



INTRODUCTION

“A positive vision for a future East Grinstead that is socially inclusive, vibrant, economically robust, with a high degree of self-sufficiency, and with a first rate environment.”

WHAT IS THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

The East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan (EGNP) provides an opportunity for local people to decide where new housing and employment should go in their local area, and how their town centres should change over the next 20 years.

WHY WE NEED A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared to guide development and changes in the Town and Parish of East Grinstead for the next 20 years.

There is a need to consider all future development together rather than only reacting to individual or piecemeal development proposals. The Neighbourhood Plan will enable this to happen.

Change over the next two decades will be steered towards meeting local housing needs, securing more employment and a stronger economy, increasing access by sustainable means, and revitalising the historic town centre.

THE AIMS OF THE PLAN

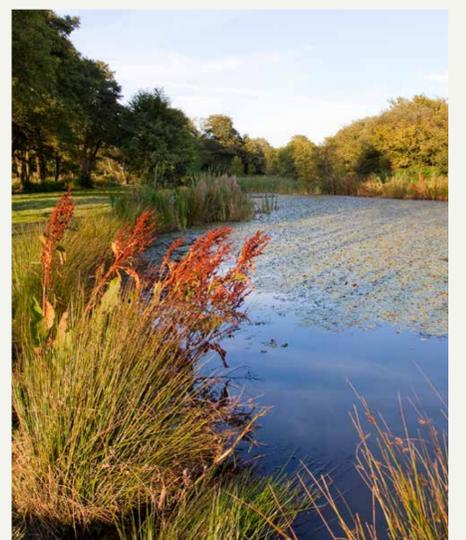
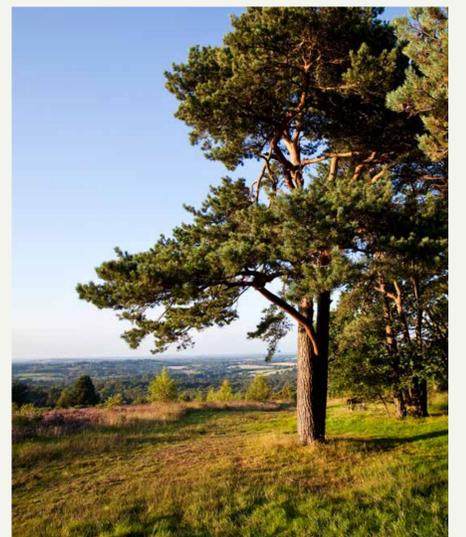
The Plan is designed to provide the local planning authority (Mid Sussex District Council) with a locally-endorsed basis for determining planning applications in East Grinstead.

The Town Council will use the EGNP as a basis for its responses to consultations on planning applications and other matters, and more widely for promoting the interests of the town.

For private sector investors and stakeholders, the Plan gives a degree of certainty as to the future direction of change, as well as specific guidance as to where and how development and change can take place.

PROGRESS TO DATE

An extensive engagement process with the local community and stakeholders has helped to identify a set of guiding principles that have shaped the Neighbourhood Plan's vision and policies. The vision and policies developed will be further tested through this formal consultation process, before the Neighbourhood Plan is completed.



HOW TO SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK

1. VISIT OUR WEBSITE

To view and comment on the Neighbourhood Plan from home, please visit our website. Alternatively, scan the QR code below on your smartphone to access the website directly.

<http://www.eastgrinsteadplan.org.uk/>



2. EMAIL OR WRITE TO US

You can also write to us by letter or email. Please use the contact details below:

East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan
East Grinstead Town Council
East Court
College Lane
East Grinstead
West Sussex RH19 3LT

Email: townclerk@eastgrinstead.gov.uk

Deadline for feedback:
Monday 7th October - 5pm



TOWN CENTRE

KEY POLICIES

TC01: Streetscape & Shopfront Design Control

To obtain planning permission, all development proposals in the town centre must respect and contribute to the historic character and streetscape, in terms of building footprint, scale, materials, design, layout and landscaping, including frontage and shopfront design.

RATIONALE

Streetscape improvements will improve the visual appeal, attracting customers as well as potential businesses.

TC02: Sustainable Access to the Town Centre

Proposed developments will be expected to contribute to and facilitate improved levels of accessibility and ease of movement to and within the town centre by ensuring the availability or provision of safe, direct and attractive routes that encourage access by walking, cycling and use of public transport.

Development proposals that meet the appropriate criteria will be expected to incorporate a Travel Plan, including a commitment to monitor its effectiveness (see West Sussex County Council Guidance on Travel Plans).

RATIONALE

Unless access is undertaken less by car and more by sustainable means, the town environment will suffer from excess traffic and parking, and this in turn will undermine the attraction and success of the town.

TC03: Retail Offer

Developments will be welcomed that provide new retail within the town centre that can improve the quality and offer of the shopping experience.

TC03a

On the primary shopping frontage any developments will be expected to respect the existing character of small units and frontages. New developments resulting in large individual shop frontages will be resisted.

TC03b

Larger retail units will be considered on the secondary shopping frontage as part of redevelopment along Railway Approach and at Queen's Walk.

RATIONALE

To maintain the primary frontage with a wide mix of retail including independent traders, while retaining the option for larger footprint retail in the western part of the town centre. Large retail units that have large catchments, which in East Grinstead are difficult to serve by sustainable means of access, are contrary to the sustainability aims of this Plan. This is consistent with the Mid Sussex District Plan, which states: "An important element of achieving sustainable communities is the regeneration and renewal of the (three) town centres so that they can be attractive and thriving retail, leisure and commercial hubs each with their own distinctive character."

TC04: Mixed Uses

Development proposals for the town centre should provide a mix of uses and residential accommodation, including a residential component on upper floors.

RATIONALE

To increase and diversify the resident, visitor and workplace populations of the town centre, which gives family orientated evening vitality.

TC07: Change of Use within Retail Frontage

Proposed developments in the town centre should enhance the shopping facilities available and not undermine the retail function of the area. Within the primary shopping frontages change of use will be permitted where:

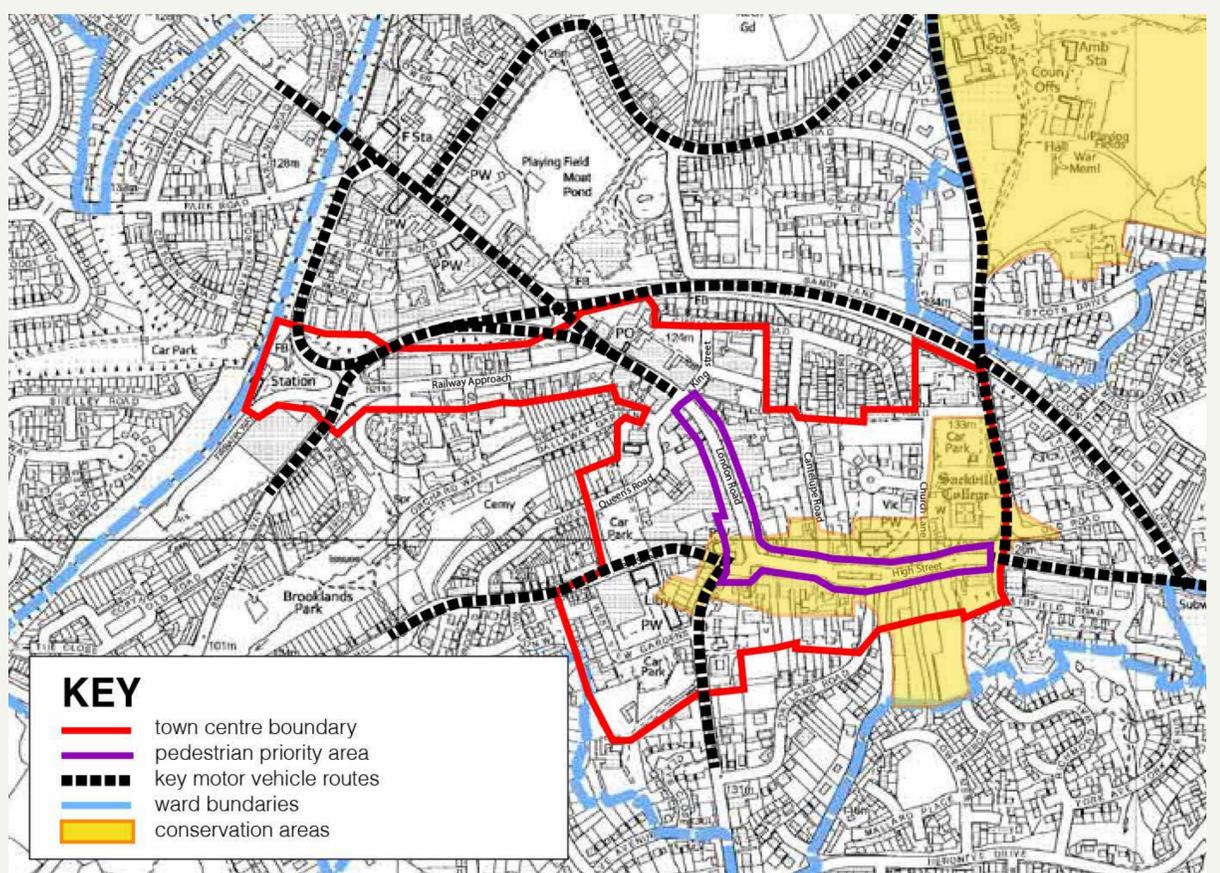
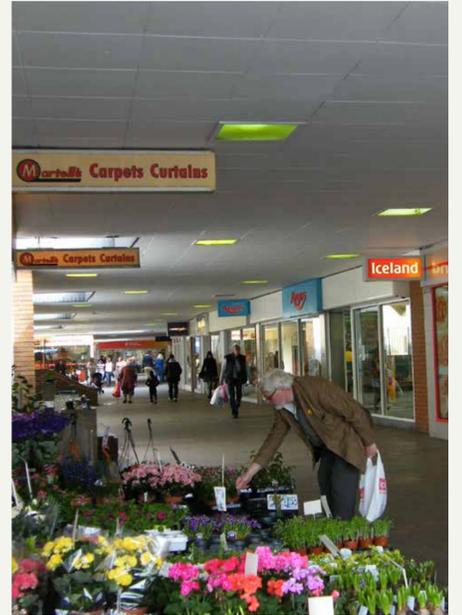
- A clear predominance of Class A1 shop uses would be maintained, and/or;
- The nature of the proposed use would sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the centre;
- The location and prominence of the proposed use would not lead to a significant break in the continuity of shopping facilities.

Permanent changes of use will be resisted that result in a loss of retail frontage at street level to:

- Use Class A2 financial services (including betting shops and money transfer shops); or to
- B1a offices; or to
- Residential use.

RATIONALE

To protect the character of the town and to retain the traditional retail space in the town centre.



Above: Town Centre proposed pedestrian priority area, vehicle routes and conservation area



ECONOMY

KEY POLICIES

EC01: Town Centre Retail Focus

New retail development in East Grinstead should be focused in the town centre. Outside the town centre retail development will generally be resisted, although small units of less than 300 square metres retail floor area will be considered if they serve local or specialist needs, and if their location is appropriate in terms of traffic, parking and amenity.

RATIONALE

Focused development will strengthen the town centre's offer to residents and visitors, offering a range of products and services in a single area, and promoting healthy competition. Retail development outside the town centre undermines that objective and also is likely to be more dependent on access by car.

EC02: Refurbishment of Queen's Walk

Prior to the realisation of full-scale redevelopment, opportunities will be explored to refurbish Queen's Walk.

RATIONALE

A relatively simple refurbishment of Queen's Walk could immediately improve its appeal to new tenants while larger-scale redevelopment plans are decided. This would help to strengthen the town's retail offer, and improve the quality and character of the development itself.

EC03: Temporary Uses for Vacant Units

The use of vacant commercial premises for temporary or short-term uses by the local community will be encouraged.

RATIONALE

Access to commercial premises is often difficult for small businesses and start-ups due to set-up costs and lease requirements. A relaxation of these costs and requirements could bring active uses back to vacant units, bringing activity and people back to the town centre during weekdays as well as weekends, as well as varying the town centre's retail and commercial offer.

EC05: Evening Economy

The provision of family friendly evening entertainment and activities will be promoted through pro-active management and an enhanced public realm, including lighting, and support of events and activities appropriate to a town centre.

RATIONALE

Encouraging evening activities within the town centre would strengthen the town's offer to residents and visitors, as well as the local businesses involved. "Family friendly" activity means, for the purpose of this policy, neither late night nor likely to generate anti-social behaviour, and generally compatible with "Purple Flag" standards (<http://www.purpleflag.org.uk/purple-flag-standards.html>) evening vitality.

EC07: Wayfinding

Develop and implement a wayfinding strategy (physical signing as well as online information) to raise awareness of local businesses and to improve connections, particularly but not only between the station and High Street.

RATIONALE

The link between the station and the Town Centre is poorly laid out and designed, and the link is neither welcoming nor immediately apparent to visitors. Within the Town Centre, awareness of local business and facilities and routes to the wider Parish could be improved through signage.

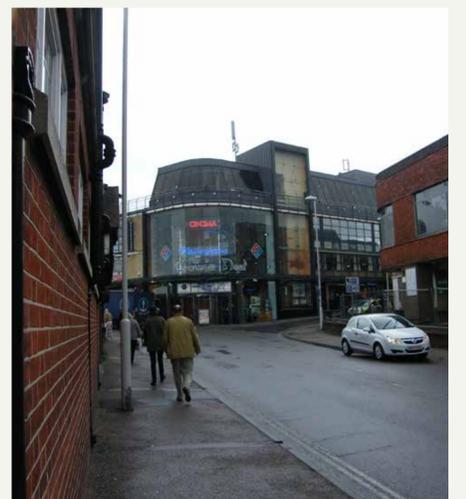


EC10: Conversion of Surplus/Unviable Office Space

Where surplus to requirement, unviable office space should be converted into residential units or other viable uses.

RATIONALE

Unsuitable office space is unlikely ever to be occupied. When this is the case, notwithstanding policy EC04, redevelopment and/or conversion opportunities should be explored so as to bring the space into use as quickly as possible in order to contribute to the vitality of the Parish.

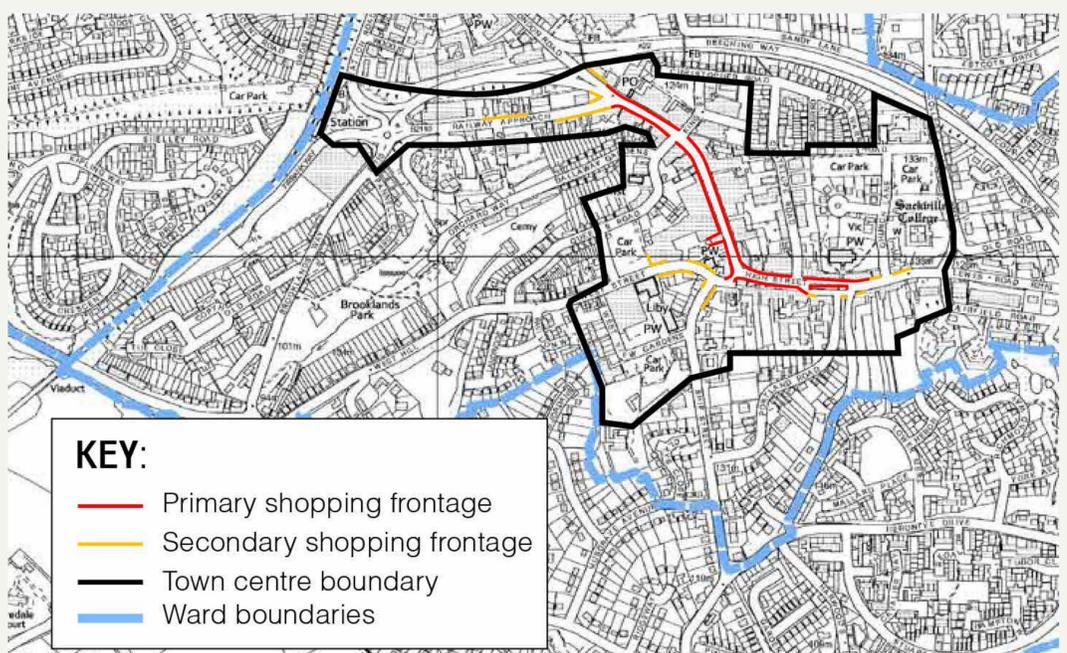
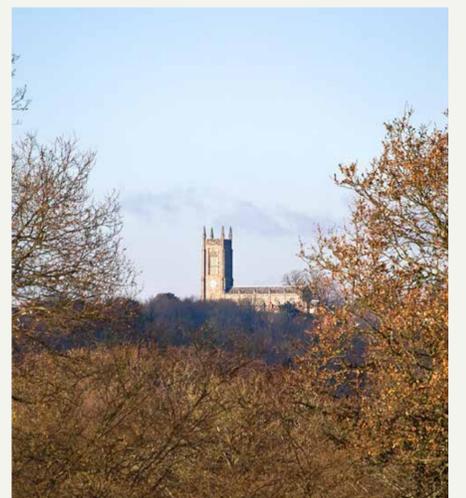


EC11: Railway Approach

Proposals for the redevelopment of Railway Approach that contribute to, or enable, the creation of an improved link between the station and town centre will be welcomed. Mixed-use developments incorporating hotel and tourism-related uses will be considered favourably.

RATIONALE

Railway Approach is seen as being integral to the unlocking of East Grinstead's potential, as a result of its strategic link between the station and Town Centre. The station end of the road is also a major gateway to the town, and as such has considerable opportunity to draw people into the town. Railway Approach, together with London Road (south) and High street, also forms the crucial link between Worth Way and Forest Way, which in turn form part of national Cycle Route 21, and the London-Paris "Avenue Verte". It is vital that East Grinstead offers a more positive experience for users of these routes.



Above: Town Centre retail zones



ACCESSIBILITY & MOVEMENT

KEY POLICIES

AM01: Developer Contributions for Transport

All new developments will be required to make a financial or other contribution to the achievement of the accessibility and movement aims of this Plan.

RATIONALE

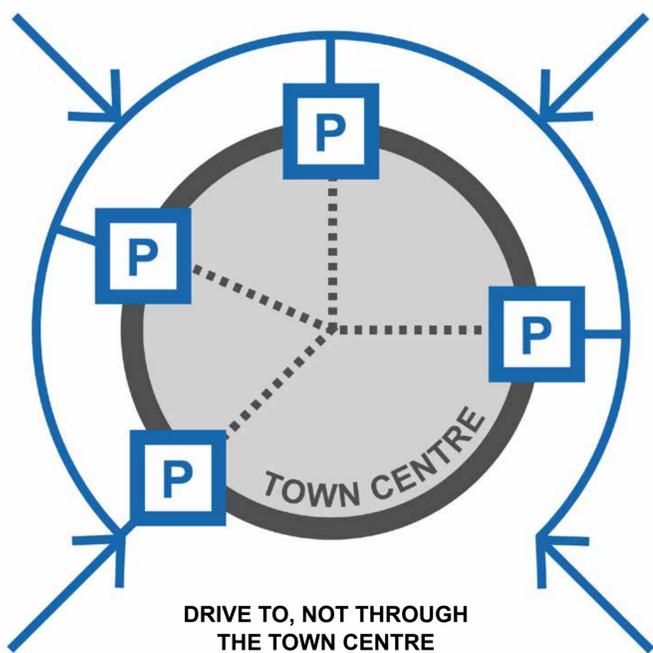
Congestion in East Grinstead has been long recognised as a constraint on development and vitality. To bring about improvements and to avoid a worsening situation, new developments are expected to help facilitate measures to address this issue.

AM02: Parking Management and Signing

Create a "Drive To Not Through" parking management system, whereby drivers approaching the town centre will be directed by a signing system to the nearest appropriate car park.

RATIONALE

Discouraging vehicles from being driven through the town centre, and avoiding "searching" traffic caused by drivers not being sure of parking opportunities until after they have driven through the town centre.



AM05: Travel Planning and 'Smart Choices'

Encourage, with partner authorities and stakeholders, a programme of intensified Travel Planning to promote "Smart Travel Choices", including rejuvenated School Travel Plans, Employer Travel Plans, a Station Travel Plan, Personalised Travel Planning, and Travel Planning Events, to achieve a shift from car to walking, cycling and public transport.

RATIONALE

The Department for Transport has recognised that Travel Planning has been proven to reduce travel by car, and to produce high benefits in relation to costs. The resulting changes in travel choices can produce greater personal wellbeing and satisfaction and potentially reduced healthcare costs.

AM07: Opportunities to Improve Connectivity

No development involving a changed building footprint or changed use of land will be approved without first undertaking a check on whether whole or part of the land could be used to improve the quality or connectivity of the walking, cycling and public transport networks. Where land is required for any of these purposes, and planning permission is to be granted, this will be negotiated with the owner/applicant.

RATIONALE

To ensure opportunities to improve the networks are not lost, and to encourage visitors for cycle recreation in the surrounding countryside, and to reduce local travel by motor vehicle.



Above: Example of a "parking route" sign system

AM11: Pedestrian Priority Town Centre

The High Street and London Road (south of King Street) and the eastern portion of West Street (east of Ship Street) is to be transformed into a "pedestrian priority" area with priority given to people on foot, mobility scooter, cycle and public transport, and with general traffic and parking restricted for all or part of the day.

RATIONALE

To create an historic but vibrant town centre offering a social and trading environment to the best international standards, and to encourage investment. This objective cannot be achieved while the area is designed and used primarily as a general vehicle traffic route and car park.



Above: How Railway Approach could look in the future

AM13: Railway Approach Redevelopment

Re-create Railway Approach as an attractive link to the town centre, with or without redevelopment of some sites to facilitate widening to provide better provision for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users, and people with a disability, as well as for deliveries.

RATIONALE

An attractive town centre must have a high quality "Active Travel" link with the railway station to attract visitors, to reduce car travel and parking. Railway Approach is also a crucial link between Worth Way and Forest Way, and is part of national Cycle Route 21 and the London-Paris "Avenue Verte" international cycle route.



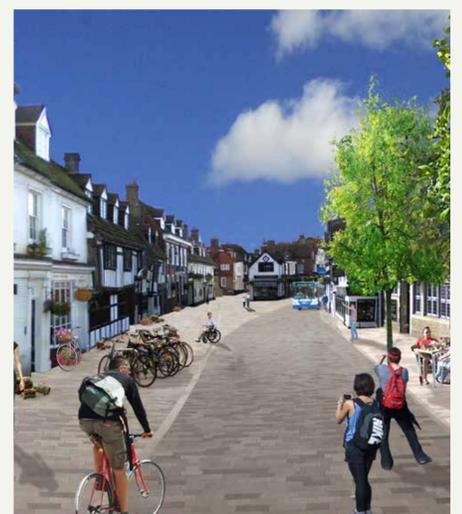
Above: A single control sign enables yellow lines to be removed

AM15: Traffic Management and Road Infrastructure

Traffic management and road infrastructure changes on A22 and A264 to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety, smooth traffic flow, reduce vehicle delays, and improve bus reliability.

RATIONALE

Access to the town via the A22 and A264 is frequently slow, with unreliable journey times, adversely affecting the quality of bus services as well as general vehicle movement, while walking and cycling suffer from and are thereby discouraged by unsafe conditions, and inadequate crossings and widths of paths.



Above: How the High Street could look in the future



KEY POLICIES

HC01: Suitable Sites for Housing

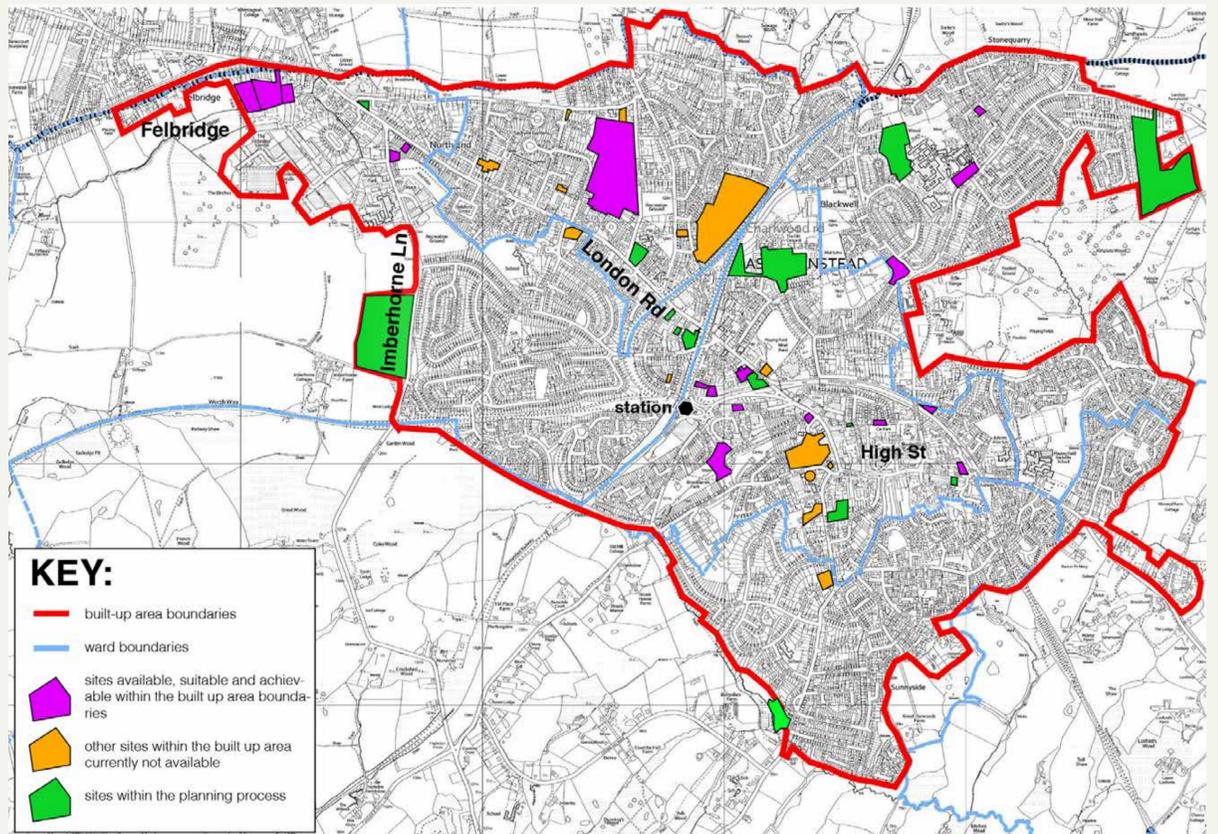
New housing developments (additional to those with planning consent but not yet built or on allocated/committed sites at March 2013) will be considered within the built up area. Other sites within the built up area not yet identified that may come forward for development (“Windfall Sites”) during the life of the Plan will also be considered if justified by the overall local housing need.

RATIONALE

The commitment represented by the sites identified is estimated to be more than sufficient to cater for local housing needs for the duration of the plan, assuming that sites are made available for development at a steady rate. Since the rate at which sites come forward for development cannot be guaranteed, it is advisable to review the housing demand and supply in 2021 and to make any adjustments to the targets as appropriate at the time.

Containing housing development within the existing built up area has the aim of:

- Conserving the town’s character;
- Protecting the countryside and preserving the AONB;
- Helping to ensure moderate pace of development appropriate to local needs, and to deter speculative development based on external demand; and
- Maintaining a strategic gap with neighbouring settlements.



Above: Potential sites for housing

HC02: New Housing Developments

Within the defined built up area, new housing developments (additional to those with planning consent but not yet built or on allocated/committed sites at March 2013) will be favourably considered provided that they would not have a severe impact on traffic conditions on the main road network serving the town. Housing proposals which cannot meet this condition will be strongly resisted.

RATIONALE

The need to ensure that the transport infrastructure copes with growth and that new developments do not worsen the already difficult traffic conditions, especially on the A22 and A264 where they pass through the town. (The situation has already been highlighted by the 2004 Local Plan, the Mid Sussex District Plan, the West Sussex Local Transport Plan and more recently by the reports by Atkins and MTRU Consultants). If and when this constraint is reduced (by reduction in motor traffic demand or increase in road capacity, or a mixture of the two) further development beyond that envisaged in this Plan can be considered. The ten-year review of the housing policies in this Plan will provide an opportunity to re-examine the issue.

HC04: Housing Mix

New schemes should provide a good range of housing types. An explanation for the proposed housing mix should accompany any planning application which exceeds the Planning Authority’s criteria for inclusion of affordable homes and clearly demonstrate how the new development responds to East Grinstead’s current and future local housing needs.

RATIONALE

To ensure that new developments address actual local housing needs rather than being solely responsive to market opportunities, especially in this sought-after area in the South-East. First consideration will be given to the provision of housing that meets the needs of the local population. Every effort will be made to engender support for local traditions and heritage and a sense of belonging.

HC07: Sports Provision for the Community

The Town Council wishes to encourage healthy and active lifestyles and support general wellbeing. This includes the promotion of new sporting facilities.

- The expansion of the existing East Grinstead Sports Club (which lies outside the defined built up area) is supported subject to consideration of other policies in the Plan concerning accessibility and landscape protection;
- Existing sports and recreational facilities at East Court Estate should be retained for existing use; and
- Land allocated for sporting use as per the sports development plan would be supported.

RATIONALE

East Grinstead is investing in sport facilities and promotes active lifestyles, and puts a high priority on these aims. Current sport provision, as highlighted in the document “A sports development and Facilities Plan for East Grinstead – 2011”, is suboptimal and a number of interventions are needed to fill the current gap, including the expansion of the Sports Club, as outlined in the sport development framework.

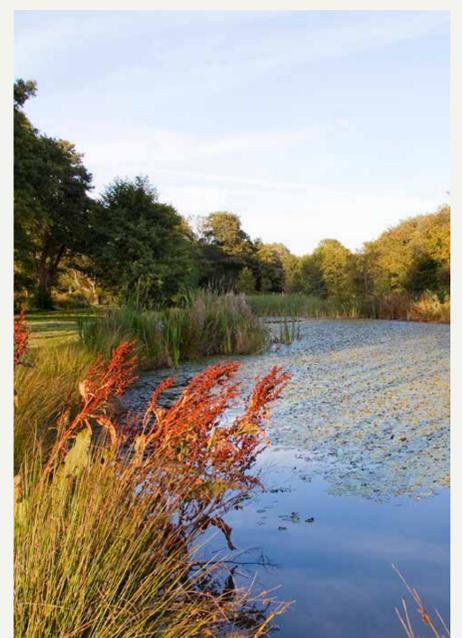


HC09: Dentists Practices

The Town Council would support new or extended dentist practices where demand for the service can be demonstrated and where the intention is shown to take on NHS patients. New facilities would be expected to be accessible for all potential patients concerning the physical layout and design.

RATIONALE

Evidence from the Doctors and Dentists survey, although not conclusive, indicates that there is limited capacity and therefore it is prudent to encourage facilities, especially in light of the duration of the plan.





ENVIRONMENT

KEY POLICIES

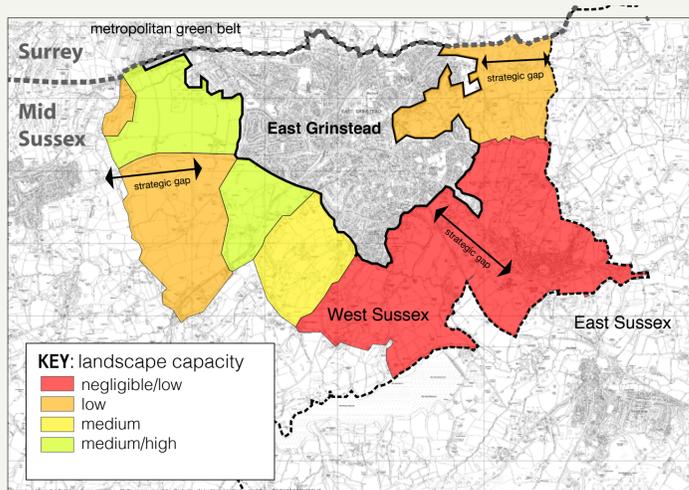
EN01: Protection of AONB

The Parish is surrounded by AONB, an area of significance and good aesthetic benefit. EGTC will resist development in AONB except in exceptional circumstances which would include for the purpose of supporting the rural economy, accommodating land based workers or activities that directly support land management or appropriate recreational facilities.

The Council further supports the MSDC Policy DP30 for 100% of any permitted rural exception dwellings to be affordable.

EN02: Resisting Coalescence

East Grinstead and the surrounding villages have individual characteristics, it is important that these are respected and maintained. A sense of leaving one settlement before arriving at the next should be retained. EGTC will resist development which erodes these natural gaps.



Above: Strategic gaps and landscape capacity

EN03: Designated and Other Green Open Spaces

The following formally designated green open spaces will be safeguarded and any development which would inhibit or detract from their value for recreation or amenity will not be permitted.

- East Court;
- Brooklands Park;
- King Georges Playing Field;
- The Green at Mallard Place;
- Worth Way;
- Forest Way;
- Lingfield Road Recreation Ground;
- Sunnyside Recreation Ground; and
- Imberhome Lane Recreation Ground.

EN03a

Changes of use on other green open spaces in the Parish will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances and where an equivalent area of green space available for public enjoyment elsewhere in the Parish is to be provided. Such other spaces include:

- Mount Noddy Recreation Ground;
- Turners Hill Recreation Ground.

RATIONALE

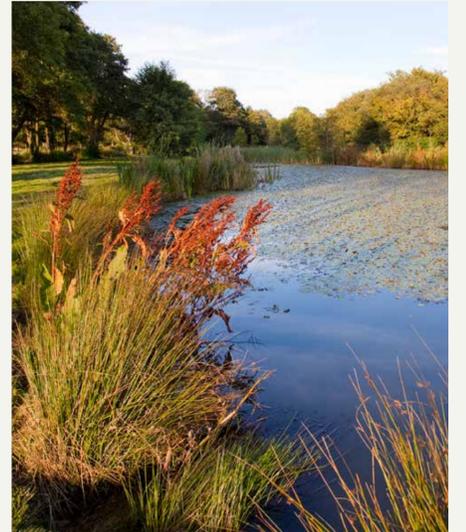
Protect the number of green spaces within the built up area. Preserve a balance between built up areas and open spaces in order to safeguard the town's character.

EN04: Protection and Enhancement of Existing Green Spaces

New development affecting existing green spaces in relation to their size, quality or accessibility within the built up area of East Grinstead will only be permitted if alternative suitable spaces are provided in close proximity.

RATIONALE

Maintain and possibly expand the provision of green spaces within the built up area in a scenario of increasing housing density. Preserve a balance between built up areas and open spaces in order to safeguard the town's character.

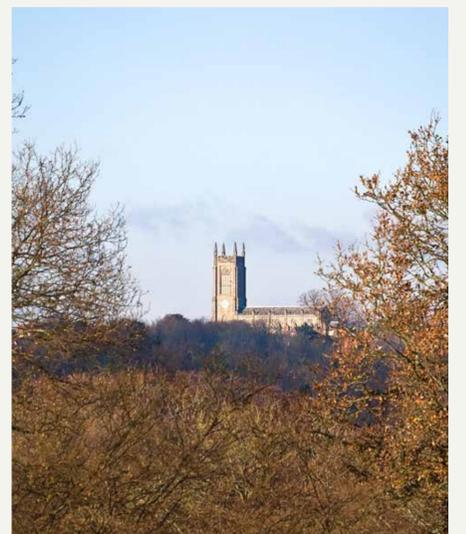


EN05: Urban Trees Supply

New development should include the provision of new trees, while proposals causing the loss of trees of arboriculture or amenity value should be resisted.

RATIONALE

Maintain and expand the stock of trees in the town for their contribution to mitigating atmospheric pollution, improving local micro-climate, enhancing the character and amenity of the local streets, to biodiversity and water management.

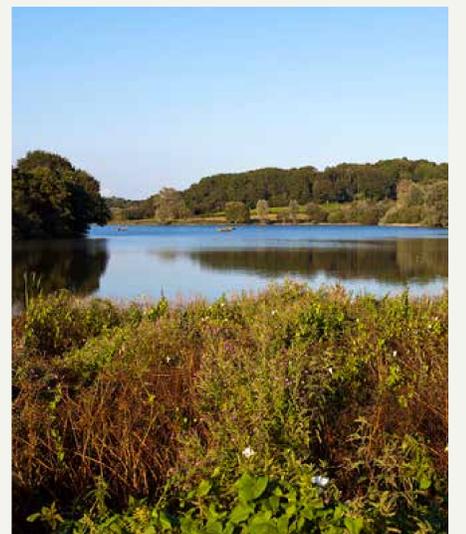


EN07: Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUD)

All new developments must clearly demonstrate the adoption of measures to minimise surface and roof water run-off. the full range of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) should be explored in order to identify the most appropriate solution taking into account each site context and the type of development.

RATIONALE

Minimise the extent of impermeable surfaces and help to reduce flood risk, help improving water quality, provide additional space of amenity, recreational and biodiversity value.



EN08: Green Space to Mitigate Impact on Ashdown Forest

Residential development leading to a net increase in dwellings within the 7km zone of influence, will be required to contribute to the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) to the level of 8ha per 1,000 net increase in population or in the form of financial contributions to SANGS elsewhere.

RATIONALE

Mitigate the potential pressure on green spaces outside the built-up area namely the Ashdown Forest and the AONB.

