

Ninfield Neighbourhood Plan

2020 - 2039

DRAFT State of Parish Report



August 2022

Ninfield Neighbourhood Plan

State of the Parish Report

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report will provide an overview of the information and evidence which has been compiled jointly by Ninfield Parish Council, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Action in Rural Sussex, as the first stage in the development of the Ninfield Neighbourhood Plan (NNP). It outlines the methods by which the NNP will be prepared, and by which the draft and final versions of the NNP will be assessed and refined. It provides a comprehensive summary record of the extensive work which has been undertaken as part of the initial phase of developing the Neighbourhood Plan and providing context against which the finished Plan can be compared.

Purpose of this report:

- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to summarise the evidence base and the context within which an identification and understanding of existing and emerging issues the Neighbourhood Plan should seek to address.

Function of this report:

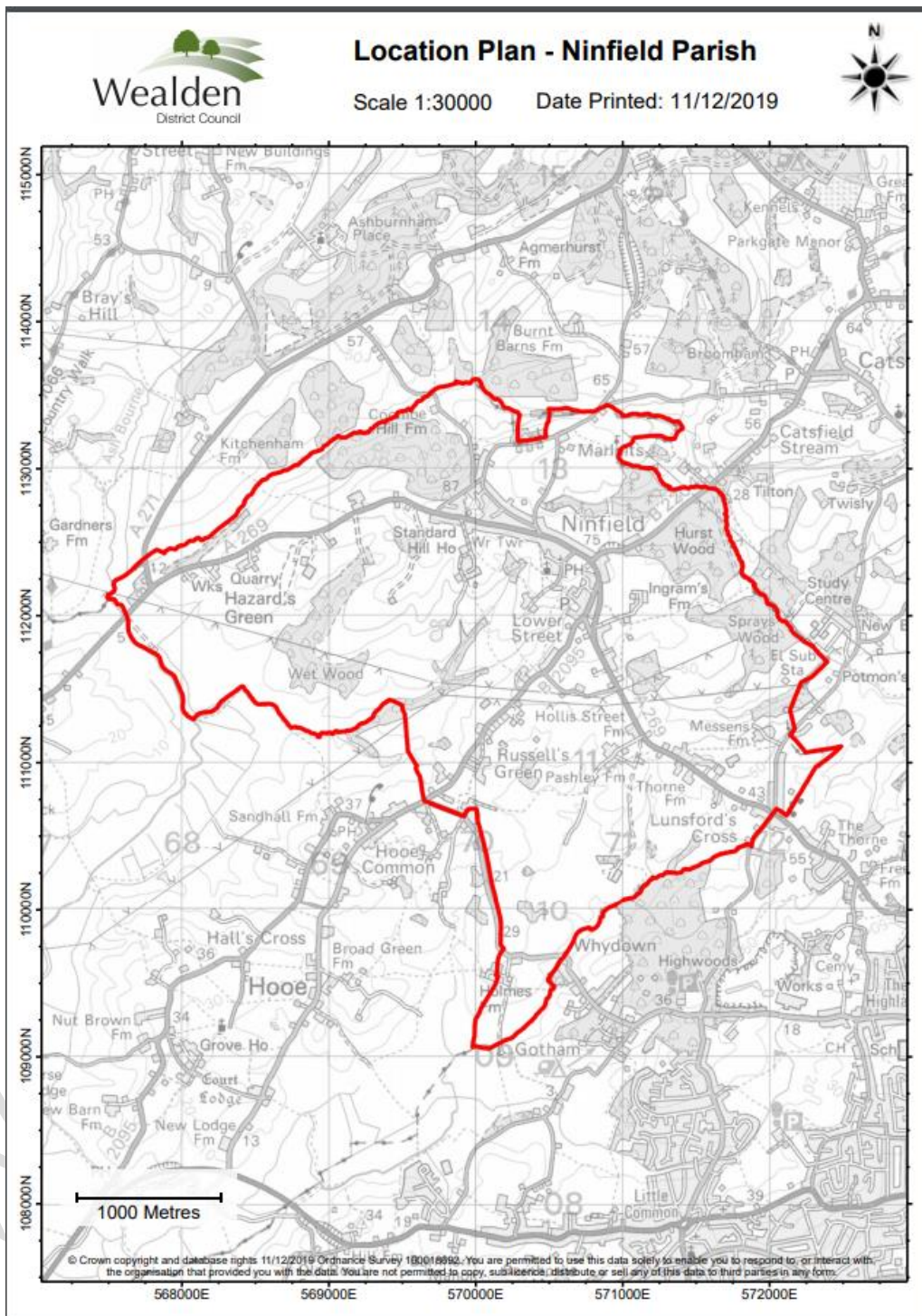
- 1.3 This report outlines the approaches which have been taken in order to gather information about the locality, its functions are to:
- Outline what the Neighbourhood Plan can and cannot realistically achieve;
 - Provide a summary of the activity undertaken and information captured as part of the Plan's development;
 - Ensure that those living in or adjacent to the designated Neighbourhood Plan area are made aware of the key issues identified;
 - To provide residents, interested stakeholders and statutory partners with robust evidence and a summary of the key issues in order to guide how they contribute or respond to the NNP making process.
 - The information contained within this document will be used as the basis for further consultation with the community, key stakeholders and the Local Planning Authorities in order to establish how challenges identified may be responded to by the NNP

Local Planning Authorities and other Services

- 1.4 Ninfield Parish Council submitted an application to Wealden District Council on the 20th November 2019 for designation of the whole of the parish area for the purposes of neighbourhood planning. The application was approved by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development on 23rd January 2020.

- 1.5 Planning policy and development control for the whole area is covered by Wealden District Council as the local planning authority.
- 1.6 The Plan covers the whole parish including the part that falls within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as shown by the Designated Area boundary marked in red on the plan below.
- 1.7 The Parish is in the Herstmonceux and Pevensey Levels ward of Wealden District Council, bordered on three sides by Rother District Council (Bexhill, Catsfield and Ashburnham Parishes) and on the fourth by the Parishes of Hooe and Wartling (both in Wealden District).
- 1.8 The village is policed by the Rother branch of Sussex Police (the nearest police stations being at Bexhill and Battle) and its health services are delivered by NHS East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group and Bexhill Primary Care Network and as such is highly sensitive to decisions made in Rother District. Local Government Services are provided by Wealden District Council (as successor to the former Hailsham Rural District Council) and East Sussex County Council.
- 1.9 Waste water disposal (sewerage) is provided by Southern Water Services who have treatment works at Hooe and Lunsford Cross. Water supply is provided by South East Water who operate the Hazards Green Waterworks (and its ancillary boreholes and Standard Hill covered reservoir and water tower).
- 1.10 There is no public gas supply other than at Lunsford Cross/Ninfield Road at the edge of Bexhill. There is a telephone exchange in Manchester Road. A number of overhead electricity lines on pylons cross the parish from the Ninfield Transforming Station (just over the boundary in Catsfield). The Pashley Solar Farm lies in the south of the parish.

Map 2 – Designated Area



2 Parish Character

History

- 2.1 The Parish comprises of the small village of Ninfield which is mentioned in the Domesday Book and the much smaller settlement of Lunsford Cross. There are also several loose groupings of dispersed dwellings most notably at Russells Green.
- 2.2 Evidence of human habitation has been found spanning all eras from the Mesolithic period (flint microliths found in Lower Street) through to the present day. Iron Age workings have been identified around Hazards Green on the south western slopes. Also in this same area the Hastings Area Archaeological Research Group have investigated Castle Croft (TQ 681116) and found Romano-British pottery and glass, fired clay debris which is believed to be the remains of a tile kiln. Nearby and just outside the boundary area, a partial Roman Villa with a tiled floor has been found. At this time the sea would have come up to the edge of the parish boundary and it is thought there were docks here.
- 2.3 At the time of the Norman Conquest, Ninfield was an agricultural settlement and sustained severe damage during the conflict. The land was given to the Earl of Eu by William but later passed to the Hastings family. In the 1300s the parish is recorded as quite impoverished, with around 130 acres uncultivated due to poverty. At this time there was no merchant or any other person who did not live by the cultivation of the land. Administratively, Ninfield gave its name to the Ninfield Hundred (which included Catsfield and Hooe), within the larger unit called the Rape of Hastings.
- 2.4 By 1680s the situation had changed and there were several established trades people operating in the village (tanner, inn keeper, shoemaker, carpenter etc). However, farming continued to be the main source of wealth and employment. By Victorian times, market gardening had become an important source of income and a windmill was also operating here. The 1901 Census shows that a large majority of families were dependent on farming and food production with around 50% of the working population employed in agriculture (as compared to 3.5% in 2011).
- 2.5 The 20th century saw a gradual and mainly linear development of more housing as farmland and market gardens near to the core of the village were sold off as a result of the reducing importance of this activity in terms of employment. However, much of the surrounding land is still actively farmed today.

Location and Main Features

- 2.6 Ninfield Parish (population 1,562 in 2011) has an area of 4.1 square miles and lies 4 miles south west of Battle and 5 miles north west of Bexhill-on-Sea town centre. The A269 runs across the Parish from Bexhill in the south west to the A271 junction at

Boreham Bridge where it continues as the A271 to Hailsham. The village lies at the intersection of the A269 with the B2095 (linking to the A259 via Hooe) and the B2204 (linking to Battle via Catsfield).

- 2.7 Ninfield is in the High Weald national character area, except for a small part which is situated in the Pevensey Levels. The East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment defines more local areas and shows Ninfield mainly within the South Slopes of the High Weald, with the east side in Coombe Haven Valley and the west side in the Pevensey Levels. The northern part of the Parish lies within the High Weald AONB, the boundary of which abuts the north west edge of the village.
- 2.8 Ninfield is situated on a prominent ridge extending eastwards from Standard Hill and is elevated from the surrounding landscape with long distance views afforded from the existing settlement edge. The landscape is characterised by a patchwork of ancient woodland and fields with historic farmsteads. Views from the north east of the settlement across the countryside towards Catsfield extend to Battle Abbey in the distance.
- 2.9 Standard Hill is a distinctive feature in the landscape and is believed to be where William the Conqueror first raised his flag after landing on the Pevensey coast in 1066, before the Battle of Hastings. The views to the south west from the village encompass the western part of the tourist area known as 1066 Country with the sea beyond.
- 2.10 The South Downs National Park, on the opposite side of the Pevensey Levels, is visible in the distance.

Character

Unspoilt Countryside - Most of the Parish countryside comprises agricultural land, nearly all of which is grade 3, but there are many areas of ancient woodland interspersed. Hedgerows and trees border most of the roads and lanes many of which are of historic interest that should be conserved. The hedgerows, woodlands, green areas and grassland support a rich biodiversity with a wealth of protected species of flora and fauna.-The Parish has distinctive, tranquil and unspoilt countryside and has retained its dark skies which is important for the nearby Herstmonceux Observatory.

Characteristics

- 2.11 The parish covers an area of approximately 1,059 hectares with a density of 1.5 persons per hectare according to the 2001 and 2011 Census.

Unique Rural Village

- 2.12 Ninfield is a small, rural village, situated on a ridge with views across to the South Downs National Park, The High Weald AONB and The Pevensy Levels (a Ramsar site and a Special Area of Conservation). Ninfield boasts a proud tradition and history – William The Conqueror planted his flag on Standard Hill after his fleet landed at Pevensy before the Battle of Hastings. For centuries the area had a flourishing iron industry and more nefariously, in the 18th century, was a regular haunt of smugglers, linking the Hawkhurst Gang in Kent to their illegally landed booty along the beaches between Eastbourne and Hastings. There is still a very productive local farming community, following in a long tradition of agriculture and market gardening in the area.
- 2.13 The Memorial Hall was originally a Drill Hall and this, along with the recreation ground forms the hub of the village used by the many and vibrant community groups and societies for a wide range of events. Being of a size that is 'big enough to do, but small enough to care' the village is well known for its Carnival, Horticultural Society and Bonfire Society events. Ninfield has a well-respected Primary School that also feeds into the local Scout group and the village recreational ground has a good range of facilities for children of all ages. A modern purpose-built Sports Pavilion services the football and cricket pitches and these facilities draw sports enthusiasts from across the area.
- 2.14 Ninfield retains its small, traditional Sussex village character in a way that has almost entirely been eradicated in surrounding villages. Many neighbouring villages and small towns have lost their longstanding family historical links to the past and been swamped by commuters from London, pushing house prices beyond the reach of local people and sucking the soul from their villages in the process. The gradual growth in Ninfield – 8 completed properties in the last 15 years has allowed for integration within both the village itself and the aforementioned societies and contributed to a virtually zero level of youth crime. This slow and measured housing growth to date has also contributed to the excellent Dark Night Skies, with scores averaging 20 (very good) no doubt helped by the almost complete lack of street lighting. Ninfield retains an important and very traditional link to East Sussex Heritage which need to be preserved for future generations.

Topography

- 2.15 Ninfield village is situated in the north part of the parish on a ridge of high ground extending eastwards from Standard Hill, the dominant topographical feature of the area. The ridge is virtually flat-topped but slopes down very gradually eastwards to the village centre where it narrows before widening and turning south-eastwards. It slopes down further, with Lower Street in a hollow, and then broadens out into a 'low plateau' extending towards Hooe and Bexhill.

The distinctive landform slopes markedly downhill from the ridge-top village to several valleys. The ridge forms a watershed between two main watercourses, Wallers Haven to the west and Combe Haven to the east. Ninfield parish includes part of the narrow

floodplain of Wallers Haven which is a northward extension of Pevensey Levels. The parish topography is complex because small tributaries of these main watercourses have also formed distinctive valleys, each with their own character. These valleys comprise those of the:-

- Ninfield Stream which forms the north boundary with Ashburnham parish;
- Moorhall Stream on the southwest side which lies almost wholly in Ninfield parish (except for the western end of the south side which is within Hooe parish); and
- Catsfield/Watermill Stream which forms the east boundary with Catsfield parish.

The first two drain into Wallers Haven, the latter to Combe Haven. Even on the south boundary of the parish with Hooe and Bexhill, the 'low plateau' area slopes down to watercourses draining to the Barnhorn/East Stream and Pevensey Levels. This is only on its central part as the plateau otherwise divides on either side into two low ridges, one with the A269 extending to Bexhill on the east side and the other with the B2095 to Hooe on the west side.

The low plateau is mainly gently undulating with a few almost flat areas. In contrast, the 3 valleys listed above have further side tributaries within them creating a topography of ridges and slopes best summarised as steeply undulating.

Dark Skies

- 2.16 Perhaps because Ninfield is situated on a prominent ridge, with AONB, Herstmonceux Observatory and South Downs National Park in close proximity, the quality of dark night skies has long been recognised and enjoyed by residents. Within the village, there are no streetlights except at the Catsfield Road/A269 junction and zebra crossing near Manchester Road.

Levels of dark night skies are currently being mapped across the whole village for inclusion in a district wide mapping exercise. To obtain a full picture, meter readings are being taken in rural, semi-rural and more built-up areas. To date (January 2021) readings in a variety of locations across the village have been completed, with the majority of average readings being above 20.00. A meter reading of 20 to 21 indicates a dark sky where stargazing is at its best and the stars of the Milky Way are clearly visible.

Clearly retention of our dark night skies is important to Ninfield and should be a consideration in any current and future development of the village.

Built environment

- 2.17 Ninfield village is comprised of a range of building styles mainly because its growth and development has been a gradual and incremental process over many decades, even centuries. It does not have a well-defined central core or focus and, historically, the settlement was scattered but with two small clusters, one at Lower Street, the other at what was called Ninfield Cross (the junction of the roads now called The Green, High Street and Manchester Road). These have buildings of historical importance (some listed) and these are generally the old farmsteads from

the 17th, 18th and 19th century with the surrounding cottages of a similar age, built for the agricultural workforce of the time.

- 2.18 The small medieval Church (and later the school) were located in an open position midway between the two clusters of development, linked to them by Church Path. Later dwellings have been added as infill from the late Victorian/Edwardian eras but more especially from the 1930s through to the 1980s.
- 2.19 The village is largely characterised by detached dwellings of individual design but there is a general harmony of scale and materials and a rural feel also arising from numerous trees and hedges. Many dwellings are bungalows (with or without dormers) and most houses are on large plots with generous front and rear gardens. Building materials are mainly local red brick and tile, some slate roofing. Many houses have tile hung walls or weatherboarding, typical of the Weald. There are some small estates (Coombe Shaw, Millfield, Downs View, Stocks Meadow, Smith Close) largely situated behind frontage development and thereby not affecting the main street-scenes. Each has a style typical of its period, largely 1970s, and, in most cases, a somewhat higher building density than the linear parts of the village with some terraced houses and flats. These estates, to varying degrees, reflect the traditional materials used elsewhere in the village.
- 2.20 Towards the periphery of the village, housing density is much lower and development has been entirely linear along the road links to other settlements in the wider area. Traditional materials predominate and plots are much larger. Some sporadic older dwellings, including historic cottages, are set in the wider countryside beyond the village itself and interspersed with farmland and wooded areas.
- 2.21 Street furniture is limited to speed limit signs, road names and one or two sets of traffic islands. There are only three lamp posts in the Parish (excluding the lighting columns at the Kings Head junction) and these are found by the Blacksmiths Inn at Ninfield Cross. Two main roads cross the Parish, the A269 and the B2095/B2204, other routes are very narrow lanes (single track in many places). There are paved footways along the A269 and B2095 within the village but no other roads have paved footways other than in the housing estates. Church Path is an important paved pedestrian route across the village, away from the roads, and there is also a paved path across the edge of the Recreation Ground linking Church Lane to Stocks Close. There are 2 short paved paths linking High Street to Manchester Road, one via Millfield.

Green Spaces

- 2.22 The Recreation Ground provides a designated public green space in the village. The other large tract of public green space is Church Wood which is a community owned ancient woodland. The village is surrounded by unspoilt countryside with some public footpaths. The village lies on the southern edge of the High Weald AONB. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 115 states that "Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs". The beauty of the parish can also be appreciated at night, with residents

remarking about the wonder of its Dark Skies.

- 2.23 Preserving Green Corridors between Ninfield and other settlements should sustain the identity of the village by maintaining its individuality and ensure that villages do not become an urban sprawl but remain connected to the countryside, protect existing assets, particularly trees and verges many of which are abundant with wildflowers. Established hedgerows are crucial to the aesthetic character of the area, they form a network of corridors for wildlife and contribute to biodiversity.
- 2.24 The establishment of Blue Corridors will help relieve the pressure of flooding on upstream and downstream communities and make flood protection options within the area more resilient and flexible. They also contribute to networks of green infrastructure, which act as support to towns and rural areas and provide a range of environmental, social and economic benefits. We have some stunning views from the village across the Pevensy Levels and out to sea and across the High Weald AONB. Church Wood has now been designated a Local Nature Reserve and is home to many important species of wildlife. Views are of importance and must be protected to connect the village with the open rural landscape.
- 2.25 Designated open green spaces are essential to the social life and well-being of the community, providing recreation areas, where residents can meet and share village life. This being of far greater importance now and in the future in light of the recent pandemic, where the lack of open green spaces has shown to have an impact on the population's mental health and wellbeing.

Moving around

- 2.26 Bus Services: Ninfield has a limited bus service and most routes are 2 hourly during core daytime hours. There are bus stops situated in the village as follows: Lower Street, Bexhill Road (opposite Ingrams Farm) The Kings Arms public house, Church Lane, Manchester Road and the High Street, opposite Moor Hall Drive.
- 2.27 Bus numbers 95, 98, 98A and number 302 (School Bus, term time only) currently provide services to Ninfield.
- 2.28 The earliest weekday bus in Hailsham direction is 07:19hrs and 08:20hrs Bexhill/Hastings direction.
- 2.29 There are no bus services into the evening either to or from Ninfield. The latest arrival time at Ninfield is between 17.00 hrs and 19:00 hrs. There is a generally reduced Saturday service and no bus service to or from Ninfield on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Commuting to work

- 2.30 Battle, Bexhill, Hailsham and Eastbourne are accessible from Ninfield by bus, but, except for Battle, due to timetabling, it would not be possible to travel both to and

from work, assuming a standard 9 – 17.30 working day. The bus journey from Ninfield to the centre of either Hastings or Eastbourne takes at least an hour.

- 2.31 Trains; The two nearest railway stations are at Battle and Bexhill both are 4 miles away from Ninfield.
- 2.32 Battle station: Currently trains to Hastings run approximately every 30 - 40minutes, from 06.50 hrs and trains to London Charing Cross via Tunbridge Wells run every 30 – 40 minutes from 05.42 hrs. Some later morning trains go to London Cannon Street. Battle station has designated car parking facilities for 255 vehicles. There is a taxi rank at the station. The latest bus from Battle Station to Ninfield leaves at 18.05 so the latest train for onward travel to Ninfield leaves London Bridge at 15.09 so full time working would not be possible.
- 2.33 Bexhill Station: Trains run via Eastbourne to Lewes, Brighton and Portsmouth and to London Victoria. The Gatwick Express can be accessed via Eastbourne. Trains running in the opposite direction travel to Hastings. Currently the earliest train to London Victoria is at 05.10 hrs.
- 2.34 For trains returning from London Bridge to Bexhill, the latest departs at 22.35, but there is no onward bus service to Ninfield at this time. The latest departure from London Bridge to connect with Ninfield via bus from Bexhill departs at 15.15. So due to limitations of the bus timetable, it is impossible to make a complete outward and return journey for commuting to work in London based on a standard working day. These restrictions apply to travel to/from London for leisure, education and all other purposes.
- 2.35 There are no car parking facilities at Bexhill station. On road parking is metered. The nearest car parks is are at Manor Gardens or the De La Warr Pavilion on the sea front. There is a taxi rank at the station.
- 2.36 **Cycling:** Ninfield has no designated cycle routes/paths so use of a cycle is restricted to the roads. Even the main roads are relatively narrow, on all but a few stretches, with insufficient width for a demarcated cycle lane either within the carriageway or the verges. All routes out of the village are downhill (some are quite steep) so a degree of physical fitness is essential. Road maintenance is poor and the surfaces of many roads in the Parish are often pot-holed and rutted.
- 2.37 The A269 is the main route through the village and carries heavy traffic at peak times. The traffic using this road is often fast, perhaps owing to very little on-road obstruction by parked cars, despite the 30mph speed limit for its length through the village. Outside the village, especially on the A269 and B2204, vehicle speeds are generally very high as only the 60mph limit applies but cyclists usually cannot be passed safely if there is an oncoming vehicle. The same can apply on the winding, narrow B2095 which does have some lower speed limits. At off peak times the speed of cars tends to increase further. Traffic along the very narrow minor side roads can be significant, with rat-running in some cases, and dangerously fast for their condition. Motorists often seem unprepared to encounter cyclists, pedestrians or horses on these 'shared surface' roads, most with no speed limit.

- 2.38 **Pedestrian Routes:** Dedicated public footpaths are limited except to the south west of the village. There is paving along both sides of the A269 through the village but this stops at the edge of the built areas. There is a zebra crossing on the High Street which is rather dangerously situated close to a bend in the road. There are a few island crossing points on roads in the village (High Street, Bexhill Road). A short section of Lower Street has a footpath to one side and the estate developments mostly have paths as does part of Manchester Road but the back roads (Coombe Lane, Marlpits Lane, Moons Hill, etc) do not. In some areas of the village, such as Lower Street and some of the estates, inconsiderate parking prevents easy pedestrian passage. Outside the village, the area is not well served by longer cross-country footpaths. Except to the south west of the village where a number of public footpaths form a network linked to Church Path and Church Wood, public footpaths are very few in number so recreational walking from the village in the other directions is limited. There is an almost total lack of public footpaths on the north side of the village, towards the AONB. There is one path to the east linking to the woods in the Catsfield Stream valley.
- 2.39 For safety reasons most residents avoid walking on the paths joining the B2095 which is particularly hazardous due to its narrowness, lack of continuous verges, bends and fast-moving traffic. Some of the paths become very waterlogged where they cross valleys and they are difficult to use in the winter. Generally, crossing the roads and walking along the roads and lanes is hazardous because of blind bends and traffic volume and speed.
- 2.40 **The visitor economy:** Ninfield lies within the 1066 Country tourist area. There are a small number of holiday rentals and B&B accommodation in the Parish. However, the amount has declined significantly in recent years, notable losses being the large Moor Hall Hotel and Country Club in the 1990s, and also the Moons Hill Farm Guesthouse. The Blacksmiths Inn and Kings Arms pubs and the Village Stores contribute to servicing this sector. Many people who have family roots in the Parish visit regularly and come to see the churches, school and to use the local history archive.
- 2.41 **Other settlements:** Lunsford Cross is the only other recognisable settlement in the Parish outside the village. Potman's Lane (situated off the A269) is the location for most of the housing in Lunsford Cross. It has 51 dwellings in a linear development along both sides of the lane. Lunsford Cross is 2.6km from Ninfield and has no services of its own but, as with Ninfield village, has a very limited bus service to other settlements (Ninfield, Battle & Bexhill). Although some residents may use the shop, post office, school and GP in Ninfield they are more likely to travel the opposite way to Sidley and Bexhill which offer more comprehensive services. There is a footpath linking Lunsford Cross with Sidley but no path connects the settlement to Ninfield village. Residents of Lunsford Cross are highly reliant on cars to access facilities and services. The settlement does not provide any facility to the rest of the Parish. There is an MOT testing station a short distance over the Bexhill boundary but no shop.

2.42 Russell's Green is an area comprising around 36 dwellings spread sparsely along the B2095 towards the Parish boundary with Hooe. It is too dispersed to form a recognisable settlement. There is a farm shop/café and a small plant nursery very near the boundary with Hooe. There is no bus service serving this area so all residents are highly reliant on the car to access services. Some residents will access facilities in Ninfield however they are more likely to travel to Bexhill for a more comprehensive range of services. The B2095 has no footpath and, because drivers often travel too fast, is regarded as a dangerous route for walkers, cyclists, horse riders (and car drivers!).

Amenities

- 2.43 **Schools** - there is a privately run Nursery & Pre-School and a Church of England Primary School catering for about 150 pupils. At age 11 children transfer to secondary education in either Battle or Bexhill. A special school in the Parish, one of two across East Sussex, specialises in learning for children and students on the Autistic Spectrum, including those with complex needs.
- 2.44 **Medical** – Ninfield has a GP Surgery (with pharmacy service), with on-site parking forecourt, located in High Street. It is a satellite of the larger Collington Surgery (now also merged with Pebsham Surgery) in Bexhill. However, its catchment area is much wider than just Ninfield and includes the neighbouring parishes of Catsfield, Crowhurst, Hooe, Wartling and Ashburnham plus parts of other parishes including the settlements of Whydown, Windmill Hill and Bodle Street Green.
- 2.45 **Shops** -The village has a general store & Post Office combined, however the Post Office Service has been closed for several months following a change of ownership. There is a petrol filling station with a small convenience store attached and a separate tyre fitting business. Within the Parish but nearer to Hooe is a small Café/Farm Shop and garden centre. There is also a country store (equestrian and pet supplies) some way out of the village towards Bexhill.
- 2.46 **Pubs** – There are 2 pubs, The Blacksmith's Inn and the Kings Arms. The former is a traditional village pub and the latter is a carvery and pizza restaurant.
- 2.47 **Churches** -The Parish is served by St Mary the Virgin Church of England. In addition, there is a small Methodist Church. Both churches join together for ecumenical services.
- 2.48 **Clubs and organisation**- There are a wide variety of groups and clubs in the Parish including: a Book Exchange, Ninfield Action Group, Ninfield Bonfire Society, Bowls Club, Carnival and Sports Association, Crafting & Knitting, Art Society, Flower Group, Horticultural Society, Local History Group, Play Group, Ninfield Village Society, Scouts, Working Men's Club, Dance and Drama and Stoolball.
- 2.49 **Community spaces** - In the centre of the village is a large recreation ground with facilities for visiting football & cricket teams (Ninfield does not have its own team for either sport). The Pavilion provides changing facilities for sports teams and meeting

space for various groups/societies e.g. Local History Society, Health & Well-Being Group. There are also two areas with play equipment. The Memorial Hall provides space for larger events and the Methodist Hall is used by several smaller groups.

3 Background

- 3.1 Under the Localism Act (2011) and related Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012), local communities can have a larger say on the development of their area by undertaking neighbourhood planning.
- 3.2 Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to plan for the types of development to meet their community's needs and where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.
- 3.3 Neighbourhood planning enables communities to play a much stronger role in shaping the areas in which they live and work and in supporting new development proposals. This is because unlike the parish, village or town plans that communities may have prepared, a neighbourhood plan forms part of the development plan and sits alongside the local plan prepared by the local planning authority. Decisions on planning applications will be made using both the local plan and the neighbourhood plan, and any other material considerations.

4 Selected Parish Statistics

Social Characteristics

4.1 Demographics

The usual resident population of the parish (as at 2011) was 1562 people. Of these:

- 267 People were aged 14 and under (17.1%) of the parish population compared to 16.5% across the District
- 192 People were aged 15 to 29 (12.3%) of the parish population compared to 14.3% across the District
- 263 People were aged 30 to 44 (16.8%) of the parish population compared to 16.8% across the District
- 490 People were aged 45 to 64 (31.4%) of the parish population compared to 29.5% across the District
- 350 People were aged 65 and over (22.4%) of the parish population compared to 22.9% across the District

Table 1 - Table comparing age structure of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the Local Authority area

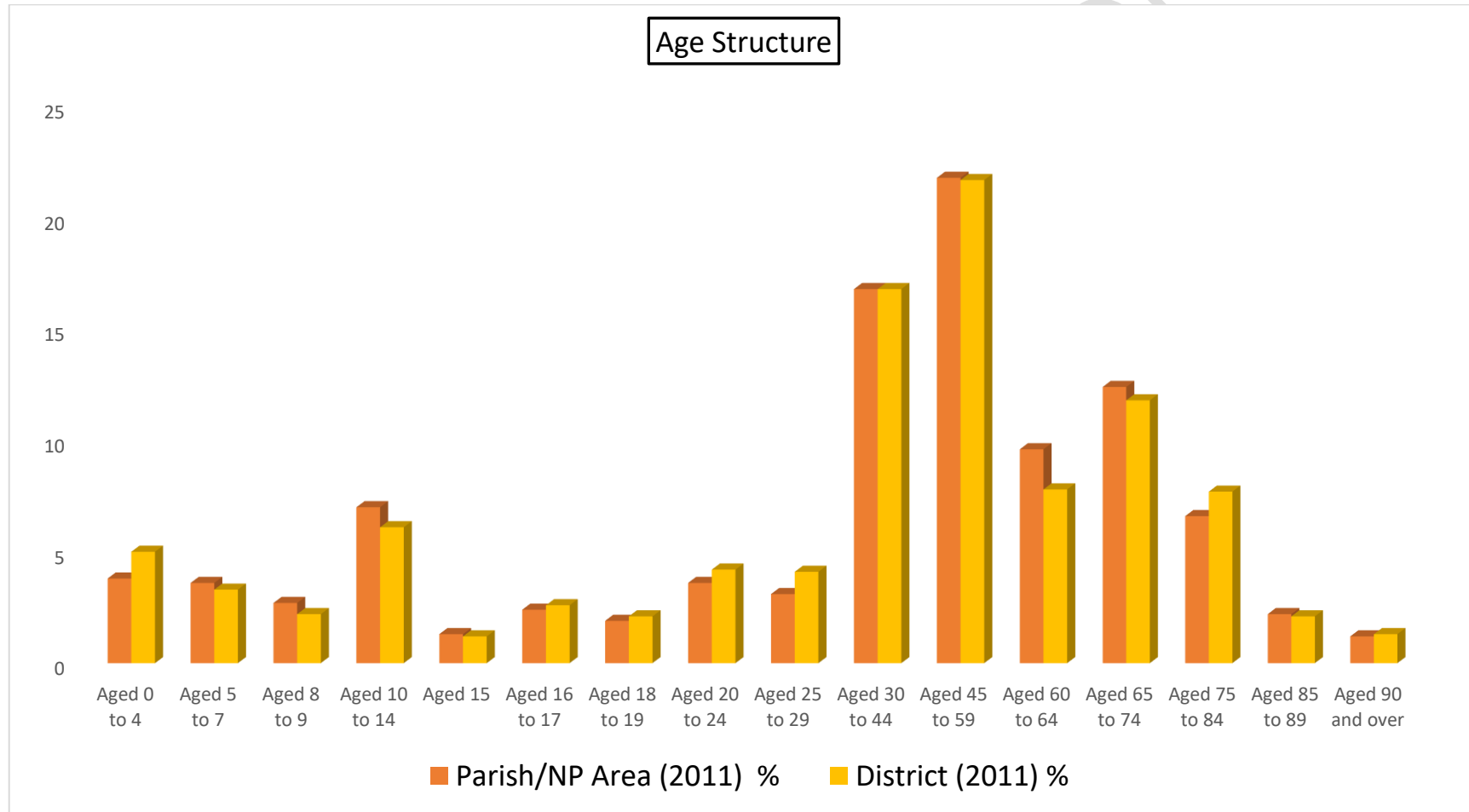
Age Structure	Parish/NP Area (2011)		District (2011)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Aged 0 to 4	59	3.8	7,508	5.0
Aged 5 to 7	56	3.6	4,866	3.3
Aged 8 to 9	42	2.7	3,234	2.2
Aged 10 to 14	110	7.0	9,023	6.1
Aged 15	21	1.3	1,841	1.2
Aged 16 to 17	37	2.4	3,837	2.6
Aged 18 to 19	30	1.9	3,130	2.1
Aged 20 to 24	56	3.6	6,306	4.2
Aged 25 to 29	48	3.1	6,161	4.1
Aged 30 to 44	263	16.8	24,958	16.8
Aged 45 to 59	340	21.8	32,294	21.7
Aged 60 to 64	150	9.6	11,615	7.8
Aged 65 to 74	194	12.4	17,578	11.8
Aged 75 to 84	103	6.6	11,470	7.7
Aged 85 to 89	34	2.2	3,180	2.1

Aged 90 and over	19	1.2	1,914	1.3
TOTAL	1,562	100.0	148,915	100.0

Source: Census 2011

Working Document

Figure 1 - Graph comparing the Age Structure of the Neighbourhood Plan Area with the Local Authority Area



4.2 Housing

4.2.1 Tenure

Housing that is owner occupied	Housing that is social rented	Housing that is private rented	Other rented accommodation
524	56	42	22
81.4% of households (England average = 64.1%)	8.7% of households (England average = 17.7%)	6.5% of households (England average = 15.4%)	3.4% of households (England average = 2.8%)

Source: Census 2011 (KS402EW)

4.2.2 Households

There were 644 households* located within the Parish. According to the 2011 census

- From the 2011 Census data and as seen in the Table below, the most common housing tenure in Ninfield Parish is owner-occupied housing (81.1%), with rates slightly higher than that for the rest of the District (78.8%).
- The parish has a higher level of social housing rented from Wealden District Council than the district average (7.3% compared to 4.7%). There used to be 114 Council houses (including some flats) in the parish but as a result of the 1985 'Right-to-Buy' legislation, 67 had become private owner-occupied by 2011.
- The parish has lower levels of other forms of Social Rented housing than the rest of the District and lower levels of Private Rented Housing (8.2% compared to 11.1%)
- Of those Living Rent-Free the parish has the same in proportion as the District and those in Shared Ownership Housing are slightly lower compared to the District.

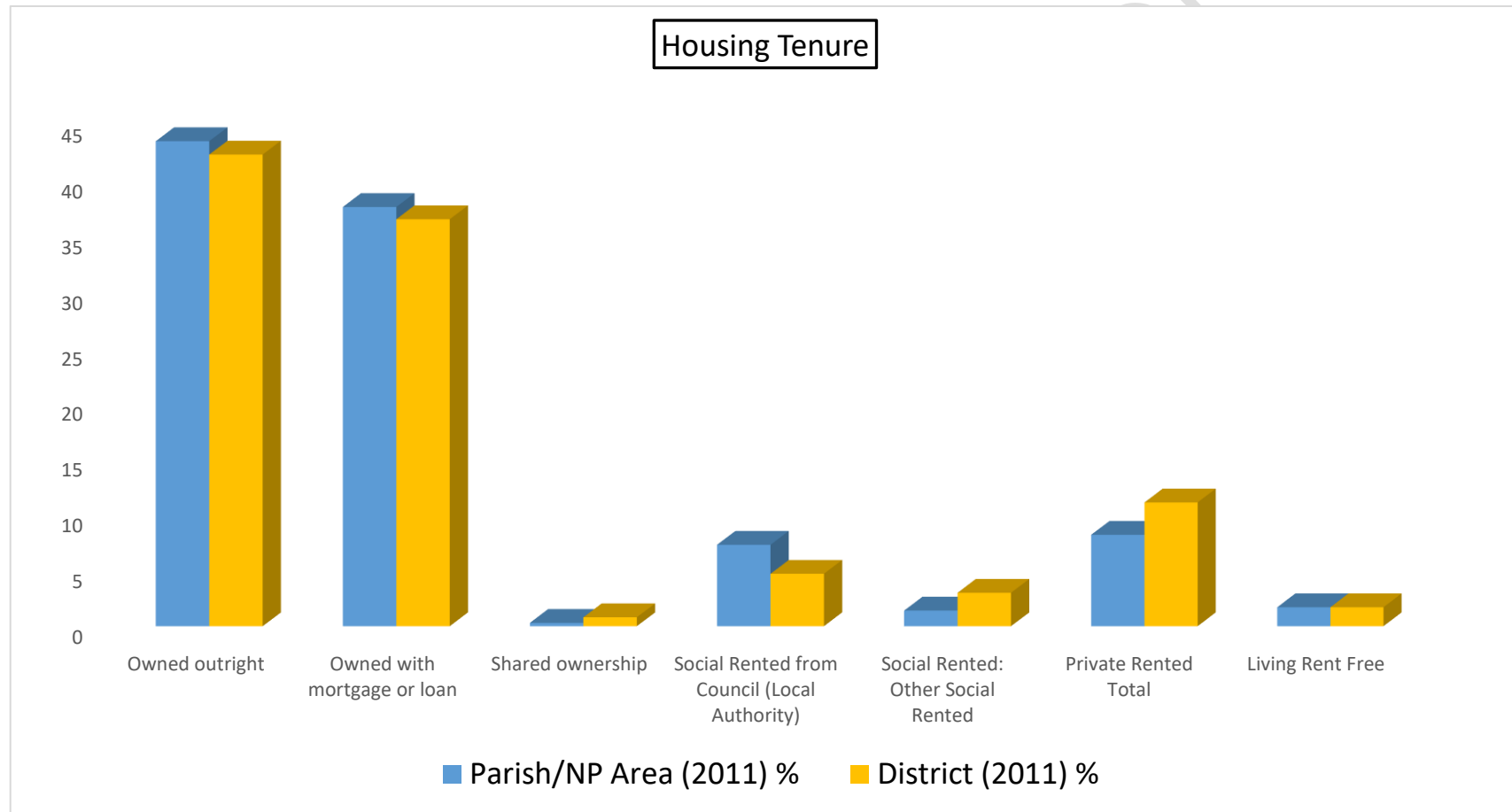
Table 2 - Table comparing housing tenure of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the Local Authority area

Tenure type	Parish/NP Area (2011)		District (2011)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Owned outright	280	43.5	26,483	42.3
Owned with mortgage or loan	242	37.6	22,872	36.5
Shared ownership	2	0.3	503	0.8
Social Rented from Council (Local Authority)	47	7.3	2,956	4.7
Social Rented: Other Social Rented	9	1.4	1,852	3.0
Private Rented Total	53	8.2	6,973	11.1
Living Rent Free	11	1.7	1,037	1.7
TOTAL	644	100.0	62,676	100.0

Source: Census 2011

*A household is defined as one person living alone, or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room, sitting room or dining area. As defined by ONS (2014).

Figure 2 - Graph comparing the Tenure of Households in the Neighbourhood Plan Area with the Local Authority Area



4.2.3 Dwellings

There are 655 dwellings* located within the Parish:

- As the Table below shows, Ninfield Parish has a higher proportion of households occupying detached housing (57.3%) when compared to the rest of the District (44.5%).
- The Parish has a significantly lower proportion of those occupying flats/maisonettes (5.5% compared to the District figure of 11.5%).
- It has a slightly higher proportion of households occupying semi-detached housing (31.0% compared to 30.0%) but with a much lower proportion of terraced housing (5.7% compared to 12.7%)
- It also has a lower proportion of those occupying Caravan or Other Mobile or Temporary Structures (0.6% compared to 1.2%).

Table 3 - Table comparing dwellings in the Neighbourhood Plan to the Local Authority area

Dwelling type	Parish/NP Area (2011)		District (2011)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Detached	381	57.3	29,030	44.5
Semi-Detached	206	31.0	19,581	30.0
Terraced	38	5.7	8,289	12.7
Purpose built flat, maisonette or apartment	31	4.7	5,562	8.5
Flat, maisonette or apartment - part of converted/shared house	3	0.5	1,263	1.9
Flat, maisonette or apartment - in commercial building	2	0.3	707	1.1
Caravan or Other Mobile or Temporary Structure	4	0.6	768	1.2
TOTAL	665	100.0	65,200	100.0

Source: Census 2011

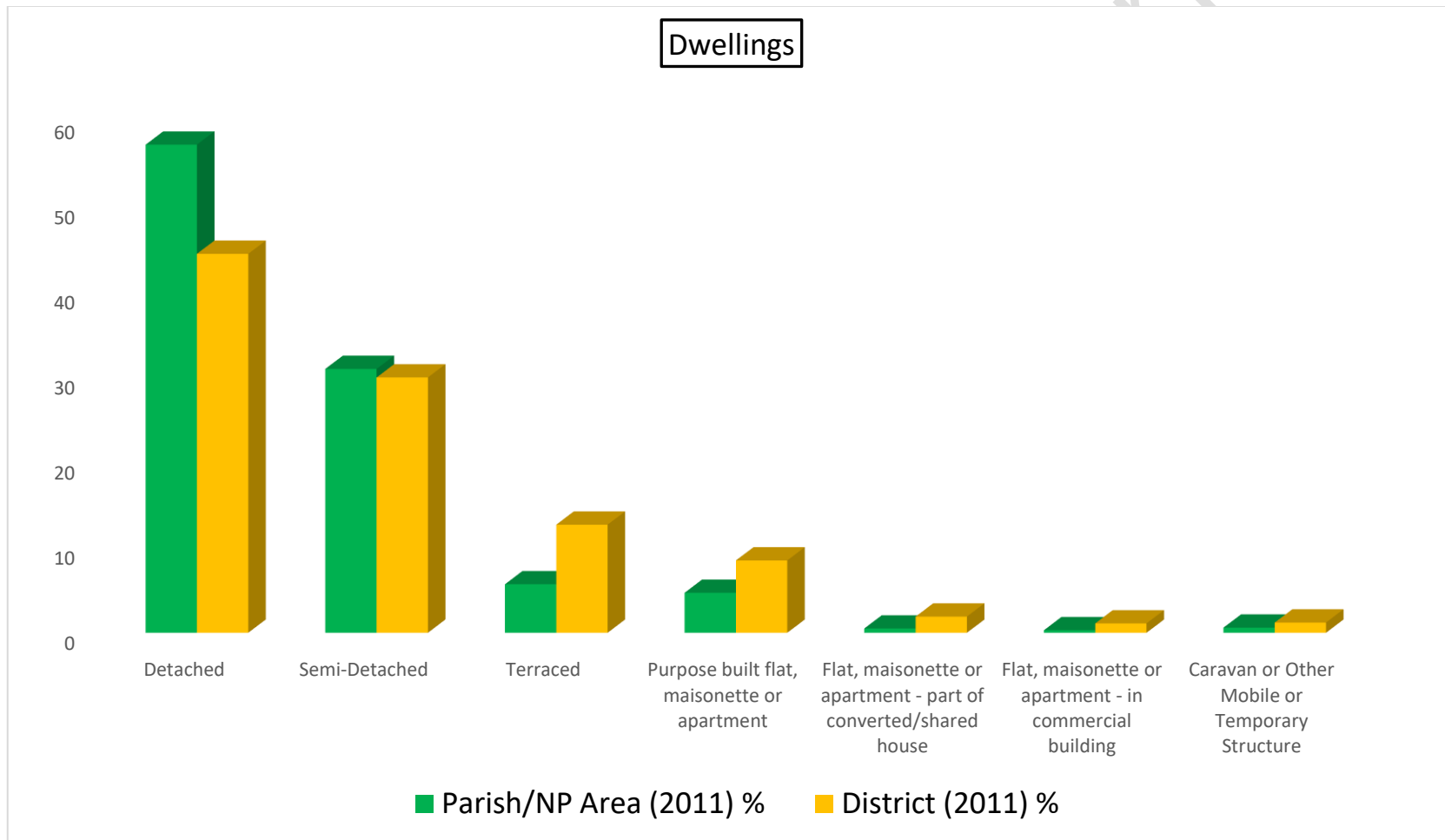
*A dwelling is a unit of accommodation with all rooms, including kitchen, bathroom and toilet behind a door that only that household can use. As defined by ONS (2014).

The results for dwellings are classified by the number that are shared or unshared, with shared dwellings further categorised by the number of household spaces in each dwelling. Household spaces are classified by the number that are occupied or unoccupied, and by type of accommodation."

"A household space is the accommodation used or available for use by an individual household. A dwelling is shared if:

* the household spaces it contains have the accommodation type 'part of a converted or shared house'; * not all of the rooms (including kitchen, bathroom and toilet, if any) are behind a door that only that household can use, and * there is at least one other such household space at the same address with which it can be combined to form the shared dwelling"

Figure 3 - Graph comparing the Dwelling Type of resident households in the Neighbourhood Plan Area with the Local Authority Area



4.2.4 Additional Local Housing Information

Housing growth since 2011

Since the 2011 Census, there have been 17 new houses completed. A further 222 (net) have been approved (including 65 resolved to be approved subject to legal agreement) of which up to 138 are under construction. Over 120 others have been refused.

Built

1 x detached Haffendens Yard, Standard Hill
1 x detached Old Butchers site
3 x terrace (conversion of the Old Butchers) The Green
1 x detached Church Path Lower Street
1 x detached Ninfield Road (Behind Skinners Sheds)
1 x detached, Tanyard Farm Hooe Road
3 x detached opposite garage Bexhill Road
5x terraced houses Birch Holt, Marlpits Lane

Construction sites (in varying states of progress)

3 x detached Moons Hill
2 x semi-detached, High Street
55 x mixed Ingrams
78 x mixed Manchester Road (net increase as 2 demolished)

Approved and not yet started (excludes replacements of mobile homes)

9 x detached Ingrams broilerhouse site
13 x mixed Potmans Lane
1 x detached Messens Farm, Potmans Lane
1 x detached Tanyard Farm, Hooe Road
65 x mixed Crouch Field (20 Acre Field)- resolved to be approved in Dec 2021 subject to legal agreement (permission not yet issued as at August 2022)

Submitted to WDC planning and yet to be decided

Refused (including on appeal)

70 x mixed Land South of High Street, Ninfield (Thakeham)
40 x mixed Land South of Catsfield Road, 'Doodes site' - appeal dismissed.
2 x semi-detached, Haffendens Yard, Marlpits Lane
4 x Potmans Lane, Lunsford Cross (appeal dismissed)
6 x Bexhill Road, Lunsford Cross
3 x Russell's Green (appeal dismissed)

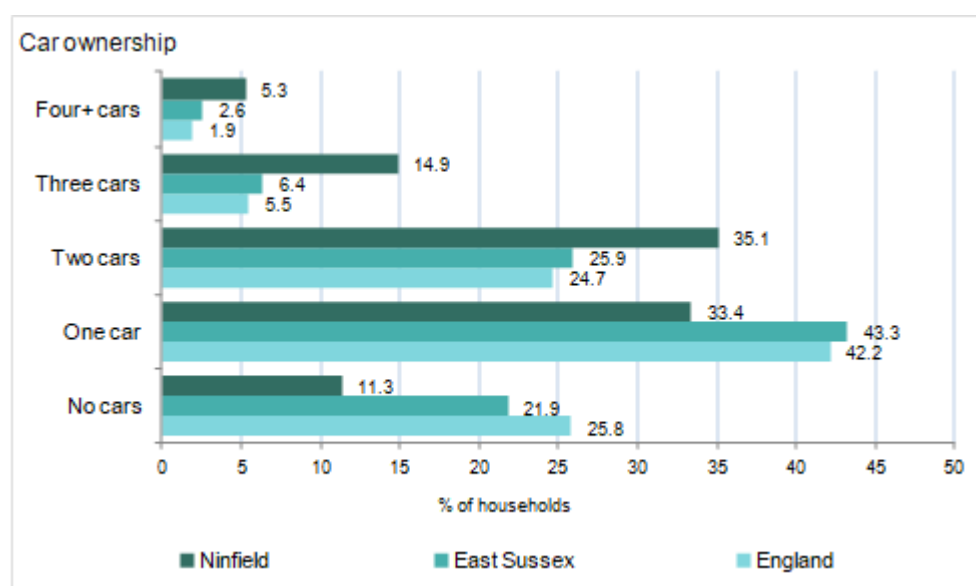
Based on the 2011 occupancy rate, the 17 new dwellings completed since 2011 (some remain unoccupied to date) are likely to result in a population increase of no more than 40 persons. This increase is partially offset by the loss of the Birch Holt Care Home. There may have been a change in the occupancy levels of existing houses but, overall, the parish population is unlikely to have changed significantly since 2011 (i.e. approximately 1,600).

Clearly the population will increase substantially (by about 500 people) if the 222 new dwellings approved were all completed and occupied, especially as a large number of these are 3 and 4 bedroom houses.

4.3 Transport

4.3.1 Car ownership

No cars	One car	Two cars	Three cars	Four+ cars
75	215	225	95	35
11.3% of 645 households (England = 25.8%)	33.4% of 645 households (England = 42.2%)	35.1% of 645 households (England = 24.7%)	14.9% of 645 households (England = 5.5%)	5.3% of 645 households (England = 1.9%)



Source: Census 2011 (table KS404EW)

4.3.2 Travel to work

People working from home	People travelling less than 2km to work (2001)	People travelling 40km+ to work (2001)
75	50	60
6.7% of people aged 16-74 (England = 3.5%)	7.2% of people aged 16-74 (England = 20.0%)	8.8% of people aged 16-74 (England = 8.8%)
Average travel time to nearest employment centre by car	Average travel time to nearest employment centre by cycle	Travel time to nearest employment centre by public transport/walking
6	18	17
County average: 5 mins	County average: 7 mins	County average: 11 mins

Of the 644 households in the Parish:

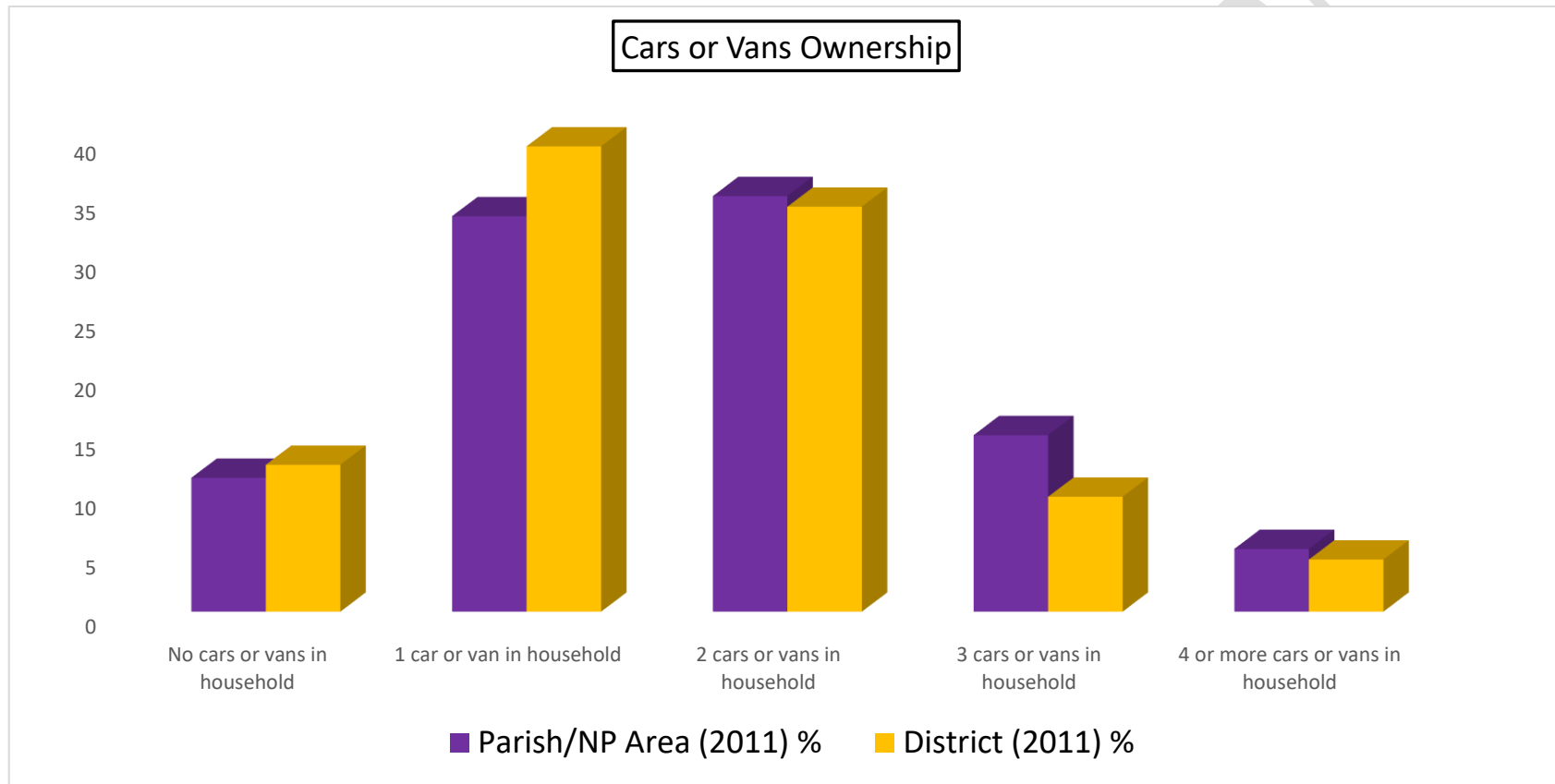
- Based on the 2011 Census, the parish has a slightly lower proportion of households with no cars or vans (11.3% compared to the district average of 12.4%) and households with 1 car or van of the District average (33.4% compared to 39.3%).
- The parish has a slightly higher proportions of those with 2 cars or vans (35.1% compared to 34.2%).
- The parish has higher proportion of households with 3 cars or vans (14.9% compared to 9.7%) and of those with 4 or more cars or vans (5.3% compared to 4.4%) both more than the district average.

Table 4 - Table comparing cars or vans in Neighbourhood Plan area households to those in the Local Authority area

Cars or Vans in Household	Parish/NP Area (2011)		District (2011)	
	Number	%	Number	%
No cars or vans in household	73	11.3	7,801	12.4
1 car or van in household	215	33.4	24,608	39.3
2 cars or vans in household	226	35.1	21,416	34.2
3 cars or vans in household	96	14.9	6,091	9.7
4 or more cars or vans in household	34	5.3	2,760	4.4
TOTAL	1,101	100.0	62,676	100.0
<i>Sum of all cars in the area</i>				

Source: Census 2011

Figure 4 - Graph comparing the availability of cars/vans to households in the Neighbour Plan Area with the Local Authority Area



WORK

4.4 Health

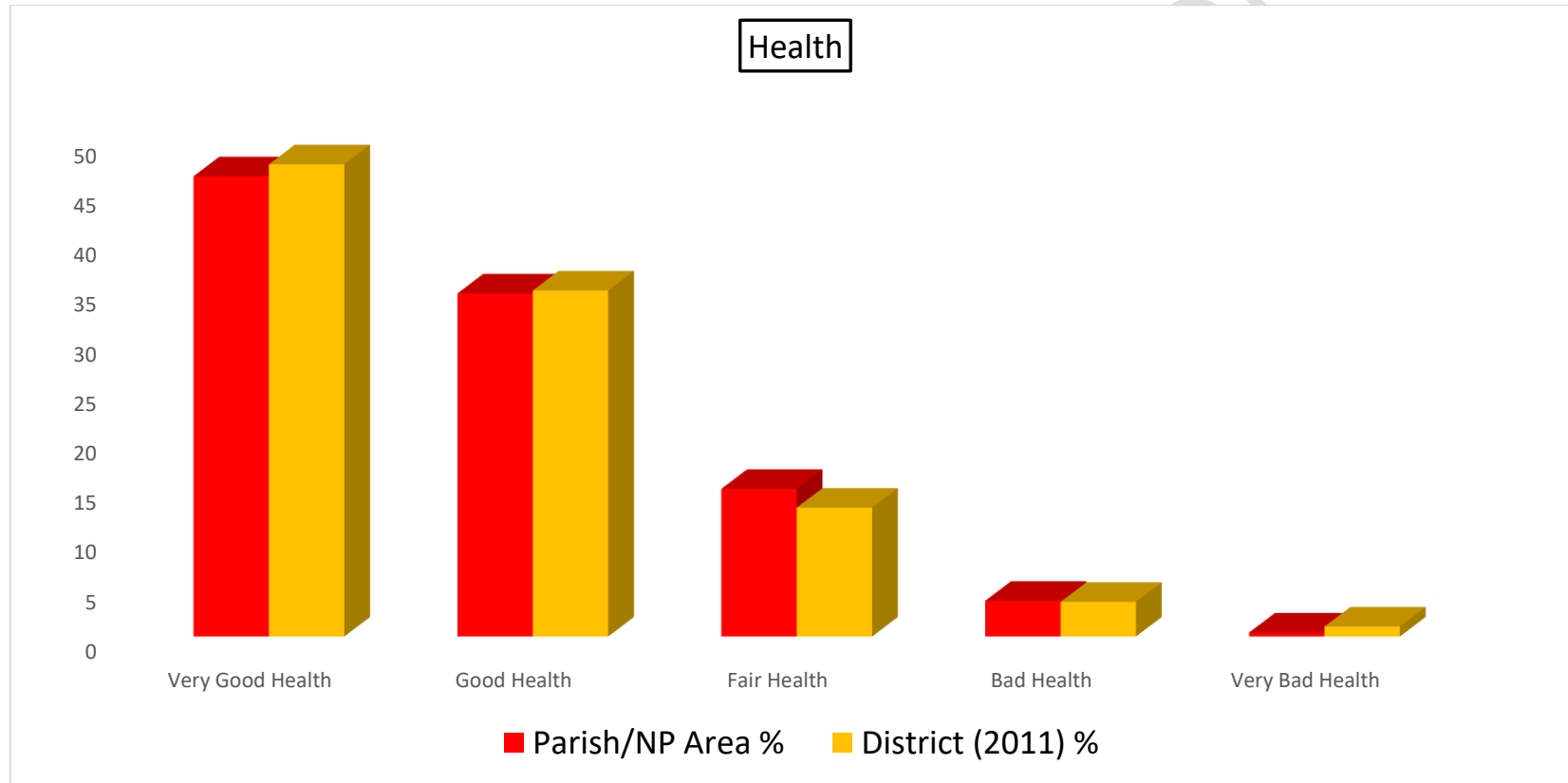
- Based on the 2011 Census, Ninfield Parish has a slightly lower proportion of residents with very good health compared to the District (46.4% compared to 47.6%). It is directly comparable when it comes to good health (34.6% compared to 34.9%) and a slightly higher proportion of its residents in fair health to the district average (14.9% compared to 13.0%).

Table 5 - Table comparing the general health of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area with those in the Local Authority area

General Health	Parish/NP Area		District (2011)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Very Good Health	724	46.4	70,867	47.6
Good Health	541	34.6	52,009	34.9
Fair Health	233	14.9	19,408	13.0
Bad Health	57	3.6	5,198	3.5
Very Bad Health	7	0.4	1,433	1.0
TOTAL	1562	100.0	148,915	100.0

Source: Census 2011

Figure 5 - Graph comparing the General Health of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan Area with the Local Authority Area



4.5 Economic

4.5.1 People in employment

Economically active residents 774 69.2% of people aged 16-74 (England average = 69.9%)	Economically inactive residents 344 30.8% of people aged 16-74 (England average = 30.1%)	Full-time employees 314 28.1% of people aged 16-74 (England average = 38.6%)	Part-time employees 187 16.7% of people aged 16-74 (England average = 13.7%)
Self-employed 218 19.5% of people aged 16-74 (England average = 9.8%)	Working 49+ hours per week 150 20.2% of people in employment (England average = 13.3%)	Working from home 75 6.7% of people aged 16-74 (England = 3.5%)	Employed in the public sector 225 30.3% of 730 people in employment (England = 28.2%)

Source: Census 2011 (tables KS601EW,)

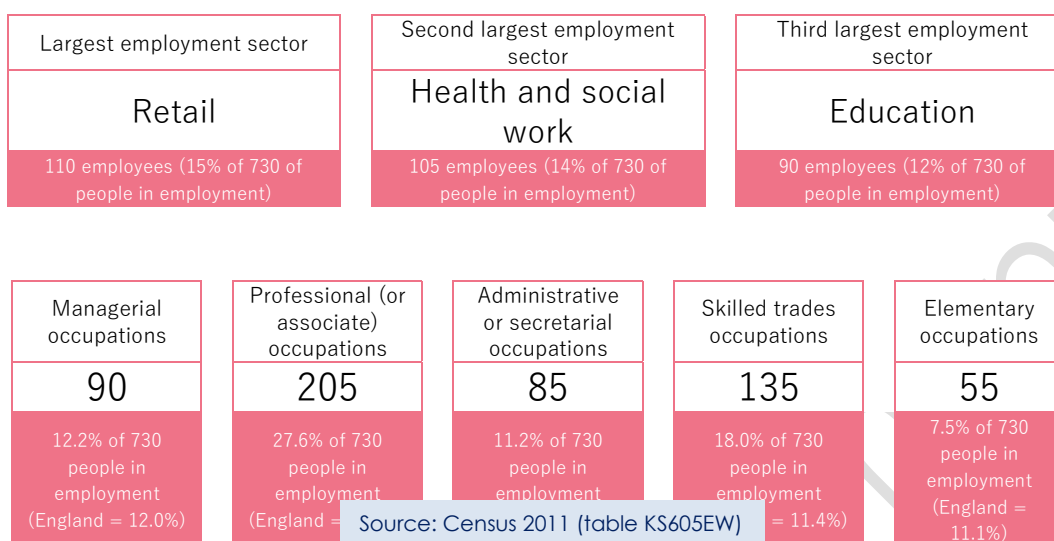
(This data is based on standard definitions: 'Public sector jobs' are defined as jobs in Health, Education or Public Administration industry sectors. 'Private sector jobs' are those in other sectors. Voluntary sector jobs are not identified separately but are included within the public and private sector figures. ACRE OCSI 2013)

4.5.2 Skills

People with no qualifications 305 23.8% of people aged 16+ (England= 22.5%)	People with highest qualification: Level 1 180 14.1% of people aged 16+ (England= 13.3%)	People with highest qualification: Level 2 195 15.5% of people aged 16+ (England= 15.2%)	People with highest qualification: Level 3 145 11.5% of people aged 16+ (England= 12.4%)
People with highest qualification: Level 4 (degree level qualifications) 345 27.0% of people aged 16+ (England= 27.4%)	<p>'Level 1' qualifications are equivalent to a single O-level, GCSE or NVQ. 'Level 2' qualifications are equivalent to five O-levels or GCSEs. 'Level 3' qualifications are equivalent to two A levels. 'Level 4' qualifications are equivalent to degree level or higher.</p>		

Source: Census 2011 (table KS501EW)

4.5.3 Jobs



- Economic activity rates of those aged 16-74 are only slightly lower in Ninfield Parish (69.2% economically active) than the average for the District (70.0% economically active),
- Ninfield Parish has a significantly lower proportion of those who are full-time employees than the District (16.7% compared to 34.4%),
- The Parish has a significantly higher proportion of those who are part-time employees than the District (28.1% compared to 14.8%), as well as those who are self-employed (19.5% compared to 15.7% for the District)
- Unemployment rates (for those aged 16-74) in 2011 were the same as those for the District (2.5%).

Table 6 - Table comparing the economic status of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area to those in the Local Authority area

Economic Activity	Parish/NP Area (2011)		District (2011)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Economically Active - Full Time Employee	187	16.7	36,449	34.4
Economically Active - Part Time Employee	314	28.1	15,676	14.8
Economically Active - Self-Employed	218	19.5	16,673	15.7
Economically Active - Unemployed	28	2.5	2,670	2.5
Economically Active - Full Time Student	27	2.4	2,746	2.6
Economically Inactive - Retired	211	18.9	19,091	18.0
Economically Inactive - Student (including Full-time students)	28	2.5	3,617	3.4
Economically Inactive - Looking after Home or Family	46	4.1	4,504	4.3
Economically Inactive - Long-Term Sick or Disabled	31	2.8	2,827	2.7
Economically Inactive - Other	28	2.5	1,626	1.5
TOTAL	1,118	100.0	105,879	100.0

Source: Census 2011

Of the 1,562 usual residents of the parish, 1,118 were aged between 16 and 74 and of these:

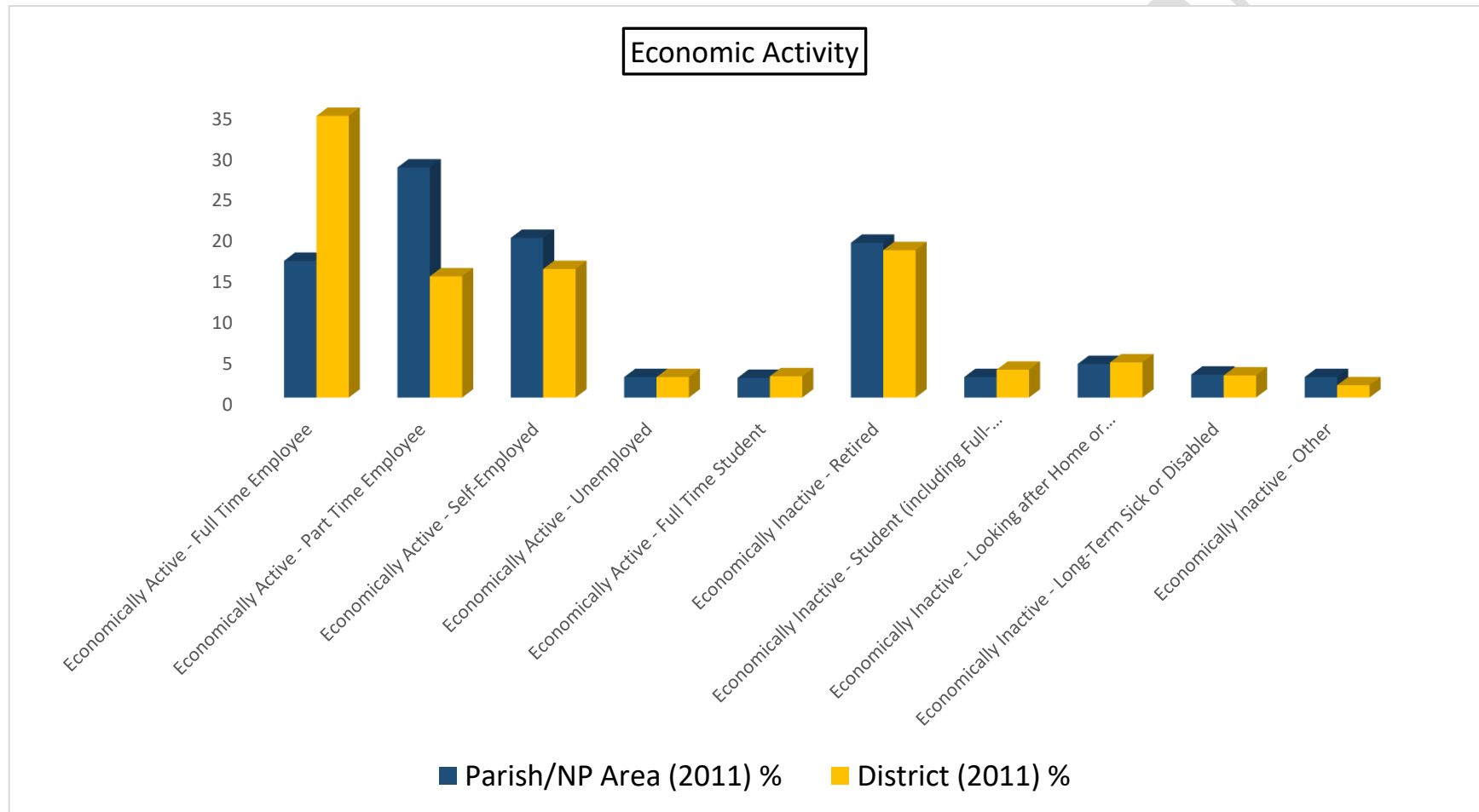
744 (69.2%) were economically active*:

**Economically Active - All people usually resident in the area at the time of the 2011 Census aged 16 to 74 and who were economically active (either in employment, or not in employment but seeking work and ready to start work within two weeks, or waiting to start a job already obtained). As defined by ONS (2014).*

344 (30.8%) were economically inactive*:

**Economically Inactive - All people usually resident in the area at the time of the 2011 Census aged 16 to 74, who were economically inactive (anyone who was not in employment and did not meet the criteria to be classified as unemployed). As defined by ONS (2014).*

Figure 6 - Graph comparing the Economic Activity in the Neighbourhood Plan Area with the Local Authority Area



4.5.4 Occupations

- The parish possesses slightly higher proportions of those employed in the Skilled Trade and Sales and Customer Service categories compared to the average for the district, with lower proportions than the district average employed in the other categories.

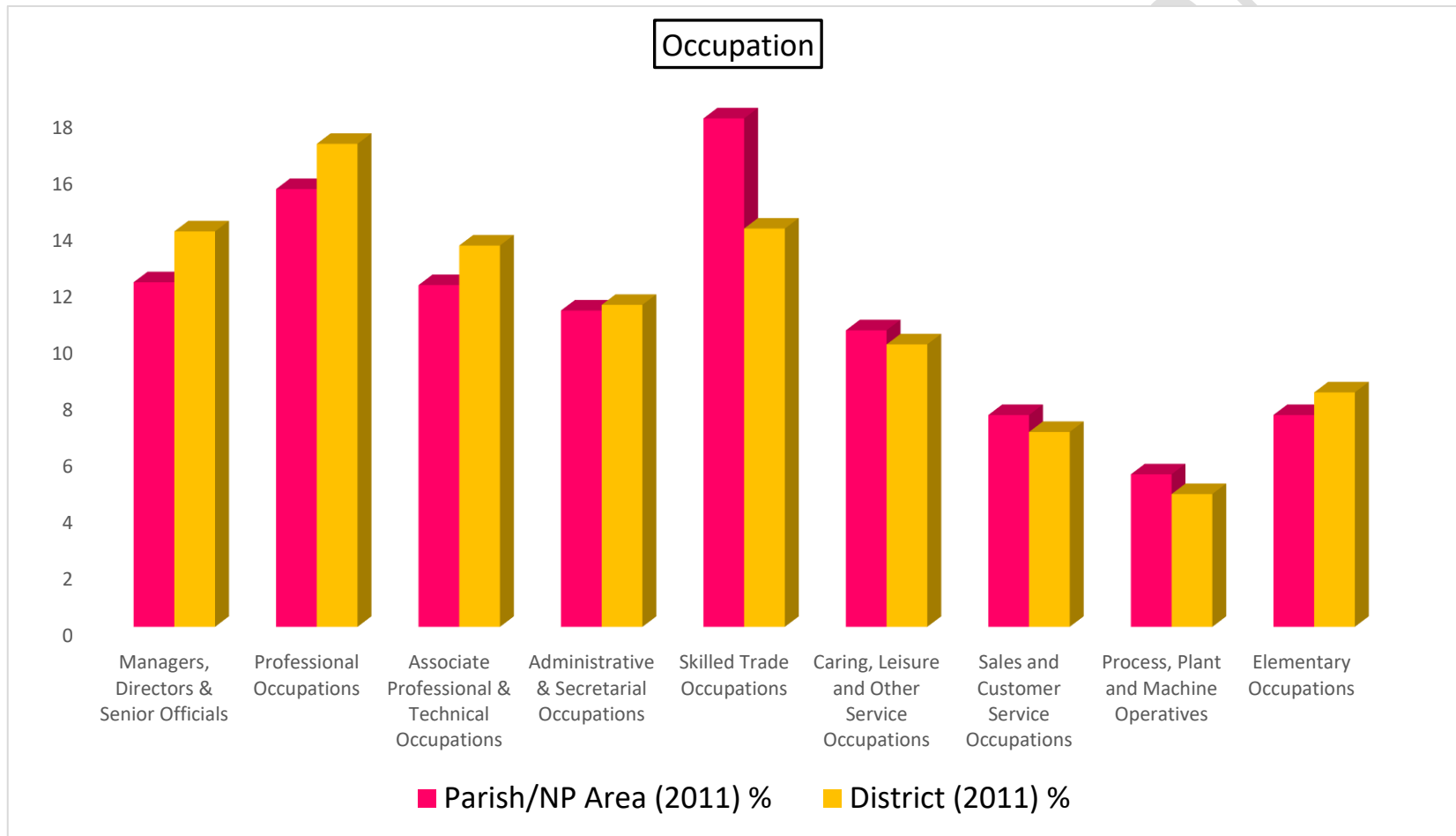
743 residents in the parish were in employment and aged between 16 and 74:

Table 7 - Table comparing the occupation of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan with those in the Local Authority area

Occupation	Parish/NP Area (2011)		District (2011)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Managers, Directors & Senior Officials	91	12.2	9,961	14.0
Professional Occupations	115	15.5	12,168	17.1
Associate Professional & Technical Occupations	90	12.1	9,574	13.5
Administrative & Secretarial Occupations	83	11.2	8,112	11.4
Skilled Trade Occupations	134	18.0	10,005	14.1
Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations	78	10.5	7,137	10.0
Sales and Customer Service Occupations	56	7.5	4,898	6.9
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	40	5.4	3,320	4.7
Elementary Occupations	56	7.5	5,909	8.3
TOTAL	743	100.0	71,084	100.0

Source: Census 2011

Figure 7 - Graph comparing the Occupations of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan Area with the Local Authority Area



4.5.5 Qualifications & Skills

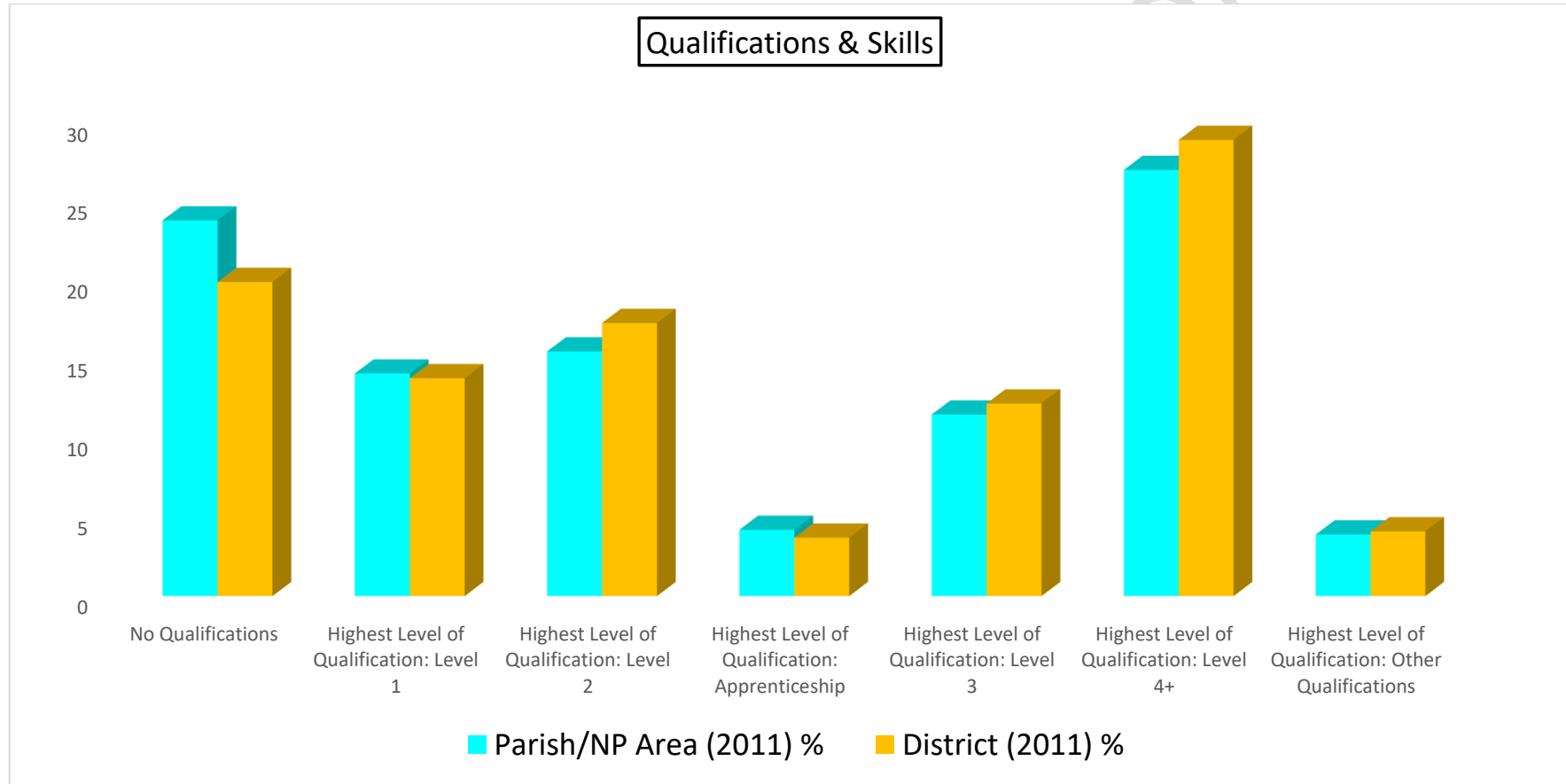
- Ninfield Parish has a higher proportion (23.8%) of residents who in 2011 possessed no qualifications than the district average (19.9%).
- It has a higher proportion of those possessing Level 1 qualifications than the District average
- It has lower proportions of those possessing Level 2, 3 and Level 4+ qualifications than the district average
- It has a similar proportion of those possessing other qualifications.

Table 8 - Table comparing the qualification and skills of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area with those in the Local Authority

Qualifications & Skills	Parish/NP Area (2011)		District (2011)	
	Number	%	Number	%
No Qualifications	303	23.8	24,347	19.9
Highest Level of Qualification: Level 1	179	14.1	16,937	13.8
Highest Level of Qualification: Level 2	197	15.5	21,218	17.3
Highest Level of Qualification: Apprenticeship	54	4.2	4,516	3.7
Highest Level of Qualification: Level 3	147	11.5	14,998	12.2
Highest Level of Qualification: Level 4+	344	27.0	35,360	28.9
Highest Level of Qualification: Other Qualifications	50	3.9	5,067	4.1
TOTAL	1,274	100.0	122,443	100.0

Source: Census 2011

Figure 8 - Graph comparing the Qualifications of residents in Neighbourhood Plan Area with Local Authority Area



4.5.6 Type of Employment

- The main significant differences between residents in the Parish and those in the District are the higher proportions of those in the parish employed in the Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing, Manufacturing, Construction, Education, Human Health & Social Care Activities. Significantly lower proportions in the parish compared to the District are in Financial and Insurance Activities and in Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities.

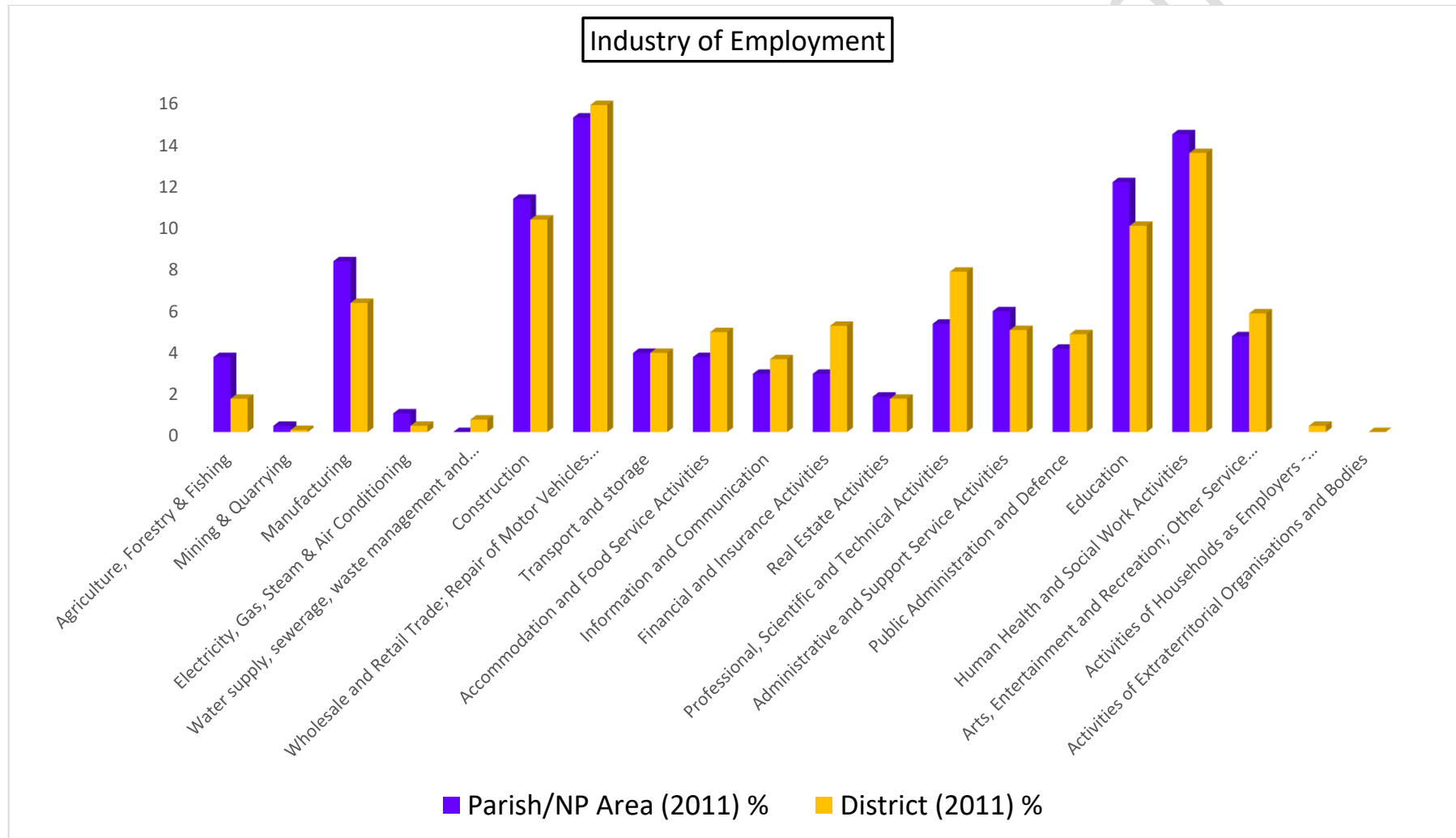
The 743 usual residents aged between 16 and 74 in employment are employed in the following activities:

Table 9 - Table comparing the activity types of employment of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area with those in the Local Authority area

	Employment Activity	Parish/NP Area (2011)		District (2011)	
		Number	%	Number	%
A	Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	27	3.6	1,120	1.6
B	Mining & Quarrying	2	0.3	52	0.1
C	Manufacturing	61	8.2	4,403	6.2
D	Electricity, Gas, Steam & Air Conditioning	7	0.9	246	0.3
E	Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	0	0.0	452	0.6
F	Construction	83	11.2	7,232	10.2
G	Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motor Cycles	112	15.1	11,175	15.7
H	Transport and storage	28	3.8	2,668	3.8
I	Accommodation and Food Service Activities	27	3.6	3,423	4.8
J	Information and Communication	21	2.8	2,460	3.5
K	Financial and Insurance Activities	21	2.8	3,637	5.1
L	Real Estate Activities	13	1.7	1,137	1.6
M	Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	39	5.2	5,501	7.7
N	Administrative and Support Service Activities	43	5.8	3,467	4.9
O	Public Administration and Defence	30	4.0	3,310	4.7
P	Education	89	12.0	7,026	9.9
Q	Human Health and Social Work Activities	106	14.3	9,538	13.4
R	Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; Other Service Activities	34	4.6	4,030	5.7
S	Activities of Households as Employers - Undifferentiated Goods and Services			188	0.3
T	Activities of Extraterritorial Organisations and Bodies			19	0.0
	TOTAL	743	100.0	71,084	100.0

Source: Census 2011

Figure 9 - Graph comparing-type-of employment for residents in Neighbourhood Plan Area with Local Authority Area



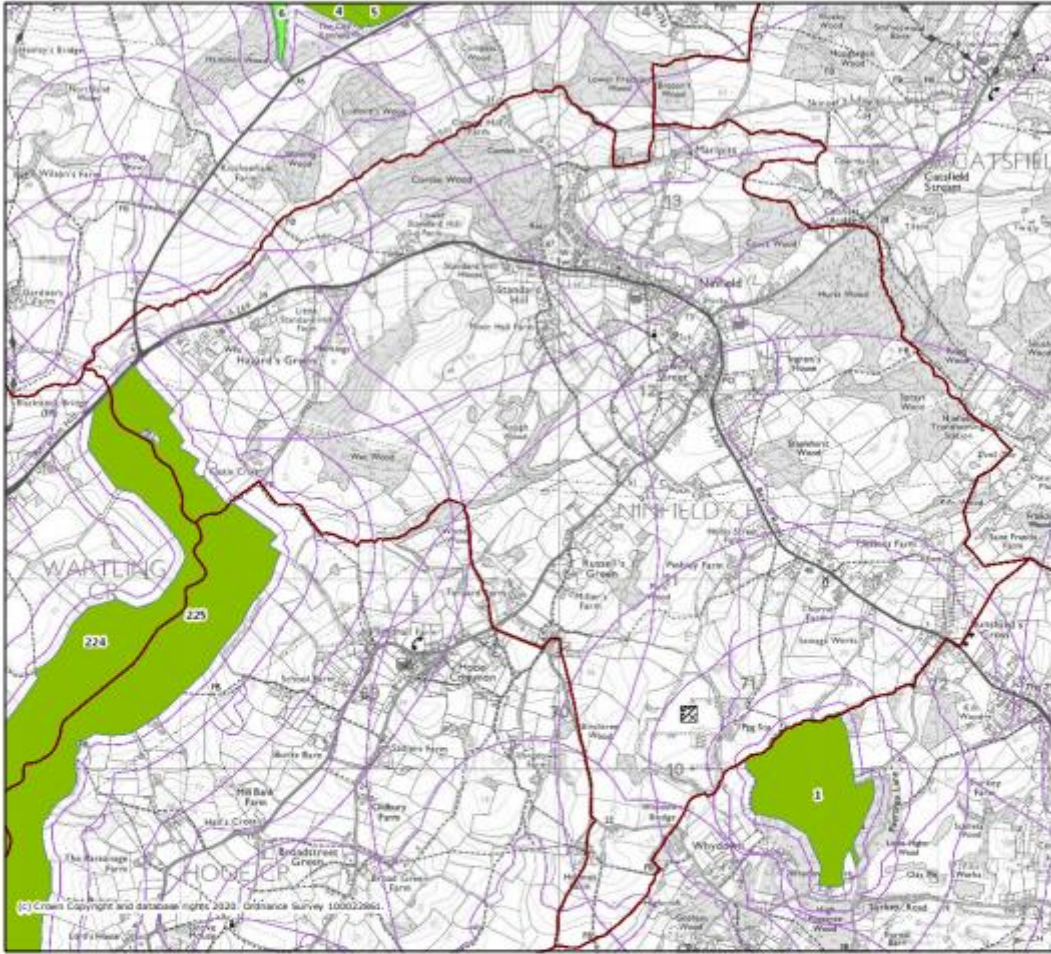
4.6 Environmental

4.6.1 Landscape Designations

- About an eighth of the parish (mostly north of the A269) lies in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As the whole parish has been designated for the neighbourhood plan, this area is included.
- No part of the Parish falls within the South Downs National park (SDNP).
- A small part of the western edge of the parish lies within the Pevensey Levels RAMSAR site (also a designated SSSI and SCA). The High Woods SSSI in Bexhill abuts the southern boundary of the parish.
- Church Wood is registered as a Local Nature Reserve
- Combe Wood, Long/Wet Wood and Rough/Whites Wood are designated Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)

- 4.7 **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** (SSSIs is a conservation designation denoting a protected zone/area. They often contain important habitats such as grasslands, parkland and woodland and are the building block site-based nature conservation legislation and most other legal nature/geological conservation designations are based upon them (including national nature reserves, Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas, and Special Areas of Conservation.) Some contain ancient woodland and ancient trees. In other words, these areas have high conservation value, and need to be protected.

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are a GIS tool developed by Natural England to make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks posed by development proposals to: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs),

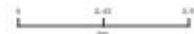


Legend

- Parishes (GB)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest Units (England)**
- Favourable Condition
- Unfavourable Recovering
- Unfavourable no change
- Unfavourable Declining
- Part Destroyed
- Destroyed
- Not Assessed
- SSSI Impact Risk Zones - to assess planning applications for likely impacts on SSSIs/SACs/SPAs & Ramsar sites (England)**
-

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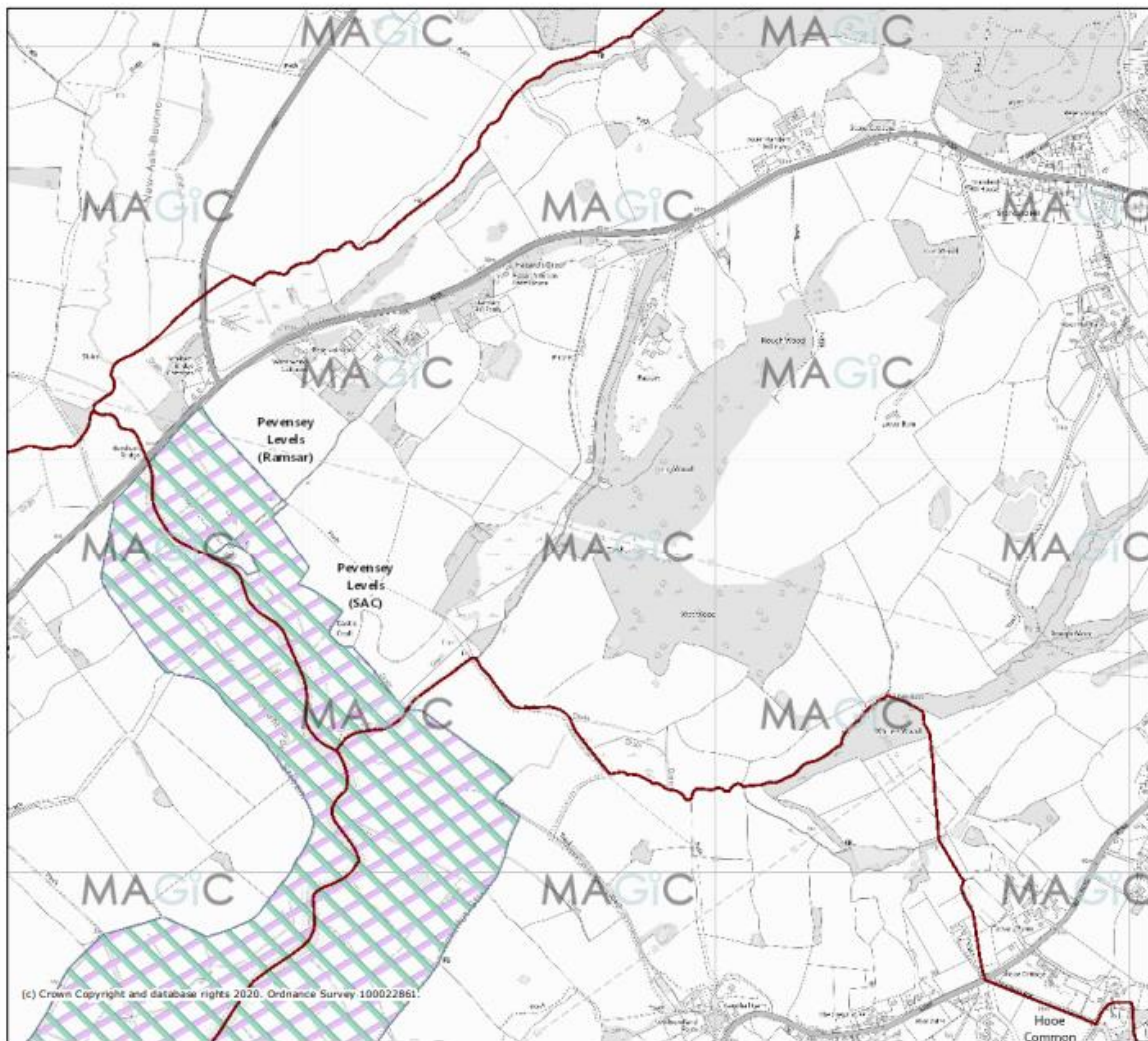
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4.8 **National Special Areas of Conservation & RAMSAR sites** - The Parish contains an area identified by Natural England as Special Areas of Conservation (the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora.) This zone is within the Pevensey Levels SAC and lies to the west of Castle Croft up to the A269 and the western boundary of the parish covering an area of approximately 2.34 hectares: This area is also a RAMSAR site (land listed as a Wetland of International Importance under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (the Ramsar Convention) 1973.) This is the same area with the SSSI designation

MAGiC

SAC & RAMSAR Site in Ninfield



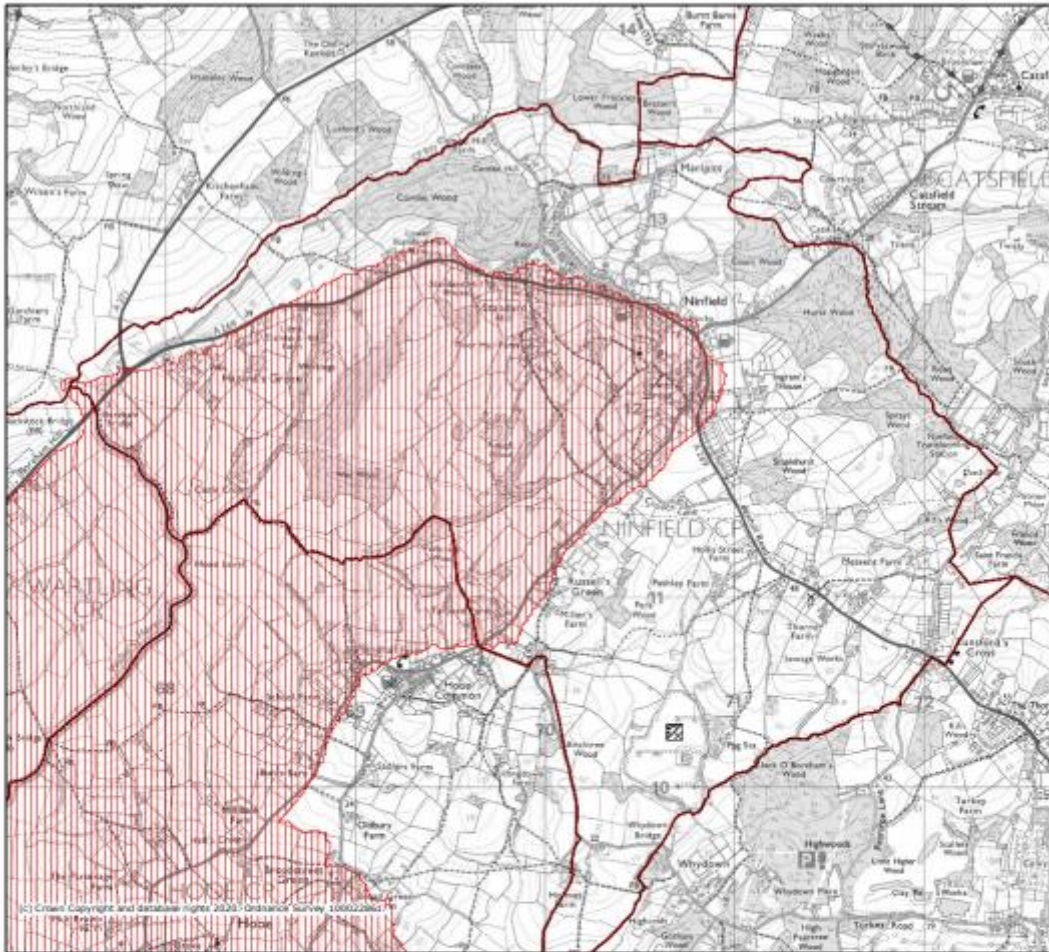
- Legend**
- Parishes (GB)
 - Ramsar Sites (England)
 - Special Areas of Conservation (England)

4.9 Drinking Water Protected Areas (Non-Statutory)

Drinking Water Protected Areas (Surface Water) are, within the Water Framework Directive, where raw water is abstracted from rivers and reservoirs. Raw water needs to be protected to ensure that it is not polluted which could lead to additional purification treatment. To do this water companies and the Environment Agency identify raw water sources that are 'at risk' of deterioration which would result in the need for additional treatment. These zones are areas where the land use is causing pollution of the raw water. Action is targeted in these zones to address pollution so that extra treatment of raw water can be avoided.

Working Document

MAGiC Drinking Water Protected Areas - Ninfield



Legend

- Parishes (GB)
- Drinking Water Protected Areas (Surface Water) (England)

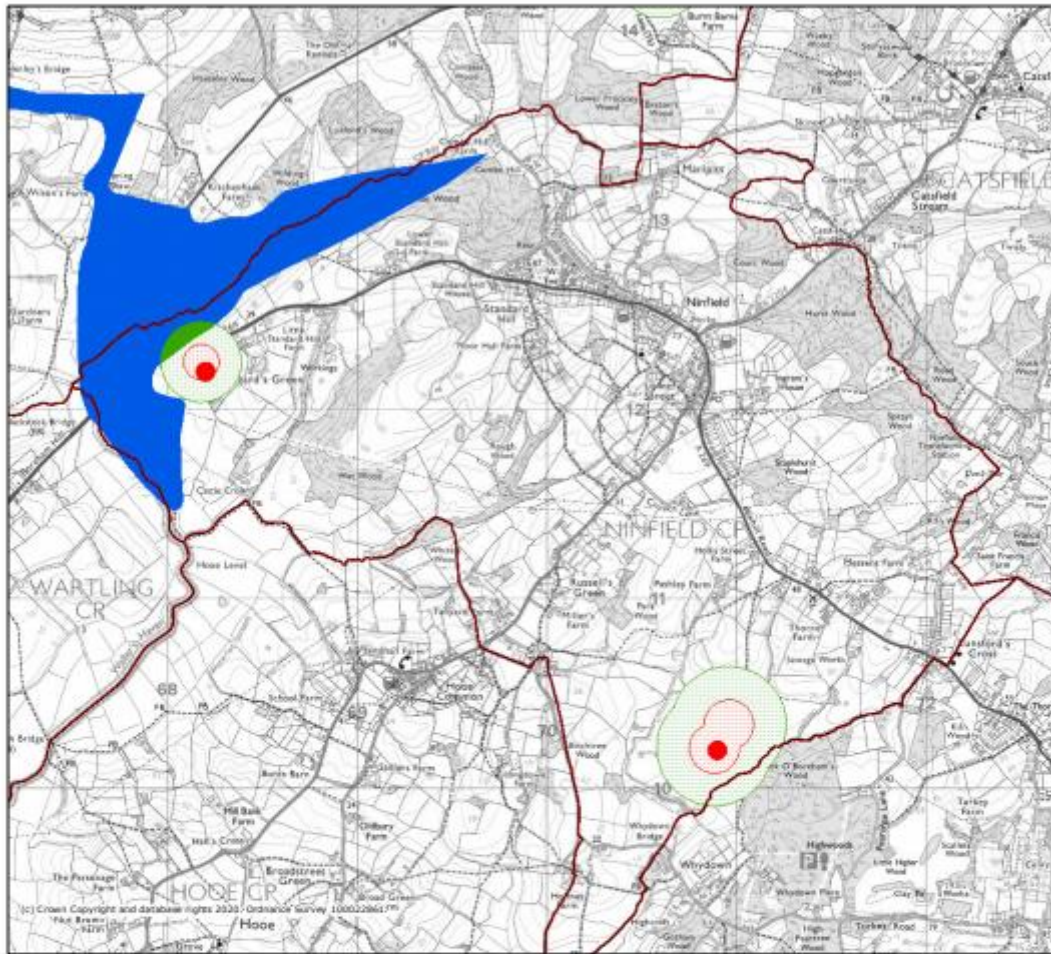
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4.10 Source Protection Zones (Non-Statutory)

Source Protection Zones [Merged] have been created as public facing outlines where common boundaries and overlaps (based on zone number) have been removed. Source Protection Zones (SPZs) are defined around large and public potable groundwater abstraction sites. The purpose of SPZs is to provide additional protection to safeguard drinking water quality through constraining the proximity of an activity that may impact upon a drinking water abstraction. This is part of an initial screening process in assessing impacts to groundwater resources. Zones around location sites are defined by groundwater travel time to an abstraction. This is determined through applying Environment Agency groundwater flow models run at the location of abstractions, inputting parameters such as flow direction, geology type, rainfall and hydrological boundaries. SPZs provide a visual representation of the increased risks as you get closer to the abstraction.



Legend

- Parishes (GB)
- Source Protection Zones merged (England)
 - Zone I - Inner Protection Zone
 - Zone I - Subsurface Activity
 - Zone II - Outer Protection Zone
 - Zone II - Subsurface Activity
 - Zone III - Total Catchment
 - Zone III - Subsurface Activity
 - Zone of Special Interest

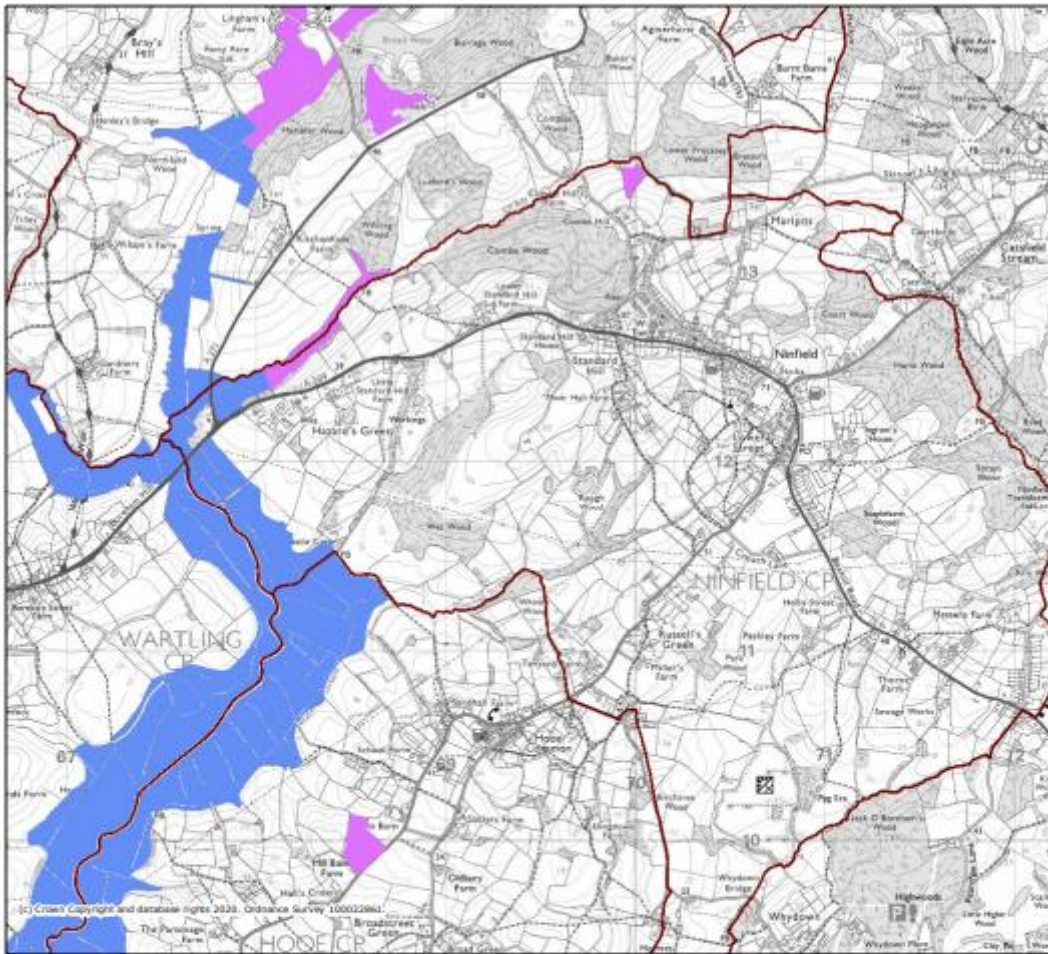
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4.11 Biodiversity

- The Parish contains areas identified by Natural England as Priority Habitats and are subject to Habitat Action Plans:
 - **Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat** – 3 zones:
 - Located adjacent to the parish boundary in the north-west corner of the parish. Zone 1 is south of the A269 and is defined as coastal grazing marsh. Zone 2 is directly north of the first but separated from it by the A269. Zone 3 is adjacent to Zone 2 but separated by the A271. Zones 2 & 3 are defined as floodplain grazing marsh and are within the High Weald AONB.

 - **Good quality semi-improved grassland Priority Habitat** – 2 zones:
 - Two zones both located on the north of the parish with the first zone directly to the east of coastal and floodplain habitat zone 3. The second is located north east of Combe Hill Cottage. Both of these zones are in the AONB and total approx. 3.9 hectares. They have also been referred to as wildflower meadows.



Legend

- Parishes (GB)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh (England)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Good quality semi-improved grassland (Non Priority) (England)

Projection = OSGB36
 xmin = 56480
 ymin = 109500
 xmax = 574500
 ymax = 114300

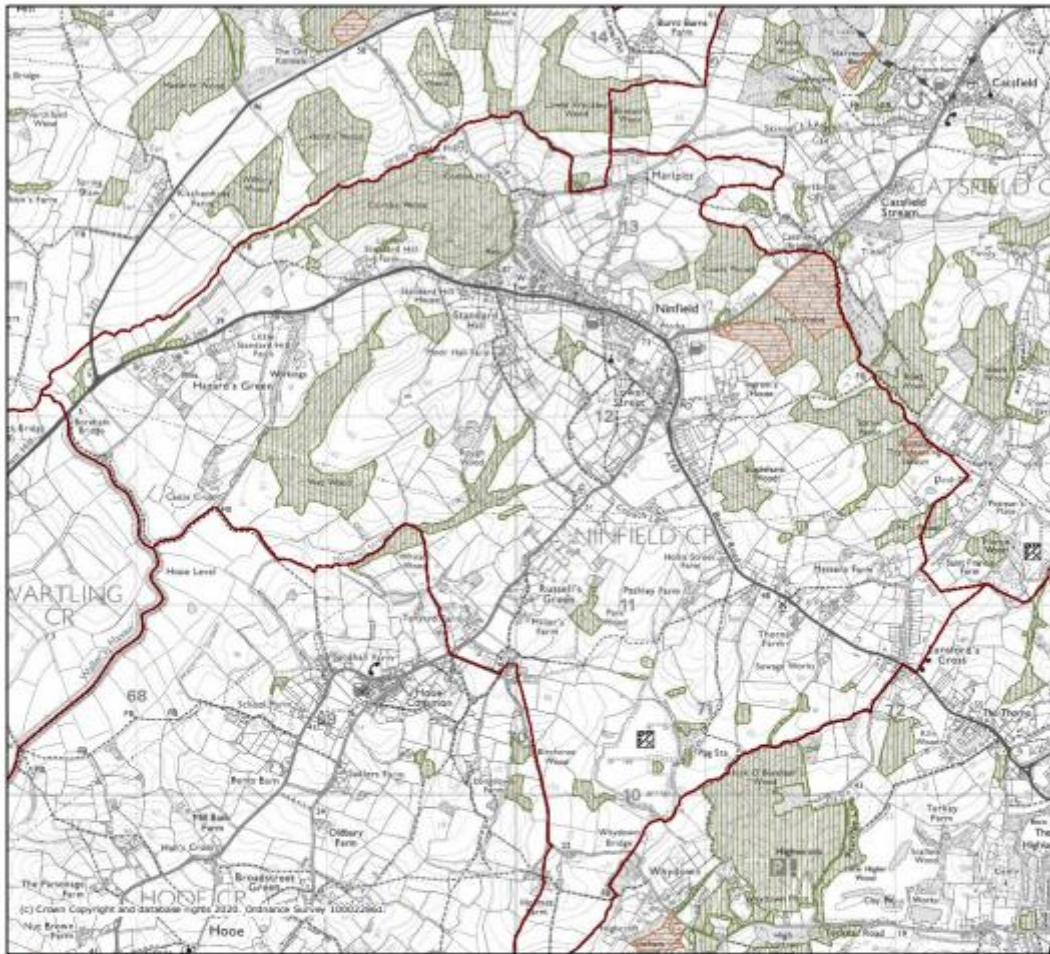
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- **Ancient Woodland**

- There are substantial areas of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland across much of the parish both within and outside the AONB. However, there is significantly less in the south part where it is mainly in small remnant pockets. There is also some Ancient Replanted Woodland in the east part of the parish south of the B2204. Combe Wood, Rough Wood, Long Wood, Wet Wood, Kiln Wood, Church Wood, Court Wood, Hurst Wood, Sprays Wood, Pipe Wood, Staplehurst Wood and Park Wood are the main Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodlands in the parish.

Working Document



Legend

- Parishes (GB)
- Ancient Woodland (England)**
- Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
- Ancient Replanted Woodland

Projection = OSGB36
 utm = 565282
 zone = 109200
 east = 575200
 north = 114100

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- **Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat** – Multiple (approximately 35) small and large pockets of land, located in various sized pockets across the parish with the majority centred within the north of the parish area (approximate coverage – 15 to 20% of parish land area).

MAGiC

Deciduous Woodland - Ninfield



Legend

- Parishes (GB)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England)

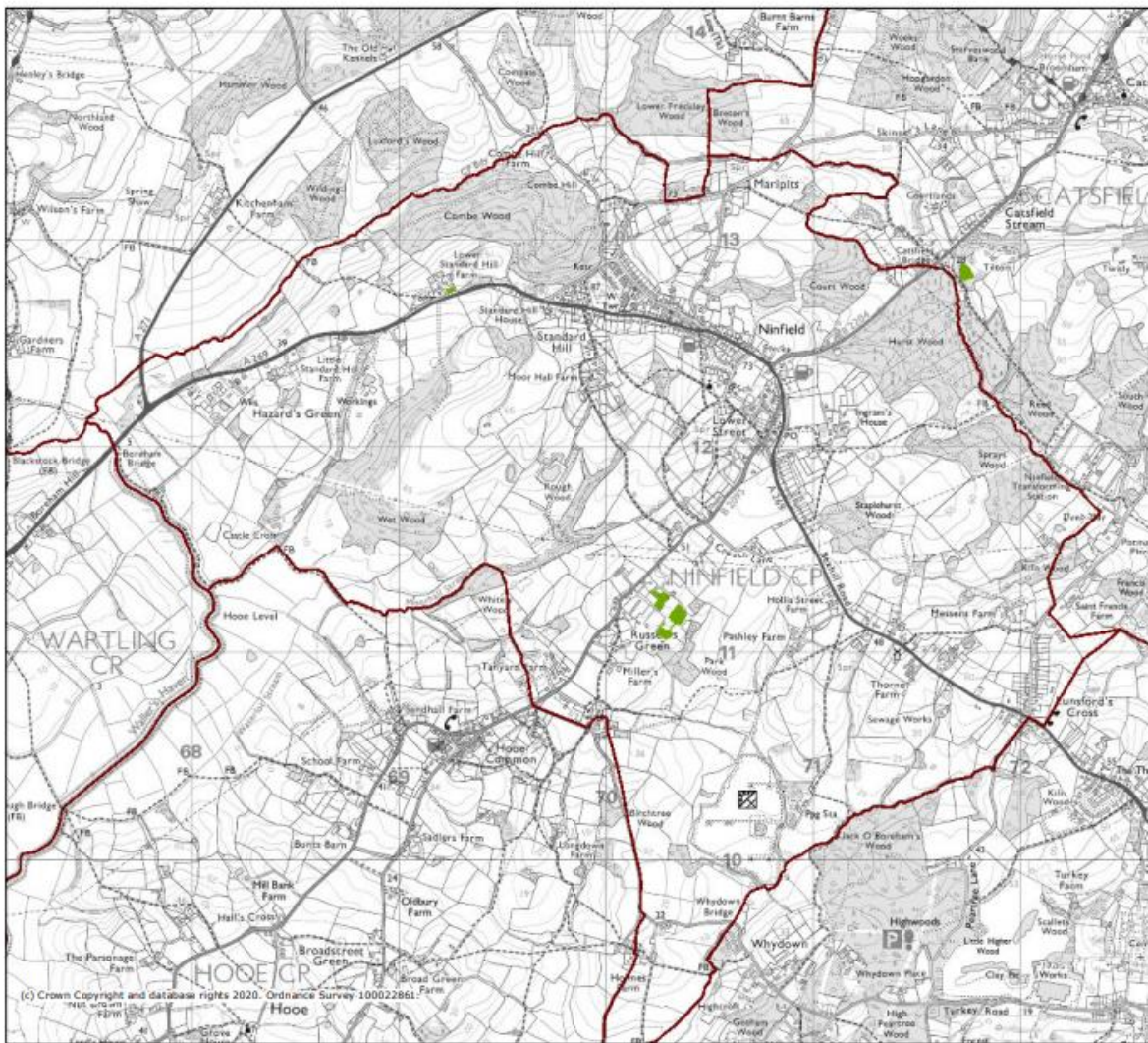
Projection = OSGB36
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 yorn = 109693
 xmax = 575100
 ymax = 112860

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- **Traditional Orchards Priority Habitats – 3 zones:**
 - Two zones located south around Russell's Green south of the B2095 and west of The Coach House and north of Park Wood (approx. 1.5 hectares in total). These have been removed since the survey and no longer exist.
 - The third zone is located north of the A269 at Lower Standard Hill Farm (approx 0.1 hectare).

MAGiC

Traditional Orchards - Ninfield

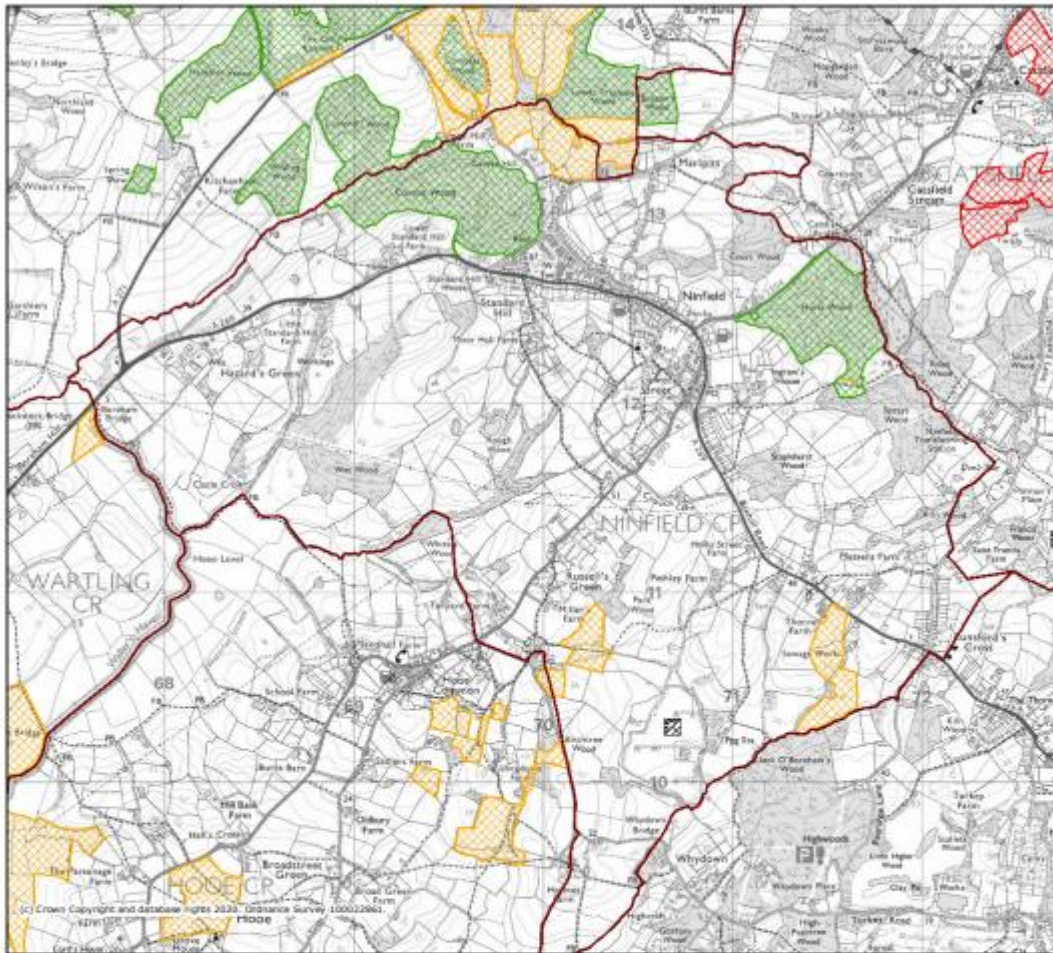


Legend
 □ Parishes (GB)
 ■ Priority Habitat Inventory - Traditional Orchards (England)

4.12 Agri-Environment Schemes

Countryside Stewardship Scheme (Agreement Management Areas) - This is a polygon spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent and location of all land under management within the Countryside Stewardship Agri-Environment Scheme from 01/01/2016 onwards.

- Countryside Stewardship (Higher Tier) – 4 zones – 3 to the south of the B2095 totalling approx. 16.3 hectares. The fourth and biggest zone is located north of Marlpits Lane and east of Combe Lane. This large zone crosses the northern boundary into Ashburnham (approx. 11.5 hectares).
- Woodland Management Plan – 2 zones including Combe Wood within the AONB (approx. 37.3 hectares) and Hurst Wood bordering the eastern parish boundary and south of the B2204 (approx. 27.1 hectares).



Legend

- Parishes (GB)
- Countryside Stewardship Agreement Management Areas (England)**
- Countryside Stewardship (Middle Tier)
- Countryside Stewardship (Higher Tier)
- Countryside Stewardship - Arable Offer (Middle Tier)
- Feasibility Study and Historic Building Restoration
- Hedgerows and boundaries
- Implementation plan
- Woodland Creation Grant
- Tree Health Improvement
- Tree Health Restoration
- Woodland Management Plan

Projection = OSGB36
 xmin = 564683
 ymin = 109083
 xmax = 575000
 ymax = 114200

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4.13 Forestry & Woodland Schemes

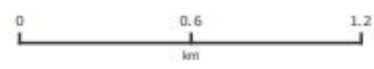
- **Woodland Grant Scheme 1** – 3 zones:
 - The largest zone is located in the north eastern part of the parish. This area is found to the north of Little Ingrams and east of Church Lane. Parts of Court Wood and Hurst Wood falls within it and covers an area of approximately 37 hectares.
 - The second is located north west and can be found north of Wet Wood and covers parts of Rough Wood (5 hectares) with the smallest zone located east of the B2095 and south of Crouch Lane. This zone is within the Coach House perimeter and measures approximately 0.3 hectares.
- **Woodland Grant Scheme 2** – 1 zone:
 - One zone located within Street Farm site along the A269 (2.2 hectares)
- **Woodland Grant Scheme 3** – 5 zones:
 - One zone is located in the north of the parish, north of the A269 and Combe Lane, covering Combe Wood (approx. 37 hectares).
 - Two zones are located south of the B2204, along the eastern side of the parish. These zones cover Hurst Wood, Sprays Wood and Pipe Wood (approx. 42 hectares)
 - A fourth zone is located at Russells Green, south of The Coach House and north of Park Wood, covering approximately 0.4 hectare.
 - The fifth zone is a strip along the south eastern boundary with Bexhill (0.4 hectare). The majority of this zone falls within Bexhill parish.

MAGiC Voodland Grant Schemes 1&2



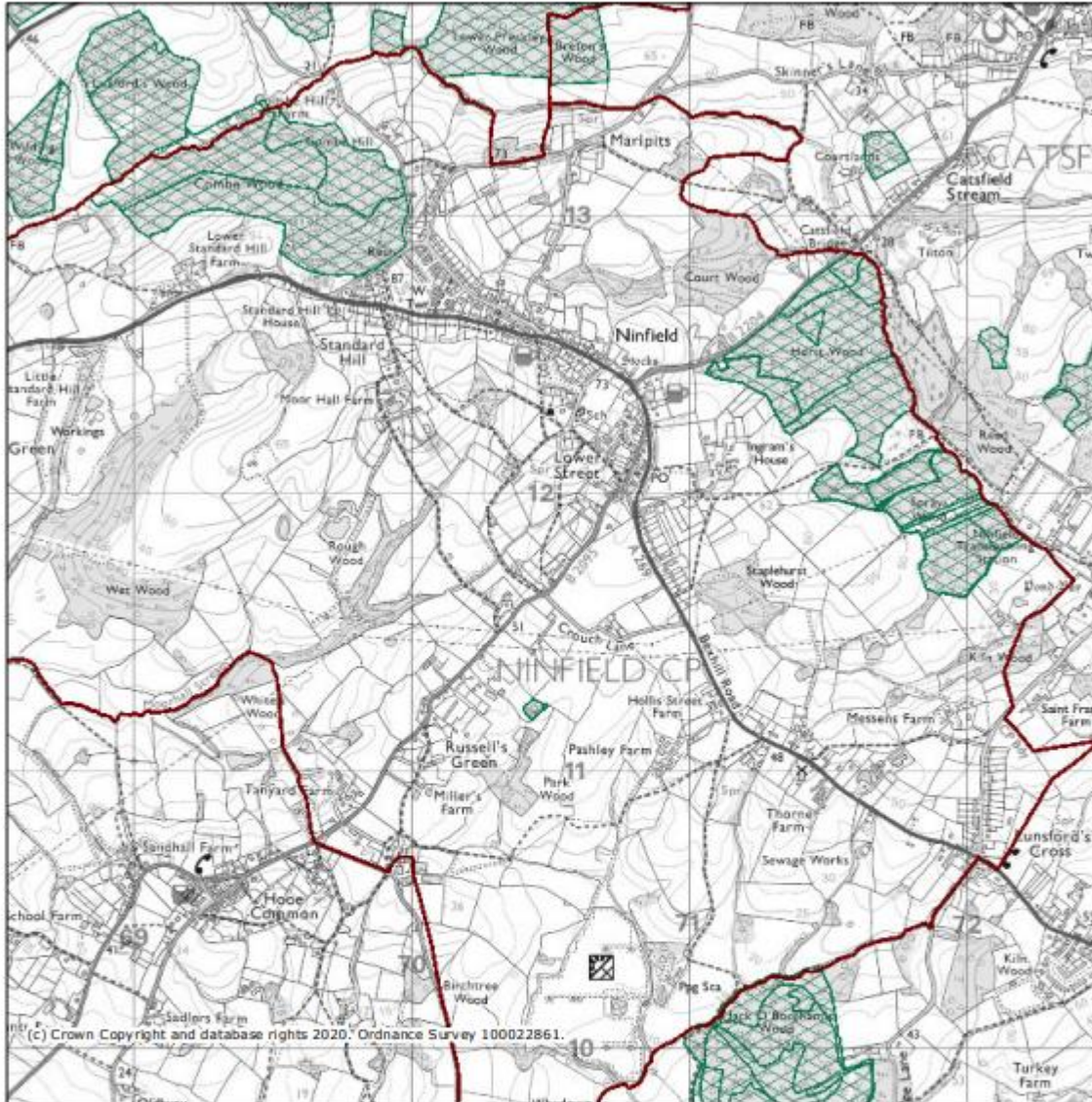
Legend

- Parishes (GB)
- Woodland Grant Scheme 1 (England)
- Woodland Grant Scheme 2 (England)



Projection = OSGB36
 xmin = 565100
 ymin = 109400
 xmax = 575100
 ymax = 114200
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MAGiC Woodland Grant Scheme 3



Legend	
Parishes (GB)	Projection = OSGB36 xmin = 565500 ymin = 109400 xmax = 575500 ymax = 114200
Woodland Grant Scheme 3 (England)	Map produced by MAGiC on 2 December, 2020. Copyright resides with the data suppliers and the map must not be reproduced without their permission. Some information in MAGiC is a snapshot of the information that is being maintained or continually updated by the originating organisation. Please refer to the metadata for details as information may be illustrative or representative rather than definitive at this stage.

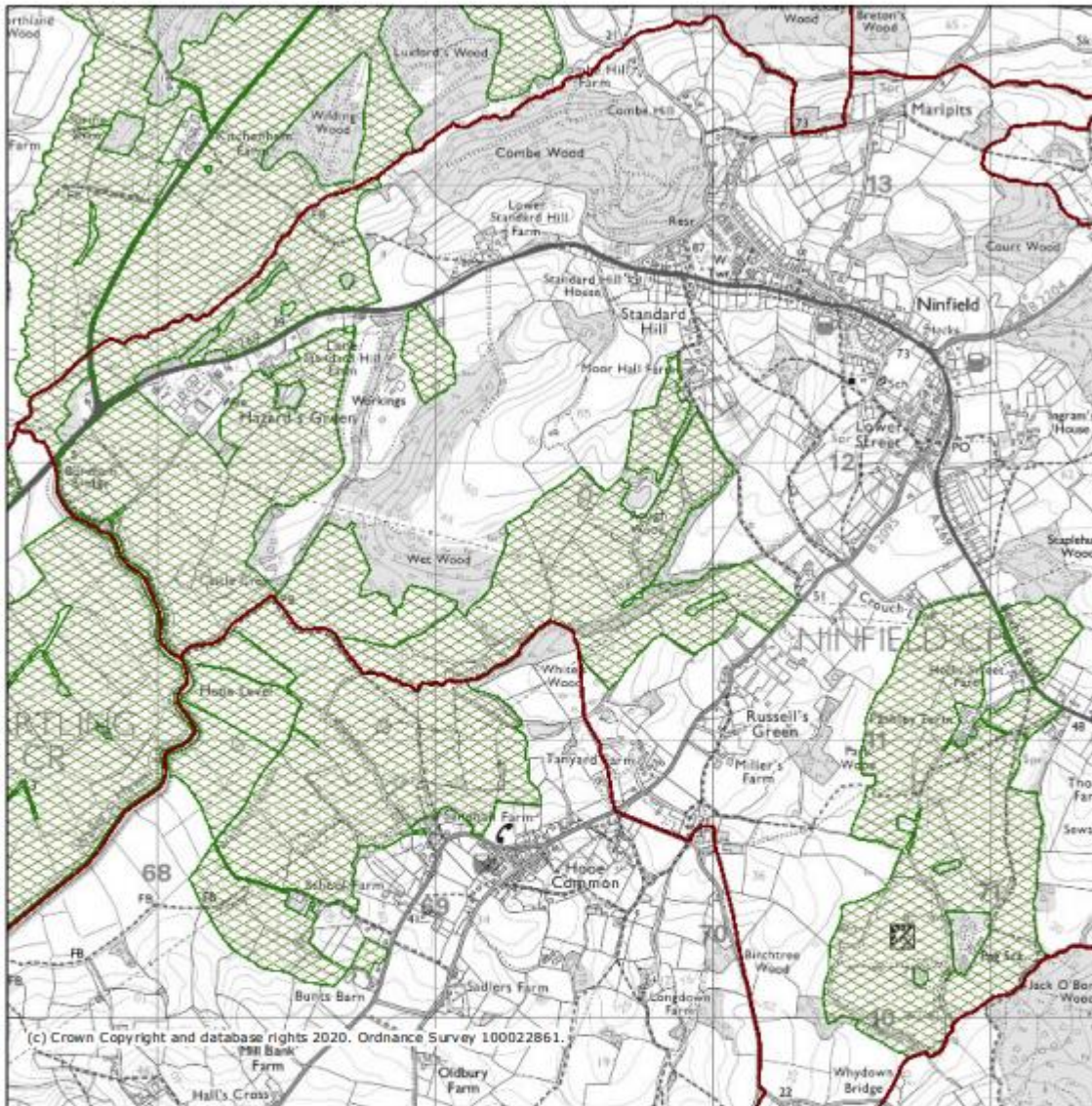
4.14 Land-based Schemes

Environmental Stewardship is a land management scheme that provides funding to farmers and other land managers in England to deliver effective environmental management on land.

The aim of Higher Level Stewardship is for farmers to undertake environmental management schemes which offer “significant benefits” to high-priority areas (ie. protection of the historic environment; promotion of public access and understanding of the countryside).

Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) is a simple and effective land management agreement with priority options. Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) is a more complex type of management agreement tailored to local circumstances.

- **Entry Level plus Higher Level Stewardship** – 3 zones:
 - Approximately 30% of the parish land area located mainly in the western half of the parish but also in the south east (making up about 3 zones and covering a number of farms) is covered by Entry Level plus Higher Level Stewardship Schemes.
- **Entry Level Stewardship Schemes** – None
- **Higher Level Stewardship Scheme** – None
- **Organic Entry Level Stewardship Scheme** – None
- **Organic Entry Level plus Higher Level Stewardship Scheme** – None



Legend

- Parishes (GB)

Environmental Stewardship Agreements (England)

- Entry Level plus Higher Level Stewardship
- Entry Level Stewardship
- Higher Level Stewardship
- Organic Entry Level Stewardship
- Organic Entry Level plus Higher Level Stewardship

0 0.6 1.2
km

Projection = OSGB36
 xmin = 564400
 ymin = 109200
 xmax = 574500
 ymax = 114100

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4.15 Heritage

The Historic England classification of Listed Buildings¹ shows that the Parish of Ninfield contains the following:

4.15.1 Grade I listed buildings and structures including (1):

	Building	Location	Description
1.	The Parish Church of St Mary	Church Lane Ninfield East Sussex	Stone cemented over nave, weather-boarded bell turret. Brick sepulchre. Chancel, north vestry, nave with north aisle, south porch and west tower. Nave and tower C13, the nave of stone, the tower of timber, weather-boarded outside and containing a C13 musicians gallery opening into the church. Chancel C17, red brick. North aisle and vestry 1885, stone. The whole church was restored by Sir Arthur Blomfield in 1885-7. Font probably of 1660s. Jacobean panelling behind the altar.

4.15.2 Grade II listed buildings and structures including (61):

	Building	Location	Description
1.	SOUTH COTTAGE AND THE REGISTERED OFFICE OF BERNARDS COACHES NINFIELD LTD	Hooe Road Russell's Green Ninfield East Sussex	2. C18 or earlier. Two storeys. Four windows. Ground floor red brick and grey headers, above tile-hung. Half-hipped tiled roof. Casement windows
2.	THE STOCKS AND WHIPPING-POST	The Green Ninfield East Sussex	Constructed of iron. A good example of heavy Sussex iron. Sited on a small triangle of grass and fir trees at the junction of Church Lane and The Green.

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/results?searchtype=nhleadvanced>

3.	CHURCH FARM BARN	Manchester Road Ninfield East Sussex	C18. Red brick. Half-hipped tiled roof. Weather-boarded gabled wagon entrance.
4.	FORMER OASTHOUSE AND GRANARY	Manchester Road Ninfield East Sussex	C19. Red brick and grey headers. Tiled roof. Round oasthouse at west end.
5.	CHURCH FARMHOUSE AND LIME TREE COTTAGE	Manchester Road Ninfield East Sussex	Early C19. Two storeys. Four windows. Red brick and grey headers alternately. Tiled roof. Casement windows with pointed panes. Modern gabled porch.
6.	COMBE HILL COTTAGES	Combe Hill Ninfield East Sussex	C18. Two storeys. Four windows. Ground floor red brick, above tile-hung. Tiled roof. Casement windows.
7.	FIR TREE COTTAGES	The Green Ninfield East Sussex	C18 building containing 3 cottages. Two storeys. Five windows. Ground floor red brick, above tile-hung. Half-hipped tiled roof. Casement windows.
8.	COMBE HILL FARMHOUSE	Combe Hill Ninfield East Sussex	L-shaped house, C17 or earlier. Two storeys. Two windows. Ground floor red brick, above faced with weather-boarding. Hipped tiled roof. Casement windows.
9.	IRON RAILING ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE GARDEN AT TANYARD HOUSE	Hooe Road Russell's Green Ninfield East Sussex	C18 iron railing on low red brick wall along the east side of the garden.
10.	MILLER'S FARMHOUSE	Hooe Road Russell's Green Ninfield East Sussex	Probably C17. Two storeys. Four windows. Partly red brick and grey headers, partly faced with cobbles but mostly faced with weather-boarding. Tiled roof. Casement windows.

11.	OASTHOUSE AND GRANARY TO THE NORTH OF ACKEHURST FARMHOUSE	Straight Lane Ninfield East Sussex	C18. Round oasthouse of red brick and grey headers. Granary red brick on ground floor and tile-hung above.
12.	APPLE TREE COTTAGE	Lower Street Ninfield East Sussex	C18 or earlier. Two storeys. Three windows. Ground floor stuccoed, above tile-hung. Tiled roof. Glazing bars missing. gabled porch. brick chimney breast at south end.
13.	LITTLE PARK	Hooe Road Russell's Green Ninfield East Sussex	L-shaped early C19 house. Two storeys and attic. Three windows. Two dormers. Stuccoed. Stringcourse. Eaves bracket cornice. Tiled roof. Windows with segmental heads, pointed Gothic glazing and Venetian shutters.
14.	ACKEHURST FARMHOUSE	Straight Lane Ninfield East Sussex	T-shaped probably C17 house. Two storeys and attic. Three windows. Ground floor red brick, above tile-hung. Half-hipped gable to west wing with attic windows. Tiled roof. Casement windows.
15.	HIGH KNOLL	Manchester Road Ninfield East Sussex	L-shaped probably C17 house. Two storeys. Four windows. Red brick and grey headers. Tiled roof. Casement windows. Doorway with flat hood on brackets and 6 panel door. The back has 4 gables, tile-hung.
16.	FIG TREE COTTAGE	Lower Street Ninfield East Sussex	C17. Two storeys. Two windows. Faced with weather-boarding. Tiled roof. Casement windows. Doorway with flat hood on brackets. Later addition of one window bay with sash windows retaining their glazing bars at the south end.
17.	BARN AT INGRAM'S FARM TO SOUTH WEST OF THE FARMHOUSE	Ingram's Green Ninfield East Sussex	Probably C18. Red brick and weather-boarding. Hipped tiled roof with tie-beams and arched braces inside.
18.	CROSS FARM	The Green Ninfield East Sussex	L-shaped C18 house. Two storeys and attic. Three windows. Two dormers. Ground floor red brick, above tile-hung. Dentilled eaves cornice. Tiled roof. Casement windows. On the south side a modern bay window supported on stilts has been added on the first floor.

19.	INGRAM'S FARMHOUSE	Ingrams Green Ninfield East Sussex	L-shaped house. South wing C17, or earlier, refaced with red brick in C18. Stringcourse. Half-hipped tiled roof. Glazing bars intact. East wing added in early C19. Stuccoed. Two storeys. Four windows.
20.	PASHLEY FARMHOUSE	Bexhill Road Ninfield East Sussex	C17 or earlier timber-framed building with plaster infilling, partly refaced with red brick and tile-hanging, the north face of the north wing partly slate-hung. Hipped tiled roof. Casement windows. Bay of 2 storeys on west front. Two storeys. Two windows facing west, 3 windows facing south.
21.	BARN OR OUTHOUSE ADJOINING HOLLIS STREET FARMHOUSE ON THE WEST	Bexhill Road Ninfield East Sussex	C18. The west end has been converted into a cottage. Two storeys. Two windows. Red brick and grey headers on a base of flints. Stringcourse. Hipped tiled roof. Three sash windows with glazing bars intact. Barn extension of lower elevation to east with casement windows having pointed panes.
22.	BARN 40 METRES SOUTH WEST OF TANYARD HOUSE	Hooe Road Russell's Green Ninfield East Sussex	GV II Barn, until 1886 associated with the tanning industry. Parts are C16 or earlier but it was reroofed and clad in the C18 with C19 modifications. Oak timberframe, clad in Ashburnham brick in mixture of Sussex and English garden wall bond, weatherboarded gable to south west and half-hipped peg-tiled roof. Central midstrey and C18 outshots either side to south east. South east side has one and south west side has four triangular buttresses. South west side also has ventilation slits. Some C20 window openings. C19 five bay cartshed attached to north not of special interest. Interior of 7 bays and aisled. Bay to north west of midstrey is C16 or earlier with curved windbraces, there are several jowled posts and a re-positioned top of a wallplate. C19 bolted knees apart from midstrey. Aisle posts on padstones. C18 roof with staggered purlins and collar beams. Internal weatherboarding to south east wall.
23.	MORHOUSE AND MOOR COTTAGE	Lower Street Ninfield East Sussex	Pair of cottages, once three cottages and shop. C18 or earlier, refronted in early C19 with late C19 shopfront and some C20 extensions to south. Possibly timberframed but externally red brick ground floor, mainly painted, with tile-hung first floor. Tiled roof, half-hipped to north east and hipped with gablet to south west with three brick chimneystacks. Two storey: four windows. Mainly C20 casements of traditional pattern. EXTERIOR: Front elevation has four three-light casements to first floor, one four-light casement to ground floor, two

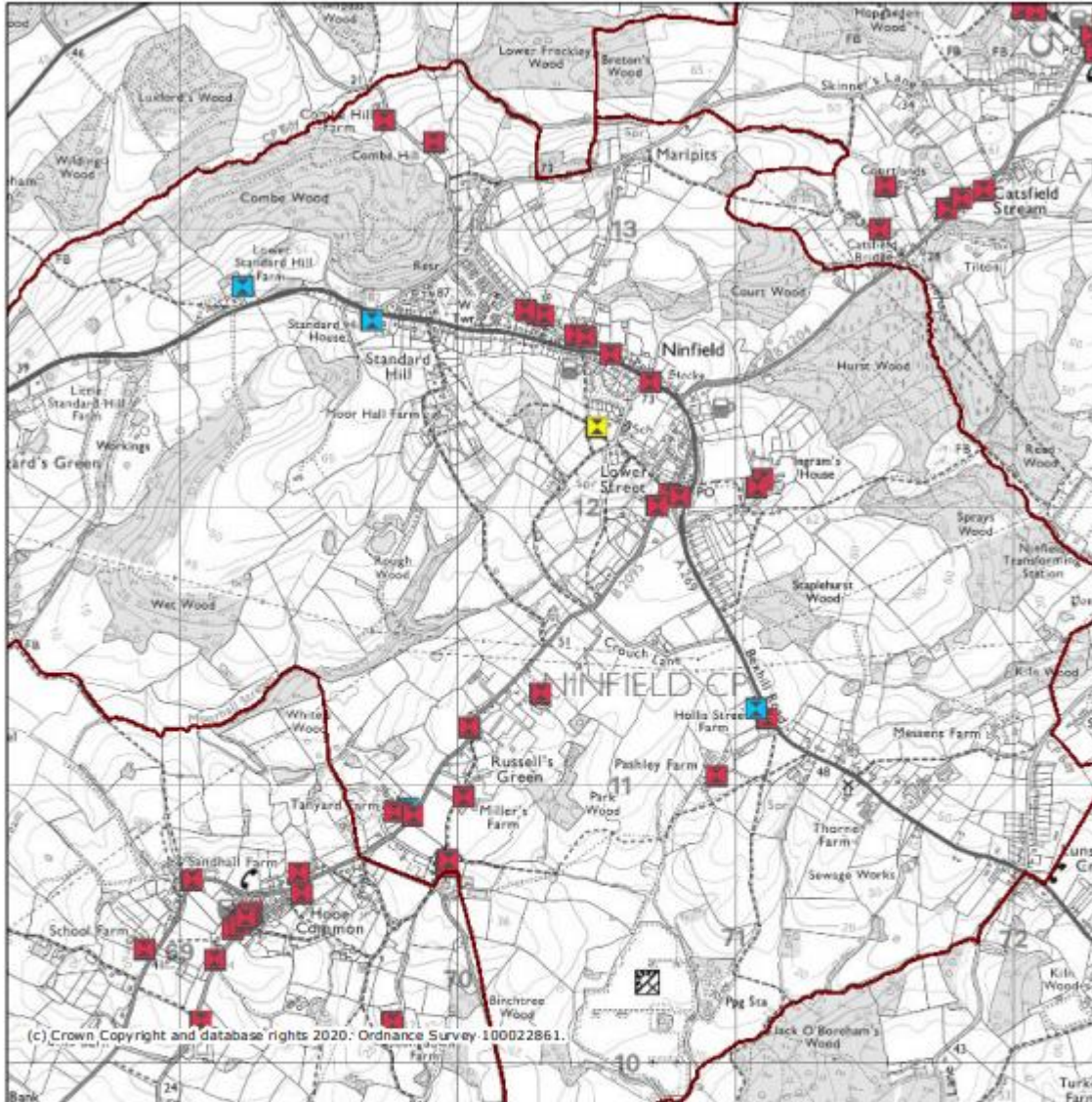
			doorcases, one with flat hood, and former shopfront of late C19 date with two square bays, shop windows with cambered heads and central cambered doorcase with half-glazed door. South west elevation has unpainted brickwork to ground floor in English garden wall bond and four casement windows with leaded lights, the right side one in projecting brick C20 extension. Lean-to brick extension and two C20 conservatories. North east extension is weatherboarded to first floor and has an external brick chimneystack.
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4.15.3 Grade II* Listed (4):

	Building	Location	Description
1.	TANYARD HOUSE	Hooe Road Russell's Green, Ninfield East Sussex	Good C18 house. Two storeys. Five windows. Red brick and grey headers alternately. Stringcourse. Wooden eaves cornice. Tiled roof. Glazing bars intact. Doorway with pilasters, pediment and semi-circular fanlight.
2.	HOLLIS STREET FARMHOUSE	Bexhill Road Ninfield East Sussex	Impressive building of C17 or earlier date, refaced with red brick in C18, first floor of the end window-bays tile-hung with the trace of a moulded bressummer below. The portion between these, containing 3 windows, projects slightly with a painted stringcourse. Moulded wooden eaves cornice. Steeply-pitched hipped tiled roof. Some casement windows with small square panes, some sash windows with glazing bars intact. Chimney breast at each end. Modern porch with pediment. Two storeys. Five windows.
3.	LUXFORD HOUSE	STANDARD HILL Ninfield East Sussex	Interesting L-shaped house of late C17 character but dated 1702. Two storeys. Four windows. Red brick and grey headers. Wooden modillion eaves cornice. Tiled roof. Casement windows of 2 tiers of 3 lights each with wooden mullions and transoms. Doorway with bolection moulded surround and cornice having the date 1702 and the initials "G.L." in it and 6 panel door. The gable ends have a stone stringcourse, long and short quoins and coping. The back wing is of lower elevation

4.	STANDARD HILL FARMHOUSE	STANDARD HILL Ninfield East Sussex	Impressive house with many interesting features. Dated 1659 but refaced with red mathematical tiles about 1790. The main portion has 3 windows and 3 gables. At the east end is a recessed portion, probably added in the C18, of one window and one gable. Tiled roof to the whole. Three storeys. Casement windows. Modern porch with pediment containing a bronze relief in the tympanum. Bay window of 2 storeys on each side of this. In the 3 original gables are little boards inscribed respectively "God's providence is my inheritance", "Except the Lord build a house they labour in vain that build it" and "Here we have 1659 our abidance".
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Working Document



Legend	
Parishes (GB)	Projection = OSGB36 xmin = 565300 ymin = 109300 xmax = 575400 ymax = 114400
Listed Buildings (England)	Map produced by MAGiC on 2 December, 2020. Copyright resides with the data suppliers and the map must not be reproduced without their permission. Some information in MAGiC is a snapshot of the information that is being maintained or continually updated by the originating organisation. Please refer to the metadata for details as information may be illustrative or representative rather than definitive at this stage.
I II II*	

4.15.4 Scheduled Monuments: **(None)**

4.15.5 Parks & Gardens:

- **Grade I: None**
- **Grade II*: None**
- **Grade II: None**

Working Document

5 Community Views on Planning Issues in the Parish

5.1 Launch and SWOT Survey

- 5.1.1 An online residents' survey was carried out in August 2020 to identify and gather residents' views on what they consider to be the strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats to Ninfield Parish. 108 responses were received to the survey.
- 5.1.2 Two online sessions were held in September 2020 with residents via Zoom to feedback the outcome of the consultation as well as discuss key topic areas for the Ninfield Neighbourhood Plan to focus on based on the findings. The dates of these sessions were advertised within the survey for interested residents to provide details to be sent a link to join. 25 people in total attended these two feedback sessions.

5.2 Summarised analysis of Ninfield SWOT below.

Strengths

- Incredible Views, Surrounding Countryside and Green & Open spaces/Fields
- Small Village identity, Rural character, peace & quiet
- Continued Dark Skies - No light pollution
- Strong sense of community/ friendly people, community spirit
- Heritage, Listed Buildings

Challenges

- Speeding Traffic, Volume of Traffic
- Insufficient Parking - Dangerous Parking
- Too many houses proposed, Over-development of village
- Lack of Local employment
- Local Transport Services

Opportunities

- Affordable Housing for local youngsters/Sheltered Accommodation
- Protect Green Spaces and Wildlife
- Improved Parking, Safer Roads & Facilities
- Better internet and mobile coverage
- More Allotments with good access

Threats

- Over-development & Associated Traffic issues
- Loss of Green Spaces & Wildlife habitats
- Pressure on existing facilities/services with new developments
- Urbanisation - Becoming a suburb – losing village identity
- Climate change & effects

Other Concerns and Aspirations Identified

- Risk of losing community assets – pubs closing
- Overgrown hedges,
- Not enough school places
- Dog walking facilities
- Social isolation
- Traffic calming measures
- Need for a village hub
- Concerns about flooding
- Need for better bus services
- Amenities for your people
- Addressing anti-social behaviour

5.3 Topic Based Online Discussions

A series of hourly topic based online discussions with residents were carried out during the months of October and November 2020. Below are the summarised outcomes of these sessions

5.3.1 **Village Character & Heritage Assessment** - 20th Oct 2020

- A rich heritage with listed buildings scattered throughout the parish
- There is a small concentration of facilities
- Protect and preserve the visual impact of the village. Its peaceful nature and quietness positive for mental health.
- Retain the very distinct green gaps between settlements

5.3.2 **Environment & Countryside** – 27th Oct 2020

- Ninfield is an agricultural parish and farming is key to it. Farmlands should be protected from developments that will result in their loss. Encourage farmers and landowners who are not using their lands for farming to diversify
- Nature recovery areas, an opportunity for wildlife to join habitats- travel
- Enhance Church Wood (rare and special habitat), Combe Wood and the AONB. Church Wood has seen an increased use during Covid-19 crises
- Concern-about wildlife and loss of habitats with developments on green fields. Promote wildlife verges and viaducts
- Protect trees from being cut down by developers as happened at Ingrams. Encourage and promote tree planting.

- Retain our dark skies – not supportive of street lighting
- Green energy supported – already a solar farm in the parish. The parish is vulnerable to water and electricity supply problems.

5.3.3 **Infrastructure, Economy, Transport & Travel** – 4th Nov 2020

Residents Suggestions on Transport & Travel

- Reduce speed limit in Hooe Road
- Need Minibuses connecting villages, hamlets and towns i.e. Ninfield to Bexhill, Bexhill to Hastings - forming a grid pattern instead of one long bus journey route which is likely to encounter delays, smaller buses are more flexible and easier to find alternate routes. Bus routes are not convenient as currently structured, no way to get to Battle station early enough for commuting to London or late enough to return.
- Would love to cycle more, out and back to the village, even walk to Bexhill but the main roads are not safe. Buses are unreliable and times are not always useful, cabs are too expensive.
- Cycle and footpath down main road if possible? Footpath linked to Hooe Road, Road dangerous – The rural nature of the village makes it difficult when it comes to footpaths and cycle paths with some footpaths very difficult to use.
- Buses are so expensive, it's cheaper to drive into Bexhill and Hastings. A trip in a car with 3 people is far more economical.
- Ensuring people cut their hedges to keep footpaths clear for pedestrians it can be hard to push buggies along the footpaths.
- The path by the High Street bus stop is very narrow and makes it impossible to take the buggies up there.
- There should be a correlation between footpaths and speed limit. Ninfield parish has certain extremely narrow winding lanes where even a 30mph limit is not safe.

Supporting local economy

- Parking – impossible in many parts of the village. Making it difficult for people to stop and patronise village facilities etc.
- Poor Broadband connectivity (speed and signal) is a real issue in Ninfield
- Diversification of farm buildings for local business hubs
- Promote and encourage small building for people to use for their local businesses

5.3.4 **Design & Development** – 18th Nov 2020

- Context – Ninfield is a small village in the countryside, has a strong sense of community with a historically gradual growth pattern. Gradual developmental increase preferred. There are a variety of housing styles represented in the parish but it is mainly traditional in design and its use of

construction materials. This diversity is appreciated and should be encouraged whilst retaining character of the area. Would not encourage mass development to totally change demographic of the village. Smaller increments lead to better integration. It is a nice place to live –

- Builders should be discouraged from buying smaller dwellings and converting them into larger homes. If a community is to thrive a good mix/spread of housing is needed
- No existing housing in the village is affordable for young people.
- Affordability, families and children having to move away to get on a property ladder
- Shared ownership is not the best of schemes and not supported
- Well-built and genuinely affordable starter homes are needed along with Assisted housing to help with the elderly, Houses for life long living – lifetime homes
- Exception site – how do you ensure it goes to people with true connections to the village
- 'Affordable housing' is a misnomer - social housing is what is needed – need to explore a Community Led Housing (CLH) scheme to meet local need, with small homes, possibly Self-build.
- Community Led Housing (CLH) scheme to meet local need. Tiny homes? Self-build?
- Properties should not be sold on – but rented
- Lovely Memorial Hall with a good sense of history. Need new blood to keep the mix and keep things going. Limited with school, poor public transport and these could alienate people. Facilities are key to keep the community thriving. Would love a central community hub with a community café etc.
- Need a design guide to shape the village – making new development more relevant to Ninfield and linking the design back to the character of the parish. Front gardens, shared services not appropriate
- Something to fit into the linear flow of village – around the settlement pattern.
- Encourage wider use of Solar. Photo voltaic, battery, rainwater harvesting, materials reflecting existing materials, no street lighting etc.

Residents views on the need for affordable & local housing

“I have recently found a new property to move into. However it’s about 15 miles away. I would have loved to have stayed in Ninfield but it’s near on impossible for people looking to start out on the property ladder”

“We're in "affordable housing" in Ashburnham. It's good to get on the property ladder, but we'd never do it again there's lots of hidden scams behind it! Also I'd advise the parish council to avoid Optivo like the plague!”

“My daughter has grown up in the village but to be able to buy a house she has had to move out to another area. She would have much preferred to have stayed in her local community, so affordable housing is needed, not necessarily part owned homes, when Smith Close was built that was for local people, to buy or part buy, that should be the case again to keep youngsters in the village”

“The part buy scheme was viable 10 years ago, but now it just seems to cripple everyone who's got them more recently”

“I know of at least four younger people who would love to stay in /return to the village. It would be great if a proportion of any development was set aside as starter homes for 'village' people or affordable housing.”

“We need more affordable housing. We moved back in with my parents as needed more space and to save for deposit. My children have to go to Catsfield School.”

“I was on shared ownership before and would do it again, the nearest affordable housing was Sidley and as my parents postcode was Wealden we couldn't apply and the only houses in Wealden would mean Hailsham and that's too far to do the school run and moving schools isn't an option due to my son having special needs and he's settled now anyway”.

*“My parents have lived in village 34 years in the same house, my grandad lived in the village and my uncle lives in the village. I really want to stay as local as possible
We need actually affordable starter homes that look presentable and are well built. Not 200 4 bed cardboard boxes at 300-600k. We need a local discount on newbuilds.”*

“Definitely need more affordable housing in the area “

5.3.5 Community Resilience & Cohesion – 25th Nov 2020

Ninfield is an attractive village benefitting both from our superb geographical location and from the fact that it still remains a rural village. Wonderful countryside, far reaching views and a strong community spirit.

Village appearance is important: Street furniture, litter bins, bus shelters, public benches, verges, hedges, open spaces, wild flower verges, our nice Sussex style direction fingerposts etc. all need continuous maintenance either by the responsible bodies or by community involvement.

Hard community resilience components comprising available facilities, such as:

- Primary School.
- Pre-school.
- Post office & general store.
- Doctors surgery.
- Recreation Ground.
- Memorial hall.
- Pubs/Restaurants.
- Garage.

The availability of all of makes the village appealing to young families as well as those in their later years looking to maintain their independence. Having these facilities gives the parish greater resilience, (as found during lockdowns), and provides for a sustainable community.

- The 'softer' component essential in the village comprises;
- An active Parish Council to manage and maintain village facilities.
- The two ladies who publish the Parish News.
- The Village Society who look after the Church Wood.
- The Memorial Hall committee who manage the hall.
- The many and varied special interest groups that provide activities and make use of the facilities.

To have resilience and sustainability all these are essential. If the school disappears, young families will be lost, if the Post office or doctors disappear, the appeal to the independent older generation will be lost.

An active Parish Council or Village society is essential to ensure our facilities do not become under-utilised, unmaintained and fall in the hands of the developers. The many different community groups in the Parish enable residents to join like-minded people in their spare time retaining the 'community' aspect of the village.

It is essential to retain the 'hard' components and find ways to encourage more people to become part of the 'soft' components to ensure a resilient and sustainable community over the period of the plan.

Other identified facilities to encourage and promote in the parish;

- More provision for children playground space/equipment
- Electrical charging points for cars
- Community garden
- Local nature reserve
- Need for a community café/hub – pavilion could be used as a start – should have internet access.
- Allotments –
- Burial space – running out of space at current site.
- Linking young people to facilities and services – could be outside of parish – but access could be provided to get to them
- More bins - A better bin at the play court, Kid friendly bin? They kick off the top of the bins.

5.4 **Neighbourhood Plan and Housing Survey:** A Questionnaire was sent to every household in the Parish in March 2021 with an on line version provided via the Parish Council website. Over 340 people took part. The survey was wide-ranging but several questions related directly to housing issues. These results are summarised as follows:

Do you own or rent your home?: 90% of respondents were owner occupiers, with 5% renting (5% neither owned or rented their home).

How many bedrooms do you have?: 1.5% of respondents lived in a 1 bedroom property, 20% lived in a 2 bedroom property, 41% lived in a 3 bedroom property, 26% had 4 bedrooms and 11% lived in properties with 5 or more bedrooms.

Who is in your household?: 69% of respondents lived with one other adult, 19.5% lived with 2 or more other adults, 18% had children in their household and 9.6% lived alone.

What sort of new housing is needed?: 44% wanted to see starter homes, 40% favoured 1 or 2 bedroom properties, 38% wanted family homes, 30.6% wanted elderly/disabled adapted homes.

What style of Housing do you want to see?: 70% wanted traditional style housing and just under 60% wanted eco/sustainable homes.

Where should new housing be sited?: 58% wanted new housing on brownfield sites, 53% said housing should be sited only within the development boundary, 21% wanted to see farm buildings converted for housing.

What size of housing development should there be?: just under 55% favoured groups of less than 10 houses, 49% favoured individual houses (27% stated a preference for no new housing at all).

Should new buildings be sympathetic to character and scale of surrounding buildings?: around 73% said that new buildings (including extensions) should take into account the scale, character and materials used in surrounding buildings. 61% wanted to see sustainable design (solar power, water harvesting, enhanced insulation etc) incorporated in new buildings.

5.5 Working Groups & Summary Findings:

Local Green Space: a working group was set up to carry out an assessment of local green areas to formulate a list of candidate sites for LGS allocation. These were checked against NPPF criteria and those that did not qualify on these grounds were discarded. The views of the community were sought in the Parish Questionnaire in March/April 2021 and with this evidence, 7 sites were allocated as LGS. These are:

- 1) The Recreation Ground
 - 2) The Stocks & Whipping Post
 - 3) Church Wood with adjacent valley slopes including Church Fields and Church Path
 - 4) The Allotments
 - 5) The Churchyard
 - 6) Roadside verges at Manchester Road/Combe Lane, Standard Hill east, Bexhill Road
 - 7) Proposed recreation area behind Sparke Gardens, Manchester Road
- See LGS Report for full details.

Character Assessment and Heritage: a working group was set up to look at the character of the built environment in the Parish. The built areas were sorted into 10 distinct sectors where characteristics were broadly similar. These are as follows:

- 1) Ninfield Cross comprised of Manchester Road east and The Green
- 2) Coombe Shaw and Manchester Road west
- 3) Millfield
- 4) Standard Hill, The High Street and part of Marlpits Lane
- 5) Downs View
- 6) Church Lane
- 7) Stocks Meadow and Smith Close
- 8) Lower Street
- 9) Bexhill Road (north)
- 10) Potmans Lane

A template was used to collect data on Layout, Topography, Land Use, Roads/Streets & Routes, Buildings and Details, Streetscape, Landmarks, Green & Natural Features, Spaces and Views & Dark Night Skies. Photographs were used to document the features within each area. See Character Assessment & Heritage Report for full details.

Landscape Study: a detailed report describing the landscape features across the Parish of Ninfield was prepared by a small subgroup. This assessment detailed the setting of the Parish within the wider landscape and its relationship to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The topography, geology, landscape history together with woods, trees and agriculture was analysed. Distinct Landscape Character Areas were identified and looked at in detail. These are as follows:

- 1) The Ridge-top Village
- 2) The Low Plateau (including Lunsford Cross & Russell's Green)
- 3) The Valley of Moorhall Stream
- 4) The Valley of Catsfield Stream
- 5) The Valley of Ninfield Stream
- 6) Waller's Haven Levels.

Potential Areas of Locally Valued Landscape were identified and mapped. See Landscape Study for full details.

A Design Guide for Ninfield: a working group was set up to create a design guide for the Parish which we hope will influence the style of future development. The Design Guide followed the example of the High Weald Design Guide and was developed using the Landscape Study, Character Assessment and Heritage reports with the aim of creating well-designed places that conserve and enhance the area's character, setting and sense of place without stifling innovation and creativity. It was deemed necessary to gain more influence over new development due to the unprecedented level of speculative, large scale applications for estate type developments that have not been in keeping with the rest of the village in terms of density or materials used. See A Design Guide for Ninfield for full details.

Working Document

6 The Planning Context

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) and NDPs

- 6.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies in England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans (including Neighbourhood Plans) should be produced and is therefore a key document when undertaking community led planning.
- 6.1.2 Neighbourhood planning provides the opportunity for communities to set out a positive vision for how they want their community to develop over the next 10, 15, 20 years, in ways that meet identified local need and make sense for local people. They can put in place planning policies that will help deliver that vision or grant planning permission for the development they want to see.
- 6.1.3 This section highlights the relevant paragraphs in the NPPF which advise on the required approaches to be taken when planning at the local level.
- 6.1.4 The NPPF states that policies to address non-strategic matters should be included in local plans that contain both strategic and non-strategic policies, and/or in local or neighbourhood plans that contain just non-strategic policies. (para 18).
- 6.1.5 Local Plans should make explicit which policies are strategic policies. These should be limited to those necessary to address the strategic priorities of the area (and any relevant cross-boundary issues), to provide a clear starting point for any non-strategic policies that are needed. Strategic policies should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other non-strategic policies. (para 21)
- 6.1.6 Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies. (para 29)
- 6.1.7 Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently. (para 30)
- 6.1.8 Refusal of planning permission on grounds of prematurity will seldom be justified where a draft plan has yet to be submitted for examination; or – in the case of a neighbourhood plan – before the end of the local planning

authority publicity period on the draft plan. Where planning permission is refused on grounds of prematurity, the local planning authority will need to indicate clearly how granting permission for the development concerned would prejudice the outcome of the plan-making process. (para 50)

- 6.1.9 The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. (para 101)
- 6.1.10 Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities, so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development. (para 127)
- 6.1.11 Local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning. (para 156)
- 6.1.12 As well as the required approaches to Neighbourhood Planning as set out in the NPPF as highlighted above, the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 states that when a plan proposal is submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), it must include a statement explaining how the proposed Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8, of Schedule 4B to the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to neighbourhood plans (otherwise known as the Basic Conditions). One of the requirements is that the making of a neighbourhood development plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).

The following tables set out how the NNDP will be in general conformity with policies at national and local level.

Policies in the NPPF and Guidance in the PPG	How the Ninfield Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) will have regard to national policies and advice.
NPPF Chapter 2. Achieving sustainable development	The Plan will need to show how it contributes to achieving sustainable development and this is one

	of the Basic Conditions that the NNDP will need to meet.
NPPF Chapter 3. Plan-making	The preparation of the Plan will need to follow the advice in this chapter insofar as it is key to the role and content of the Plan.
NPPF Chapter 4. Decision-making	The Plan will not propose any Neighbourhood Development Orders or Community Right to Build Orders to grant planning permission. Other ways that this chapter could be of relevance is through the identification in the plan making stage of conditions and obligations.
NPPF Chapter 5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes with accompanying PPG advice on deliverability	The Plan will not include delivery of homes as this is impractical until the housing needs of the District and its overall distribution are set by an emerging new Local Plan.
NPPF Chapter 6. Building a strong, competitive economy	The Plan will review policies to strengthen its rural business economy.
NPPF Chapter 7. Ensuring the vitality of town centres	The Plan will review policies to strengthen local retail opportunities.
NPPF Chapter 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities	The Plan will review policies relating to safety, health and wellbeing.
NPPF Chapter 9. Promoting sustainable transport	The Plan will review policies relating to sustainable transport.
NPPF Chapter 10. Supporting high quality communications	The Plan will review policies relating to communications.
NPPF Chapter 11. Making effective use of land	The Plan will ensure that policies consider the effective use of land.
NPPF Chapter 12. Achieving well-designed places	The Plan will review policies relating to design and include a local design guide.
NPPF Chapter 13. Protecting Green Belt land	There is no designated Green Belt within the parish.
NPPF Chapter 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change	The Plan will review policies relating to climate change, resilience, and flooding. The parish does not contain any coastline.
NPPF Chapter 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	The Plan will review policies relating to the natural environment including conserving and enhancing the setting of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other designations.
NPPF Chapter 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	The Plan will review policies relating to the historic environment and consider the protection of non-designated heritage assets.
NPPF Chapter 17. Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals	The Plan cannot include policies directly relating to minerals.

6.2 Local Planning Context

- 6.2.1 As stated, the NNDP is required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Wealden Development Plan (ie. the adopted Wealden Local Plan documents), as have been adopted at the time of the NNDP's examination. It also needs to have regard to any emerging Development Plan policies.
- 6.2.2 It is necessary to identify which local planning policies are strategic. Para 21 of the NPPF states that if a Local Plan includes both strategic and non-strategic policies, it should make explicit which of the policies are strategic policies. These should be limited to those necessary to address the strategic priorities of the area (and any relevant cross-boundary issues), to provide a clear starting point for any non-strategic policies that are needed. **Strategic policies should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other non-strategic policies.**
- 6.2.3 Paragraph 20 of the NPPF defines strategic policies as those which set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for (a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development; (b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk management and the provision of minerals and energy; (c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and (d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment including landscapes and green infrastructure, and measures to address climate change.

In the case of Wealden District, the strategic policies are those set out in the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 (apart from WCS8 which is replaced by policy AFH1 of the Wealden Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2016). The Wealden Local Plan 1998 was adopted at a time when the strategic policies were contained in the East Sussex Structure Plan 1991 (and its Deposit Draft Replacement 1996). County Structure Plans were abolished in 2004 and subsequently replaced by Core Strategies (in addition to the policies of the NPPF). Consequently, there is reason to regard all the 'saved' policies of the 1998 Local Plan as non-strategic. Nevertheless, for the sake of comprehensiveness, the NNDP will also demonstrate compliance with the saved policies of the Wealden Local Plan 1998.

The Wealden Development Plan (for the area falling outside of the South Downs National Park), comprises the following documents:

Wealden Development Plan Document	Commentary
East Sussex Waste and Minerals Plan adopted 2013	Neighbourhood plans cannot include policies that cover minerals and waste development, nor include policies that allow development to take place in a way that would negatively affect mineral resources, or

	minerals or waste operations (see listed sites in Ninfield below).
East Sussex Waste and Minerals Sites Plan 2017	Little Standard Hill Farm, is a safeguarded site for mineral extraction. Downbarn Farm and Ninfield, Tarmac Topblock are safeguarded waste sites
Wealden Local Plan 1998 (saved policies)	From 27 September 2007 a number of policies in the Wealden Local Plan were saved by approval of the Secretary of State under paragraph 1 (3) of Schedule 8 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan 2013	The Core Strategy Local Plan comprises the spatial vision and strategic objectives and policies for Wealden District for the period 2013 to 2027.
Wealden Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan 2016	This document supersedes Core Strategy Local Plan Policy WCS8 concerning affordable housing.

The adopted strategic policies that the NNDP is required to be in conformity with, are as set out below under the relevant document heading:

Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 – Policy Heading	Policies within Ninfield Neighbourhood Development Plan must be in conformity with the identified Strategic Policies outlined below
WCS1 Provision of Homes and Jobs 2006-2027	Land will be identified for provision of 4,525 dwellings (9,414 including commitments); 40,000sqm of employment and 17,000sqm of retail in the District.
WCS2 Distribution of Housing Growth 2006-2027	Broad allocations for housing in each of the towns with 455 allocated to the rural villages (1,373 including commitments)
WCS3 Distribution of Employment and Retail	Allocates land for development to meet WCS1. The allocations are in towns with none allocated in the rural parishes.
WCS4 Strategic Development Areas	Ninfield is not one of these areas.
WCS5 Managing the Release of Housing Land	Monitoring to allow cohesion between housing delivery and infrastructure provision. Release of land will be managed to meet WCS2 and adequacy assessed.
WCS6 Rural Areas Strategy	Categorises settlements and allocates land for housing to meet WCS1. Ninfield is a 'Local Service Centre' with an allocation for 50 net additional dwellings.
WCS7 Effective Provision of Infrastructure	The release of land for development will be conditional upon there being sufficient capacity in the existing local infrastructure to meet the requirements generated by the proposed development. Where development would create the need to provide additional or improved community facilities, services and

	infrastructure to mitigate its impact, a programme of delivery must be agreed with the relevant infrastructure providers which will ensure that these improvements are provided at the time they are needed.
WCS9 Rural Exception Affordable Housing	In exceptional circumstances, planning permission may be granted for small scale affordable residential development in rural areas outside development boundaries in order to meet an identified local housing need among those people unable to compete in the normal housing market.
WCS10 Provision for gypsies and travellers	Allocation of an additional 23 pitches of which none are in Ninfield.
WCS11 Site criteria for allocations in WCS10	Not applicable as no sites in Ninfield.
WCS12 Biodiversity	In order to contribute to the biodiversity targets provided in the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan the District Council will prevent a net loss of biodiversity, ensure a comprehensive network of habitats, and work with partners to maximise opportunities to ensure habitats, biodiversity features and ecological networks are maintained, restored, enhanced and where possible created to achieve a net gain in biodiversity and sustain wildlife in both rural and urban areas.
WCS13 Green Infrastructure	Development proposals will not be permitted which would result in the loss of existing open space or harm to Wealden's network of green spaces unless measures are incorporated within the development that will either mitigate the effects of development or alternative and suitable provision is made that is accessible, of good quality and value to its users, in an appropriate location, at an appropriate scale and nature and would positively contribute to the overall network of green space. All new residential development will be required to contribute to the green infrastructure network and where appropriate to make provision for new or enhancement of existing open space.
WCS14 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development	When considering development proposals, the District Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Wealden District Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan 2016 Policy Heading	Policies within Ninfield Neighbourhood Development Plan must be in conformity with the identified Strategic Policy detailed below
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<p>AFH1 Affordable Housing</p>	<p>New housing developments, including affordable housing, will be expected to provide for a mix of dwelling size, type and tenure that meet the identified housing needs of the local area. New housing developments must make the most effective use of the land, taking into account the character of the local area. Affordable housing is required at a level of 35% of the number of dwellings on development sites with 5 (net) dwellings or more. Where sites are allocated in a Local Plan that document may specify a different, and potentially higher, housing target having regard to the findings of the associated viability assessment and any site specific considerations.</p> <p>Affordable housing provision should incorporate a mix of tenures. The presumption is for development sites of 49 dwellings (net) or less that around 80% of the total number of affordable homes provided will be for social rented accommodation with the remainder being for intermediate accommodation. For development sites of 50 dwellings (net) or more around 40% of the total number of affordable homes provided will be for social rented accommodation, 40% will be affordable rent and 20% intermediate accommodation.</p> <p>Where it can be proven that affordable housing requirement cannot be achieved, due to economic viability, there will be flexibility in meeting stated targets. In such exceptional circumstances, the tenure of affordable housing should be examined prior to the proportion of affordable housing. It will be the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate that the requirements of the policy cannot be met. The closest alternative target that can be achieved will be sought taking into account viability and need. The affordable housing will be distributed within the site to ensure it is integrated and indistinguishable within the new development and surrounds. It will also be comparable in design terms with the market housing on site.</p> <p>Affordable housing should be delivered on site, however in exceptional circumstances a commuted payment may be accepted in lieu of on-site provision. These circumstances may include provision where a Registered Provider finds it uneconomic or impractical to provide the units in the scale or form agreed.</p>

Wealden District Council - Emerging Local Plan

6.2.1 In recent years Wealden District Council sought to update its development plan and submitted a new Wealden Local Plan to the Secretary of State, for independent examination in January 2019. Following the Stage One examination process in the spring/summer of 2019, the Inspector concluded in December 2019 that the submitted plan could not proceed further in the examination process and should be withdrawn. Wealden District Council voted to withdraw the draft Local Plan on 19 February 2020 at its Full Council meeting and therefore this document does not form part of the strategic framework for the Wealden District. WDC is now engaged upon the preparation of a new Local Plan.

6.2.2 Neighbourhood Plans can be developed before, after, or in parallel with a Local Plan. Although an emerging Local Plan does not constitute part of the statutory development plan, it still needs to be considered by qualifying bodies for two reasons:

- A) The evidence base behind an emerging local plan will also form the evidence base for the neighbourhood plan area so will be relevant in policy making; and
- B) Where local and neighbourhood plans have conflicting policies, the plan made last will carry more weight. To avoid the risk of policies in a Neighbourhood Plan being superseded by a later local plan, it is necessary for the two plans to work iteratively and in a complimentary way.

6.2.3 Where a neighbourhood plan does precede an emerging local plan, Planning Practice Guidance states the “the local planning authority should take a proactive and positive approach working collaboratively with a qualifying body particularly sharing evidence and seeking to resolve any issues, to ensure the draft neighbourhood plan has the greatest chance of success at independent examination”.

6.2.4 There will be opportunities for Ninfield Parish Council as qualifying body and Wealden District Council to actively collaborate during their respective plan making processes as the District Council is now preparing a new Local Plan for the District. On adoption this Plan will provide policies to manage growth and guide development over a 15-20 year period. Key milestones and the current timetabling of the Local Plan are as follows:

Key Milestones of Local Plan	Indicative Date
Approval of the revised Local Development Scheme	July 2020
Early Engagement Consultation – Direction of Travel Document	September - October 2020

Local Plan Draft (Regulation 18) consultation	Spring 2022
Local Plan Submission Draft (Regulation 20) invite representations to be made	Winter 2022 / 2023
Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft to the Secretary of State Draft (Regulation 22)	Spring 2023
Consideration of representations by appointed Independent Inspector (Regulation 23)	Spring-Summer 2023
Examination in Public (Regulation 24)	Summer 2023
Publication of the recommendations of the appointed person (Regulation 25)	Winter 2023
Adoption of the Local Plan (Regulation 26)	Winter 2023

6.3 Direction of Travel' Consultation document

6.3.2 In November 2020 the District Council published a 'Direction of Travel' Consultation document, which is the first stage in their engagement process in preparing this new Local Plan. The document has identified fourteen themes and outlines issues, challenges and policy options for each topic that will be considered as part of the plan-making process.

The topic areas are listed below, with a commentary on collaboration opportunities with the NNDP plan making process.

1. Direction of travel policy options: Tackling Climate Change

- Delivering improvements in energy efficiency for new and existing developments;
- Facilitating the provision of water efficiency and renewable energy installations in developments;
- Facilitating the provision of decentralised energy networks and renewable energy developments;
- Encouraging active and sustainable transport to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions including the provision of walking and cycling infrastructure within major new developments;
- Encouraging ULEV network and infrastructure;
- Enabling carbon sequestration / storage in appropriate locations and as part of developments;
- In liaison with partners, encourage and seek measures to help manage flood risk and deliver suitable sustainable drainage systems as part of developments;
- Safeguard land to deliver sufficient water storage capacity (i.e. increasing reservoir capacity at Arlington);
- Implementing parking standards for development; and
- Ensuring that new development is designed to consider climate change from project inception, taking account of the whole life of the development.

Collaboration Opportunities: NNDP has the opportunity to develop policies relating to the use of renewable technology, sustainable transport solutions, sustainable drainage systems and other climate change initiatives.

2. Direction of travel policy options: Infrastructure to support growth

- To help create sustainable communities and reduce the need to travel by private motor vehicle, planning policies will support development by ensuring that the right infrastructure is provided in sustainable locations at the appropriate time;
- Planning policies will seek to promote the use of sustainable transport modes (i.e. walking, cycling and public transport) and will favour development in locations where existing sustainable transport routes are in place (or where this can be provided);
- Planning policies will seek to direct new development allocations to sustainable locations and to be designed to support sustainable modes of transport, as well as provide suitable vehicular accesses and parking;
- Planning policies will support the provision of new social infrastructure where it is needed;
- Planning policies will support the provision of new education infrastructure in locations where it is most needed to meet the requirements for school places;
- Planning policies will support the provision of new telecommunications infrastructure where it is required;
- Planning policies will support the provision of new health infrastructure (particularly GP surgeries) where it is most needed;
- Continue to have firm planning policies that seek to resist the loss of existing facilities (i.e. public houses, village shops, community halls) where possible;
- Allocate sites for social and community uses to meet the needs identified by Wealden District Council and/or other infrastructure providers and to aim to locate these where they are most needed and within walking distance;
- Continue to consider the impacts of large new developments within Wealden and the impact they have on existing social and community infrastructure within towns/villages;
- If required, subject to Government planning reforms, the Council will seek to review its CIL Charging Schedule by the end of 2023 to ensure that new development is making an appropriate contribution to infrastructure provision; and
- The Council will progress an overall assessment of the financial viability of new development contained within the Local Plan to support the review of the CIL charging schedule.

Collaboration Opportunities: NNDP has the opportunity to develop policies relating to the provision of infrastructure required by new development, encourage sustainable transport, provision and protection of community facilities.

3. Direction of travel policy options: Housing

- The provision of a clear strategy to bring sufficient land forward at a sufficient rate to meet our housing target and delivering these in the most

sustainable locations for growth, taking into account land constraints and limitations;

- To provide planning policies that seek to both allocate and support the delivery of a mix of housing sites in the district, including those from small-to-medium sized house builders, to ensure housing delivery over the entire plan period;
- If required, we will seek to provide housing requirements for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the Council's overall planning strategy for the pattern and scale of development;
- Encouraging the delivery of a range of housing to meet the needs of different groups of the community including increasing specialist accommodation, retirement / sheltered housing, residential and nursing care homes, accessible and/or adaptable homes;
- Improve opportunities for self-build or custom build housing, community-led housing and build to rent;
- To maximise opportunities to deliver on brownfield sites where possible, particularly within existing towns and villages, that benefit from existing infrastructure provision and can achieve higher densities;
- Encouraging the right types, sizes and tenures of housing within the district to meet our community's changing needs;
- The new Local Plan will ensure that new housing development will be developed at appropriate densities, that accessibility standards (i.e. lifetime homes) and space standards are also appropriate to ensure good quality development;
- To provide planning policies that consider the appropriateness of converting rural buildings for housing, the development of single dwellings in the countryside and the redevelopment of existing housing stock; and
- To safeguard existing gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople sites from redevelopment to other uses and to meet the future accommodation needs of gypsies, traveller and travelling showpeople as part of the new Local Plan.

Collaboration Opportunities: NNDP has the opportunity to develop policies relating to housing including its range, pattern, size and tenure and approaches to windfall sites.

4. Direction of travel policy options: Affordable Housing

- Providing a policy that requires a minimum threshold for affordable housing provision for all major housing development sites;
- Establishing clear priorities for genuinely affordable family homes for rent or homeownership, including percentages for the types of affordable housing tenures provided on development sites at different scales (i.e. shared ownership, affordable rent, starter homes, self and custom build etc.)
- To set out a clear planning policy for off-site affordable housing contributions and where this may be appropriate, in line with national planning policy guidance.
- To set out a clear planning policy to support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, including allowing some market homes to help facilitate this.

Collaboration Opportunities: NNDP has the opportunity to identify sites to bring forward rural exception sites for affordable housing.

5. Direction of travel policy options: Local Economy

- To establish how much economic development floorspace will be required in Wealden over the plan period, including any unmet needs from neighbouring authorities and provide a strategy for bringing forward sufficient employment land to meet those agreed needs;
- Provide a spatial strategy for the distribution of new economic development that takes into account the known constraints of the district to ensure that sustainable development comes forward;
- Provide planning policies that ensure new employment development, whether large or small, are of a good design, have a suitable access and are supported by the right infrastructure;
- Provide planning policies that seek to protect existing employment land from redevelopment in both urban and rural settings where this is needed;
- Provide planning policies that set clear criteria is established for the expansion and/or intensification of existing employment sites where planning permission is required;
- Provide further guidance on the protection of residential amenity where employment uses are intensified/expanded in residential areas;
- The new Local Plan will direct our largest scale employment generating activities in Wealden to the most sustainable locations;
- Provide planning policies that support and are flexible with regards to small-to-medium sized enterprises and help facilitate the growth of such businesses in the future. This could consider actively considering options to make land available for such business uses; Provide further guidance on the types of offices that could be encouraged in the economic climate, specifically the types of shared, flexible and managed workspaces suitable for start-ups and very small businesses;
- Provide further guidance for rural businesses that includes issues surrounding the diversification of existing farming enterprises, the conversion of rural buildings for employment use and the expansion/intensification of outdoor recreational businesses; and
- To ensure that planning policies create an environment which enables the cultural and creative economy to expand.

Collaboration Opportunities: NNDP has the opportunity to develop policies relating to the protection of existing employment sites and support of new attractive employment site/s where appropriate including diversification.

6. Directions of travel policy options: Town and Local Centres

- Setting visions and objectives for each of our larger town centres and identifying specific improvements that could be brought forward through future development proposals;
- Establish a hierarchy of town and local centres in the District taking into account each centre's size and function;

- Define the extent of our town centres and primary shopping areas; Direct new major retail and leisure development into our larger town centres;
- Require out of centre retail development proposals to prove no adverse impact on our existing centres by setting a locally specific threshold for retail impact assessments;
- Provide planning policies that support and encourage the regeneration and development of appropriate town centre sites, encouraging a suitable mix of uses;
- Provide planning policies that support the delivery of a range of shop unit sizes to meet the needs of retailers and businesses that wish to locate or increase their offer in our town centres;
- Provide planning policies that support and encourage a more vibrant daytime and evening economy within our town centres including diversity of uses such as pop-up shops, shared spaces etc.
- Provide policies to protect community uses, local shops and services in our local centres / villages; Provide planning policies that seek to retain, enhance and re-introduce or create new markets; and
- Provide planning policies that will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of our town and local centres.

Collaboration Opportunities: NNDP has the opportunity to develop policies relating to the protection of community uses, local services and shops as well as identify new facilities.

7. Direction of travel policy options: Tourism

- Provide planning policies that support and encourage the sustainable growth of the tourism and cultural offer of the District through the delivery of new tourism businesses as well as supporting the expansion of existing business. This should include tourism accommodation;
- Provide planning policies which facilitate, subject to criteria, proposals that deliver high quality and sustainable tourism experiences including enhancing visitor experiences; increasing the length of stays and encouraging year round tourism;
- Provide planning policies specific to the types of tourism accommodation we want to encourage and offer, taking account of any relevant evidence base data;
- Provide policy support for farm diversification in regards to tourism offers be that accommodation or experiences;
- Look at providing policies which support and facilitate the sustainable delivery of experiential tourism such as viticulture;
- Consider policies that provide opportunities for visitors to increase their awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the district;
- Consider the location and design on any tourism related development to minimise the need for travel by car and which encourages travel by other sustainable means such as public transport, walking and cycling;

- Ensure that any planning policies for tourism development will not lead to adverse effects on the character, historical significance, appearance or amenity of the district. This includes avoiding adverse impacts on the vitality and viability of village and town centres;
- Provide policies that prevent the loss of visitor accommodation, visitor attractions and recreation facilities unless under very specific circumstances

Collaboration Opportunities: NNDP has the opportunity to develop policies relating to the visitor economy, tourism sectors and assets.

8. Direction of travel policy options: Natural Environment

- Provide a policy to seek biodiversity net gains onsite and only consider other avenues when this is not possible and it is supported by firm evidence;
- Provide a criteria based policy for allowing offsite biodiversity net gains to be delivered;
- Continue to resist development proposals that would be likely to adversely affect the biodiversity of the district including designated and non-designated sites as well as individual biodiversity features;
- Provide policies which support and encourage development that maintains, restores, enhances and where possible creates biodiversity and ecological networks;
- Look at the potential to establish a strategic network of areas/sites that could be identified and allocated for off-site biodiversity net gains and set this within policy;
- Consider the potential to require more than the national 10% biodiversity net gain requirement for development;
- Look to provide planning policies which retain and protect specific biodiversity features such as trees and hedgerows on a district wide basis; and
- Consider the introduction of buffer zones for sites with importance for nature conservation.

Collaboration Opportunities: NNDP has the opportunity to develop policies relating to protection, mitigation and net gains to biodiversity/habitats, environmental improvements and enhancements.

9. Direction of travel policy options: Green Infrastructure

- Continue to resist the inappropriate loss of green infrastructure, green infrastructure assets (trees, hedgerows, open spaces etc.) and green/blue spaces and support proposals to enhance access to, as well as the quality and quantity of, green infrastructure;
- Provide a policy setting out the strategic green infrastructure network in the district and identify what development will need to achieve in relation to it;
- Provide policies setting out green infrastructure principles and standards that developments will need to achieve, using the green infrastructure evidence base;

- Provide policies to create green infrastructure links between new developments and the wider green infrastructure network including existing and new green/blue spaces;
- Include green infrastructure within any generic infrastructure policy, alongside more traditional 'grey' infrastructure i.e. roads;
- Provide support for the designation of Local Green Spaces where appropriate in Neighbourhood Plans but also through the Local Plan;
- Provide policies to support the creation of new green spaces and the protection of existing. Include requirements for linkages to be made between green spaces themselves and developments;
- Ensure that future green and open space needs are planned for in areas with the potential for substantial change and support the creation of new publicly accessible green and open space in areas of deficiency; and
- Enhance green and open spaces to provide a wider range of benefits for residents. Examples could include improved public access for all, inclusive design, recreation facilities, habitat creation, landscaping improvement or flood storage

Collaboration Opportunities: NNDP has the opportunity to develop policies relating to the allocation of Local Green Spaces, protection and improvement to green corridors, green/blue infrastructure including informal/formal open space.

10. Direction of travel policy options: Landscape Assets

- To continue to resist inappropriate loss of valued landscapes and approving proposals that will conserve or enhance landscape character and its wider benefits;
- Providing a criteria based policy for allowing development in the countryside;
- Consider a policy that protects green and blue corridors;
- Consider a policy which is specific to design within the landscape – designated and non-designated – and set out certain criteria;
- Develop a High Weald AONB specific policy requiring proposals to clearly demonstrate how they have regard to the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan and High Weald Design Guide;
- Consider a policy which protects and enhances rural landscape features in their own right i.e. hedgerows, field patterns, settlement patterns, trees, water features; and
- Consider the inclusion of a dark night skies policy which will control lighting schemes in those parts of the district with the darkest skies.

Collaboration Opportunities: NNDP has the opportunity to develop policies relating to the protection and enhancement of the special character of the High Weald AONB, protection of historic/natural landscape features, conserve and enhance landscape character areas and protection of dark skies,

11. Direction of travel policy options: Heritage and Cultural Assets

- Provide district wide planning policies to conserve and enhance the significance of the historic environment through the positive management of development affecting heritage assets (designated and non-designated), including through the safeguarding of heritage assets and their setting.
- Provide planning policies that support and encourage the appropriate use of historic buildings, including historic farmsteads, to ensure their continued viability whilst protecting their character and setting;
- Provide planning policies that will secure the conservation of a heritage asset for the foreseeable future through 'enabling development' that might otherwise conflict with other planning policies;
- Provide a criteria based planning policy for the consideration of development that relates to demolition involving heritage assets and;
- Provide a policy for the sustainability of historic buildings and heritage assets (i.e. in relation to renewable energy generation, energy efficiency measures taking a 'whole building' approach.

Collaboration Opportunities: NNDP has the opportunity to develop policies relating to ensuring development preserves, reflects and enhances heritage and cultural assets within the parish.

12. Direction of travel policy options: Design

- Provide a clear vision and expectations for the design of development in the district;
- Providing policies that support high quality and inclusive design in new development and improvements to the public realm;
- Provide a criteria based planning policy to ensure scale, massing, height, details and materials in developments reflect the character, local distinctiveness, and context of the district;
- Maintain the provision of a detailed Design Guide to accompany any design policies within the Local Plan;
- Provide housing policies that will ensure new residential developments are tenure blind so that affordable housing is well integrated and has the same external appearance as private housing. This will assist in preventing segregation within developments and promote social cohesion;
- Provide policies which relate to the layout and design of sites in terms of public spaces including green spaces and open space provision.
- Ensure that open space standards are included in any such policies; Ensure that any policies on design take full account of the need to protect and enhance the natural environment and wildlife;
- Provide policies on standards for accessible and adaptable developments including allowing for homes to be capable of adaptation to meet changing needs of occupants as they get older. This should include the adoption of minimum space standards for new residential developments in line with national standards but amended if necessary to meet local needs;
- Promote sustainable construction methods through policies;

- Provide sustainable design policies to include energy and water efficiency measures as well as the orientation of developments and greening measures including green roofs, green walls and tree planting;
- Provide policies that ensure developments are designed and delivered to enable and promote good living conditions for new and existing residents. This will support health and well-being goals as well;
- Provide planning policies for the design of the public realm including shopfronts and street furniture in town and village centres; and
- Consider the provision of area specific design policies for different areas of the district in order to better reflect the varied character of the district.

Collaboration Opportunities: NNDP has the opportunity to develop policies relating to the specific design elements of development in both the Low and High Weald areas, promote the use of sustainable building techniques and approaches, encourage development to include lifetime homes, the strengthening of placemaking including public realm improvements.

13. Direction of travel policy options: Health and Well-being

- Provide policies setting out the location, quantity and quality standards new development is expected to deliver in terms of open space, sport and recreation facilities;
- Continue to protect and resist the inappropriate loss of open space, sport and recreation facilities;
- Ensure the location of new housing development (including site allocations) is situated on land and in areas accessible to employment, services & facilities (including healthcare and community), public transport, open space, walking and cycling routes in order to create walkable neighbourhoods; Provide policies that support and encourage active travel choices including walking, cycling and public transport.
- Ensure that distances needed to travel to access recreational facilities and open space are minimal and that access to these is possible via walking and/or cycling;
- Provide policies to support public realm improvements including but not limited to appropriate street lighting, signage and street legibility;
- Ensure that new development is designed to reduce the risk of crime.
- Provide policies that support and encourage local and sustainable food production (i.e. allotments, community gardens);
- Provide policies that provide the appropriate housing mix for the district, informed by the evidence base, and ensure that policies support the provision of housing that accounts for the changing age profile of the district, ensuring suitable housing adaptability where possible.;
- Consider opportunities to design in safe and accessible walking and cycling networks to developments. This could then help support and encourage the proportion of residents who walk and cycle in the District. This could have beneficial impacts on health, obesity, reducing emissions and sustainable transport;
- Provide policies to support and encourage mixed use developments. The blending of homes with shops, employment and civic building brings well-

known health benefits to residents by encouraging walking, and corresponding benefits to the environment by removing the need to drive;

- Ensure that development, particularly housing development, is made healthy through the provision of good quality green / open spaces and greening measures within their design and layout; and
- Noise management policies should be considered for the district particularly given its rural nature as this can affect health and well-being. To protect existing social and community facilities so people have a places to meet and socialise. To promote new social and community facilities as part of residential or other mixed use development schemes where appropriate.

Collaboration Opportunities: NNDP has the opportunity to develop policies relating to the protection and enhancement of formal and informal recreation facilities, protection and support for community hubs, encouragement of active travel, public realm improvements, support of community resilience, adequate greening in new development, allocation of allotments and linkage of walking and cycling routes.

14. Strategic Growth - Options for Housing

Option 1 – Focused Growth including Large Extensions to Existing Sustainable Settlements

This option would be to focus on growth for existing sustainable settlements, similar to the approach taken in the Core Strategy Local Plan (2013).

For this option, the most sustainable settlements (possibly including those very close to the border) would deliver the vast majority of the growth in the district. A smaller proportion of growth would then go to other sustainable rural settlements within the district, including larger villages with sustainability credentials. There would only be very limited growth in smaller villages and rural areas.

Option 2 – Semi-Dispersed Growth to Existing Sustainable Settlements and Larger Villages

This option would distribute growth across the district to sustainable settlements, with the majority of development still being located within the most sustainable settlements as listed in option one (subject to further settlement hierarchy work), but with a larger proportion of growth being earmarked for other sustainable settlements within the district, such as larger villages within the district that have sustainability credentials (this will be updated as part of the Council's settlement hierarchy work). There would continue to be only limited growth within smaller villages and rural areas.

Option 3 – Dispersed Growth

This option would be to provide for development in all settlements across the district in line with an updated settlement hierarchy that assesses the sustainability credentials of all settlements in the district. The amount of new development would be proportionate to the size of each settlement (and its position within the settlement hierarchy) as well as its existing services/facilities and the ability to enhance those facilities. This would be the only option where some growth within

smaller villages and rural areas would be supported subject site specific constraints and the settlement's position within the settlement hierarchy.

Option 4 – New Settlement(s) Growth

This option would in effect include a 'new' freestanding settlement(s), potentially in the form of one or more 'Garden Village'. Depending on the final location, this option could also include the very significant expansion of an existing settlement(s).

This option would be based on a potential settlement or settlements of around 2,000 to 5,000 homes plus other business, employment, community and leisure uses. The proposed settlement would include an agreed set of design principles and would be led through a unique master plan that would form part of the Local Plan.

Collaboration Opportunities: NNDP has the opportunity to develop policies relating to the allocation of new homes in the village. However, recently there have been planning approvals for a large quantum of residential development in the parish, with 222 approved and in various states of progress. These are in addition to the 17 already built and occupied. Clarification will be sought with Wealden District Council as to emerging growth options and the contribution Ninfield has already made to overall housing delivery targets.