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1. About Neighbourhood Planning

The Government introduced the opportunity for local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans through amendments to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Localism Act 2011, and through the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, which set out the requirements for Neighbourhood Plans.

Neighbourhood Plans can influence or allocate new housing; produce design policies for allocated sites or for general design policies; protect or identify new community facilities; and identify green spaces to be protected from any future development proposals and more.

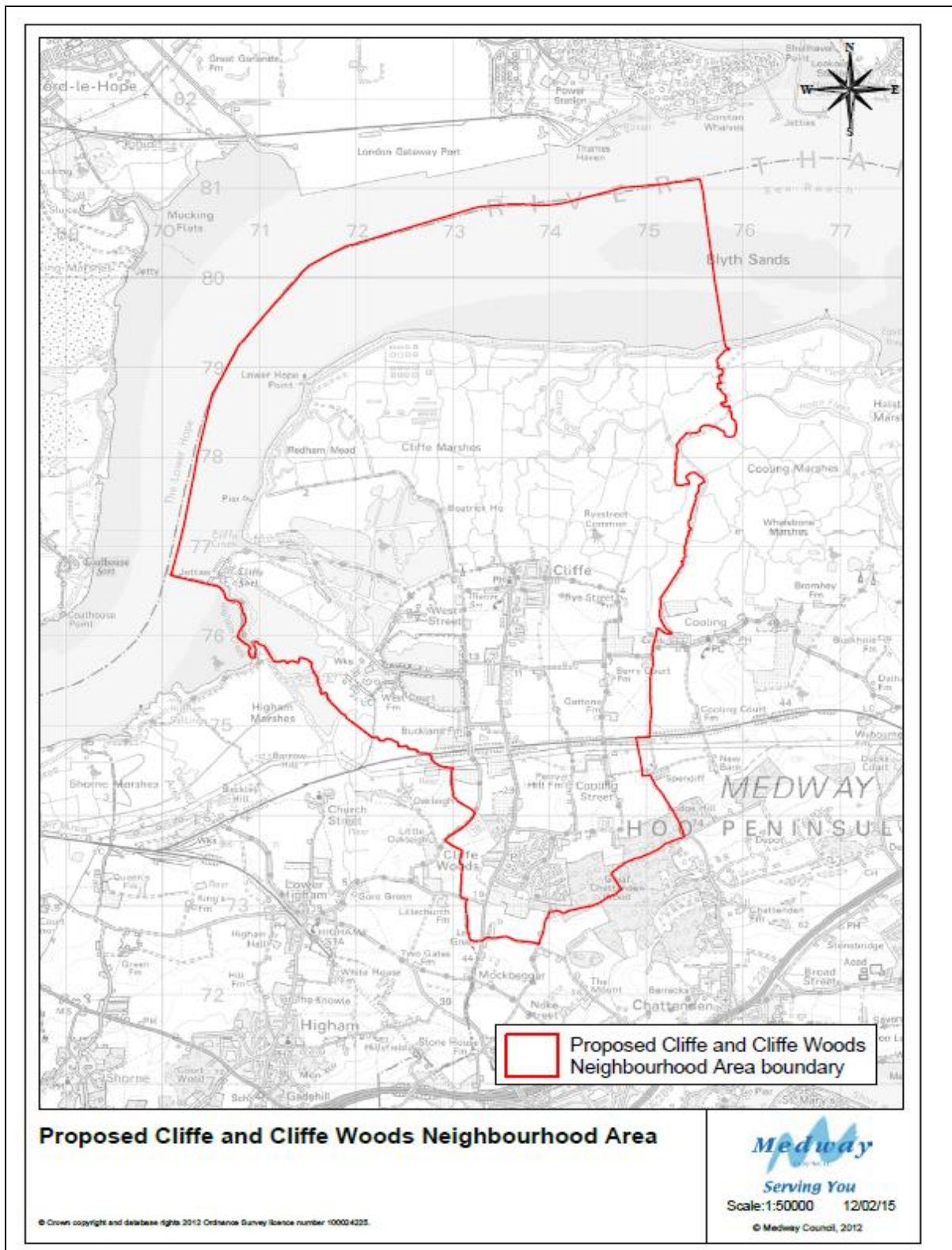
How the C&CW Neighbourhood Plan fits into the planning system

Neighbourhood Plans are policy-based land use plans that need to be in general conformity with the local plan. In this case, the local plan is prepared by Medway Council. Neighbourhood Plans are produced by community forum groups or Parish or town councils. In this case the Neighbourhood Plan has been produced by a Steering Group of residents and Parish councillors with an agreed term of reference to work on the Neighbourhood Plan. This has ensured that residents and local groups were in the driving seat of producing policy based on local knowledge and views.

To do this a dialogue between Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council (C&CWPC) and Medway Council has been necessary to ensure that the policies and proposals in the Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Neighbourhood Plan conform to national and local policy, as required by the Neighbourhood Plan regulations. The development of the Neighbourhood Plan has taken place during a period of great uncertainty in relation to local plan policy making by Medway Council and has had to follow the Medway Council Local Plan review process, which is underway with a target for the Local Plan to be adopted in 2020 (Medway Local Development Scheme January 2018). The Medway local plan has to take into account the needs of the whole of Medway and accommodate their duty to cooperate with other local authorities and service providers on issues like housing development, transport and health provision.

As far as possible the C&CWPC has taken a flexible and positive approach to the development of the Medway Local Plan's emerging policies and their supporting evidence as the Neighbourhood Plan has developed and discussed its policies with Medway as part of the process.

The Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area



The Neighbourhood Plan area to which the Neighbourhood Plan applies is the whole of the Parish of Cliffe and Cliffe Woods. This was designated as a Neighbourhood Plan area by Medway Council on 16th June 2015 and is shown on the map above.

2. About Cliffe and Cliffe Woods (C&CW) Parish

The location and character of the Neighbourhood Plan area, which covers the whole Parish provides both important opportunities for, and constraints to, Neighbourhood Planning proposals and policies to guide future development within the area. Below is an overview of the main characteristics of the Parish today and the current issues that the Parish faces.

The Parish of C&CW is home to over 5,000 people located in the Medway Unitary Authority¹ area. Table 1 below shows key statistics about the population of the Parish.

Table 1 : Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Key Statistics				
Population	Population	No. of Households	Under 15 years %	Over 65 years %
	5,370	2066 aver size 2.6	20.7	13.6
Transport	No. of cars in Parish	No. of households without a car		
	3,571	173		
Employment	Persons economically active %	Persons Unemployed %	Persons working at home %	
	72.4	2	3.4	
Travel to work	Car as driver or passenger %	Train %	Bicycle or walking %	
	55.4	4.6	2.6	
Source 2011 census summary profile				

The Parish sits on the Hoo Peninsula in the Greater Thames Estuary, which is one of the most important areas for birdlife in Europe.

The Parish is one of the largest in the historic county of Kent and has two villages: the ancient village of Cliffe which is believed to be one of, if not the oldest, settlement on the Hoo Peninsula, with evidence of habitation from the Mesolithic period continuing to the present day. Cliffe has a compact built form with a variety of styles and materials.

The more recent village of Cliffe Woods, is essentially a 20th-century development which started as a turn of the century 'Plot Lands' development in the proximity of the B2000. It was developed as a mixture of speculative larger scale development and self-build which has given it a more open form than Cliffe but is similarly mixed in form and materials.

¹ Set up in 1998 and administratively independent from Kent County Council.

Due to its location and history, the Parish has many heritage assets (a scheduled ancient monument, listed buildings and a conservation area) that benefit from special protections. The landscape and wildlife assets of the Parish are similarly protected under local, national and international law.

The basic infrastructure that supports the population of the Parish reflects the character of the landscape and its historical development. The B2000 is the main access road through the Parish. It is the only real access available to connect with the Medway towns, the wider district and beyond. The provision of gas services is also relatively recent (the 1980s) and public transport infrastructure relies on infrequent bus services.

Provision for walking and cycling exists throughout the Parish but there is some lack of route connectivity. Over 50% of local residents travel to work by car and increased car ownership since 2011 generally means that existing road infrastructure is under pressure in terms of parking, overall volumes and types of vehicles (including on un-adopted smaller roads that provide access within and between villages).

Sewage infrastructure is provided via main drainage connecting the core of Cliffe and Cliffe Woods to the sewage plant at Whitewall Creek, Upnor. Outside these core areas residents have their own septic tanks. Broad band and mobile telephone connectivity are patchy.

The residents of the Parish mainly go elsewhere to work, since the various cement works and other industry in the area declined and have been replaced by marine aggregate activities, resulting in much reduced and less local employment.

Much of the Parish is high grade agricultural land and local employment in this sector still exists for residents of the Parish. But most leave the Parish to work and the main sectors they work in are retail and construction.

Community infrastructure that supports education, health, cultural, leisure and religious activity meets most of the needs of residents. It has a very fine church in Cliffe, two very popular primary schools, one medical practice, two surgeries one for each village (part of a group which also serves Higham and Wainscott), social clubs and two community halls. Active leisure facilities include recreation grounds, a bowls club, tennis courts, rugby/football pitches, a skateboard park, ball courts, play areas and allotments.

There are local retail providers in both villages, although Cliffe Woods with its small parade of shops fares slightly better than Cliffe in this regard.

Housing in the Parish is mainly owner occupied and is predominantly provided as detached or semi-detached homes although there are rows of terraces in Cliffe associated with its industrial past. There are some families within the Parish who are in housing need and since the 2011 census the population of Cliffe village consists of younger families and the population of the village of Cliffe Woods is ageing.

Current Issues

The people of the Parish have had many meetings and participated in surveys about the content of the Neighbourhood Plan and options for its future.² During that time a number of applications have come forward for development of parts of the Parish for housing and discussions have taken place with Medway Council about the future of the Parish as part of their work updating the 2003 Medway Local Plan.

Residents have identified a number of key issues which they would like to address as a result of these discussions and development activity within the Parish:

- Provision of affordable housing, particularly to cater for the older population and younger people who would like to remain in the Parish (bungalows and smaller properties). Community Led Housing is being proposed.
- Ensuring the design and impact of new development is appropriate to the character of the villages of the Parish, its surrounding countryside and its supporting infrastructure
- Protection of the built environment heritage of the Parish
- Protection of the rural character of the Parish and its wildlife
- Pedestrian, cycling, transport and parking improvements
- Upgrade and extension of community and leisure facilities to meet the needs of the 21st century and any potential increase in the residential population
- Consider possibilities for visitor and education facilities to support the local economy.

² See C&CW Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement

3. The Vision and Objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan

The development of the Neighbourhood Plan has been informed by a long process of discussion between the Parish Council and residents which started with a survey of residents views about a range of issues in 2015³.

A Steering Group to start the work of developing a Neighbourhood Plan was established and considered what the scope of the Plan should be in February 2016.

As a result of this work, which identified key issues for local residents as concern about development impacts on existing community infrastructure, speeding and traffic, housing development and need, a wider process of consultation began in July 2016 with a general community planning event and then focussed on the content of a Neighbourhood Plan at events held between February and July of 2017.

A series of themed workshops were widely publicised and held in the Parish. These workshops were organised with the participation of Medway Council planning department and considered both the purpose and potential of a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish, a vision for the Parish, how to engage as wide a cross section of the community as possible and how Neighbourhood Plans fitted into the Local Plan making process in Medway.

In addition, detailed workshops based on the following themes, where participants looked at current data under each theme and considered both challenges and options for addressing them:

- Environment and Heritage
- Housing and Community Facilities
- Traffic Transport and the Economy

³ See C&CW NP Consultation Statement

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The results of these workshops enabled the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – made up of local residents and Parish Councillors, to develop the following Vision and Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Vision <i>“By 2035 the unique rural landscape of Cliffe and Cliffe Wood Parish will continue to be a haven for wildlife and agriculture, and provide homes, jobs and community infrastructure for people by protecting the heritage of the area and enhancing its character through sustainable development.”</i>	
Policy Theme	Objectives
Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the distinct identity of the two main settlements in the Parish is preserved • To ensure that existing facilities to support life for residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area are not depleted • To encourage an increase in the services and employment available to residents and in the Neighbourhood Plan area that will support increases in its population and reduce the need to travel
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable improved community spirit in the villages and settlements of the Parish with infrastructure and facilities that cater for all age groups within a rural setting.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide housing in the Parish that is sustainable, including: affordable housing, retirement housing, bungalows and chalet bungalows with provision for home working where appropriate • To ensure that all housing development proposals are appropriate to the rural setting. • To provide a choice of ways that housing can be developed
Transport and traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve the safety of roads in the Parish • To improve connections with footpaths, cycle ways and public transport.
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote green and historic tourism, and small-scale craft workshops using redundant farm buildings and mixed use development opportunities • To protect agricultural jobs and employment land in the Neighbourhood Plan area
Environment	<p>To enhance and preserve the rural, environmental and historic character and assets of the Parish by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserving the rural environment which already has extensive environmental protection, • Enabling the Parish to operate as a green lung for the wider area, • Preserving rural views, wildlife sites and corridors and agricultural land uses.
Heritage	<p>To enhance and preserve the historic character of the Parish by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of expansion of the existing conservation area • Protecting the character of farmsteads in the Parish (including buildings) • Conserving unlisted properties • Ensuring the materials and design of all new development in the Parish is sympathetic to its existing character • Preserving for the future archaeological sites in the Parish for learning and historical recording

4. Sustainable Development in Cliffe and Cliffe Woods

Introduction

The Neighbourhood Plan area and the settlements within it are currently not sustainable from an economic, environmental and social perspective.

Future development is severely constrained by the lack of facilities to support people going about their daily lives (shops, services). The infrastructure for movement of goods and people is dominated by the cars and heavy good vehicles with the concomitant effects on the environment. These effects encompass people's safety and health (pollution) and potential degradation of its internationally recognised sites of wildlife importance and heritage assets. Additionally, the economy of the area is dominated by one or two employers with most people travelling out of the area for employment.

Despite this there are landowners who wish to develop land but the neighbourhood cannot absorb its impacts and the scale and design of previous proposals has failed in the past to take account of the character of the Parish; its remote and wild character, its open views, big skies and extensive areas of agricultural land, open water, woodland and wetland.

Valuing the character of the Parish whilst at the same time wanting to address the needs of its population has been the focus of people's concerns during consultation on this plan and guiding future development in the neighbourhood. In particular there is a desire to address the lack of services, local housing needs, sustainable travel options and opportunities for employment whilst retaining the rural nature of the two settlements and their surroundings.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

To achieve the vision for the Neighbourhood Plan, the following objectives have been adopted to develop policy for sustainable development across the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Objectives			
Sustainable Development in Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish	To ensure that the distinct identity of the two main settlements in the Parish is preserved	To ensure that existing facilities to support life for residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area are not depleted	To encourage an increase in the services and employment available to residents and in the Neighbourhood Plan area that will support increases in its population and reduce the need to travel

Sustainable development is a cornerstone of national planning policy in England and Wales and its importance to the health and well-being of places and people cannot be understated

since planning control presumes that sustainable development of land and buildings should be favoured.

Sustainable development in the National Policy Planning Framework 2019 is summarised as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Para 7). In more detail the policy framework suggests that the planning system can achieve this by pursuing economic, environmental and social objectives in “mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives) (para 8)”.

SUSDEV 1:

Development proposals that would result in the visual or physical merging of Cliffe and Cliffe Woods will not be permitted.

To preserve the unique characteristics and differences between the two villages and preserve the open areas between them is considered a key objective to ensure that the rural character of the Neighbourhood Plan area is protected⁴. This is important to the future economic prospects of the neighbourhood as currently visitor and visitor related facilities are one of the few areas of potential employment. The value to the local economy and biodiversity of the neighbourhood and the viability of the wildlife and landscape protections that currently exist may be undermined if development proposals result in ribbon development along the B2000 – the main artery that could make development possible on the grounds of accessibility.

SUSDEV2:

Development proposals that would involve the loss of one of the uses listed below in the Neighbourhood Plan area, other than those which are permitted development, will not be supported, unless they relate to a change of use to another use in this list.

A1 (shops)

A2 (financial and professional services)

A3 (restaurants and cafes)

A4 (drinking establishments)

A5 (hot food takeaways)

C1 Hotels

D1 Non-residential institutions

D2 Assembly and leisure

⁴ See 2017 AECOM Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Heritage and Character Assessment

Current provision of shops and other facilities that can support the local economy, provide services to local residents and visitors and encourage social interaction are limited. Further loss of these uses through development would undermine the sustainability of the two settlements and the ability of existing and future residents to meet their needs for retail services and leisure activities and for local businesses to thrive.

SUSDEV3:

Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, development or change of use to the uses listed in Policy SUSDEV2 will be supported in principle, where they do not conflict with other policies within this Plan, and where they would not be harmful to the living conditions of neighbouring residents and are otherwise consistent with sustainable development.

Work on the Strategic Housing Availability and Assessment to underpin the production of the Medway Local Plan that will replace its 2003 current policies has rejected the possibilities of all sites offered up by local landowners on the basis of the infrastructure which exists to support new residents and their impact on agricultural land and wildlife sites.

Limiting the loss of existing facilities and encouraging the development of new ones in the development process was a desire expressed consistently in consultations with local residents and businesses in the Neighbourhood.

SUSDEV4

All new development, particularly on Greenfield land, should be sensitive to the landscape and be of a height that does not impact adversely on views from the surrounding countryside. All development proposals should demonstrate how they conserve, enhance or strengthen the character and distinctive features of the landscape of the Neighbourhood Plan area and comply where feasible with the **Design Guidelines** appended to this plan. Where appropriate, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should be provided with proposals to ensure that impacts, mitigation and enhancement opportunities are appropriately addressed.

The Heritage and Character Assessment produced by AECOM for this Neighbourhood Plan outlines the strong attributes of the four local character areas it describes in terms of its rural feel, its strong farmland features and their importance as backdrops to SSSI designated land and its visibility from surrounding areas. Ensuring that development proposals address these strengths is a key objective of policy in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The extension of the green belt proposed as part of the Green Belt Review undertaken very recently by Medway Council (see map below) is also supported since it could help to ensure

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that the continued function of the Neighbourhood Plan area as a location for wildlife of international importance can be maintained and fulfil one of the functions of the green belt which is to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, preventing the incremental coalescence via ribbon development of Cliffe woods on the west of Town Road with buildings in Lea Green.

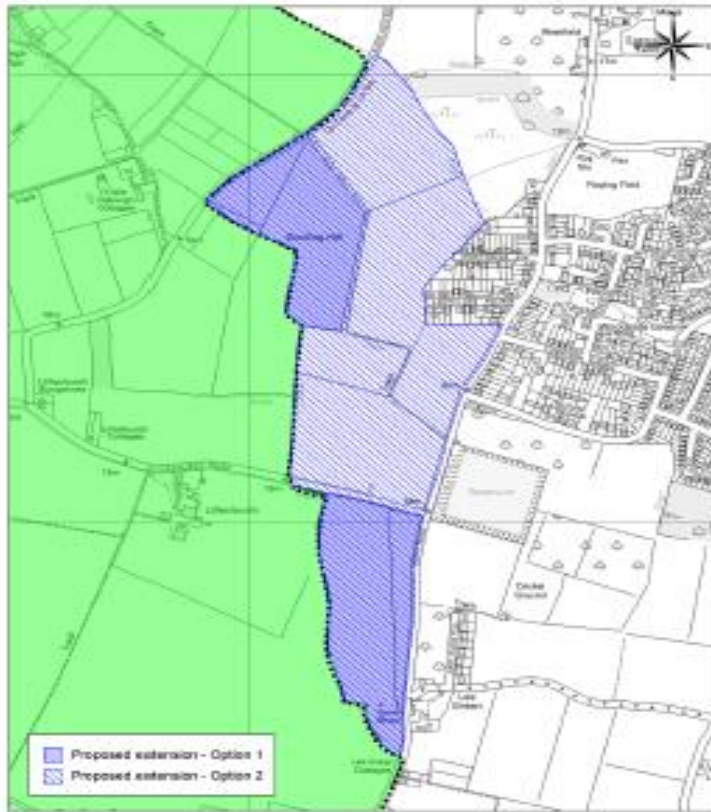


Fig 12 Land to west of Cliffe Woods. The district boundary offers poor physical definition at Cooling Hill and land to south of Littlechurch Road and west of Town Road.

Recommendation: Fig 11 describes two options. Option 1 involves minor adjustments to provide stronger physical edges. Option 2 includes Option 1 but proposes a more significant adjustment, extending the green belt to follow a very strong existing field boundary and then heading south, following the developed edge of Cliffe Woods and strong physical edge of Town Road.

SUSDEV5: Infrastructure Sufficiency Statements

All major new development⁵ proposals must be supported by a statement demonstrating infrastructure sufficiency to support the proposal. An assessment should be undertaken which takes into account:

- a) The needs, commitments and planning requirements set out in the Medway Local Plan and relevant thematic policies and site allocation specifications that it contains;
- b) Recent technical studies and engagement with strategic infrastructure commissioners and providers that may update the position set out in the latest Medway Local Plan Infrastructure position statement of Infrastructure, Infrastructure Development Plan or Strategy;
- c) Accessibility, capacity and availability of existing infrastructure in the area where this is to be relied upon to support a development proposal.

⁵ The threshold for a **major development** is any application that involves mineral extraction, waste **development**, the provision of 10+ dwellings / a site area over 0.5 Hectares or a floorspace of over 1,000sqm / an area of 1 hectare

5. Housing

Introduction

The Neighbourhood Plan area consists of two villages, Cliffe and Cliffe Woods (which are situated two miles apart) with agricultural and commercial land between, with one minor road, B2000, connecting the two. Cliffe, being the older village consists of brick-built terraces many of which were extended in later years to accord with modern life, and modern developments have been erected both on Greenfield land and infill sites. The properties in Cliffe Woods are now mostly post 1960s, earlier houses having been demolished and rebuilt.

Since the 2003 Local Plan there have been relatively low levels of development but since 2016 there had been an increase in development proposals coming forward. As at June 2019 there are a total of **721** new dwellings in the planning application pipeline.

Little has changed in relation to housing need in the Neighbourhood Plan area over this period. The responses to the 2017 Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Housing Needs Survey, showed that the majority of properties are owner occupied, some were rented, some were shared ownership, and many families were living with relatives. The comments received identified the need for affordable housing and some housing for older people. It also showed that a) residents wanted to remain in the villages but the housing stock was not available b) some older people wanted to move to smaller accommodation that more suited their needs c) young families wanted to move into the area but there was no affordable housing. Most however wanted to maintain the rural nature of the neighbourhood and felt that any development should be in character with the rural nature of the Neighbourhood Plan area and must be sustainable.

Medway Council is in the process of updating their Local Plan. In this new draft plan, there is a requirement for **29,463 homes to be built by 2035**. Currently, based on the Medway SHLAA⁶ process thirty-two sites were submitted for consideration for development. All of the sites were assessed by Medway as unsuitable for development. The Neighbourhood Plan process has also considered these sites. In fact, **3** of them now have planning consent (providing **98**) homes, but the remainder were assessed for potential designation in the Neighbourhood Plan and it was considered most of them were unsuitable for development for the same reasons as the Medway Council assessments.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Our approach is to accept that although Medway has not currently allocated sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area for housing, applications are likely to be received and may be

⁶ Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

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approved. This means that Cliffe and Cliffe Woods will play its part in meeting the number of homes Medway Council needs. Whilst the need for new homes is recognised, any development within the Neighbourhood Plan area should be sustainable and achieve the Neighbourhood Plan Vision.

To do this, the following objectives were agreed to guide the development of policy in relation to housing development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Objectives			
Housing in Cliffe and Cliffe Woods—meeting Local and Wider needs	To provide housing in the Neighbourhood Plan area that is sustainable including: affordable housing, retirement housing, bungalows, chalet bungalows and small terraces	To ensure that all housing development proposals are appropriate to the rural setting	To provide a choice of ways that housing can be developed

H1: Housing on Greenfield Sites

Major development proposals for housing on Greenfield sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area will be requested to contribute to sustainable development by including uses other than housing that are appropriate to the site location and where they do not conflict with other policies in this plan

The nature and character of the Neighbourhood Plan area means that sites coming forward for housing development in the Neighbourhood Plan area should add other facilities not just housing numbers in the area. This will help to ensure that residents and visitors have access to a range of supporting services and potential employment in the Neighbourhood Plan area and to reduce the need to travel.

There is no green belt designated land in the Neighbourhood Plan area (although there is designated green belt land in the adjacent Parish of Gravesham and Medway council is proposing to extend green belt to include land to the west of Cliffe Woods) but it does have designations that underline the rural character and setting of the Parish in the form of a number of SSSIs, the RAMSAR and Special Protected Area. Greenfield sites must therefore be carefully developed at a scale that is appropriate to the rural location of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

H2: Housing Infill

Within the Neighbourhood Plan area proposals for new housing development on brownfield sites will be supported in the form of:

- a) Small scale infill development within or immediately adjoining significant existing clusters of development
- b) Affordable housing on rural exception sites to meet an identified local need which cannot be met in any other way

Although the amount of brownfield land in the Parish is very limited, it is important that brownfield land is developed wherever feasible and appropriate to ensure the effective use of land in the Neighbourhood Plan area and meet the local need for housing.

H3: Conversion of Agricultural Buildings

Proposals for the conversion of existing agricultural buildings in the countryside to small scale residential use will be supported provided that they:

- a) Do not result in a significant increase in the existing building footprint or height, are confined to the existing area of farm buildings and maintain the main characteristics of farm buildings
- b) Conform to the relevant aspects of the **Design Guidelines** appended to this plan
- c) Do not conflict with other policies in this plan

This will preserve the rural characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan area whilst increasing the housing stock and ensuring there will be minimal impact on the rural setting of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

H4: Housing Extensions

Proposals to extend houses in the countryside will be supported, provided they do not conflict with the other policies in this plan and follow the **Design Guidelines** appended to this plan.

Extensions to existing homes enables households to meet their housing needs as they change over time. However, it is important that they do not have negative impacts on their immediate neighbours and the wider area.

H5: House Design

New housing design should respect the rural character of the Neighbourhood Plan area and its immediate context having appropriate regard to the standards set out in the **Design Guidelines** appended to this plan. Residential development will be permitted to encourage a sustainable mix of housing types and sizes to address local requirements to include social housing in accordance with the Medway Local Plan.

Particular attention should be given to building heights to ensure that roof heights do not spoil the aesthetic of the local area. Open front gardens or low hedges will be encouraged to retain the general open look and feel of the Parish.

H6: Housing Type and Tenure

New housing development should reflect local housing need, particularly for bungalows and small family accommodation in the Neighbourhood Plan area in terms of mix and tenure as identified in the most up to date SHMSA⁷ and any additional up-to-date evidence.

The mix must be appropriate to the size, location and characteristics of the site as well as to the established character and density of the immediate environment to include sufficient parking appropriate to the size of the property as set out in **Policy INFRA4** of this plan.

In common with other areas housing need and affordability are a challenge in Cliffe and Cliffe Woods. The Housing Needs Survey 2017 for the Parish identified the need for smaller homes with a mixture of 1-3 bedrooms for first time owners, “downsizers” and homes suitably adapted to accommodate the needs of the elderly.

In addition, the survey identified that 56 households had seen members of their household – mainly their children leave the Parish in the last five years with the majority citing lack of affordable housing or employment opportunities as the reason they left.

H7: Housing Density

The density of new housing development in the Neighbourhood Plan area should, as far as possible be no more than 30 dwellings per hectare to maintain the rural character of the area and sustainable residential quality

Densities do vary a lot across the Neighbourhood Plan area but to maintain its character they should wherever possible be kept at levels which address the very limited travel and other community infrastructure in the area. The Medway Local Plan proposes a site by site approach to housing density but given the limited sites considered acceptable for development in the Neighbourhood Plan area, any developer should be guided to lower expectations of the amount of housing that can be achieved on sites within it.

Proposed building at higher densities than currently exist in the Parish, will inevitably create public concerns because of perceived changes it may bring to its character. However, through good design, these changes can be brought about in a way which will protect and can often

⁷ Strategic Housing Market Assessment

enhance the character of the Parish, while at the same time providing additional housing and minimising the need to build on Greenfield sites in the District.

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6. Community Facilities

Introduction

The community halls and other buildings made available for hire by local groups and individuals in Cliffe and Cliffe Woods play an important role in dealing with isolation, providing for social interaction and spaces for education, health and leisure activities.

Table 1 shows the facilities currently available in each settlement and in addition there are spaces available in Cliffe Woods Academy, St Helens School and the Six Bells Public House in Cliffe, and a small meeting room in the Buckland Nature Reserve (just south of Cliffe).

Provision currently needs improvement in terms of the potential for a wide range of uses. Many are currently a simple hall with some ancillary facilities i.e. kitchens and toilets but many cannot accommodate or are unsuitable for informal sports or leisure activities. Many current facilities are already operating at capacity.

Table CF1: Community Facilities in the Neighbourhood Plan area	
Cliffe	Cliffe Woods
Cliffe Memorial Hall	Cliffe Woods Community centre
St Helen's House	Cliffe Woods Social Club (Woodpecker Lounge)
Cliffe Men's Social Club	Emmanuel Christian Centre
Village Club	
Scout Hut	

There is a need for places for residents and visitors to use spaces when activities cannot be accommodated in their own home and to allow service providers to make services available to people in Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish without the need for them to travel.

Similarly, there are a limited number of leisure facilities in the Neighbourhood Plan area, including allotments. Most residents have to travel to Strood to make use of indoor sports facilities. NPPF 2019⁸ (para 8b and 91a) policies make it clear that social objectives, including health should be considered in the planning of development into the future. These facilities offer opportunities provide for activities conducive to health, social interaction, well-being and lifelong learning.

⁸ National Planning Policy Framework

Objectives	
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To enable improved community spirit in the villages and settlements of the Parish with infrastructure and facilities that cater for all age groups within a rural setting.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

All of the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been developed to ensure that these facilities are protected as far as possible given the limited potential for development in the Neighbourhood Plan area. All of these facilities are important due to the limited number and variety of shops, cafes and other entertainment facilities available to residents and visitors. Their protection is critical to the sustainability of the settlements into the future.

CF1: Loss of leisure and recreation facilities

Proposals that result in the loss of existing facilities used for indoor and outdoor leisure and recreation shown on Table CF1 will be resisted unless there is clear evidence that there is no need for the facility or a suitable alternative of facilities of a similar size, quality and accessibility are re-provided or where proposals offer alternative benefits in terms of increased access to leisure and recreation activities

CF2: New and Improved provision

Development proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan area which include new leisure and recreation facilities, or the improvement of existing facilities will be supported in principle where they are consistent with other proposals and policies in this Plan. Facilities should be designed for multiple uses to ensure that facilities are viable and sustainable. Developers will be encouraged to work with providers of such facilities to develop proposals and to design them in accordance with the **Design Guidelines** appended to this plan.

CF3: Loss of community halls, centres and place of worship

Proposals that result in the loss of existing community facilities will be not be permitted unless there is clear evidence that;

- a) there is no need for the facility or suitable alternative facilities of a similar size and quality are re-provided
- b) proposals offer alternative benefits to the community in terms of access to space to assemble, worship, participate in educational activities and personal or civic celebrations

CF4: Allotments

1. Any proposals that result in harm to or loss of existing allotments will not be permitted unless:
 - a. The proposal provides a clear and significant social, economic or environmental benefit to the local population.
 - b. Replacement provision is made of at least equivalent quality
 - c. The proposed alternative land will be located within a radius of no more than 1000 metres of its present location
 - d. Any developer will prepare new land for immediate use
 - e. Any developer will compensate existing tenants for loss of any crops and relocation costs
2. Any proposal to increase allotment provision across the Neighbourhood Plan area will be welcomed and encouraged where it is consistent with other policies in this Plan

7. Environment and Heritage

Introduction

The Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Neighbourhood Plan area is characterised by and celebrated for its attractive, distinctive estuarine, woodland and farmed countryside that holds a rich diversity of wildlife

The Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich built heritage and historic assets, with twenty six listed buildings, a conservation area in Cliffe and a Scheduled Monument at Cliffe Fort. It also has a wealth of natural heritage which is of local, national and international importance, most of which is protected under local, national and international laws such as EU Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar sites (Wetland bird habitats of global importance), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) landscape designations.

The area is a rich mosaic of habitats, filled with birds and other flora and fauna including some of the most threatened and vulnerable species in the UK i.e. water vole, shrill carder bees and scarce emerald damselfly to name but a few.

It has a farming heritage with predominantly the highest-grade agricultural land; a national resource. The plan area also includes a national Cycle Trail, National Long-Distance Walking Trail and miles of footpaths, bridle paths, byways (Public Rights of Way PROW) and common land.

The protection of this environment is important to both the resident community of the area and visitors; views of the hills, woodlands, river, open farmland and marshes form part of the daily lives of residents and provide opportunities for outdoor learning and involvement in environment, ecology, landscape and social history.

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The farmland of the area is classified as excellent Grade I and Grade II. There are orchards too. Both of these resources are important as a national resource that make a contribution to future food security as well as biodiversity.

For the future planning of the local economy it also provides opportunities for visitor accommodation, tea rooms, tours and cultural pursuits related to arts and crafts, writing and photography as well as healthy activity like cycling, running, walking, sailing and so on.

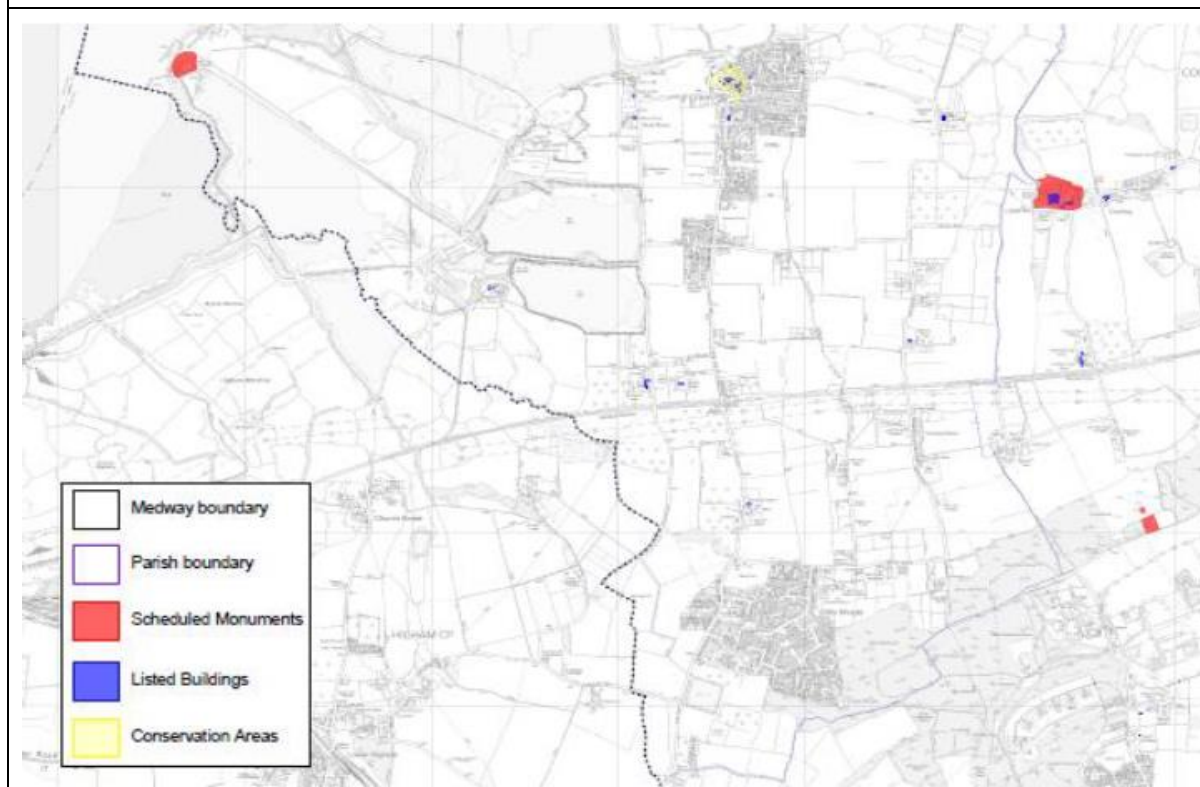
Local residents are fortunate to have access to such a rich landscape and wildlife assets, but they also have green spaces which are on their doorstep necessary to allow for relief from buildings and street activity and to allow for play and recreation – both active and passive.

The extent and location of these natural environment and heritage assets is summarized in the following tables and maps:

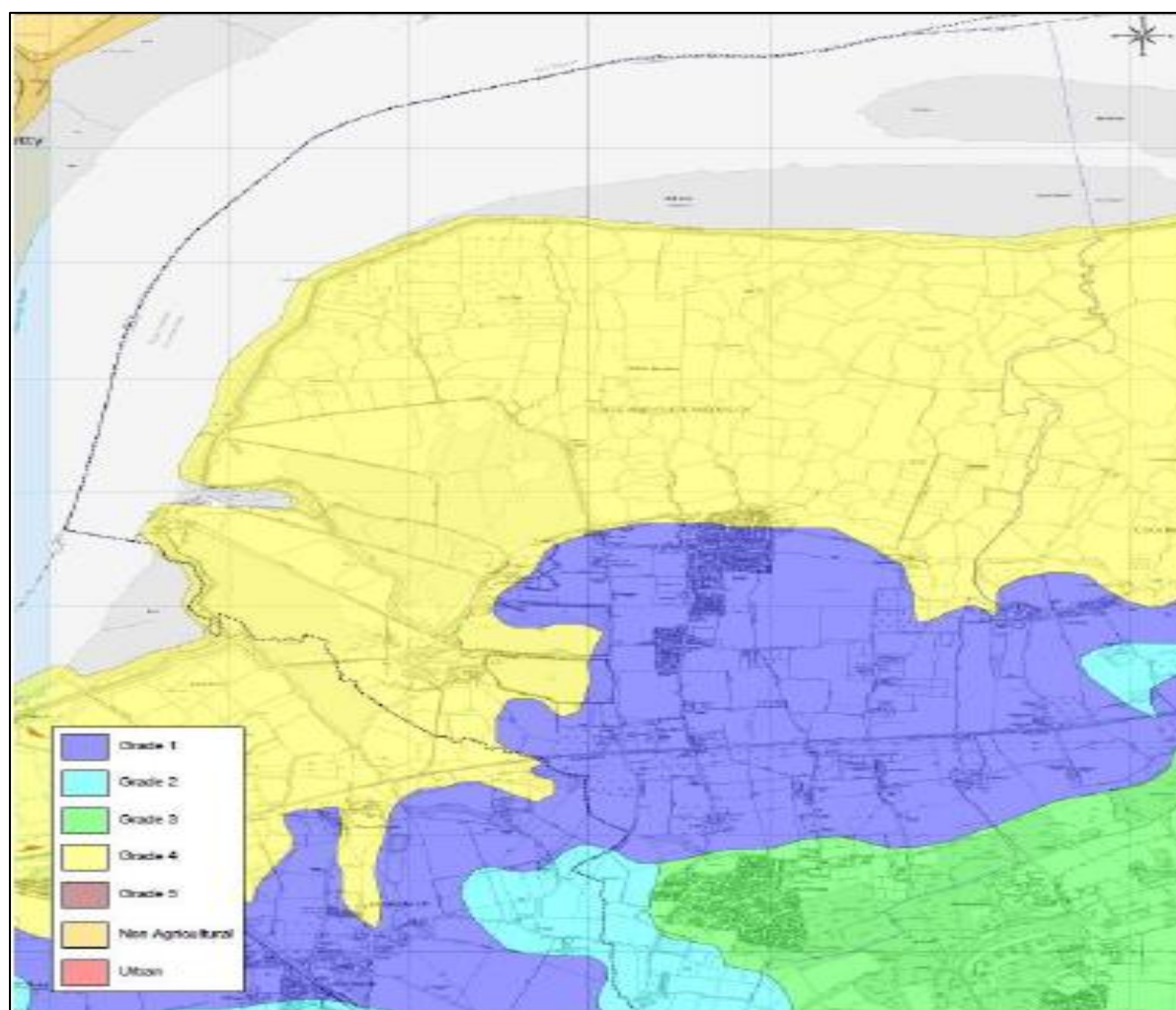
E&H Table 1: Schedule of Listed Buildings in the Neighbourhood Plan area

ID	List Entry	Name	Grade	Eastings	Northings	List Date
1	1085760	WEST COURT FARMHOUSE	II	572311.6	175417.2	14-11-86
2	1085761	GRANARY 20 YARDS NORTH EAST OF WEST COURT FARMHOUSE	II	572333.7	175423.4	14-11-86
3	1085762	MANOR FARMHOUSE	II	573096.9	176407.1	21-11-66
4	1085763	GRANARY AT BUCKLAND FARM	II	573158.7	174847	14-11-86
5	1085764	CHARNEL HOUSE AT NORTH WEST CORNER OF CHURCHYARD	II	573509.5	176655.8	14-11-86
6	1085765	HARVEY MONUMENT 20 YARDS SOUTH WEST OF SOUTH PORCH OF CHURCH OF ST HELEN	II	573573	176602.4	14-11-86
7	1085766	170-174, CHURCH STREET	II	573651.5	176564	14-11-86
8	1085767	THE RED HOUSE	II	573712	176645.4	14-11-86
9	1085768	WALNUT TREE COTTAGE	II	573993	176673.4	14-11-86
10	1086505	185, CHURCH STREET	II	573636.7	176586	17-07-90
12	1204042	CHURCH OF ST HELEN	I	573594	176626.4	21-11-66
13	1204054	STEEL AND HATCH MONUMENT 1 YARD SOUTH OF SOUTH AISLE OF CHURCH OF ST HELEN	II	573596	176614.4	14-11-86
14	1204092	THE RECTORY HOUSE	II*	573338.3	174867.4	21-11-66
15	1204114	MORTIMER'S FARM HOUSE	II	573704	174169.4	14-11-86
16	1278057	CHANCERY COTTAGE	II	573636.9	176591.6	17-07-90
17	1281378	BARN AT RYE FARM	II	574753.1	176406.2	14-11-86
18	1281406	SMITH MONUMENT 30 YARDS WEST OF CHURCH OF ST HELEN	II	573550	176617.4	14-11-86
19	1281409	176, CHURCH STREET	II	573655.9	176599.7	14-11-86
20	1336467	GATTONS FARMHOUSE	II	574569	175115.9	21-11-66
21	1336468	ALLENS HILL FARMHOUSE	II	573087.2	176533.6	14-11-86
22	1336469	BARN AT BUCKLAND FARM	II	573149	174870.6	14-11-86
23	1336470	QUICKRILLS	II	573600	176405.4	21-11-66
24	1336471	LONGFORD HOUSE	II	573657.9	176611.2	21-11-66
25	1336472	COURT SOLE	II	573607.5	176708.8	21-11-66
26	1432857	Cliffe War Memorial	II	573576	176602	23-05-16

E&H Map 1: Map of Listed Buildings in the Neighbourhood Plan area

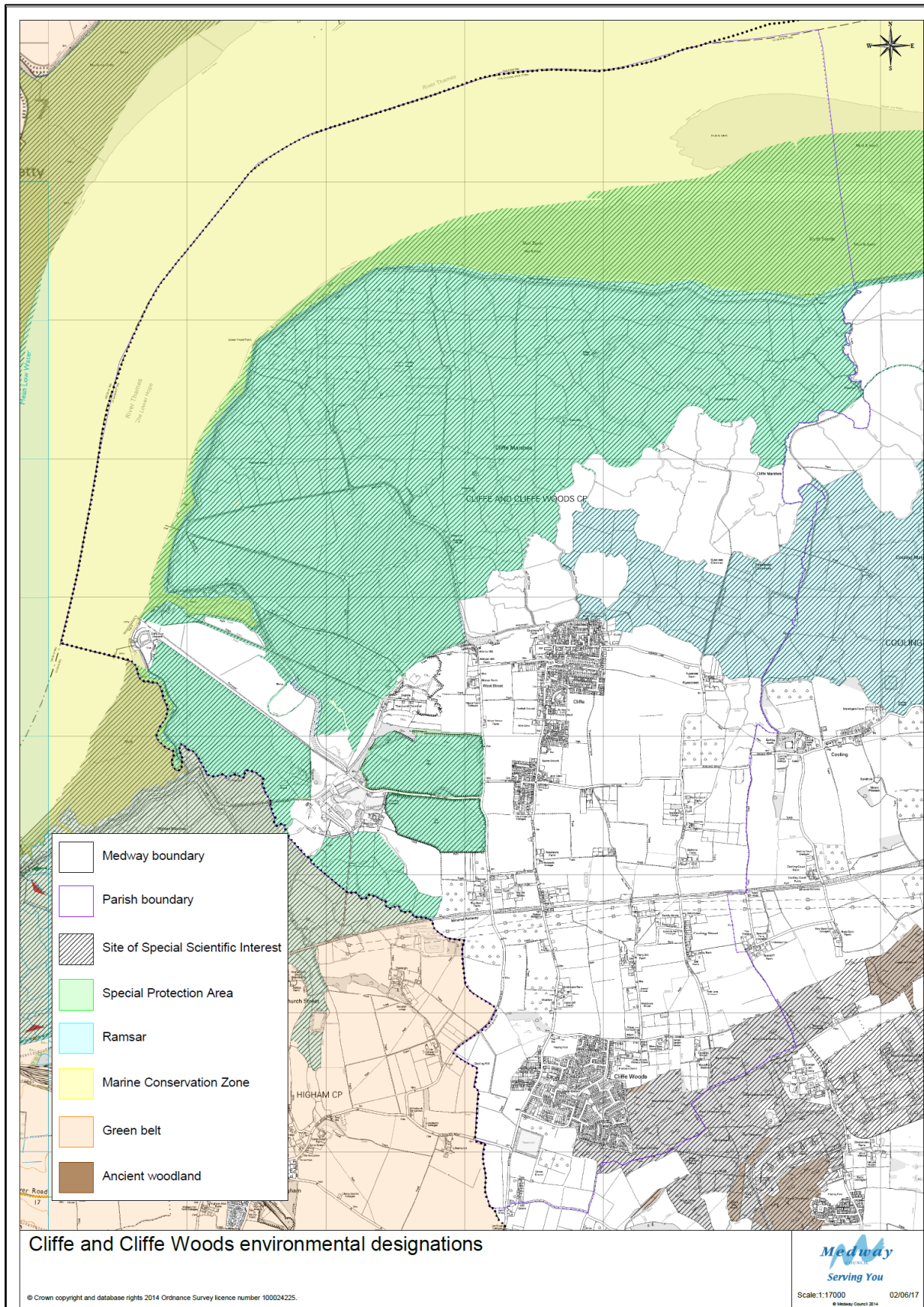


E&H Map 2: Agricultural Land in the Neighbourhood Plan area



E&H Map 3: Environmental Designations in the Neighbourhood Plan area

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E&H Map 4: Cliffe Woods Public Open Spaces

E&H Map 5: Cliffe Public Open Spaces

E&H Map 6: Map of Outdoor recreation Facilities in Cliffe and Cliffe Wood Parish

E&EH Map 7: Hidden History Areas

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

The distinctive nature of the Neighbourhood Plan area is described in the Heritage and Character Assessment 2017 undertaken to inform the development of this Neighbourhood Plan. The Assessment identifies four-character areas:

- The Historic Settlement of Cliffe
- Cliffe Marshland and Cliffe Pools
- Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Farmland
- Cliffe Woods Modern Settlement

The assessment also sets out the particular challenges in each area for managing change in the future and which have been addressed as far as possible in the **Design Guidelines** which forms part of the policies of this Neighbourhood Plan related to Environment and Heritage and to meet the following objectives and Neighbourhood Plan vision.

Objectives	
Environment	<p>To enhance and preserve the rural, environmental and historic character and assets of the Parish by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conserving the rural environment which already has extensive environmental protection,• Enabling the Parish to operate as a green lung for the wider area,• Preserving rural views, wildlife sites and corridors and agricultural land uses.
Heritage	<p>Enhance and preserve the historic character of the Parish by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consideration of expansion of the existing conservation area• Protecting the character of farmsteads in the Parish (including buildings)• Conserving unlisted properties• Ensuring the materials and design of all new development in the Parish is sympathetic to its existing character• Preserving for the future archaeological sites in the Parish for learning and historical recording

E&H1: Green Spaces

Development proposals that result in any loss of existing public green spaces as shown on the maps, across all types within the Neighbourhood Plan area will be supported only where replacement green spaces which are suitably located and equal or superior (in terms of size and quality) are provided for public use.

E&H2: Biodiversity

All development in the Neighbourhood Plan area will be expected to protect and enhance biodiversity in line with NPPF and Medway Local Plan requirements. Development must demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity in an ecological report consistent with BS 42020.⁹

E&H3: Hidden History

Development proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan area will be expected to consider its unique history and heritage assets as part of developing the details of their proposals. The results of the following investigations in terms of migration will need to be submitted as part of all planning applications in the Neighbourhood Plan area:

- a) Development Proposals for sites located within high density areas, which fall outside the village boundary of Cliffe, should undertake a desk based assessment (DBA) which should include data from Heritage Environment Records (HER), the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), light detection and ranging (LiDAR), historical maps and identified Crop Marks via aerial surveys: all of which are accessible within the public domain. DBA to be submitted with any application.
- b) All major development proposals* located within the high-density areas to also undertake a geophysical survey and, depending upon the geophysical survey results, a trial trench evaluation must also be completed, and its results addressed in detailing proposals.
- c) Development proposals for sites located in the Medium and Low density areas should undertake a desk based assessment (DBA) which should include data from Heritage Environment Records (HER), the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), light detection and ranging (LiDAR), historical maps and identified Crop Marks via aerial surveys: all of which are accessible within the public domain. DBA to be submitted with any application.
- d) All development proposals for sites that lay within the village boundaries of Cliffe and Cliffe Woods, together with those in high density areas that are not deemed to be a major development* should discuss with Medway Council planning the need for a watching brief for the site.

⁹ BS42020:2013 Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development

*The threshold for a major development is any application that involves mineral extraction, waste treatment/storage, the provision of 10+ dwellings/ a site area over 0.5 Hectares or a floorspace of over 1,000 sqm/ an area of 1 hectare.

E&H4: Design Guidelines

Development proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan area should apply the principles and guidelines included in the **Design Guidelines** appended to this plan.

The sensitivity of the character of the Neighbourhood Plan area is such that all potential development in the future is likely to be located at the edge of the two existing settlements and affect both agricultural land or sites with specific environmental designations. The **Design Guidelines** and Environment and Heritage policies have been devised to minimise these impacts and ensure that development is sensitive to and protects the heritage and character of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

8. Economy and Employment

Introduction

According to the 2011 census people in the Neighbourhood Plan area were employed in the following sectors:

ECON&EMP Table 3: Employment in the Neighbourhood Plan area	
Industry	% age of the population aged 16-64 in employment
Wholesale and Retail	14.7%
Construction	13.9%
Education	10.00%
Human Health and Social Work	10.2%
Manufacturing	7.8%
Source: 2011 Census	

The number of residents who actually work within (or very close to) the Parish lies between 90 and 180, out of a population of 2381

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Industry within the Parish is concentrated in the Salt Lane Industrial Area, to the west of the village of Cliffe which grew in relation to the employment opportunities offered. Although the amount of industry has declined in the last 50 years, the population of Cliffe has not.

Agriculture provides some employment opportunities, with most of the surface in the Parish devoted to farming on land owned/leased by local farmers. As with many aspects of the economy, technology has reduced the number of people employed in agriculture.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds owns the area of land known as Cliffe Pools, which is next to the Salt Lane Industrial Area. The RSPB owns the strip of land adjacent to SLAA site 0828 (Thameside Terminal) which could be designated for a Visitor Centre/small workshops.

Significantly, the single largest defined group of workers is those who “work mainly at or from home” (289 out of the 1082 who are working – 27% - 2011 Census Data) indicating that there may be demands for small flexible workspace or shared managed workspace within the Neighbourhood Plan area if it was available.

There are 1299 residents who are not in employment (54.6% compared to the national figure of 35.6%, possibly indicating more retired residents than other areas). Data on educational qualifications indicates that 29.6% of residents have no qualifications compared to the national figure of 22.7%. The Local Education Authority and Regional Schools Commissioners will be encouraged to examine this in relation to education/training opportunities.

An analysis of business premises in the Neighbourhood Plan area based on the payment of non-domestic rates identifies a total of 43 premises categorised as follows:

ECON&EMP Table 4: Business premises in the Neighbourhood Plan area							
Warehouse	2	Riding schools/stables	2	Workshops	2	Car Park	1
Outdoor Storage	1	Fish Farm	1	Vehicle Repair	1	Surgery	2
Offices	1	Halls/Community Centres	8	Guesthouse	1	Shops	7
Schools	2	Fire station	1	Public House	1	WC	1
Kennel	1	Cattery	1	Nursery	1	Farms	3
Comms stations/Masts	2	Concrete/aggregates	4	Vehicle Repair	1		
Source: Valuation Office Agency							

Table 4 shows the limited economic base on which the Neighbourhood Plan area is based and data for employment underlines the extent to which residents travel out of the area to work. This presents an opportunity into the future for provision of new employment space and employment generating facilities, but also the need to protect existing employment land into the future. As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan has adopted the following objectives in relation to the economy and employment.

Objectives		
Employment	To promote green and historic tourism, and small-scale craft workshops using redundant farm buildings and mixed-use development opportunities	To protect agricultural jobs and employment land in the Neighbourhood Plan area

ECON&EMP1: Agriculture

Development proposals that result in the loss of agricultural land will not be supported unless there is a proven need for sustainable development which demonstrates benefits which far outweigh the loss of food growing space in the Neighbourhood Plan area and its contribution to national food security.

The protection of farmland and the employment associated with it is an objective of the Neighbourhood Plan. This has been agreed to protect the viability of the village communities in the Neighbourhood Plan area by ensuring that everyone does not have to travel out of the area for employment, adding to problems of congestion and pollution that are already significant challenges. This policy will help to ensure that the character of the area is protected, and that farming does not disappear as a result of individual farms areas being reduced to the point that they are unviable enterprises.

ECON&EMP2: Recreation and Tourism

Development proposals for recreational and tourism activities/facilities will be encouraged in the Neighbourhood Plan area provided that the proposals do not conflict with other policies in this Plan and that:

- It can be demonstrated that they do not have a significantly harmful effect on congestion or road safety as defined by Medway Council
- Their siting and scale have strong regard to the character and the historic, natural environment and wildlife assets of the Neighbourhood Plan area
- Design and materials are in keeping with the local style, reinforce local distinctiveness and sense of place and follow the principles set out in the **Design Guidelines** included in this plan

The assets of the Neighbourhood Plan area for enjoyment of nature and other leisure pursuits are very significant. Opportunities for development such as visitor centres, visitor accommodation and facilities that support them such as café's, rural craft workshops and retail would add to the possibilities of increasing locally based employment opportunities for residents, with potential beneficial increases in business for those that support their supply chains.

ECON&EMP3: Change of use

Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of land or buildings in employment use to non-employment uses, other than those which are permitted development, will only be permitted when:

- (a) Marketing of the site over a period of a minimum of 24 months demonstrates that there is no realistic prospect of the use of the site for employment purposes; or
- (b) The proposals allow for retention of some employment uses on the proposed site

The loss of existing employment space to other uses will further undermine the local economic base of the Neighbourhood Plan area and increase pressure on the limited local travel infrastructure that currently serves it.

ECON&EMP4: Retail

Development proposals for local retail and other village centre uses will be supported in suitable alternative locations elsewhere in the Parish. Proposals in particular for a new grocery store/small supermarket will be supported provided that:

- a. It does not conflict with other policies in this plan;
- b. It is no larger than 200–300 sq. m,
- c. It is in an accessible and central position, providing good links to each village and other community facilities.

There are currently very few retail spaces available in the Neighbourhood Plan area which adds considerably to the need for residents to travel by car out of it. This is particularly the case for Cliffe and new provision, based on consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan, would be welcomed and supported.

ECON&EMP5: New employment space

Applications for the development of new small business units, including through change of use of redundant rural buildings to business use, will be favourably considered, subject to other policies in this plan and the following criteria:

- a) there is no harm to the rural character of the area or to the amenities of residents;
- b) there would be no negative impact on the local road network;
- c) there is no unacceptable conflict with agriculture and other land-based activity;
- d) if an existing building, the building concerned would not require substantial extension

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9. Infrastructure

Introduction

The Infrastructure of the Neighbourhood Plan area is deficient from a number of perspectives – physical and network connectivity is poor, roads are felt to be unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists due to traffic speeds, lack of pavements and pollution. Roads are also unsuitable for their current traffic volumes and types due to their character and the existing prevalence of on street parking. Like much of Medway there is a shortage of play facilities.

Currently Medway plans for infrastructure are underdeveloped and focused on areas of growth associated with the emergent Local Plan. The Infrastructure Position Statement produced by Medway in 2017 is a high-level commitment to ensuring that infrastructure is in place as development happens and that all needs are catered for. This will be developed into a full Infrastructure plan so that the policies at neighbourhood level here are proposed to ensure that developers are clear about the need to consider the impact of their proposals on current infrastructure provision and to ensure that the provision of new infrastructure is provided for as part of their developments if they are required and are viable.

In Medway there is no Community Infrastructure Levy regime in place so there is a reliance on the use of planning obligations to achieve new provision. Consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan has uncovered great concern about any development which will add any further pressure on all infrastructure and improvements were regarded as a high priority for residents and businesses.

As a result, Neighbourhood Plan policies are based on improving the current situation and guiding development so that it does not have further negative impact on the infrastructure of the area and providing local priorities for the type and location of improvements.

This is particularly the case for parking provision. The parking survey undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan showed a clear problem with on street parking and a problem with the size of car parking spaces and garages provided in relation to modern car sizes. This has been recognised by both the Automobile Association and National Car Parks, with damage to cars, problems turning and garages being too small to accommodate modern cars being recognised problems due to an increase in car sizes since the common standard of 2.4 x 4.8m was adopted.

Public transport provision is currently a serious impediment to the sustainability of the villages of the Neighbourhood Area. The nearest train stations are at Higham and Strood for connections to the Medway towns and London where most people locally need to travel for work and leisure.

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Unless improvements are secured, businesses and residents will struggle with accessibility to all parts of the Neighbourhood area and their homes, to be connected to on-line service provision and operate viable businesses for their customers.

The following objectives were therefore agreed for the Neighbourhood Plan:

Objectives				
Infrastructure	To improve the connection of the Parish to online resources	To improve the safety of roads in the Parish	To improve connections with footpaths, cycle ways and public transport for residents, businesses and visitors	To ensure that the provision of schools, public transport services and health facilities keeps pace with increases in population in the Parish

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

INFRA1: Health

Proposals for new health facilities to merge, extend and/or to improve existing ones in the Neighbourhood Plan area will be supported where they are consistent with other policies in this Plan. Developers will be encouraged to work with relevant partners to ensure that adequate health facilities are delivered and included within development proposals where appropriate, or through planning obligations to provide land or make financial contributions towards their development.

INFRA2: Communications

Proposals for the provision, improvement and enhancement of the speed of advanced communication technologies within the Neighbourhood Plan area for education, training and business use will be supported as part of development proposals where they are consistent with other policies in this Plan. These should include:

- a) Fibre optic superfast broadband implementation
- b) Full 4g mobile telephone coverage and next generation telephone data systems as they become available.
- c) Radio and television broadcasting reception and coverage.

INFRA3: Transport - walking

Existing rights of way will be protected from development that adversely impact on accessibility within and between settlements within the Neighbourhood Plan area

Proposals for new development will be expected to take advantage of opportunities to make appropriate connections to existing footpaths, alleyways, rights of way and bridleways in the Neighbourhood Plan area to improve connectivity for residents and businesses.

INFRA4: Parking – Cars and Cycles

The provision of car and cycle parking should as far as possible allow for:

- a) Off street vehicle and cycle parking to be contiguous with, and part of, each property, rather than provided as part of a shared arrangement.
- b) Shared parking areas that are provided are built to Secured by Design standards and each space is clearly visible from the property it serves.
- c) Parking provision for new development will be required to meet the following standards set out below unless there is a clear justification for the application of a lower standard to achieve sustainable development:
 - 1 bed house/flat - 1.5 off-road car parking space (rounded down, i.e. 3 dwellings = rounded to 4)
 - 2 bed house/flat - 2 off-road car parking spaces
 - 3 bed house/flat - 3 off-road car parking spaces
 - 4+ bed house/flat - 3 off-road car parking spaces
 - A garage will be acceptable as a parking space provided that its internal dimensions are at least 3m wide x 6m long. Tandem parking will only be permitted where there is no suitable alternative.
 - Car space dimensions should be 2.7m x 5.4

INFRA5 Public Transport

The improvement of the bus terminus in Cliffe at the 6 bells public house will be secured through planning obligations for its provision or for financial contributions towards their implementation.

INFRA6: Public Transport - Cycling in the Neighbourhood Area

Locations for improvements to cycling in the neighbourhood area are shown on the map below.

- the joint footpath/cycle path on the B2000 at Mockbeggar Farm

- New cycle and pedestrian access routes from the Neighbourhood Plan area to Higham Station, Hoo Centre and Strood town centre

New shared pedestrian/cycling provision should be provided in accordance with Department of Transport Local Transport Note 1/12 September 2012

These improvements will be secured, where applicable, via Section 106 agreements attached to planning consents within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

INFRA7: Road Safety

The improvement of visibility on the B2000 at its junctions with View Road, Tennyson Avenue Ladyclose Avenue, Mortimers Avenue, Milton Road and Merryboys Road will be secured through planning obligations for their provision or for financial contributions towards their implementation