local Value.

Proposed site allocations LPRSA071 and LPRSA101 (100 homes) are to the east of the parish. Further east is the proposed site for the Lenham Garden Village.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Headcorn

-  Low Weald Landscape of Local Value
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats







Notes

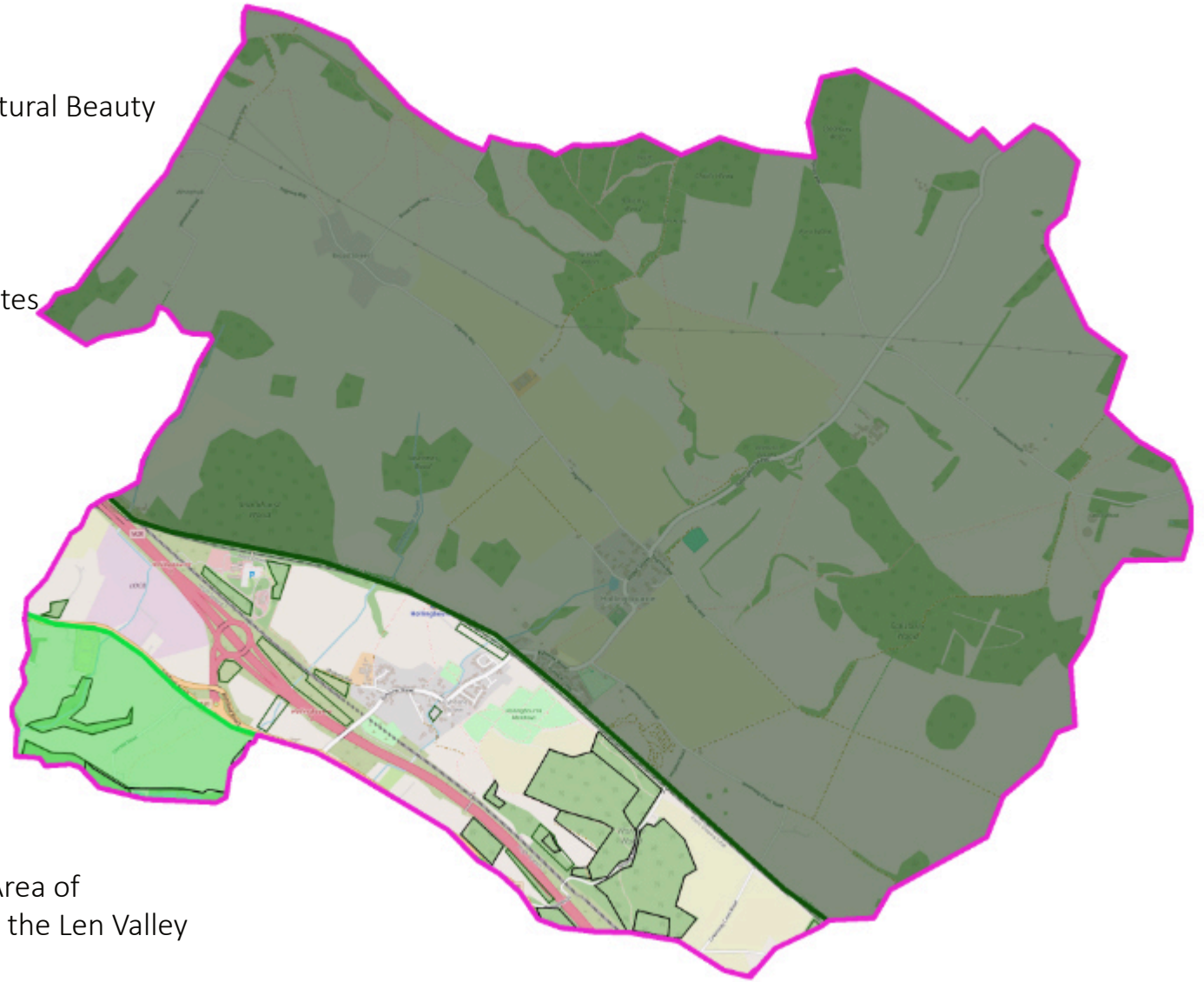
Nearly the entire parish sits within the Low Weald Landscape of Local Value.

Proposed site allocation LPRSA310 will deliver 100 homes.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Hollingbourne

-  Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Landscapes of Local Value
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats



Notes




Most of the parish sits within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and a small part in the Len Valley Landscape of Local Value.

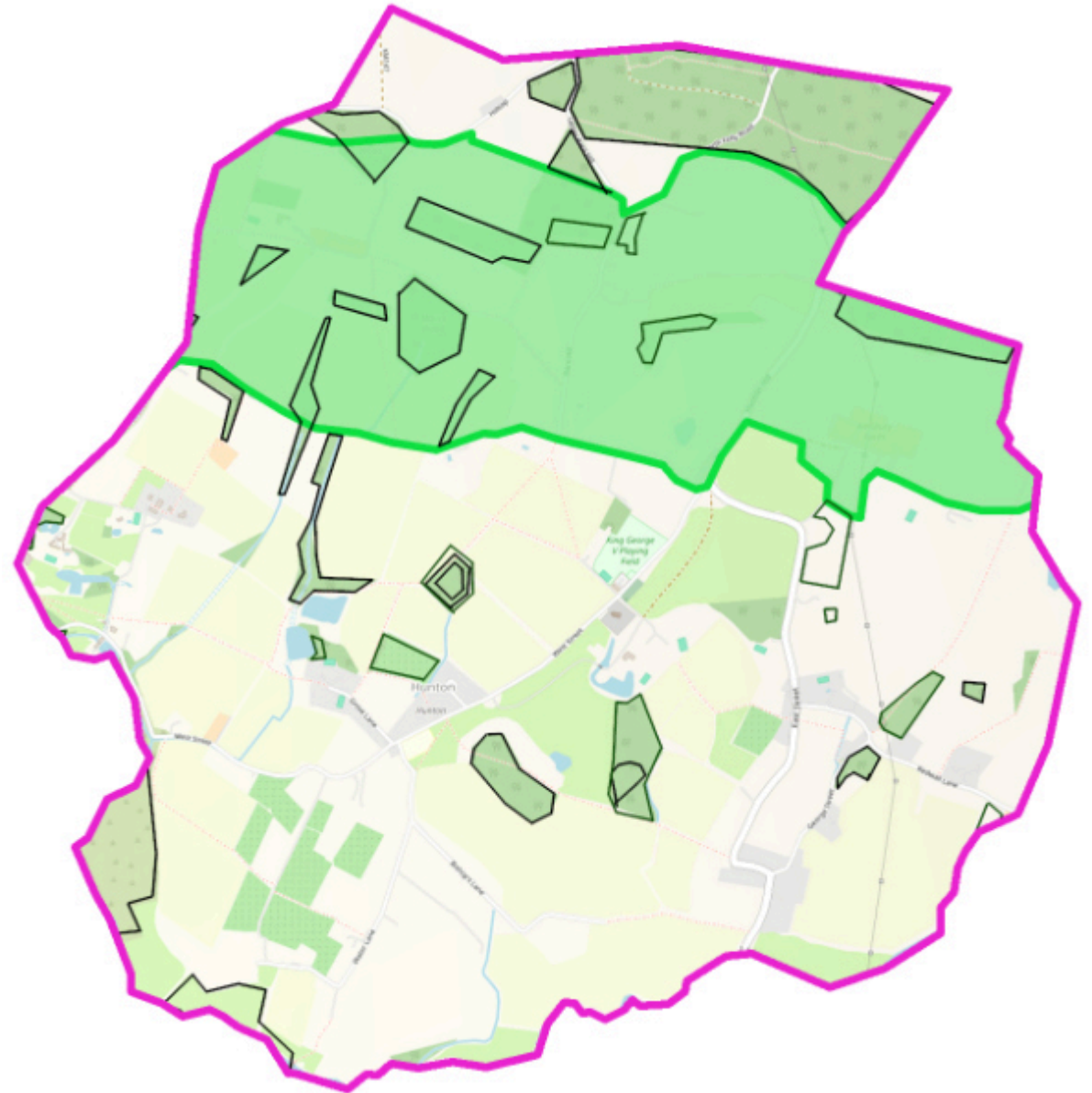
LPRSA204 will see 9 new homes. It should be noted that to the north east is the Leeds Langley Relief Road corridor. The Local Plan previously contained policy LPRSP5(A) which states:

“Land within the corridor defined on the policies map, will be safeguarded for potential future development, which will be required to provide a quantum of enabling development.”

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Hunton

-  Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats






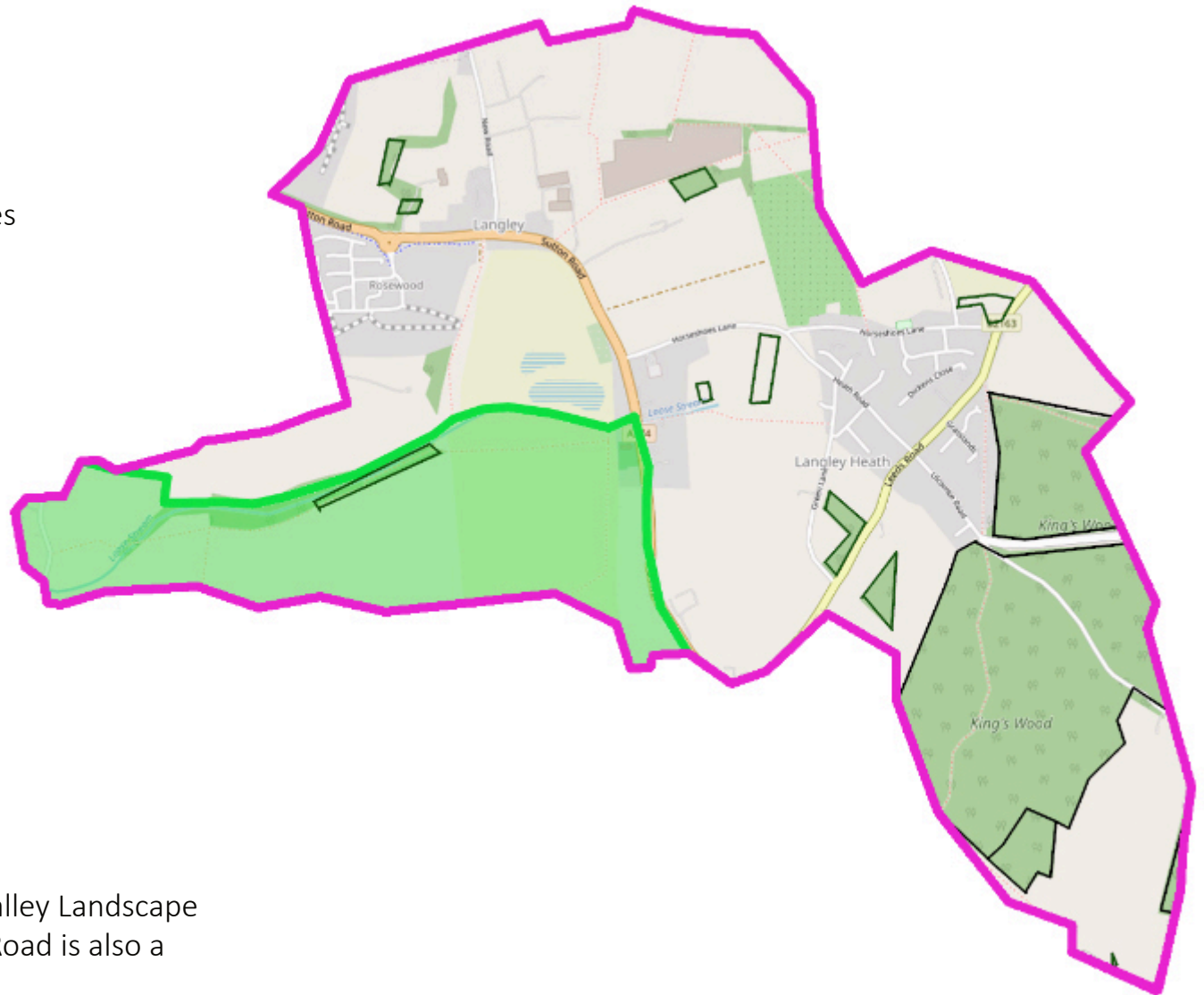
Notes

The Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value runs through the north. The south of the parish is covered by Flood Zone 3. This comprises of 3a, land that is considered high risk to build upon, or 3b, floodplain that cannot be built upon. There are no site allocations in the Local Plan presently under review.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Langley

-  Loose Valley Landscape of Local Value
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats



Notes



A small portion to the west contains the Loose Valley Landscape of Local Value. To the west and south of Sutton Road is also a designated Open Space.

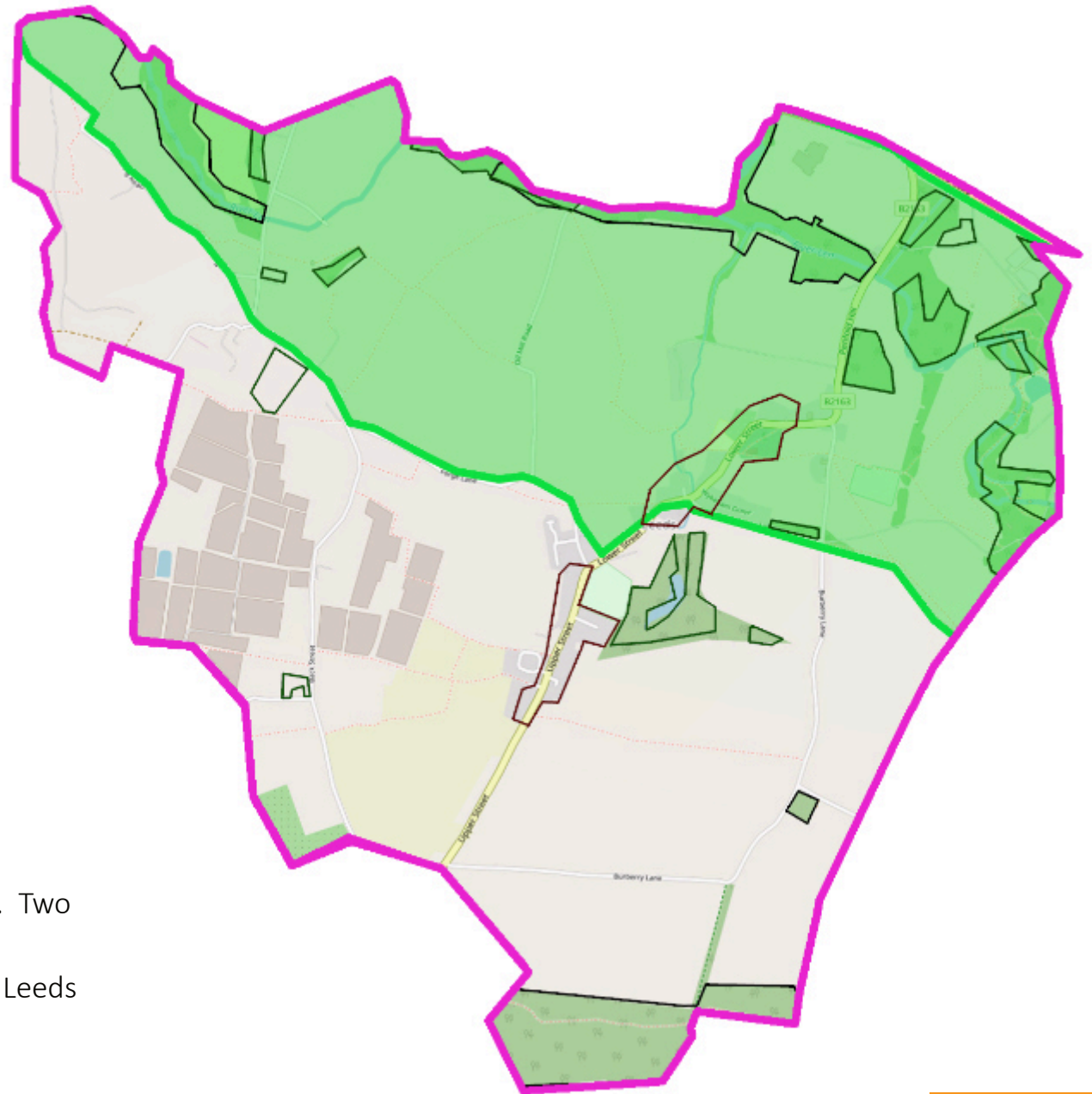
It should be noted that to the north of Leeds Road and east of Sutton Road is the Leeds Langley Relief Road corridor. The Local Plan previously contained policy LPRSP5(A) which states:

“Land within the corridor defined on the policies map, will be safeguarded for potential future development, which will be required to provide a quantum of enabling development.”

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Leeds

-  Len Valley Landscape of Local Value
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats
-  Conservation Area



Notes





To the north is the Len Valley Landscape of Local Value. Two sections of Leeds village are Conservation Areas.

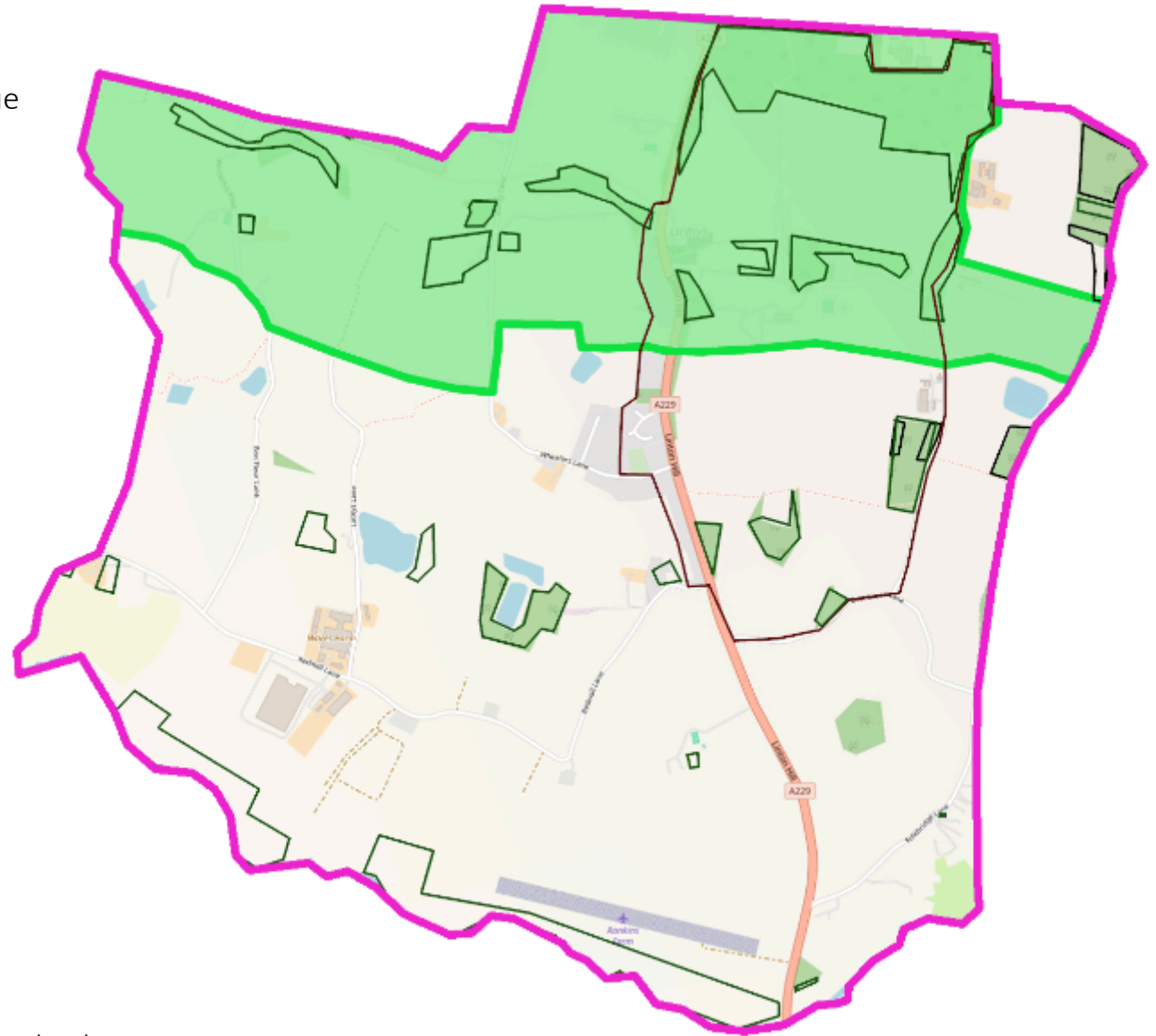
It should be noted that to the west of the B2163 is the Leeds Langley Relief Road corridor. The Local Plan previously contained policy LPRSP5(A) which states:

“Land within the corridor defined on the policies map, will be safeguarded for potential future development, which will be required to provide a quantum of enabling development.”

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Linton

-  Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats
-  Conservation Area



Notes

To the north is the Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value. To the south of the parish is covered by Flood Zone 3. This comprises of 3a, land that is considered high risk to build upon, or 3b, floodplain that cannot be built upon. The village and Linton Park is covered by a Conservation Area. There are no site allocations in the Local Plan presently under review.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Sutton Valence

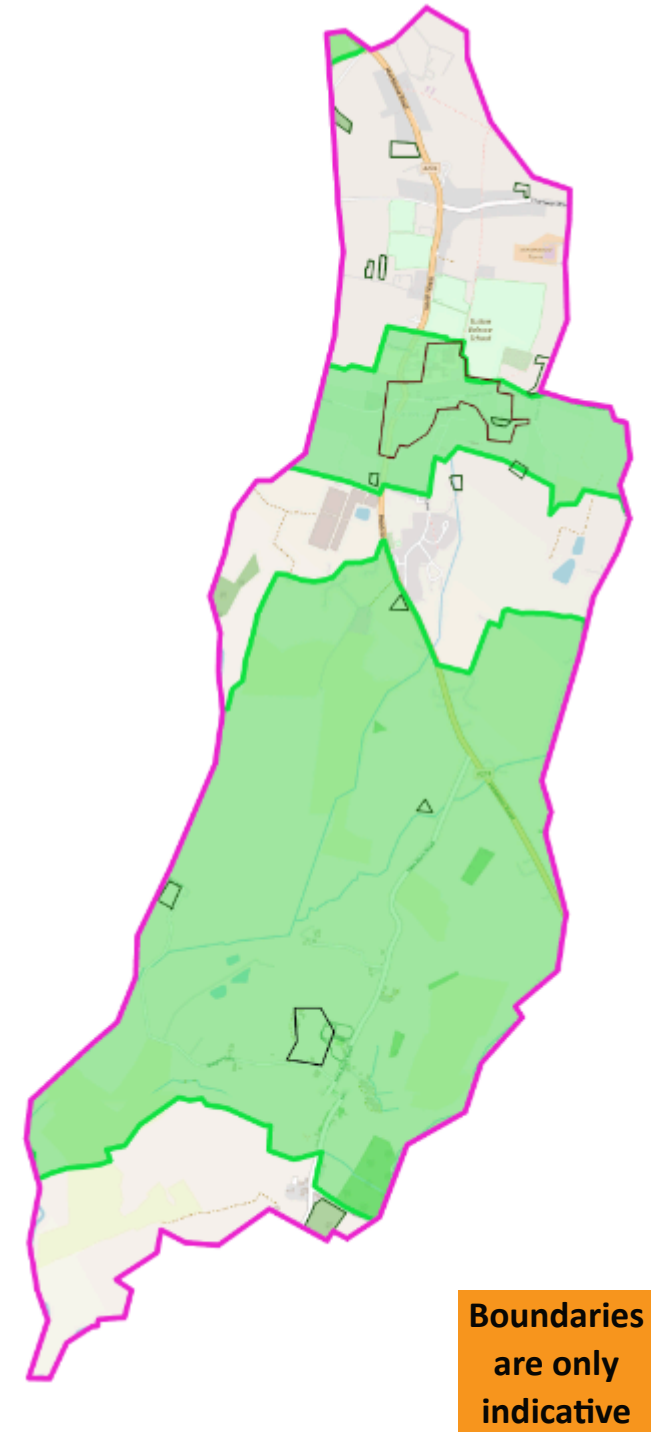
-  Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value (north)
-  Lower Weald Landscape of Local Value (south)
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats
-  Conservation Area

Notes

Site allocation LPRSA078 to the north of the village proposes 100 homes.




It should be noted that to the north is the Leeds Langley Relief Road corridor. The Local Plan previously contained policy LPRSP5(A) which states:

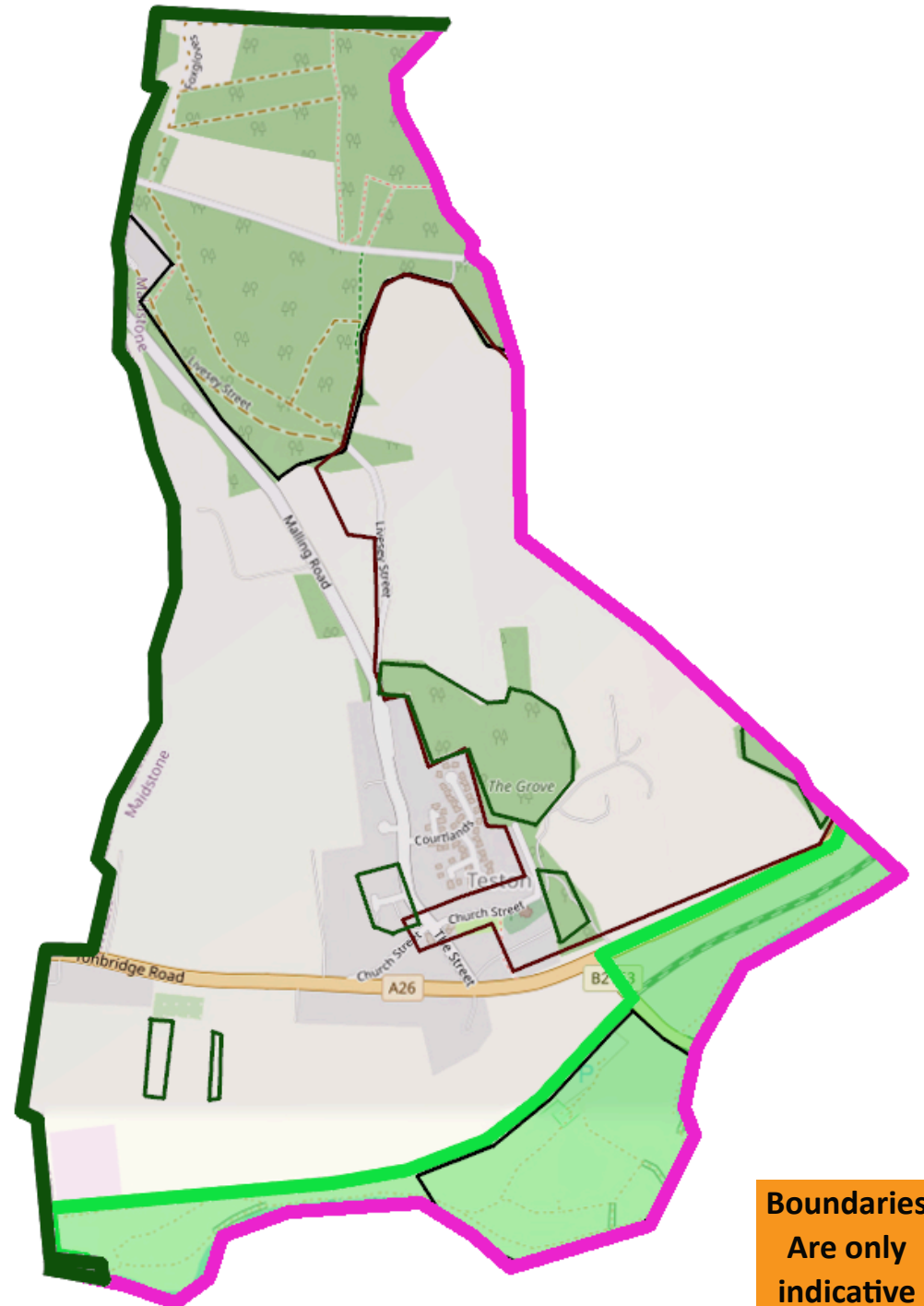
“Land within the corridor defined on the policies map, will be safeguarded for potential future development, which will be required to provide a quantum of enabling development.”



**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Teston

-  Medway Valley Landscape of Local Value
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats
-  Conservation Area







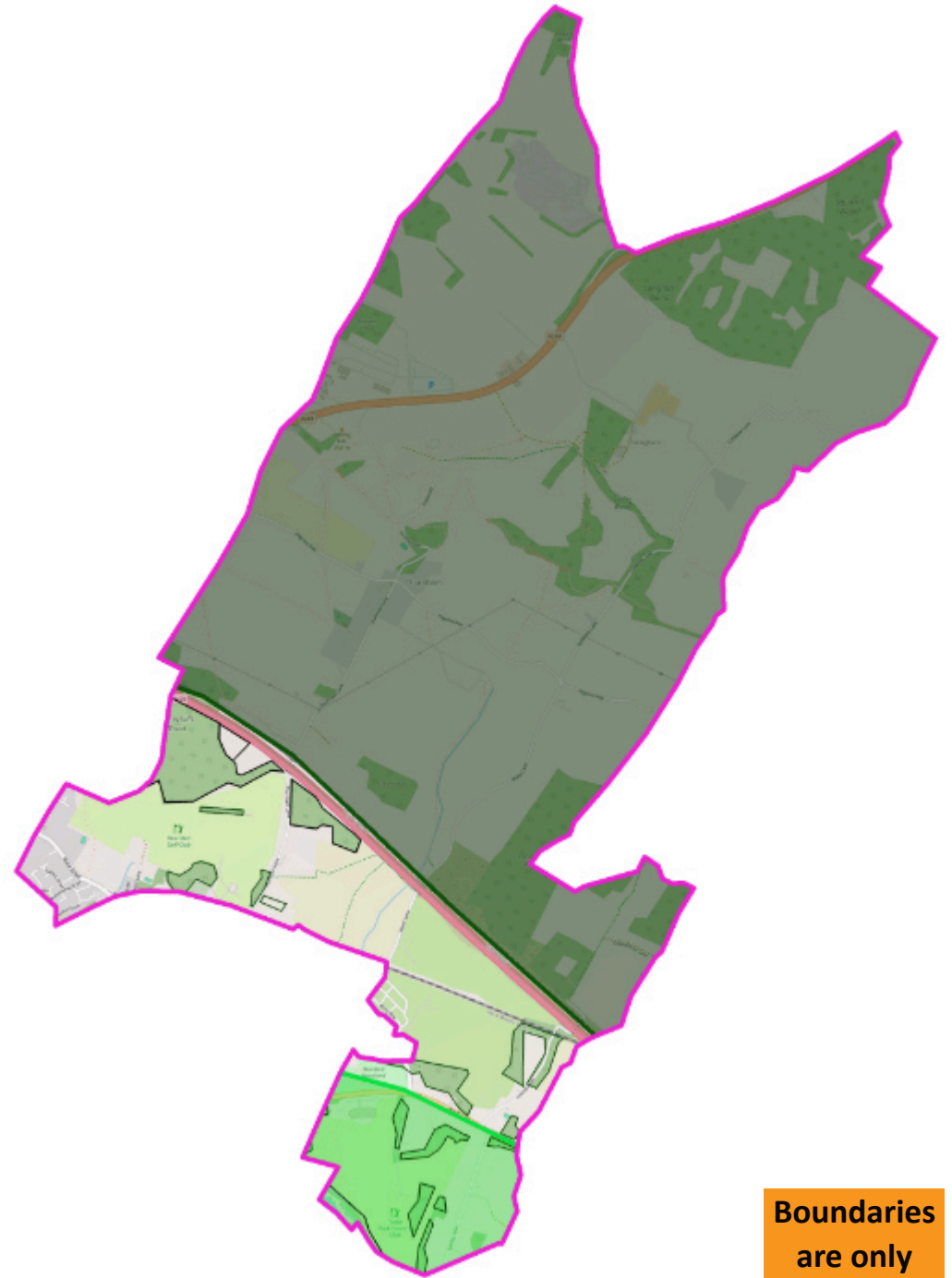
Notes

To the south is the Medway Valley Landscape of Local Value. Part of the village and to the east is a Conservation Area.

**Boundaries
Are only
indicative**

Thurnham

-  Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Len Valley Landscape of Local Value
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats







Notes

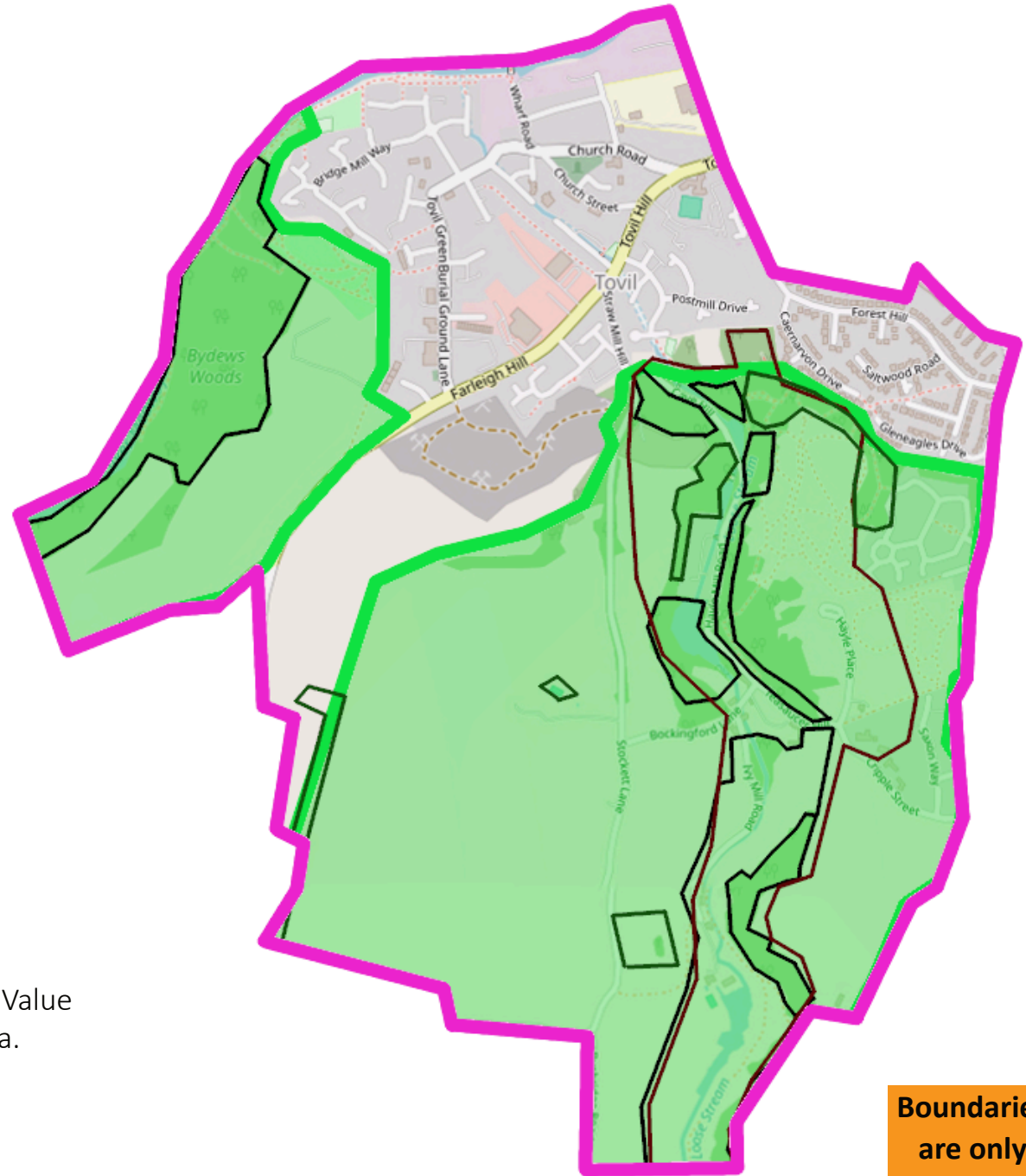
Much of the parish is in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. To the south is the Len Valley Landscape of Local Value.

Site allocation LPRSA266 proposes 67 homes.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Tovil

-  Medway Valley Landscape of Local Value
-  Loose Valley Landscape of Local Value
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats
-  Conservation Area



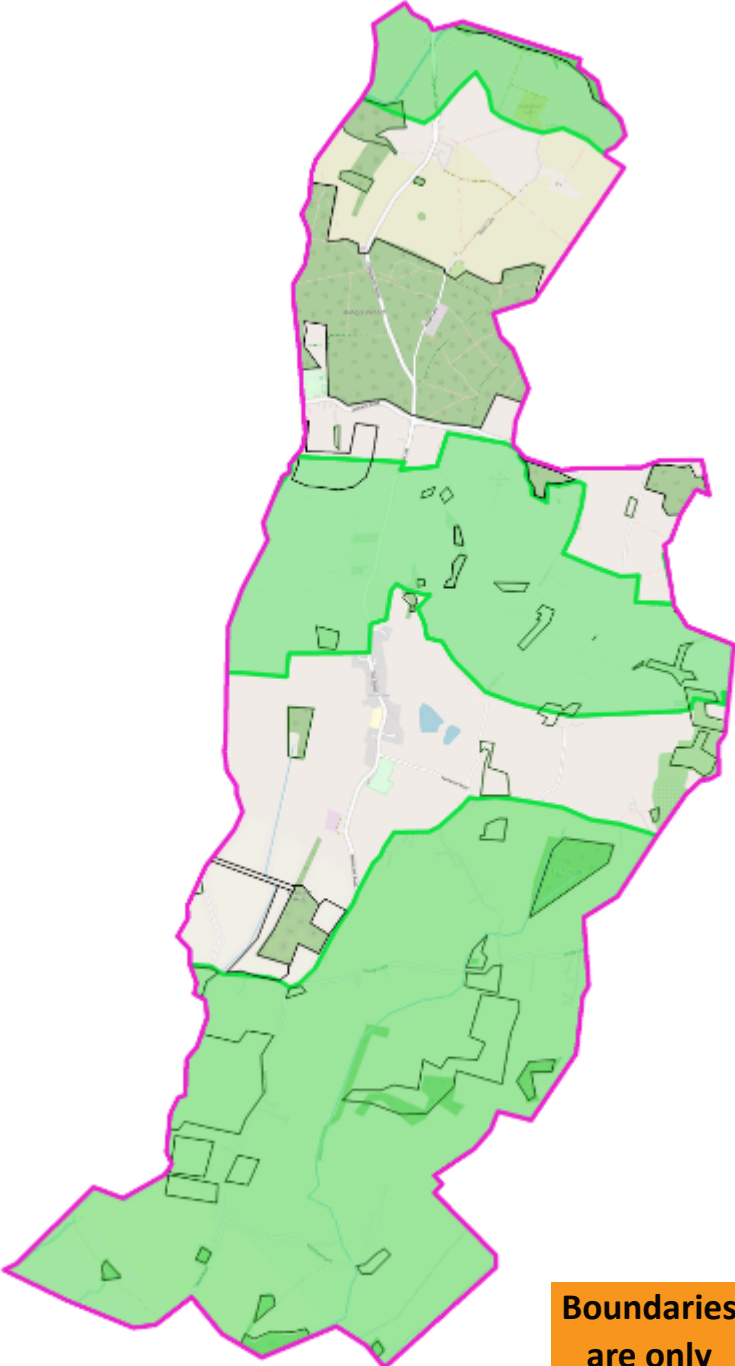
Notes

Both Medway Valley and Loose Valley Landscapes of Local Value sit in the parish, as does the Loose Valley conservation area. Proposed Site Allocation LPRSA265 would see 250 homes.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Ulcombe

-  Len Valley Landscape of Local Value
-  Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value
-  Low Weald Landscape of Local Value
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats







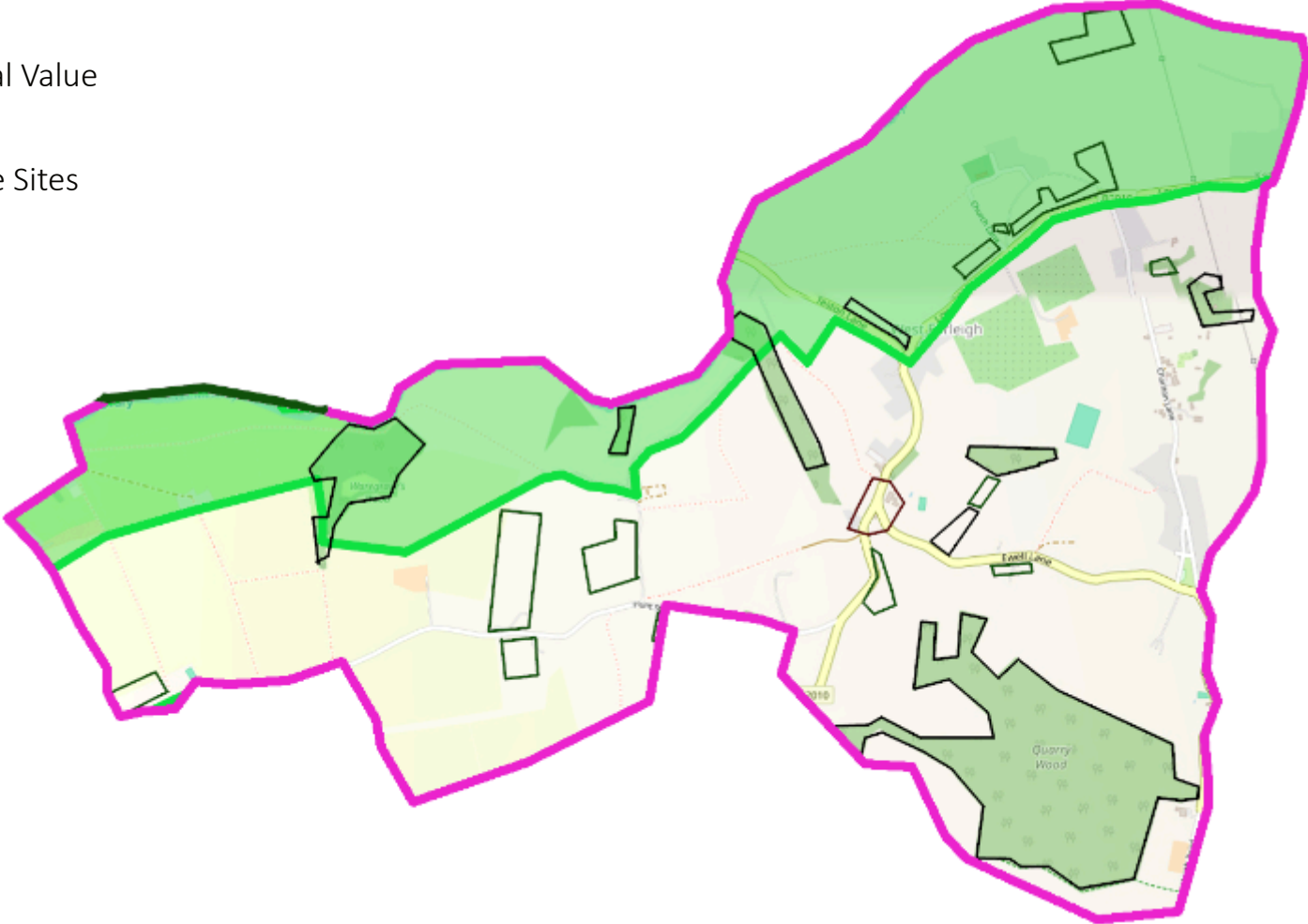
Notes

The parish is striped by three Landscapes of Local Value. Ancient Woodland comprises much of the south. There are no site allocations in the Local Plan presently under review.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

West Farleigh

-  Medway Valley Landscape of Local Value
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats
-  Conservation Area






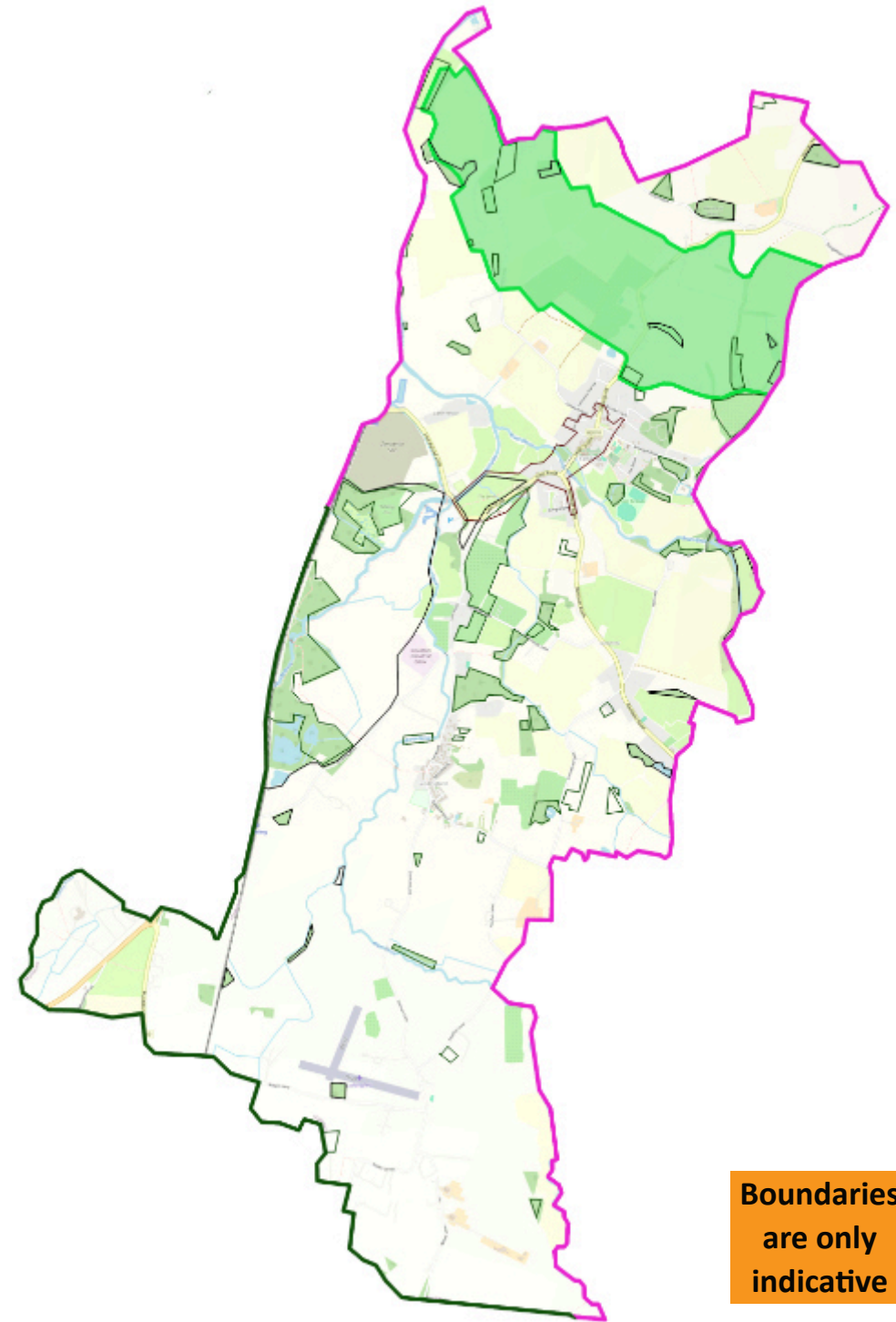
Notes

The Medway Valley Landscape of Local Value runs to the north and there is a small conservation area at the west side of Ewell Lane.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Yalding

-  Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value
-  Ancient Woodland / Local Wildlife Sites
-  Priority Habitats



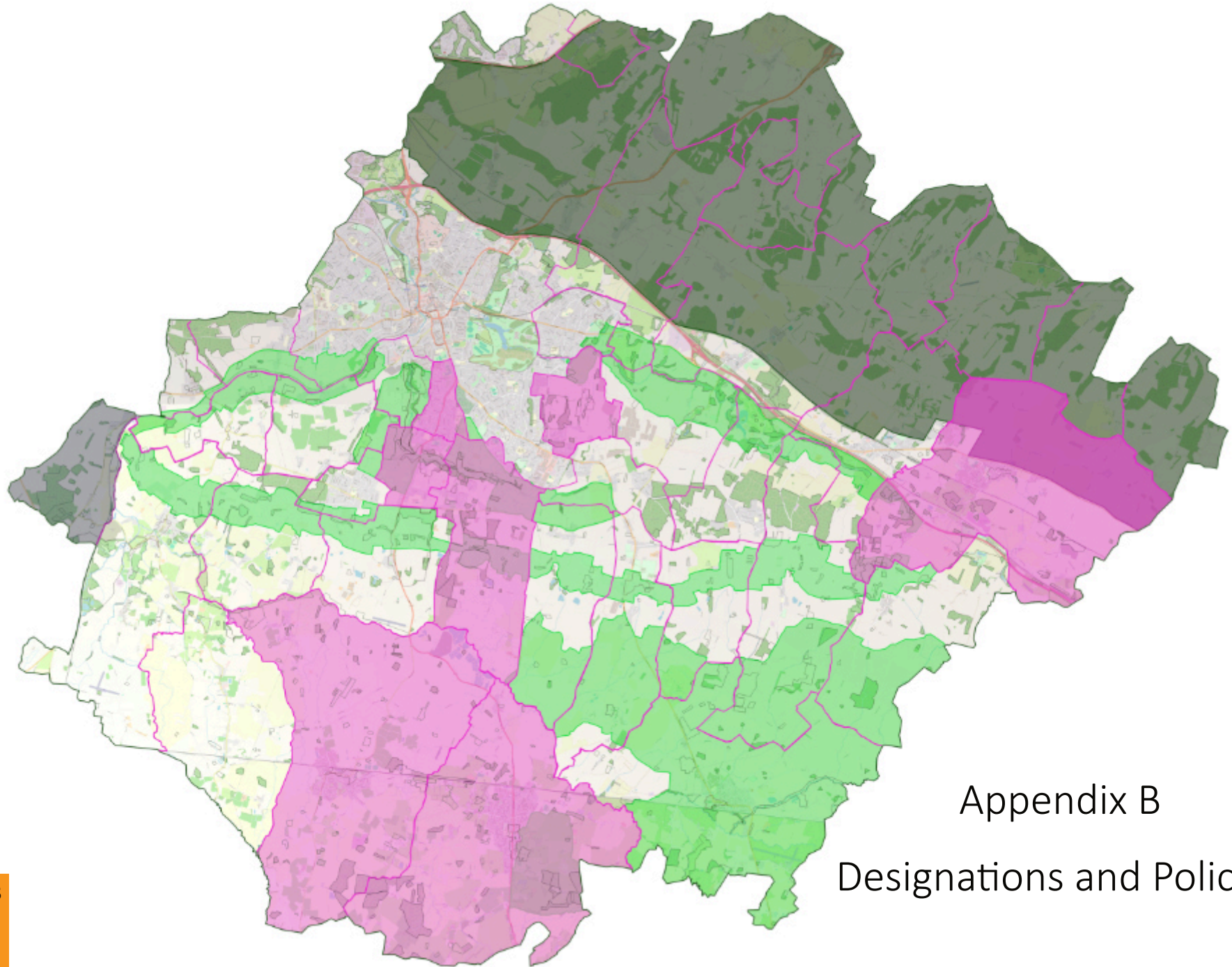
Notes

The Greensand Ridge Landscape of Local Value is to the north of the parish.

Although not mapped a large proportion of this parish is covered by Flood Zone 3. This comprises of 3a, land that is considered high risk to build upon, or 3b, floodplain that cannot be built upon.

Proposed Site Allocation LPRSA248 would see 100 homes.

**Boundaries
are only
indicative**



**Boundaries
are only
indicative**

Appendix B
Designations and Policies

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

An area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) is land protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act). It protects the land to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.

Metropolitan Green Belt

Metropolitan Green Belt encircles London with strict planning regulations to keep it open and undeveloped.

Landscapes of Local Value

Landscapes of Local Value are defined by Maidstone Borough Council through the Local Plan. These replace the Special Landscape Areas previously defined by KCC for which legislative support has been gradually withdrawn. Development proposals within landscapes of local value should, through their siting, scale, mass, materials and design, seek to contribute positively to the conservation and enhancement of the protected landscape

Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood planning is a right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011. Communities can shape development in their areas through the production of Neighbourhood Development Plans (often referred to simply as Neighbourhood Plans), Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders.

Neighbourhood Plans are typically defined at parish level. The North Loose area designation being an exception.

Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas each have their own policies to preserve them from undesirable changes.

Ancient Woodland

Ancient Woodlands are woodlands that have existed since at least 1600. They have irreplaceable, complex ecosystems and have increased planning protections.

In addition to section 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Local Plan states:

“Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate the protection of natural landscape assets including Ancient Woodland, veteran trees, hedgerows and features of biological and geological interest.”

Local Wildlife Sites

Local Wildlife sites are defined by MBC in the Local Plan and there is a commitment to preserve these in line with section 185(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework:

“(b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.”

Priority Habitats

Priority Habitats are defined by Natural England. They are protected by the Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that Local plans in England should include policies to promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats.

Credit: Maps have been sources and adapted from Open Street Map.

Published and promoted by Keith Nevols and on behalf of Maidstone Liberal Democrats (Liberal Democrats), all at 16 Trinity Road, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 2HG.