

# The Broomfield and Kingswood Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Plan



Prepared by Broomfield and Kingswood Parish Council

May 2014

## Foreword

Welcome by Chairman of the Parish Council

***As Chairman of Broomfield and Kingswood Parish Council it is my pleasure to introduce you to the Draft Neighbourhood Plan.***

***You may recall that the Localism Act came into force during the beginning of 2012 and it was decided that the Parish would seek the views of Parishioners. Therefore a public meeting was held at the village hall on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012 to enable everybody to understand the implications of the Act.***

***Following this meeting a number of people put their names forward to form a Steering Group to progress a Neighbourhood Plan (NPSG) the main objective being to find out from Parishioners their needs and wishes for future development, if any, within the Parish.***

***The intention to undertake such a plan was registered with Maidstone Borough Council who publicised the fact for a 6 week consultation period. At the same time letters were delivered to all residents, together with local advertising, asking for any comments.***

***In November 2012 a questionnaire was delivered to all households and this resulted in a 25% response from which the NPSG were able to start to formulate a plan.***

***In April 2013, following a tendering exercise, the Parish Council awarded a contract to Designscape Consultancy Ltd to turn the aspirations into workable documents and to ensure that proper procedures were followed.***

***Numerous meetings were held and further information gathered at Fetes and the School culminating in a Workshop in September 2013. There was a subsequent presentation of the draft plan at the village hall in November 2013, with the draft plan having taken note of comments that had been received. Further discussion were carried out with Maidstone Borough Council in late 2013 and early 2014, leading to the Draft Plan as now presented. The Draft Plan takes note of the further comments received at the November consultation event and also comments made by Maidstone Borough Council.***

***The Parish Council and the NPSG believe that the preparation of the plan has been an opportunity to create something beneficial for the people of the Parish and at the same time provides an opportunity to help protect the countryside of the Parish.***

***The Parish Council would like to thank all of the members of the NPSG for all of the hours of hard work that it has taken to prepare these documents and for the people of the village for their input during the process.***

**Terry Baker  
Chairman, Broomfield & Kingswood Parish Council**



Map showing Broomfield and Kingswood Parish Boundary and the extent of the Broomfield and Kingswood Neighbourhood Plan, being the whole Parish.

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## 1. Introduction

### The Neighbourhood Plan in the Town and Country Planning System

The Broomfield and Kingswood Parish Council has prepared this Draft Neighbourhood Plan to provide an opportunity for local people to help shape the approach to future development of the village of Kingswood.

Neighbourhood Plans were introduced in the “Localism Act” 2012 and is a measure to meet the Government’s aim to give local communities more say in the planning of the places in which they live and work.

The Draft Plan has been prepared through an iterative process with local people and has included consultation through the circulation of questionnaires and participation through workshops.



*Neighbourhood Plan Community workshop*

Details of the consultation process are set out in a Draft Consultation Statement which provides an overview of the process and also people’s responses. It is available on the Parish Council website ([www.broomfieldandkingswoodpc.kentparishes.gov.uk](http://www.broomfieldandkingswoodpc.kentparishes.gov.uk)) and on the Borough Council’s website ([www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk)) or is available at the Parish Council Office or Maidstone Gateway.

The purpose of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan is to determine the extent of any future development in the parish and identify where it is best located. It is also to identify any other physical improvements to the village that development will help to enable.

The Neighbourhood Plan must accord with higher level planning policy. It must comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and also the Maidstone Development Plan.

The main document in the Maidstone Development Plan is the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan, 2000. In 2007 the Secretary of State deleted some of the policies in the document, but the policies that were saved are used to make decisions on planning applications.

Maidstone has two adopted local plan documents which are part of the local plan. These documents contain planning policies and should be read with the saved policies of the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan 2000.

- Affordable Housing DPD (2006)
- Open Space DPD (2006)

Maidstone Borough Council has also adopted supplementary planning documents (SPD) and endorsed supplementary guidance documents (SG). These provide supplementary guidance to local, regional and national planning policies. The following are relevant in Broomfield and Kingswood Parish.

- Sustainable Construction SPD (2006)
- Residential Extensions SPD (2009)
- Kent Design Guide 2005 SG (2009)

- Kent Downs AONB Management Plan SG (2009)
- Draft Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-2019.

The Borough Council is currently working on a new Local Plan which will replace the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan. The new plan will be called the Maidstone Borough Local Plan it will provide a framework for development until 2031. Maidstone Borough Council aims to be able to adopt their new plan in 2015. The Council recently completed a formal consultation of the first draft of their Local Plan, the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation, Local Plan 2014.

When it is adopted the Broomfield and Kingswood Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan and will carry equal weight in determining planning applications as the Local Plan.

### **The format of the Broomfield and Kingswood Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Plan**

The Plan is prepared in four sections:

#### **Background**

This describes the purpose of neighbourhood plans and how Broomfield and Kingswood Plan is being prepared.

#### **Constraints and Opportunities**

This explains how the Parish has been assessed to identify its strengths, its future needs and how these might be met through the development process.

#### **Vision Statement, Aims and Objectives**

This is a clear statement of what the Plan aims to achieve.

### **Neighbourhood Plan Policies**

These are the policies that will describe the form of development that will be acceptable in the Parish in the period until 2031.

This Document with its appendices is the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Broomfield and Kingswood Parish.

During the preparation of the Plan background information was assembled, this is known as the Evidence Base. It is available on the Parish Council and Maidstone Borough Council websites.

## 2. Background

### Purpose

Neighbourhood planning is a new way for communities to decide the future of the places where they live and work.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a means for local communities to establish planning policies for their local area. The aim is for a Plan to set a vision for the future indicating what can be built and where. In Broomfield and Kingswood a Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by the Parish Council.

### Process

There are 5 key stages to Neighbourhood Planning.

The first is to define the neighbourhood. The Broomfield and Kingswood Neighbourhood Plan area is defined by the parish boundary (as shown on Page 3).

The second stage is to pull together ideas from local people and to begin to formulate a draft plan. The Parish Council has begun this process and it has included:

- Letters to every household informing them of the intention to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan;
- Articles in the Village News magazine;
- Notice in the Parish section of the Kent Messenger newspaper;
- Notices placed on telegraph poles within the parish;
- Questionnaire Survey, November 2012;
- Consultation event with Kingswood Village School + questionnaire survey July 2013;
- Consultation workshop event, September 2013.
- Further consultation event, November 2013.

This Consultation Draft Plan has been prepared to encapsulate the ideas of local people. There is now an opportunity for people to consider the Plan and further express their views before it is redrafted and submitted to an independent examiner who will check that it meets the right standards. The

Examiner may suggest changes to the Parish Council.

The fourth stage is a community referendum. Maidstone Borough Council will organise a referendum. People living in the Parish who are registered to vote in local elections will be entitled to vote in the referendum. If more than 50% of people voting in the referendum support the Plan then the Borough Council must bring it into force.

### Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Plan

This Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Plan is being presented to local people at Kingswood Village Hall on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2014. This marks the start of the formal six-week consultation process. Copies of the Plan will also be available on the Parish Council website ([www.broomfieldandkingswoodpc.kent.parishes.gov.uk](http://www.broomfieldandkingswoodpc.kent.parishes.gov.uk)) and also Maidstone Borough Council's website ([www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk)) or at the Parish Council Office or Maidstone Gateway offices.

Further views are welcomed until the closing date of 28<sup>th</sup> June 2014, being the end of the formal six week period. The Plan will then be redrafted and prepared for submission to the Independent Examiner.

shall be a presumption against development as these areas are valued and considered important by local people, and as also protected by Local Plan policies.

### 3. Vision Statement, Aims and Objectives

#### The Vision –

The vision is to maintain the general character of the Parish of Broomfield and Kingswood and to create a new village green in Kingswood. The new Green will create a focal point for village life, an open space for leisure and limited recreational use, somewhere for people to meet and connected to the existing Village Hall a place to host local events and entertainment.

#### Aims –

- a) To maintain the character of the Parish and the villages of Broomfield and Kingswood;
- b) To provide a new village green and limit new residential development to that which is necessary to enable the provision of the village green.

#### Objectives –

- a) To provide a new Village Green on land identified allowing up to 39 new dwellings to enable the Green to be established;
- b) The Village Green will be a minimum of 0.8 hectare;
- c) The new dwellings will be a mix of houses but generally arranged around the Village Green and be of low density and designed in a Kentish Wealden vernacular;
- d) That the developer of the housing scheme of the Plan shall make a financial contribution toward the provision of off-site affordable homes within the Borough of Maidstone;
- e) To ensure that traffic management measures create a safe environment in and around the proposed Village Green area;
- f) To safeguard important landscape features of the allocated area including perimeter trees and the Peter Pease tree, and to provide structural landscaping proposals to create a high quality environment;
- g) To safeguard the remainder of the open countryside, woodland, and other landscape areas and features of the Parish, where there

## 4. Constraints and Opportunities

### Sustainable Development

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to sustainable development. The NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development economic, social and environmental. The roles are mutually dependent. Plans need to take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas.

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that plans should respond positively to meet the development needs of their area.

The Broomfield and Kingswood Neighbourhood Plan is a response to local people's desire to establish a village green in Kingswood and create a new heart for the Village. It is envisaged that this new public space will provide a focus for local events and for informal leisure and recreation.

### Rural Settlements and Countryside

NPPF supports the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, including local shops, meeting places, sports venues and public houses. In rural areas housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. New isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided.

The central aim of the Plan is to create a new village green. This will provide a valuable resource for the Kingswood creating a new focus for local people. In order to deliver the green it is necessary to accept a limited number of new homes. This is an important fiscal tool providing the necessary funding to prepare and make available the Green. The new houses will also help to provide physical enclosure and security which will benefit users of the Green.

The housing will not be isolated but rather a moderate scale extension to the village.

The Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2000 has a policy which limits housing development at rural settlements. Policy H27 identifies Kingswood as a village where minor housing development is permitted within a boundary defined on the Proposals Map. The Borough Council's interpretation of what constitutes minor development is considered in each case in the context of the settlement concerned.

The emerging Local Plan aims to allocate new land for 17,100 dwellings to meet future needs. It is clear from the Draft Local Plan and its preparatory work including the Core Strategy Strategic Site Allocations Interim Report 2012 that it will be necessary to commit land within open countryside to meet the extent of the housing needs.

No new sites are proposed within Broomfield and Kingswood but rather most of the housing is to be focussed within and adjoining the urban area of Maidstone with further housing at the Rural Service Centres of Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden, and Staplehurst. Smaller housing developments will be permitted in five larger villages but not including Broomfield or Kingswood.

There is no pressing strategic need to provide new housing in Kingswood. The Neighbourhood Plan proposal is a direct response to the needs of the community of Kingswood to accept limited housing development to enable the provision of a new Village Green.

### Landscape

The Parish of Kingswood and Broomfield is a varied landscape. In the North it comprises a mix of the parkland of Leeds Castle and a rich riverside habitat of the Len Valley and the setting of the hamlet of Broomfield. The northern part of the Parish is in view from the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the North.

To the South there are large areas of ancient woodland and farmland. The village of Kingswood is isolated and surrounded by a mix of woodland and farmland mainly arable but with some grazing.

Broomfield features high quality architecture and townscape, with historic buildings of traditional

materials and St. Margarets church which dates back to Norman times. The hamlet benefits the protection of the Broomfield Conservation Area.

The Village of Kingswood is the dominant settlement within the parish comprising approximately 500 dwellings. The settlement was largely set out in plots for servicemen returning from World War II. Originally comprising largely pre-fabricated homes these have now largely been replaced by modern houses and bungalows. The village is generally well served but lacks any real focal point.

The proposed Village Green will create a focal point or “heart” for the village. The site is currently used for arable farming. It is not within an area designated as being of particular landscape importance and site relates well physically to the existing settlement.

### Biodiversity

There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest within the parish. However, a large area of deciduous woodland is designated as a BAP Priority Habitat.

### Agricultural Land

NPPF requires that plan makers take into account the economic and other benefits of best and most versatile agricultural land (Agricultural Land Classification Class 1,2 and 3a). Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary poorer quality of land should be used.

Across Kent Grade 1 Land is along the low-lying coastal fringe areas - including the Hoo Peninsula, Gillingham to Faversham, Thanet, Canterbury to Sandwich/Deal, and Romney Marsh.

Much of the land along the top of the Greensand Ridge from Borough Green to Pluckley, including to the north, south, east, and west of Maidstone is Agricultural Land Classification Class 2.

The quality of land is lower across the Weald is generally class 3.

### Design

It is considered important that the development aspect of the proposal is of very high design quality. This will help frame the Village Green, will help ensure a high quality of life for occupants, and will aid in the acceptability of the proposal to local people. There are two ways of helping ensure high design quality;

Firstly, to ensure the proposal refers to and follows the guidance of relevant best practice relating to design; and

Secondly, to put in place a process of design review by the setting up of a Design Review Panel which shall include local people to furthermore ensure that what is proposed is acceptable to local people.

Both aspects can and should work in tandem, and the Policy embodies both approaches.

### Transport

Key issues are access, public transport, highways design parameters, cycling, and pedestrian links. These are addressed in a separate report by BdR. The limited number of dwellings proposed are seen to have no discernible impact on local highways.

### Identifying a site

This is supplemented by a separate identification and justification document which also is available in the public domain.

Adjacent to site

The site is currently used for arable farming. It is not within an area designated as being of particular landscape importance and it relates well physically to the existing settlement.

BAP These sites are unaffected by the proposals in this Plan

The site of the proposed village green and housing is Agricultural Land Classification Class 2 Plan. The proposed loss of Class II agricultural land, which is regarded as best and most versatile land, is regrettable but this is a relatively small area in the wider context and there are no other reasonably available alternative site options within the area.

## Neighbourhood Plan Policies

### Village Green and Enabling Development

The central purpose of the Plan is to create a new heart to the village of Kingswood. This reflects a common desire of people living and working in the parish. However, the community is also clear that any development should be consistent with maintaining the overall character of the village. Enabling development is necessary to ensure investment in a village green but it is to be limited so that the general impact on the village and its surroundings is contained.

It is considered that any new housing should be of a low density befitting an edge of village location and providing considerable scope to mitigate impacts on the landscape. Furthermore, a design style reflecting local vernacular is also desired in order to help maintain the character of the village and the Parish as a whole.

A range of site options were considered during the consultation process. Clear preference was expressed for the northern of two fields enclosed by Gravelly Bottom Road, Broomfield Road and Chartway Street. The site was favoured because of its clear relationship with the most densely populated part of the village, its direct relationship with the village hall and close proximity to the local school and shops.

The site is generally unconstrained

The site benefits from established hedgerows around much of its boundary with a mix of more mature hedgerow trees. On its Southern boundary it is bordered by a distinctive line of poplars. It is important that as far as possible these features are retained and enhanced.

### Affordable Homes

(NPPF para 50)

Maidstone Borough Council's planning policy for affordable housing is policy AH1 of the Maidstone Local Development Framework, Affordable Housing Development Plan Document which was adopted in

December 2006 and replaced Policy H24 of the Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan (2000). Policy AH 1 is set out in full as Appendix x. A new policy is proposed in the emerging Local Plan.

The policies generally require that affordable homes will be integrated with market housing and provided on site. However, it does enable the possibility of off-site provision in exceptional circumstances,

*“where affordable housing cannot be provided on-site, the borough council will accept appropriate off-site provision, through alternative serviced sites provided by the developer or through the purchase of suitable existing market accommodation provided by the developer.”*

The emerging Local Plan is intended to supersede the Affordable Housing DPD. It proposes a new policy.

### **“Policy DM 24 Affordable housing**

*On housing sites or mixed use development sites of 10 residential units or more, the council will seek the delivery of affordable housing.*

1. *The target rates for affordable housing provision are:*
  - i. *Previously developed land - urban - 15%;*
  - ii. *Greenfield and private residential gardens - urban and urban periphery - 30%; and*
  - iii. *Countryside, rural service centres and larger villages - 40%.*

*This provision will consist of:*

2. *The integrated on site provision of dwellings or, where proven necessary in exceptional circumstances, off site provision in the following order of preference:*

- i. *An identified off site scheme;*
- ii. *The purchase of dwellings off site; or*
- iii. *A financial contribution towards off site affordable housing.*

3. *The council will seek a tenure split in the borough of not less than 65% affordable rented housing, social rented housing or a mixture of the two. The balance of up to 35% of affordable dwellings delivered will be intermediate affordable housing (shared ownership and/or intermediate rent). Specific site circumstances may influence the tenure split of each development, so the council requires developers to enter negotiations with the council's Housing department in consultation with registered providers at the earliest stage of the application process, to be able to determine whether a variation*

*of tenure split is acceptable/appropriate and what alternative proportions are achievable.*

*4. In cases where the required provision cannot be achieved on the grounds of viability, the council will negotiate a reduced contribution. This will be subject to viability evidence.*

*An affordable and local needs housing supplementary planning document will be produced to expand on how the proposals in this policy will be implemented.”*

It is accepted that affordable housing is needed within the Maidstone area that need is identified in the Borough Council’s Strategic Market Housing Assessment (SHMA, 2009). However, the SHMA does not provide an analysis that assists at parish level. There is an assessment at sub-area level and Broomfield and Kingswood Parish falls within the Rural East sub-area. The concluding paragraph demonstrates very clearly that housing need within this sub-area is much lower than that of the Borough as a whole as can be seen in the Table below.

identify sufficient number of eligible local people to occupy the new homes. This has meant that some of the homes have been occupied by people from outside of the Parish

The Neighbourhood Plan consultation process has indicated a clear common view that there is little demand for affordable homes within Kingswood Village.

The evidence is that the need is much greater in Maidstone than in Kingswood. This provides an exceptional circumstance and a rational response would be to support affordable homes development in the area of greatest need.

It is considered that the Borough’s housing needs would better be met if off-site provision could be provided where the need is greatest such as in the town of Maidstone.

The policy therefore supports the requirement to provide affordable homes but provides for this to be off site in the Maidstone urban area where needs are greatest.

The proposed allocation of 39 new dwelling reflects the intention to support a financial contribution to enable off-site provision. The allocation would otherwise be limited to 30 dwellings.

Table A5.12 Estimated gross need (per annum) in the Rural East sub-area

Area	No. of h’holds in need (gross)	Total no. of h’holds	% of h’holds in need	% of all h’holds in need
Rural East	102	10,774	0.9%	5.5%
Maidstone Borough	1,870	61,460	3.0%	100.0%

Source: Maidstone Borough household survey, Fordham Research 2009

The relative low requirement for affordable homes in this area compared with the Borough as a whole is marked. This Parish Council’s own experience indicates that in Kingswood the need is even lower. In 2011 18 new affordable homes were constructed Peter Pease Close, off Ashford Drive. The development comprised a mix of 1 bed apartments and 2 and 3 bed houses. Despite the best efforts of the Parish Council it has not been possible to

## Policy VG1: Kingswood Village Green and provision of new housing

### Village Green and Enabling Development

Permission will be granted for a Village Green and up to 39 new dwellings on land enclosed by Gravelly Bottom Road, Duck Pond Lane and Chartway Street as identified on the site allocation plan (Figure 1).

The proposal must be based on a masterplan indicating how the whole of the site is to be used. This shall be in accordance with the Diagram (Figure 2). As a minimum a proposal will include:

- a) A Village Green which will be publicly available, landscaped and an area of at least 0.8 hectare. The Village Green must be arranged in accordance with the Diagram;
- b) Structural landscaping proposals in accordance with the guidance provided;
- c) Children's Play Area;
- d) Access and parking arrangements;
- e) A mix of low density houses;

The proposal may also include a restaurant, cafe or drinking establishment (use classes A3 or A4, Use Class Order 1987 as amended) as part of the mix of uses, in the area identified within the Diagram.

The proposal must demonstrate that the development will deliver a good quality public space and arrangements to ensure how it will be maintained in the long term.

### Affordable Homes

A financial contribution will be sought from the developer of the market housing to enable the off-site provision of affordable homes to meet Maidstone's needs. This shall be as agreed with Maidstone Borough Council and subject to viability appraisal.

### Design

The detailed proposals shall be in accordance with:

- a) Building for Life 12;
- b) Secured by Design;
- c) Kent Design Guide guidance for Villages;

and shall be subject to Design Review by a Design Review Panel set up by the Parish Council.

### Transport

The proposal must provide the following:

#### Off-site

- a) Improved speed gateways on Lenham Road, Chartway Street and Broomfield Road on approaches to the village at the points where the speed limit reduces to 30mph;
- b) A raised table at the junction of Gravelly Bottom Road/Broomfield Road/Duck Pond Lane;
- c) Speed humps and road narrowing and a 20mph zone in Gravelly Bottom Road to the north of the site.
- d) Three new pedestrian crossings along Gravelly Bottom Road.

#### On Site

- a) A continuation of traffic calming from Gravelly Bottom Road;
- b) Provide a single point of access to Gravelly Bottom Road as shown in Figure 2;
- c) A footpath shall link to Gravelly Bottom Road within the site to the South of the landscape strip;
- d) The carriageway width should be 4.8metres with 1.8 metre wide footpaths.

## 5. Delivery

The plan is quite straightforward, in large measure based upon the implementation of a single proposal. The Parish Council will work with the landowner of the allocated site to ensure that the proposal is delivered in accordance with the policy of this Neighbourhood Plan.

It appears likely that the main proposal of the plan could be delivered within 5 years, subject to market conditions and the programming wishes of the landowner. It is anticipated that all the housing and the Village Green and highways improvements can be delivered as one single phase, or at least as one continuous rolling programme of phases.

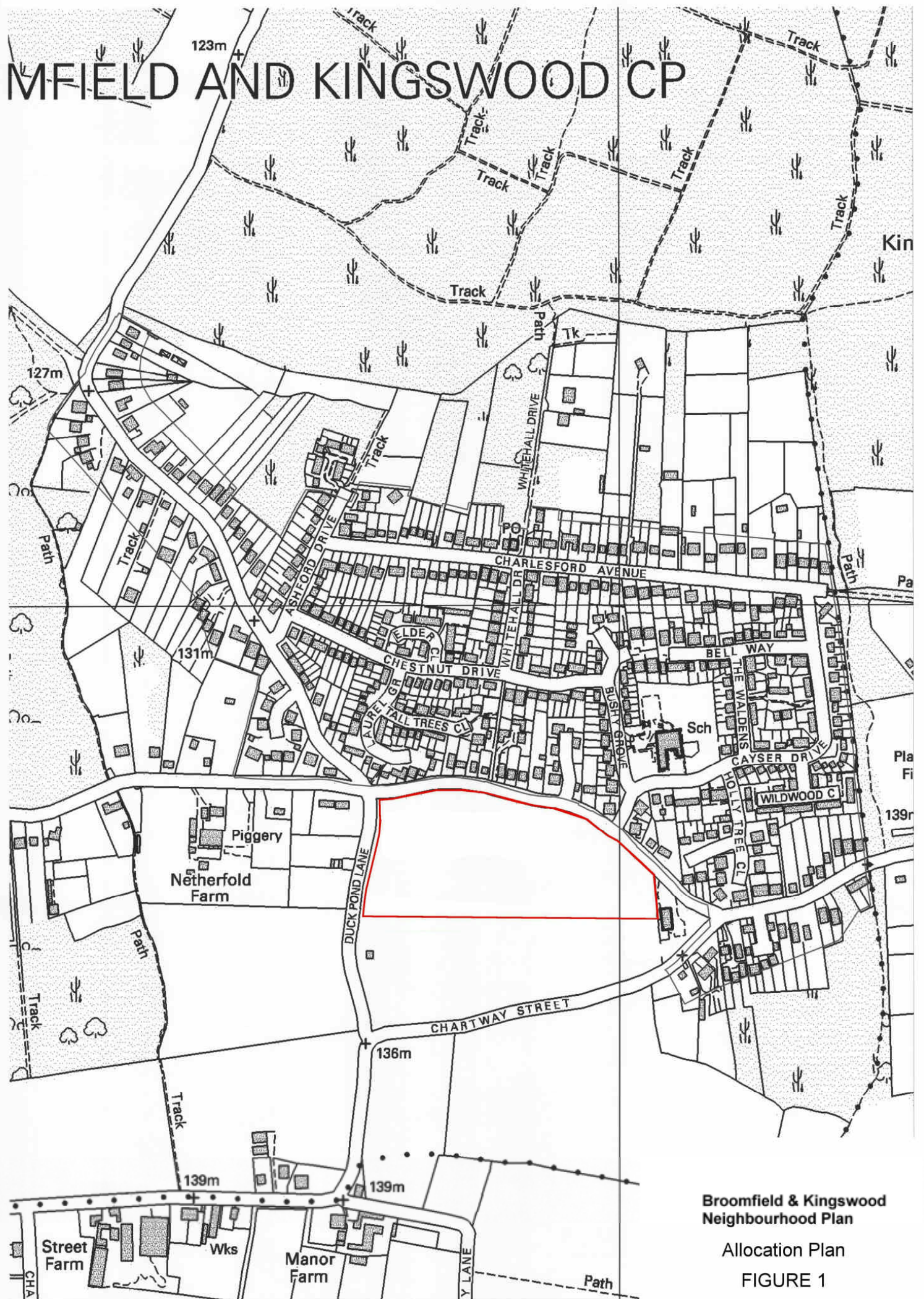
The Village Green shall be set out in the early stage of implementation and shall be planted and seeded in the first available planting season, to provide a suitable setting for the associated housing and to provide for early amenity for local people.

The Plan also will allow the Parish Council to carry out further improvement measures in the Parish through the retention of financial contributions arising from the development scheme. Such works can progress as such contributions are forthcoming as the development scheme comes forward.

The intended delivery of the plan proposals shall be set out in due course following consultation with the public, with Maidstone Borough Council, and with statutory consultees.

It is important that both Maidstone Borough Council and Kent Highways are involved in the proposed Design Review process to ensure that planning and highway matters are co-ordinated through to implementation. A number of highway measures are within the control of the highway authority.

# BROOMFIELD AND KINGSWOOD CP



**Broomfield & Kingswood  
Neighbourhood Plan**

**Allocation Plan**

**FIGURE 1**

# BROOMFIELD AND KINGSWOOD CP



**Broomfield & Kingswood Neighbourhood Plan**

**Diagram of the Plan Requirements**

**FIGURE 2**

1:2000 @ A1 1:4000 @ A3

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