

Broomfield and Kingswood Neighbourhood Plan

Appraisal of Site Development Options

**Broomfield and Kingswood Parish Council
October 2013**

**Broomfield and Kingswood
Neighbourhood Local Plan**

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Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Methodology	4
3. Description of Site Options	5
4. Site Options – Assessment of Impacts	9
5. The Site Options and Public Opinion	12
6. Conclusions	14

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to assess the most appropriate means to meet the plans key aim to provide a site for a new Village Green and associated enabling development.

The plan is the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence.

A range of five potential site options are considered and assessed with reference to national and local constraints and other sustainable development criteria and also tested through consultation with local people.

The sites are:

1. The Broomfield Park Eco Village is proposed as a mix of uses reflecting the aim to create a freestanding sustainable settlement.
2. The Ashford Drive site is a small site intended for between 4 and six houses.
3. Three fields to the south of Kingswood, south of Gravelly Bottom Road and spanning Broomfield Road.

This report is divided into sections.

Section 2 sets out the methodology that that has been followed in assessing site options

Section 3 describes the options.

Section 4 is a detailed assessment and comparison of the impacts of each of the sites.

Section 5 is an account of public opinion towards the site options.

2. Methodology

A. Identifying Options

The first challenge was to identify reasonable options to compare.

It was agreed that sites should meet the mutual aims of maintaining the character of the villages and providing a new village green. Broomfield village and the northern part of the Parish were discounted because of the village's historic built environment, the landscape value and remoteness from the main population. Areas of ancient woodland were also avoided. This focussed meant the focus was close to the village of Kingswood.

This assessment includes the sites recently submitted to Maidstone Borough Council in response to its call for sites. In January 2013 two sites that lie within the Parish were proposed, the Broomfield Park Eco Village forming part of the Broomfield Park Estate north of Gravelly Bottom Road and a site in Ashford Drive Kingswood.

Three sites to the south of Kingswood, south of Gravelly Bottom Road and spanning Broomfield Road emerged through local knowledge and because they relate well to the core of Kingswood, are open land, as opposed to forest, and the land owner is willing to make some land available for development.

The possibility of a dispersed option was also considered.

The following options are summarised below and identified on the plan opposite.

- Option 1 Broomfield Park
- Option 2 Land at Ashford Drive
- Option 3 Land West of Duck Pond Lane
- Option 4 Land South of Gravelly Bottom Road & North of Chartway Street
- Option 5 Land East of Duckpond Lane & South of Chartway Street
- Option 6 Dispersed Sites

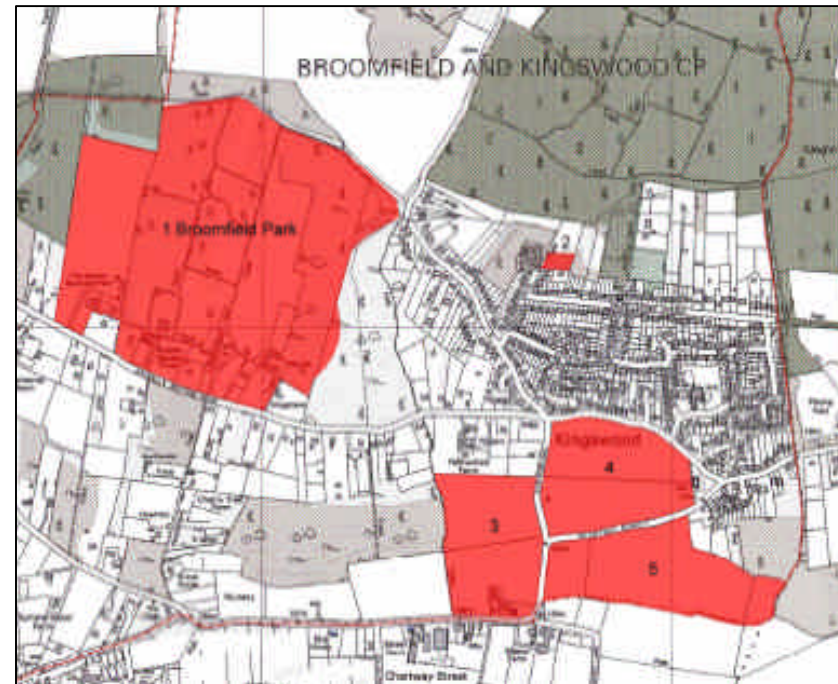


Figure 1 - Plan indicating Site development options

All 5 sites and the dispersed sites option were then objectively assessed and also considered at the consultation workshop.

3. Description of Site Options

Option 1: New Settlement at Broomfield Park

Option 1 is considered as it has been advanced to Maidstone Borough Council in response to their call for sites as they prepare their replacement Local Plan.

A meeting has been held between the landowner and representatives of the Parish Council both accompanied by their respective advisers. Eco-Build Partnership UK has prepared a document to explain the Broomfield Park Eco Village. The proposal is for a new free-standing settlement to the west of Kingswood Village. The proposal includes 450 market “Eco homes”, 200 affordable homes, 250 retirement bungalows, a care home, 50 business units, a primary school, a village green, a village hall, cafe, crèche and swimming pool, library, digital cinema, medical centre (inc. Doctors surgery, dentists surgery and optician), public house, shop and post office. The proposal is seen as a means of accelerating the construction of the Leeds Langley by-pass. It also proposes the promotion of electric cars and mini buses with electricity supplied from an on-site bio mass station.

The land is currently a mix of forestry and light industrial uses. Part is used for the growing of Christmas trees.

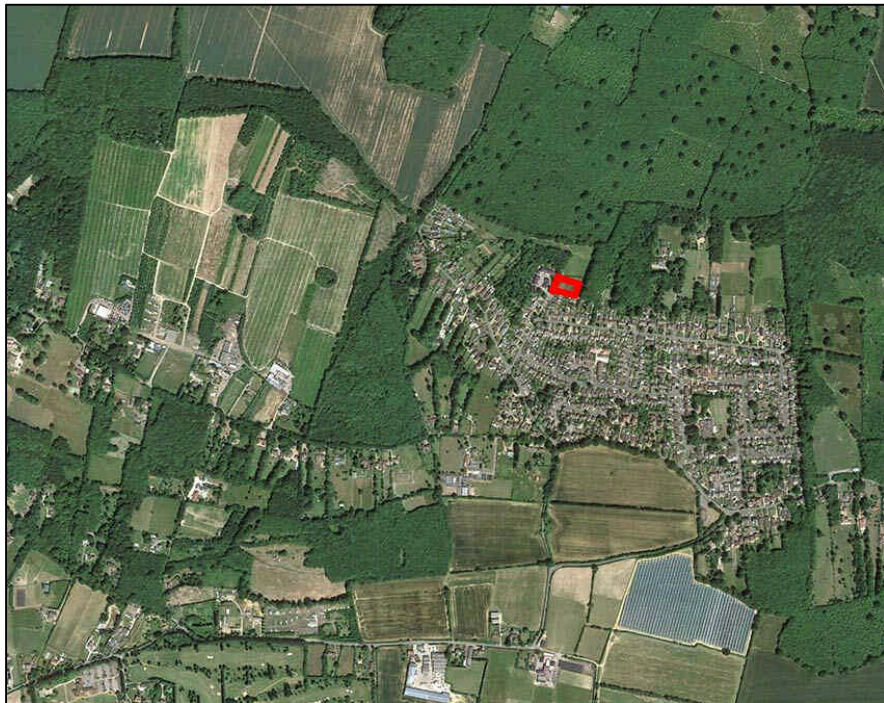


Option One

Option 2 Ashford Drive

Option 2 is considered as it was advanced to Maidstone Borough Council in response to their call for sites as they prepare their replacement Local Plan.

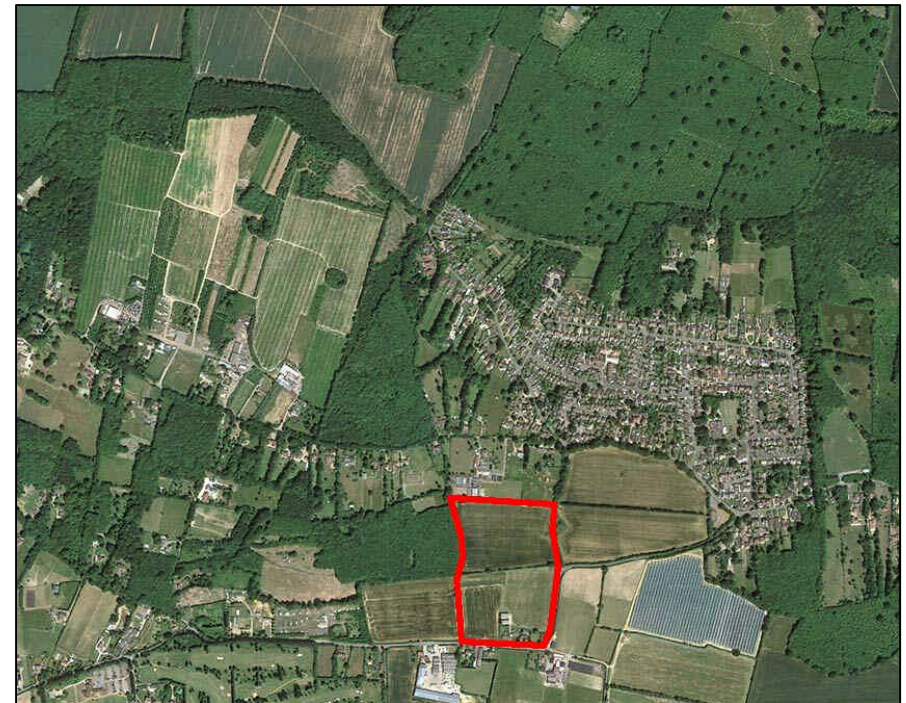
The meeting was held with the landowner who described his aspirations for developing the site. The site is approximately xx hectares and the owner wishes to build between 4 and 6 dwellings on the site. The site is clearly too small to provide a village green and is discounted on this basis.



Option Two

Option 3 Land West of Duck Pond Lane

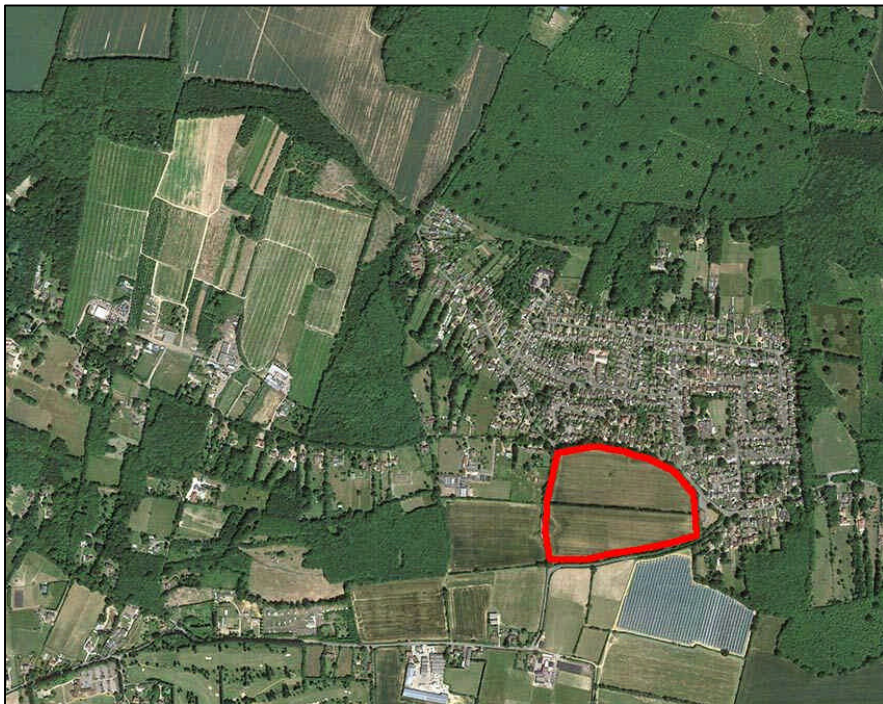
The land is currently part of a farm estate and is in arable use. The land owner has been approached and expressed an interest in providing a village green with enabling development provided that that meets the general wishes of the people of Kingswood.



Option Three

Option 4 Land South of Gravelly Bottom Road and North of Chartway Street

The land is currently part of a farm estate and is in arable use. The land owner has been approached and expressed an interest in providing a village green with enabling development provided that meets the general wishes of the people of Kingswood.



Option Four

Option 5 Land East of Duckpond Lane and South of Chartway Street

The land is currently part of a farm estate and is in arable use. The land owner has been approached and expressed an interest in providing a village green with enabling development provided that meets the general wishes of the people of Kingswood.



Option Five

Option 6 Dispersed Sites (SLAA)

The merits of a dispersed sites option was considered. However, the recent call for sites by Maidstone Borough Council as part of their Local Plan process attracted only two site options and they have been considered as options 1 and 2 above. Furthermore, the site needs to be a substantial size to enable a village green and a dispersed site option would not meet this requirement. The dispersed option was not therefore pursued.

4. Site Options – Assessment of Impacts

The 6 site options are assessed against the two aims of the Neighbourhood Plan:

Aim 1 To maintain the character of the Parish and the villages of Broomfield and Kingswood

Aim 2 To provide a new village green and limit new residential development to that which is necessary to enable the provision of the village green.

Site Option	Description	Evidence
Option1 Broomfield Park Eco Village	<p>The proposal is to create a new freestanding settlement. The scale of the development which would be expected to double the population of the Parish would clearly have a major impact on its character.</p> <p>The proposal includes a range of improvements to transport but there would nevertheless be a major impact on local roads.</p> <p>The required by-pass will have its own impacts.</p> <p>The proposed access Road to north may impact on AONB and Listed Building/Historic Garden.</p> <p>The site for the proposed development at Broomfield Park includes several large areas of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland. (Loam Pits Shaw comprises 11.5 Ha of ancient coppice woodland to the east of the proposal site; Broomfield Woods comprises 13 Ha of similar ancient coppiced woodland to the west, and an additional area of ancient replanted woodland (also known as Broomfield Woods) to the north.)</p> <p>There is a small area of ancient woodland toward the centre of the site.</p>	<p>No direct impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Local Landscape Area SPA and RAMSAR and SSSI Scheduled Ancient Monument Listed Buildings Conservation Areas Historic Gardens <p>Potential Impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ancient Woodland directly North and West of site. Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Area to most boundaries of the site and part within the site. Local Wildlife Site to north west of site.

	<p>The majority of the rest of the site is used for the production of Christmas trees.</p> <p>The aim of the Eco Village is to create its own focus and to provide services for nearby villages including Kingswood. This does not meet the expressed needs of the community of Kingswood.</p> <p>The option has significant impacts and doesn't meet the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	
Option 2 Ashford Drive	<p>The site is clearly too small to provide a village green. Option 2 is discounted on this basis.</p>	<p>No direct impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Local Landscape Area SPA and RAMSAR and SSSI Scheduled Ancient Monument Listed Buildings Conservation Areas Historic Gardens Local Wildlife Site to north west of site. <p>Potential Impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ancient Woodland Close proximity to Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Area
Option 3 Land West of Duck Pond Lane	<p>Options 3, 4 and 5 have very similar impacts when considered by national and local planning designations. The main difference between the three sites is that options 3 and 5 relate less well to the built form of the village. This means that the proposed new housing will be more remote from existing village services and also that a new village green would be further from most of the existing housing.</p> <p>The topography of the northern part of this area constitutes a shallow depression with an area of woodland to the west which would mean the sensitivity of this area to visual impact of development would be reduced.</p> <p>A high density residential development would have an impact upon the ancient woodland/BAP woodland to the immediate west of Option 3.</p>	<p>No direct impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Local Landscape Area SPA and RAMSAR and SSSI Scheduled Ancient Monument Listed Buildings Conservation Areas Historic Gardens Local Wildlife Site to north west of site. Ancient Woodland Close proximity to Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Area <p>Potential Impact on:</p>

	Both options 3 and 5 also extend further into the open countryside. For these reasons Option 4 is preferred.	Agricultural Land Classification Class 2.
Option 4 Land South of Gravelly Bottom Road and North of Chartway Street	<p>Options 3, 4 and 5 have very similar impacts when considered by national and local planning designations. The main difference between the three sites is that options 3 and 5 relate less well to the built form of the village. This means that the proposed new housing will be more remote from existing village services and also that a new village green would be further from most of the existing housing.</p> <p>Both options 3 and 5 also extend further into the open countryside. For these reasons Option 4 is preferred.</p>	<p>No direct impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Local Landscape Area SPA and RAMSAR and SSSI Scheduled Ancient Monument Listed Buildings Conservation Areas Historic Gardens Local Wildlife Site to north west of site. Ancient Woodland Close proximity to Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Area <p>Potential Impact on:</p> <p>Agricultural Land Classification Class 2.</p>
Option 5 Land East of Duckpond Lane and South of Chartway Street	<p>Options 3, 4 and 5 have very similar impacts when considered by national and local planning designations. The main difference between the three sites is that options 3 and 5 relate less well to the built form of the village. This means that the proposed new housing will be more remote from existing village services and also that a new village green would be further from most of the existing housing.</p> <p>Option 5 would have an impact on the Landscape Character Area as it becomes much more open and characteristic of the Coxheath Plateau Farmlands LCA moving south away from the settlement of Kingswood into open countryside.</p> <p>Both options 3 and 5 also extend further into the open countryside. For these reasons Option 4 is preferred.</p>	<p>No direct impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Local Landscape Area SPA and RAMSAR and SSSI Scheduled Ancient Monument Listed Buildings Conservation Areas Historic Gardens Local Wildlife Site to north west of site. Ancient Woodland Close proximity to Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Area <p>Potential Impact on:</p> <p>Agricultural Land Classification Class 2.</p>
Option 6 Dispersed Sites	Site needs to be a substantial size to enable a village green and a dispersed site option would not meet this requirement. Dispersed Sites Option discounted for this reason.	

5. The Site Options and Public Opinion

Site Option	Summary of Responses from local communities as it expressed at the consultation workshop.
Option1 Broomfield Park	There was no evidential support for this option through the public consultation process other than from the owner of the land and his representatives. Comments from workshop groups included: “No support new housing on Gravelly Bottom Road”. “Opposed to the proposal for 1000 new homes”.
Option 2 Ashford Drive	There was no strong objection to development of this site and some limited support. It was recognised that this would not meet the aim of creating a new village green. Comments from workshop groups included: “Acceptance of the limited development envisaged for Identified Area 2 (4 to 6 houses) “Ashford Drive proposal ok”; “Accept small development at Ashford Drive”;
Option 3 Land West of Duck Pond Lane	This site was consistently considered to be less appropriate to site 4. One view from the workshop was that, “Accept partial development at site 3” this was in addition to providing a green and limited enabling development at site 4.
Option 4 Land South of Gravelly Bottom Road and North of Chartway Street	There was a strong preference that if there was to be any new housing development then the majority of this should be on site 4. Comments from workshop groups included: “Acceptance for Creation of Village Heart such as a Village Green within Area 4”; “Utilise field (Site A) as village green with housing around it. Include public house”; “Area 4 most suitable for 15 houses”; “Other new development should be around perimeter of site 4” “ Add village centre at site 4” “Development of site 4 to include Village Green etc” “Prefer to expand site 4 Preferred site for housing ½ of site 4 Development preferred at site 4”; “Limited development preferred at site 4 (8 in favour) – more in favour if it included the provision of a village green”; “Site 4 preferred”

Option 5 Land East of Duckpond Lane and South of Chartway Street	This site was not considered to be appropriate for development.
Option 6 Dispersed Sites	This option was discounted as it would not be a clear way of creating a village green.

6. Conclusions

Five potential site options and a dispersed site option have been assessed. This has been done with reference to national and local constraints and other sustainable development criteria. The options have also been tested through consultation with local people.

The conclusion is that site 4 Land South of Gravelly Bottom Road and North of Chartway Street is preferred. The site is of a scale that is sufficient to provide a new village green and related enabling development.

The site relates well physically to the existing village encouraging use of the Green by local people and enabling residents of the proposed new housing to access existing services with ease and without requiring the use of cars.

As has been shown the site is largely unconstrained by national and local landscape and conservation policies. The land is within an area of Agricultural Land Classification Class 2 however, the other key competing sites are similarly affected.

It is considered that the proposed development of site 4 is the most appropriate strategy to meet the Plan's aims when considered against the reasonable alternatives and based on proportionate evidence.