

# WEST HOATHLY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

## Scoping Report for Sustainability Appraisal

Submitted for Consultation with Statutory Authorities  
by West Hoathly Parish Council  
2012



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# 1. Introduction

The purpose of this Scoping Report is to identify the sustainability issues within West Hoathly Parish and to set objectives for the Sustainability Appraisal of the West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan that can be used to determine how the Neighbourhood Plan will address some or all of these issues. The West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan objectives are in compliance with the Strategic Objectives of the Mid Sussex District Plan, and consistent with local and national planning policy, **while taking into account the local circumstances and needs of the parish of West Hoathly.**

This document will be the subject of consultation with Mid Sussex District Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage and the High Weald AONB Unit before the draft Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal are published in 2013. The outcome of the consultation on this scoping report may result in further issues being identified.

In accordance with European and national legislation Neighbourhood Plans must be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal for consultation with environmental bodies and other relevant stakeholders, particularly where the plan has a positive or negative effect on the environment.

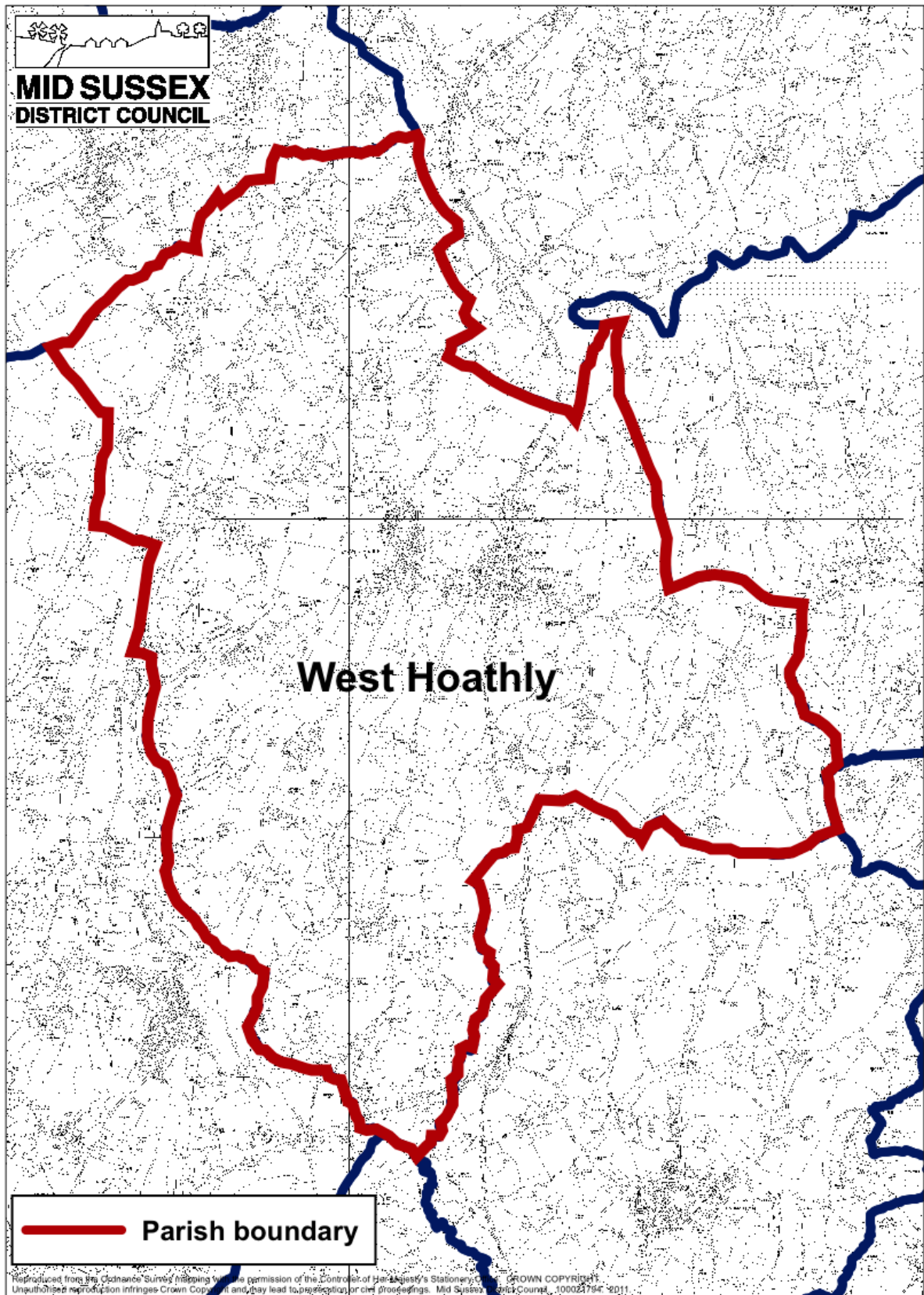
Sustainable Development is about ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. It is about considering the long-term environmental, social and economic issues and impacts in an integrated and balanced way. The UK Government has set five guiding principles to achieve the sustainable development purpose. These principles form the basis for policy in the UK and are as follows:

- Living within Environmental limits
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy
- Promoting good governance
- Using sound science responsibly

One of the means by which sustainable development can be achieved is through the land-use planning process. The West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan, which is currently being prepared, will need to be in conformity with the Mid Sussex District Plan. It will be adopted under the framework of the District Plan and will comprise part of the planning policy framework for the district. The Neighbourhood Plan can help to achieve sustainable development as it aims to ensure that **development meets the needs of people living and working in the parish**, whilst at the same time helping to ensure that adverse environmental impact is minimised. This Sustainability Appraisal will guide the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that the plan prepared is the most sustainable possible, based on the alternative options for the plan's overall strategy and the policies within it to deliver the strategy.

The commitment to the achievement of sustainable development has been set out in legislation introduced at both European and national level. In 2004 the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was implemented in the UK. This sets out the requirement for SEA, which has been incorporated into the Sustainability Appraisal process. Section 39 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Local Development Documents to be prepared with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. This Sustainability Appraisal incorporates the SEA process – for ease, this report is referred to as the Sustainability Appraisal from now on, although it incorporates the elements required for SEA.

## 2. Methodology



The Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole of the parish of West Hoathly which comprises the villages of West Hoathly and Sharpthorne, the hamlet of Highbrook and dispersed settlements scattered in the rural areas. Preparation of the plan is being led by members of West Hoathly Parish Council with consultation throughout with residents. To inform the Sustainability Appraisal of the Neighbourhood Plan, public workshop sessions were run in February and March 2012 covering parish challenges/concerns, valued aspects and future aspirations. The workshop outputs were verified with a parish-wide consultation survey in April 2012 conducted on-line and hand delivered to every household. The majority of the District wide data has already been collected for the Sustainability Appraisal for the Mid Sussex District Plan and had been obtained from the various sources best placed to provide accurate data in their relevant area of expertise. This information has enabled the environmental, social and economic issues facing both the district and West Hoathly to be established.

At a more local level, the West Hoathly Futures Report published in 2009 was created through a process in which the community established the issues and key priorities for the parish. It used the Parish Council as a conduit for community involvement and strove to benefit residents' lives.

Mid Sussex District Council has published a set of 18 Sustainability Objectives in its 'Sustainability Appraisal Consultation Draft, November 2011' and this document uses and expands upon those that are relevant to the issues identified for West Hoathly. In particular, local issues and objectives have been identified, and the indicators used to measure these are from local sources, at a local scale where possible. These will help assess the sustainability issues facing West Hoathly Parish, to be addressed where possible in the Neighbourhood Plan.

### **3. Policy context**

The West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan will need to comply with both national and local planning policies.

The Mid Sussex District Plan Sustainability Appraisal reviewed all programmes, policies strategies guidance and Initiatives that have influenced the development of the District Plan. The West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan and Sustainability Appraisal will need to be in conformity with the District Plan and it is therefore not proposed to review in this scoping report all international, national and local documents that are relevant.

**Appendix A** at the end of this report, provides a summary of the local programmes, plans and other documents which influence the Neighbourhood Plan, in addition to those outlined above. Key objectives and indicators have been identified from the District Plan and these have been incorporated into the sustainability framework and used to inform baseline data and the identification of key issues.

The aims, objectives and indicators from these policy documents have been used to supplement the West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan sustainability objectives set out in this Scoping Report. It should be noted that the policy context for the West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan Sustainability Appraisal is not static. Therefore, as further relevant plans or programmes are developed, they will be reviewed and incorporated within the assessment at future stages of publication of this Sustainability Appraisal report.

## 4. Parish characteristics and issues

A collection of information on environmental, social and economic characteristics of the parish is required to provide a basis for predicting and monitoring the effects of the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. Legislation suggests that the Sustainability Appraisal should describe the baseline environment in terms of a series of topics which are set out below.

### Nature conservation

The parish of West Hoathly covers approximately 16 square kilometres of countryside.

Selsfield Common, owned by the National Trust from 1898 was the first of their land acquisitions, and is currently managed by West Hoathly Parish Council.

There are currently several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) namely Philpots for mosses and lichens, over 100 ponds supporting varied wildlife and a marvellous rock formation in Chiddinglye Woods amongst which is Great-upon-Little.

### Landscape

The parish of West Hoathly is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which was designated in 1983.

The parish is part of the Weald, which evolved slowly through millions of years; water and marshlands drained away 135 million years ago leaving fossilised remains of iguanodon and fish in Philpots Quarry. The alluvial plain of that time left sandstone outcrops and layers of Wadhurst gault clay. After the Ice Age the whole Weald became thickly forested until people drove their pigs here to feed on acorns and uproot the soil and slowly farms became established. They cleared the trees to create small fields of farmland and later coppiced trees to support the iron industry. The parish continues to this day to be an area of woodland and pasture interspersed with arable farming where the soil is suitable. This has all created the landscape we see and enjoy today; ancient woodland, outcrops of sandstone rocks with underlying clay and the rich pattern of fields surrounded by deciduous hedging. The area is interspersed with ancient tracks linking the individual settlements, which have become our local footpath network.

The road system is influenced by the terrain of the land. As it approaches West Hoathly village it runs along the escarpment where the rocks fall steeply away to the valley. The ridge is a watershed and on the north side water drains down to the Medway and on the south side local springs are headwaters of the River Ouse.

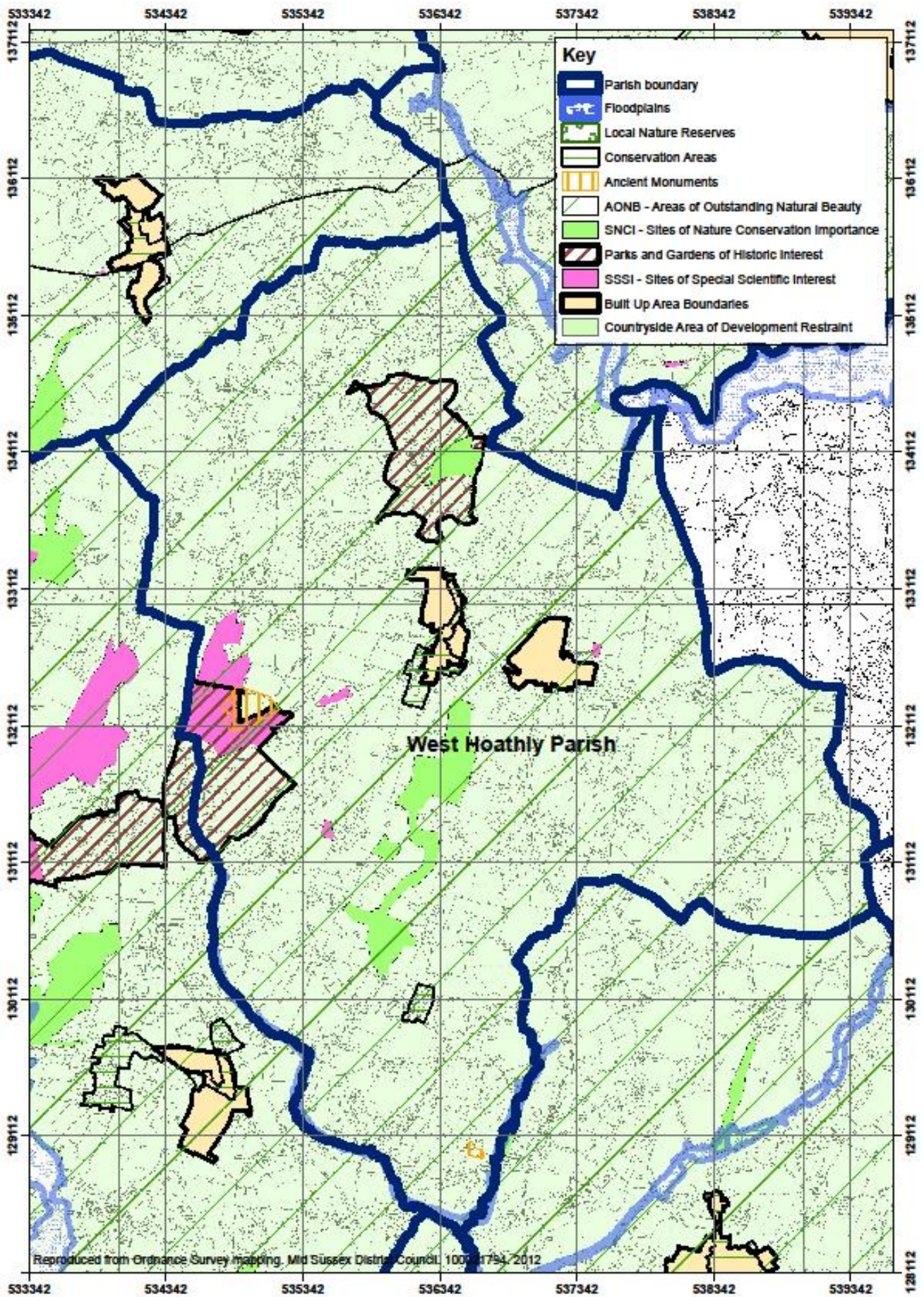
The toposcope at Finche Field highlights views to the South and North Downs and is 180 metres above sea level. Finche Field, which is owned by the Parish Council forms the local countryside gap as meadowland between Sharpthorne and West Hoathly and accommodates extensive and well used allotments.

There are many footpaths in the parish which are very popular with resident and visitor walkers including the users of Blacklands Farm (owned by Girl Guiding UK), including many Duke of

Edinburgh Award teenagers. The parish has a rich natural environment for leisure activities with children being free to enjoy and learn from the natural world, fresh air, sunlight and birdsong.

The parish is close (within 7km) to the Ashdown Forest which provides further convenient and rich landscape for flora and fauna and for leisure activities. The proximity of the Ashdown Forest means that the parish has additional environmental considerations and obligations.





## Heritage

Although situated within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a region that historically has had a heavy covering of woodland, West Hoathly nevertheless provides evidence of



human occupation from Mesolithic times up to the present. The landscape has been described as a wooded, confined, rural landscape of intimacy and complexity, perceived as attractive, locally secluded and tranquil.

West Hoathly lies on a high sandstone forest ridge to the west of Ashdown Forest, part of whose medieval pale boundary was once within the parish. The ridge reaches an altitude of over 180 metres above sea level at West Hoathly village but falls away in all directions towards the parish boundaries, except to the north where it rises to 190 metres at Selsfield Common. The modern eastern boundary of the parish is contiguous with Grinstead Lane, once the main road from West Hoathly to East Grinstead, and includes Tyes Cross and "Dalingridge". To the south it meets the boundary of the parish of Horsted Keynes and continues towards the south-west so as to encompass the community of Highbrook. To the west the parish of West Hoathly abuts that of Ardingly and includes part of the Roman road from Hassocks to London as far as Selsfield Common, which the road crosses. The parish then extends to the north-east as far as the 14th century farmhouse of "Tickeridge" (Grade II listed), near Kingscote.

The earliest evidence of life in the parish was found at the stone quarry at Philpots, about a mile to the west of West Hoathly village, where fossils of *Iguanodon* and of the fish *Lepidotus mantelli* dating from about 135 million years ago, were excavated. The first human settlement that has been identified is also near Philpots. This is an Iron Age fort or camp which is protected on three sides by rocky cliffs forming a promontory between two converging valleys, and on the fourth side by a ditch and bank. At the base of the rocky outcrops, there are small caves where archaeologists have found Mesolithic flint implements. These probably indicate the presence of ancient hunting camps, rather than a permanent stone-age settlement. When the Saxons settled in the area, they did so at a new site, where the current village of West Hoathly is located, and the Iron Age camp was no longer inhabited.

The recorded history starts in 765 when King Aeldwulf issued a Royal Charter granting pig pastures at Chiddingly, Stonehurst and Barleylands, all within the modern parish, to support a monastery. These pig pastures were to the west and north of the present village of West Hoathly, whose economy in Saxon times was mainly dependent upon agriculture in forest clearings. However, the local iron ore was also exploited since before the Roman period and this grew into a significant industry from the 16th century. After the 18th century, when supplies of wood for charcoal became severely limited, the iron industry moved to coal mining areas of the country. The sites of iron furnaces have been identified at Chittingly, Strudgate, Stumblett, Gravetye and Mill Place and iron ore mines, dating from about 1200, at Sharpthorne. Iron manufacture was a profitable business and the iron masters were able to build substantial houses for their families. Gravetye Manor (Grade I listed) was built by Richard Infield in 1597 near his iron furnaces. From 1884 to 1935 it was the home of the famous gardener, William Robinson, and survives today as a hotel of national renown. The Manor House (Grade II listed), opposite West Hoathly church, was also built by the Infield family.

There was no manor of West Hoathly, but part of the parish belonged to the manor of Ditchling and another portion belonged to the manor of Plumpton. The manor of Gravetye is first mentioned in 1571 when Richard Infield dies and possession passes to his son.

Although West Hoathly village was founded by the Saxons, the earliest surviving building is St. Margaret's Church (Grade I listed) which is of Norman origin, part of it dating from about 1090. "The Priest House" (Grade II listed) is a 15th century dwelling which is preserved as a museum by the Sussex Archaeological Society. The core of the "Cat Inn" (Grade II listed) is also 15th century. To help to conserve this historic village, within which there are some 20 listed buildings, the Mid



Sussex District Council has designated much of it as a Conservation Area. The centre of the settlement of Highbrook is also a conservation area.

The Lewes and East Grinstead Railway was built in the valley to the east of West Hoathly village and opened in August 1882. A brick works was established to support the construction of the railway and particularly to provide the lining for the tunnel through Sharpthorne Ridge. When assessing the tunnel, the Board of Trade Inspector commented that he “had never seen work better done.” A brick works remains there to this day, unusually still manufacturing heritage bricks in the traditional way by firing them in open clamps rather than in kilns. The railway closed in 1958, but the section that lies within the parish has been preserved as part of the steam heritage “Bluebell Railway”. The presence of the railway station from 1882 to 1958 encouraged the creation and growth of the settlement of Sharpthorne where previously there had only been two or three farms and a few cottages. One of these original farmhouses, “Old Coombe” is now Grade II listed.

The settlement at Highbrook is long established; the oldest surviving house, “Battens” (Grade II listed), is from the 14th century and 3 or 4 other houses there show medieval origins and are also Grade II listed. The development of the community was facilitated by local landowners, principally the Stephenson Clarke family, who lived at the nearby “Brook House”, parts of which date from the 15th century, and by Mrs Kirby and Miss Weguelin of “Highbrook House” (Grade II listed). They built and endowed All Saints Church (Grade II listed) in 1884, and the parish hall in 1875, for the convenience of their estate workers and local residents. A small 19th century oast house adjacent to the church has been preserved as a public shelter.

Selsfield Common is situated at the important road junction between the ancient ridgeway and the Roman road. The first record of land-ownership dates from 1290 but the settlement has never grown larger than a hamlet. There was once a windmill here but it was demolished in the early 20th century. Today, a Water Tower (Grade II listed) stands above the skyline. The Victorian house “Selsfield Place” is also Grade II listed.

Tyes Cross, to the east of the parish, is a hamlet situated at a crossroads where the ridgeway from West Hoathly to Ashdown Forest crosses the highway from East Grinstead to Birch Grove and Twyford. It is named after John Tye who lived at “Barnard's Place” (now “Courtlands House”) in 1597. At one time it had a school, provided by the owner of Courtlands Estate, but the building is now a private house.

There are 55 listed assets within the parish including the following designated heritage assets: two scheduled monuments of Philpots Camp, the moated site in Orchard Wood and the two registered historic park and gardens at Gravetye Manor (Grade II\*) and at Stonehurst (Grade II).

## **Air and climate**

The main sources of atmospheric pollution arise from the proximity of Gatwick Airport and roads such as the C319. The climate of the parish is described as a local variant of the British sub oceanic climate.

## **Water**

Water supply for the parish is sourced from an underground reservoir at Selsfield. It is piped here from Caterham on the North Downs and Weirwood Reservoir. Water is also sourced from the Ouse in Horsted Keynes and pumped to an underground reservoir at Grovelands in Hammingden Lane for mains distribution. South East Water covers the region for the supply of mains water. Surveys within the Parish show aquifers at 50m & 120m.

## Soils

Within the parish boundary the area comprises geological formations laid down in the Cretaceous Period. The Hastings beds are subdivided into Tunbridge Wells Sand and Wadhurst Clay. Within the Tunbridge Wells sand are found clays and sandy soils, Ardingly sandstone outcropping in areas as at Rock Woods, and the local quarries of Philpots and Hook, with reserves of sandstone worked for building stone.

The Grinstead and Wadhurst Clays comprise areas suitable for brick making as at West Hoathly Brickworks (Ibstocks) in Sharpthorne. Soils within the parish are able to sustain a range of cropping. The heavy clay soils are prone to waterlogging and cracking during drought, with the sandstone soils freer draining but in areas lacking depth. However arable farming is possible but the greater proportion is pasture land and much deciduous woodland typical of the weald. DEFRA requires farmers to keep a soil protection plan available at inspections in a soil protection review to ensure good agricultural and environmental practice.

## Human characteristics

The Civil Parish of West Hoathly is a predominantly a rural area with two village settlements near the centre of the Parish area in West Hoathly and Sharpthorne (which have formally defined village built-up areas) and a smaller hamlet settlement at Highbrook plus many individual and small groups of dwellings (including those at Selsfield and Tyes Cross) along the surrounding highways. West Hoathly and Sharpthorne account for around 40-45% of the population / dwellings each and Highbrook 6% of the dwellings. Each of the main settlements has its own historic roots and identity which means that the parish of West Hoathly has a multi-centric character unlike its neighbours in Ardingly, Horsted Keynes and Turners Hill.

West Hoathly parish is a not a deprived area when measured against national statistics. However some residents find it difficult to access the benefits enjoyed by others, and there are some elements of the community, who do not enjoy the same level of prosperity or access to services. The population of the parish was 2,121 at the date of the last published Census in 2001 in about 800 households. West Hoathly represented 1.67% of the total Mid Sussex population of 127,378.

Of the dwellings in West Hoathly parish, 79.5% were owner occupied in 2001. 53% of households lived in detached houses (compared to 32% across West Sussex and 30% across the whole of the South East). In 2009 the average value of properties was £307,500, significantly above the average in Mid Sussex of £233,000. There has been no significant housing development in the Parish (i.e. more than 2-3 units) since the 1980s (In Bayhams Field, Sharpthorne).

The mean age in the parish in 2001 was 40, consistent with that in England as a whole (39). This suggests that West Hoathly is a popular place for families to live, perhaps due to its proximity to travel hubs to reach employment areas such as at Gatwick, Brighton and London.

Nursery and preschool education is available in the parish. West Hoathly Primary School provides schooling for 84 children (although the school could take up to 120 pupils), of which 71% live within the parish. Secondary schooling is provided at Imberhorne School and Sackville School in East Grinstead and at Oathall Community College in Haywards Heath. Around the area there is a good choice of private schools providing schooling for ages 2-18.

Acorn data from the Office of National Statistics suggest from mid-2008 population estimates that the number of young people in the parish is falling with an increase in the number of people aged

65+. This tallies with the local perception of an ageing parish population caused by increased life expectancy and younger potential residents being priced out of the property market.

## **Roads and Transport**

The C319 is the main road linking, but also bisecting the main settlements of the Parish. It comprises Selsfield Rd, Chapel Row and The Hollow in West Hoathly and Top Road in Sharpthorne. This road suffers from high volumes of traffic bypassing East Grinstead. Traffic diverts from the A22 at Wych Cross to the A264 (and M23 junction 9) towards Gatwick Airport and vice versa. The community is particularly affected by the volume, nature and speed of traffic, in particular, distribution related traffic based in the Gatwick area. There are significant numbers of heavy goods vehicles, most of which are passing through to locations elsewhere. The main residential roads mentioned are especially affected and the high volume of traffic creates danger, inconvenience and a sense of intimidation to pedestrians and other road users. The noise and vibration affects dwellings, many of which are very close to the road. The roads themselves are poorly suited to accommodate the traffic and structural failures of the ridge road have taken place, most recently in 1987. Highway maintenance is generally poor and inadequate in view of the high traffic volumes by means of periodic surface dressings. In consequence drainage gullies are often blocked by loose dressing materials and from soil run off from fields.

Traffic speeds and pedestrian safety have long been a major issue in the Parish. This has been identified as the issue of greatest concern for over 30 years resulting in a 30mph road traffic order along the C319. Following a local public referendum in 2002, speed actuated 30mph warning signs were installed. The 2009 Parish Futures consultation put traffic calming at the top of the agenda and again in the Neighbourhood Plan consultation in April 2012, traffic issues and pedestrian & cyclist safety were the dual top concerns. An independent professional study to address the traffic management, look at improving pedestrian safety and enhancing the village streetscape was commissioned from TMS in 2011. The predominant view of parishioners is that street lights are not wanted. The TMS report has recommended a "shared space" approach to traffic calming by removing road markings in the residential areas, reducing street furniture and creating a different feel to the road space within the two main village communities. A strategic approach to traffic speed limits throughout the parish is desired (including the lanes and smaller communities of Highbrook and Tyes Cross) which is not presently in place. Hamilton-Baillie Consultants have issued a study and toolkit for Dorset AONB which provides relevant and useful potential approaches.

As a result of the attractions of the West Hoathly village as a tourist destination (The Priest House and St Margaret's Church and churchyard) and also the commercial success of The Cat Inn, there is an ongoing issue with the amount of car parking available. The problem is often highlighted by inconsiderate parking resulting in the bus service being unable to pass along West Hoathly's North Lane.

Local bus services are currently under threat with funding for rural bus services being reviewed in June 2012 by West Sussex County Council. Buses to Crawley and East Grinstead are infrequent (2 hourly service) and do not provide an effective service for commuters. The nearest railway stations are at Haywards Heath (8miles), Three Bridges, Crawley (8miles) and East Grinstead (5miles). In consequence residents need to use a car to commute by train with associated parking capacity problems in station car parks and street parking.

The villages were formerly served by the Lewes and East Grinstead railway which was closed in 1953. The line is now operated as a heritage railway by the Bluebell Railway and plans are in place to extend railway operations to East Grinstead in 2013. The station in Sharpthorne is currently closed. In 1992 the parish opposed the reopening of the station as a temporary terminal, mainly on

the grounds of concerns about traffic and parking. Going forward there may be opportunities for some utility use of the rail link for residents and as a draw for in-bound tourism, but it is unlikely that any commuter timed services will be provided.

The adjacent villages of West Hoathly and Sharpthorne are separated by a small strategic gap. The villages function as a single community to a large extent. There is significant walking between the two villages associated with the school in West Hoathly and the shop in Sharpthorne. There is a lack of contiguous pavements throughout the villages, with the consequent need to cross and re-cross the main road. The need to balance the urbanising effect of formal pavements (walkways at the side of the road) against the lack of safety for pedestrians to encouraging walking or cycling is recognised. The Parish Council have asked WSCC to provide a short length of pavement in Sharpthorne Rd for the benefit of residents in terrace houses on the road and also to afford safe access for children to the Old Sharpthorne playground.

## **Infrastructure**

West Hoathly Parish is well served with 4 recreation grounds, including football and cricket pitches and 3 playgrounds. Recently a small skateboard ramp has been provided for older children. There are several community spaces that can be hired by local groups and residents, including 2 village halls (West Hoathly and Highbrook), a church hall (Sharpthorne) and the school. Between them these spaces can host a variety of different events. There are two Church of England churches (West Hoathly and Highbrook) that share a vicar, and a Roman Catholic chapel that is run from Worth Abbey.

The parish is served by one village store (in Sharpthorne) including a part-time post office counter service. There are also three public houses, a café, a hairdresser, several vehicle-servicing garages and two small car parks. The Crawley Down Health Centre provides a small branch surgery in St Dunstan's Chapel 2 mornings a week and a prescription delivery service to the Costcutter shop. However, in recent years the parish has lost the shop in West Hoathly, the petrol filling station and the mobile library service.

There is no mains household gas supply in the parish so the majority of homes use oil-fired central heating with some electric storage heating and some still using coal. There is a small but growing percentage of homes using bio-mass (including the communal boiler at Hoathly Hill) and other modern alternative systems such as solar thermal or photovoltaic and heat pumps.

The Parish is served by two BT telephone exchanges in Sharpthorne (for the majority) and Ardingly (for the Highbrook settlement). Apart from cellular services these are the only source of broadband access. Neither exchange has any current plans to upgrade to superfast broadband (ie 20 megabit +) so homes and businesses only receive a basic broadband service by modern standards with many rural properties having a poor service due to the distance to the exchanges.

Homes in West Hoathly and Sharpthorne villages mostly use mains drainage with local sewage works just outside both villages. Outside the village areas the majority of homes have private drainage arrangements.

## **Economic characteristics**

According to the 2001 census 73% of adults of working-age are economically active. The skill level of the local population is generally high with 27% qualified to degree level or above compared to 19% across the whole of West Sussex. Over half the working population (53%) work as senior managers and officials or in professional and technical occupations. This suggests that many people commute to the larger employment areas of London and Brighton although some professional people work



from home on a full or part-time basis. There is some local employment, in particular at the Ibstock Brickworks, Philpots Quarry, Comber and Son builders and the small Hangdown Mead Business Park. There are also the hospitality businesses at The Gravetye Manor Hotel and The Cat Inn. The majority of business units in the parish employ between 1 – 4 people.

## 5. Key sustainability issues

### SWOT assessment

The following table has been informed by the issues identified in the Neighbourhood Plan public workshops and consultation, and the baseline information collected in Section 4.

<p><u>Strengths</u> Relatively low crime, valued school, outstanding landscape setting, designated land (e.g. AONB, SSSI, LNR), significant built heritage assets, strong community spirit, extensive local communications media (Chronicle, Hoathly Hub), good range of community activities, choice of pubs, Costcutter and Post Office, Organic Cafe, thriving village clubs, friendly Churches, local employment opportunities, access to Haywards Heath, East Grinstead and Crawley for other major hubs.</p>	<p><u>Weaknesses</u> Multi-centric settlement layout, low primary school roll, traffic speed, volume and weight and widespread parking issues, visual clutter, pedestrian vulnerability, infrequent public transport, limited health facilities e.g. doctors' surgery, limited activities for older children, high house prices, high rental prices, lack of affordable housing, piecemeal pavements and verges, blocked parked cars, poor bus service, poor Broadband service.</p>
<p><u>Opportunities</u> Improve pedestrian safety, implement traffic management, better balanced age distribution, improve contact and service to elderly, capitalise on Bluebell railway, reduce street clutter, garden share and community growing, reduced travel carbon fuel usage, organise events to encourage inclusion, encourage use of renewable energy, encourage local businesses.</p>	<p><u>Threats</u> Climate change, loss of biodiversity, drought or water interruption/contamination, danger from HGVs and fast traffic, over or inappropriate development leading to loss of rural character, loss of services such as buses, shops, loss of agricultural land and local food self sufficiency, loss of local distinctiveness through cumulative loss of local vernacular such as building materials of sandstone walls and local stock bricks and erosion of rural countryside features</p>

### Key issues

There are a number of sustainability issues and challenges facing the parish. While West Hoathly offers a high quality environment to residents and local businesses, the Neighbourhood Plan will need to manage and seek to resolve a series of issues over its lifetime if the parish is to continue to be successful while respecting its outstanding landscape setting.

In the absence of a Neighbourhood Plan (and as a consequence a lack of vision and strategy for West Hoathly), there will be fewer opportunities to address the issues and challenges facing the parish, as well as contributing to a reduction in the potential benefit to the community.

<b>Challenges Facing West Hoathly Parish</b>	<b>Effect without the Neighbourhood Plan</b>
Problem of traffic speed, volume and weight and lack of pedestrian/cyclist safety on the C319 and lanes	Residents lives will be further blighted by inappropriate traffic patterns
Viability of Primary School and Pre-School	Issue not addressed and danger of downward spiral and possible closure
Lack of affordable housing for Parish residents	No suitable sites for housing for local people would be allocated.
Supporting an ageing population	Potential issues of care/support/transport and suitable local homes
Inadequate and potentially reducing public	Further erosion of options, increased car

<b>Challenges Facing West Hoathly Parish</b>	<b>Effect without the Neighbourhood Plan</b>
transport options	dependency and/or isolation
Support and flexibility for local businesses	Existing policies may not meet their needs and aspirations
Infrastructure improvements such as roads, crossings, parking, school facilities	Funding for infrastructure requirements may not be achieved
Pressures for development in countryside	District Plan policies are strategic in nature and may not provide adequate protection
Loss of agricultural land to development	Could get worse with no policy on protection
Poor access to services and facilities	Could get worse with no policy on sustainable transport
Need to maintain and enhance the high quality natural environment, wildlife networks and biodiversity of the parish	District Plan policies are strategic in nature and may not provide adequate protection
Need to protect and enhance the historic buildings and environment of the parish	District Plan policies are strategic in nature and may not provide adequate protection

## 6. Objectives of the Sustainability Appraisal

The issues for the Neighbourhood Plan and the Objectives for the Sustainability Appraisal, have been informed by the policy documents identified in section 2 (in particular the Mid Sussex Local Plan adopted in 2004, Mid Sussex District Plan, consultative draft Nov 2011, the West Hoathly Parish Futures Study 2009, and the results of the 3 workshops and the household consultation survey conducted in April 2012), the baseline information collected in section 4 and the sustainability challenges for West Hoathly Parish identified in section 5.

The Objectives, and the Indicators used to measure them, are collectively known as the Sustainability Framework.

The Sustainability Appraisal will assess the sustainability of the Neighbourhood Plan through the identification of objectives and indicators. These will be used to predict the sustainability effects of the strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan, and the policies identified to deliver the strategy. The next stage of the Sustainability Appraisal will include consideration of alternatives and information about likely future changes that will occur even without a new Neighbourhood Plan. These alternatives will be assessed against the Sustainability Framework in order to determine which option is the most sustainable. This will be used to inform the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan in order to make sure it is the most sustainable plan possible, given all realistic alternatives.

The Sustainability Appraisal will be carried out by considering the Neighbourhood Plan policies against the Sustainability Objectives.

Each policy will be tested by applying a number of “indicators”. This will help to judge the performance of the policy against each of the sustainability objectives. It is proposed that the performance of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan will be measured against the objectives as follows:

<b>Major positive / Minor positive / Neutral / Minor negative / Major negative / Indeterminate</b>
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## 7. Sustainability Objectives

In order to undertake the Sustainability Appraisal process for the Neighbourhood Plan, it is necessary to identify sustainability objectives and indicators to enable an assessment to be made of the emerging options and allow for recommendations and mitigation measures to be proposed.

The sustainability objectives have emerged through the following considerations:

- The review of documents listed in Appendix A
- Identification of the baseline characteristics
- Identification of the sustainability issues known locally
- Addressing the 'weaknesses' and mitigating the 'threats' outlined in the SWOT analysis

The latter two considerations have been identified through open community workshop sessions and confirmed through a whole community consultation survey. The matrices following the objectives relate the sustainability objectives back to the key concerns and valued aspects of the parish as identified by these.

The proposed sustainability objectives and indicators (Sustainability Framework) for the Sustainability Appraisal of the Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

### **1/Env. To maintain and enhance the countryside and open spaces of West Hoathly parish in terms of its**

- geology, landform, water systems and climate,
- ridge top settlement pattern and historic farmsteads,
- ancient woodlands and field patterns
- ancient rights of way (footpaths, bridleways, tracks and lanes)
- landscape character
- diversity of wildlife
- peace and quiet
- available amenity open spaces

### **whilst ensuring any changes benefit the community as a whole.**

- *area of Ancient Woodland within the parish – not reduced*
- *condition of ancient woodland - improved*
- *number of Trees with Preservation Orders within the parish - maintained or increased*
- *number of specific valued countryside assets – maintained or increased*
- *condition and accessibility of footpaths – maintained or improved*
- *interference with any of these features through grant of planning consent – minimised*
- *biodiversity – maintained or enhanced*

### **2/Env. To retain the distinctiveness of villages and small settlements and the gaps between them whilst encouraging some organic growth which addresses deficit dwelling stock (young families, older people) and complements their surroundings.**

- *planning consents outside defined settlement boundaries – none or limited*
- *proportion of housing developments which address housing needs - maximised*

### **3/Soc. To encourage pride in settlement maintenance and appearance.**

- *number of derelict /unmaintained houses – minimised*
- *adherence to conservation area standards - maximised*
- *amount of litter - minimised*

**4/Env. To conserve and enhance the architectural and landscape heritage of conservation areas and individual historic buildings with any changes conforming to locally agreed detailed design guide.**

- *number of Listed Buildings in parish – not diminished*
- *MSDC conservation officer/ English Heritage assessment – maintained or improved*
- *Changes not conforming with design guidance - minimised*

**5/Soc. To ensure a supply of homes consistent with the parish identified housing needs and to meet the local social objectives of homes suitable for younger families and older people.**

- *proportion of housing developments directly addressing identified needs – maximised*
- *housing shortfall - reduced*

**6/Env. To ensure all NEW homes are built to high standards of design, construction and resource efficiency, and homes in countryside and conservation areas are of outstanding design.**

- *new homes meeting building regulations level 4 or above of the Code for Sustainable Homes (Mid Sussex District Plan Policy) – maximised*
- *number of new homes in countryside or conservation areas within NP Policy – less or equal to policy*

**7/Env. To increase resource efficiency of buildings, and the proportion of energy use from renewable sources in the parish,**

- *capacity of photovoltaic, solar thermal installations, biomass and heat pumps – increased*
- *number of domestic water recycling systems - increased*
- *renewable energy use in public buildings – increased*
- *water efficiency measures - implemented*

**8/Soc. To have an efficient, quick and co-ordinated public transport service that meets the needs of residents and visitors – in particular -**

- *secondary school children to get to and from school*
- *commuters to link with major travel hubs*
- *other social, domestic and pleasure purposes*
- *people visiting the parish*
- *proportion of secondary school students using public transport – increased*
- *number of commuter car journeys to travel hubs – reduced*
- *number of practical public transport travel options from main parish population centres - increased*

**9/Env. To substantially reduce the impact on residents' lives of the volume, speed and weight of traffic within the parish.**

- *Highways in village areas and unclassified lanes are pedestrian, cyclist, horse-rider friendly*
- *Reduced through traffic*
- *Walking and cycling routes to service centres (EG, FR) and between parish settlements*
- *Adequate parking spaces in village areas*
- *average traffic speeds – reduced*
- *number of HGVs passing through or into the parish – reduced*
- *number of regular cycle users – increased*
- *amount of pedestrian journeys - increased*
- *number of businesses with green travel plans - increased*
- *car journeys to/from WH school - reduced*
- *proportion of journeys to work by sustainable methods – increased*



- *number of off-street public parking spaces within easy walking distance of village centres*
- *increased*

**10/Econ.** To make the parish an attractive place for businesses providing essential retail and service offerings for the local community and retain a variety of hospitality businesses for local and tourist use.

- *range of retail outlets – maintained or increased*
- *range of goods and services available locally – maintained or increased*
- *number of new businesses started - increased*
- *number / variety of hospitality premises - maintained or increased*
- *visitor numbers to Priest House, Bluebell Railway - maintained*

**11/Soc.** To ensure outstanding quality pre-school and primary education opportunities are available within the parish supported by the necessary extended childcare requirements to meet current social patterns.

- *school roll - increased*
- *Preschool self-sufficiency – achieved*
- *Childcare places satisfying the needs of working parents - increased*

**12/Soc.** To sustain and enhance the diverse selection of clubs/societies/sports/worship for all age groups and make the parish an attractive venue for small touring offerings.

- *number and range of active groups – maintained or increased*
- *variety of sports activities – maintained or increased*
- *number of youth teams or groups – increased*
- *number of members of youth teams or groups - increased*

**13/Econ.** Facilitate employment opportunities in the parish (local businesses, working from home, self employment).

- *number of local employment opportunities – maintained or increased*
- *number of local employers – maintained or increased*
- *number of households with “super fast” broadband service – increased*
- *number of planning applications approved for home office adaptations - increased*

**14/Soc.** To improve access to health services especially for children and older people.

- *number of venues for health services in parish – maintained or increased*
- *local collection of prescriptions – maintained or improved*
- *volunteer car hospital scheme – maintained or improved*

**15/Soc.** To promote community responsibility for parishioners own, others’ and community assets

- *incidence of crime - reduced*
- *Farm & Countryside Watch membership - increased*
- *Number of active Neighbourhood watch schemes - increased*

**16/Soc.** To encourage the sense of community and engagement in local topics and the inclusion and support of vulnerable groups.

- *participation in parish council elections – increased*
- *number of Chronicle subscribers – maintained or increased*
- *number of Hoathly Hub subscribers – increased*
- *numbers attending annual parish assembly – increased*
- *number of events and activities for vulnerable groups – maintained or increased*
- *participation of vulnerable groups in parish affairs - increased*

VALUED ASPECTS:	1/Env-Countryside	2/Env - Settlements	3/Env - Maintenance	4/Env - Heritage	5/Soc – Housing Needs	6/Env - Homes	7/Env - Energy	8/Soc – Public Transport	9/Env – Traffic/Parking	10/Econ - Commercial	11/Soc - Education	12/Soc - Culture	13/Econ - Employment	14/Soc - Health	15 /Soc - Security	16/Soc - Community
The countryside	✓															
Historic built parts of the area		✓	✓	✓												
The range of community activities and support												✓				✓
The pubs										✓						
Access to a range of towns, London and the coast for employment								✓	✓							
Having a primary school					✓						✓					
Relatively low crime rate															✓	
Effective local communications (e.g. Chronicle, Hoathly Hub)																✓

✓ = Primary | ✓ = Secondary

CONCERNS:	1/Env-Countryside	2/Env - Settlements	3/Env – Maintenance	4/Env - Heritage	5/Soc – Housing Needs	6/Env - Homes	7/Env - Energy	8/Soc – Public Transport	9/Env – Traffic/Parking	10/Econ - Commercial	11/Soc - Education	12/Soc - Culture	13/Econ - Employment	14/Soc - Health	15 /Soc - Security	16/Soc - Community
The volume and speed of traffic								✓	✓				✓			
Pedestrian and cyclist safety	✓								✓							
Shortage of homes suitable for young families and down-sizing older residents		✓			✓											
Population age distribution		✓			✓											
Public transport services								✓								
Continued viability of West Hoathly primary school and other child activities					✓						✓					
Range of shops within the Parish									✓	✓						
Range of retail products on offer										✓						
Energy and water use efficiency						✓	✓									
Facilities for teenagers, including travel options								✓				✓				
Facilities for ageing population								✓		✓				✓		
No focal centre for services within the Parish									✓					✓		
Local employment opportunities										✓			✓			
Broadband speeds										✓			✓			
Local crime															✓	
Cohesion across the different localities									✓			✓			✓	✓

✓ = Primary | ✓ = Secondary

## 8. Next steps

As the Neighbourhood Plan is developed, the strategy and policies will be tested against these sustainability objectives, to identify appropriate policies for inclusion in the Plan. All realistic policy options will be appraised against the Sustainability Framework set out in Section 7 of this report, in order to ensure that the policies chosen for the West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan are the most sustainable, given all realistic alternatives.

This document sets out the baseline information on the parish, the plans and policies influencing the production of the Neighbourhood Plan, current sustainability issues that are facing the village and the sustainability objectives that the Neighbourhood Plan should strive to achieve.

The proposed timetable for the Neighbourhood Plan is set out in the timeline below. It is intended that the Sustainability Appraisal and draft Neighbourhood Plan will be published together in summer 2012, enabling them to be published for joint consultation.

Consultation responses on this Scoping Report will be taken into account when preparing the final sustainability framework on which to test the emerging policies. Where necessary, further assessment of the options will be undertaken, along with any updating of baseline data, plans and policies.



**WEST HOATHLY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TIMELINE – JULY 2012**

	2012												2013											
Stage	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
District Plan Timetable	Amend draft District Plan						Consult & Submit			Examination and Inspectors Report						Adopt District Plan								
<b>Informal Stage</b>																								
Gathering evidence on issues and options for the parish		■	■	■																				
Scoping Sustainability Appraisal (i.e. identifying objectives)					■	■	■																	
Issue scoping document for consultation								■	■															
Consider consultation responses and make amendments to Scoping document										■														
Gather evidence on Housing Needs							■	■																
Gather evidence on possible development sites							■	■																
Informal community engagement			■	■																				
<b>Neighbourhood Planning regulation published (circa May 2012)</b>																								
<b>Formal Plan Preparation</b>																								
Submit Plan area to District Council					■																			
District Council publicise for 6 weeks						■	■																	
Plan Area Approved							■																	
Prepare Draft Plan								■	■	■	■	■												
Publish for public consultation (min 6 weeks)												■	■											
Consider consultation responses and make amendments to Plan																■								
<b>Submission and Examination Stage</b>																								
Submit Plan to District Council																								
District Council checks for compliance with policy etc.																								
District Council publicises for 6 weeks																								
MSDC appoints Examiner (in consultation with Parish Council)																								
Examination takes place																								
Examiner's Decision issued																								
<b>Referendum and Adoption Stage</b>																								
Referendum, including necessary publication & issuing polling cards																								
If outcome is positive, District Council adopts Neighbourhood Plan																								

## Appendix A Summary of Plans and Programmes

NAME OF DOCUMENT	BROAD AIMS/RELEVANT POLICIES	REQUIREMENTS OF THE DOCUMENT IN RELATION TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012	This document sets out the Govt's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework for District and Neighbourhood Plans.	The Neighbourhood Plan will need to pay particular regard to this new Planning Framework.
Mid Sussex Local Plan (MSLP), 2004	This document was statutorily adopted in 2004. It defines built up area boundaries and contains some policies that have been retained in the District Plan.	MSLP Policies for West Hoathly have been retained and will need to be taken into account in the Neighbourhood Plan
Mid Sussex District Plan, Consultative Draft 2011	The draft District Plan has been written in the context of the Localism Act and changes to the planning system. It sets out strategic policies and provides the framework for subsequent planning documents including Neighbourhood Plans.	The Neighbourhood Plan will need to comply with the strategic aims and policies of the District Plan.
High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan, 2009	Identifies the important features of the AONB and sets out guidance and objectives on the ways in which these features can be protected, restored and enhanced.	As the parish is located entirely within the AONB, the NP will need to take full account of the aims of AONB designation and the land and countryside management issues in this document.
Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment, 2005	This document looks in detail at the landscape character of the District and contains detailed management guidelines	The management guidelines will need to be taken into consideration in the Neighbourhood Plan
Ancient Woodland Inventory for Mid Sussex, 2007	This survey identifies the areas of ancient woodland within Mid Sussex	Ancient woodland is a key biodiversity asset for the parish and needs to be recognised in the Neighbourhood Plan.
Mid Sussex Rural Affordable Housing Strategy, 2007	This document identifies a strategy to enable the Council to meet the housing needs of local residents in rural areas.	The Neighbourhood Plan will consider how it can contribute to this in the light of a new Housing Needs Study.
Biodiversity Action Plan for Sussex	Focuses resources to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Sussex by means of local partnerships, taking account of national and local priorities.	The Neighbourhood Plan will need to take account of nature conservation and biodiversity issues.
Mid Sussex Economic Development Strategy, MSDC 2010	The document lists objectives for economic development and states how the Council will assist in meeting these aims	The Neighbourhood Plan will need to be in broad compliance with the economic development and tourism policies of the District Plan
Mid Sussex Infrastructure Development Plan, draft 2011	Sets out infrastructure requirements that development will be expected to contribute towards.	The Neighbourhood Plan should contain a policy on infrastructure to comply with these requirements.
Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study, 2007	The study identifies the capacity of the Mid Sussex landscape to accommodate strategic development.	The study has been a key piece of evidence in the formulation of policies concerning the District's landscape
Register of Listed Buildings	Lists and describes the buildings included in the List of Buildings of Special Arch and Historic Interest	The Neighbourhood Plan will take account of the need to protect and conserve this asset.
West Sussex Sites of Nature Conservation Importance Register	Identifies and describes sites of importance	The Neighbourhood Plan will need to contain policies to protect these sites
West Hoathly "Parish Futures" Consultation , 2009	This community led plan contains aims and actions identified by the community	The issues identified in the "Parish Futures" will be used to inform the Neighbourhood Plan.
West Hoathly Housing Needs Study	New study commissioned April 2012	This will be used to inform the Neighbourhood Plan
TMS Traffic & Safety Study, November 2011	Independent Professional Study commissioned	This report will be used to inform the Neighbourhood Plan
Hamilton-Baillie	Commissioned for Dorset AONB	Will be considered for relevance in West Hoathly

Associates, Traffic in Villages Toolkit, 2011		
Census Data 2001		Informs the basic characteristics of West Hoathly
West Hoathly Parish Profile	Prepared by Action in Rural Sussex, March 2011	Informs the basic characteristics of West Hoathly
Acorn Neighbourhood Profile	Office of National Statistics	Informs the basic characteristics of West Hoathly
Historic Environment Record	Informs the basic characteristics of West Hoathly	Informs the basic characteristics of West Hoathly
Re-appraisal of the West Hoathly Conservation Area 2008	Mid Sussex District Council	Informs the basic characteristics of West Hoathly