

This document is produced by

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Public consultation in accordance with regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

commences on 17 August 2012

and

closes at 5.00pm on 1 October 2012

All enquiries should be addressed to:

Spatial Policy

Maidstone Borough Council

Maidstone House

King Street

Maidstone

Kent ME15 6JQ

Telephone: 01622 602000

Email: LDF@maidstone.gov.uk

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1.1 Maidstone Borough Council is carrying out public consultation on three elements of its Core Strategy Local Plan:

- The inclusion of a new policy for the presumption in favour of sustainable development;
- The allocation of strategic housing and employment sites; and
- The setting of individual housing targets for the five rural service centres.

1.2 The government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012, and there is an expectation that Core Strategies will include a policy to reflect the NPPF's direction towards a presumption in favour of sustainable development. A model policy produced by the Planning Inspectorate forms part of the consultation.

1.3 The Core Strategy Local Plan is the key document of the local planning policy framework. It sets out the Council's spatial vision and objectives over a 20 year period from 2006 to 2026, as well as a number of spatial policies that explain how much development will be provided over the plan period, where development will be located and, equally important, where development will be resisted. The Core Strategy also contains a number of core policies that focus on delivering the strategy and setting criteria against which development applications can be determined.

1.4 The Council published its draft Core Strategy for public consultation on 2 September 2011. This stage in the plan making process was known as "public participation" or regulation 25 consultation under former plan making regulations, and is the equivalent of regulation 18 under new regulations which came into effect in April 2012⁽¹⁾. The consultation ran for 6 weeks to 14 October 2011 and was widely publicised. A total of 585 individuals and organisations responded submitting nearly 2,800 comments, which is an indication of the success of the consultation.

1.5 Since then the Council has spent a considerable amount of time investigating and reviewing the issues that arose from the representations, including the production of new evidence, in order to fully respond to the comments made. One of the main concerns raised by respondents was the need to allocate strategic development sites in the Core Strategy, as opposed to identifying strategic locations on the key diagram.

1.6 Cabinet gave consideration to this matter at its meeting on 16 May 2012, and agreed to include strategic site allocations in the draft Core Strategy to give certainty to the public and the development industry about the quantity and location of development. The Council is now consulting the public on the sites it proposes to allocate in the Core Strategy before the document is published in its entirety for the next round of public consultation called "publication" (regulation 19). At that stage, all of the comments received from this consultation as well as those from last autumn will be fully considered before amendments to the draft Core Strategy are made.

1 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Regulations) 2012

1 . Why the council is consulting the public

1.7 The process for making strategic site allocations began with a “call for sites” exercise between 11 May and 15 June 2012 inviting landowners, developers and their agents to use a pro forma to submit information about available sites within the strategic housing and employment locations identified on the key diagram of the draft Core Strategy. The call for sites focused on strategic housing locations to the north west and the south east of the urban area, and the strategic employment location at junction 8 of the M20 motorway. All known sites within these areas formed part of the assessment, even if further information was not submitted as part of the call for sites. The strategic location at junction 7 of the M20 motorway for a medical hub did not form part of this initial call for sites exercise because proposed development is associated with the medical hospital currently under construction. For the same reasons that sites in other strategic development locations were appraised, i.e. to give certainty to the public about development proposals, land at junction 7 formed part of the assessment.

1.8 A strategic housing site is defined as “a site which individually, or collectively with other sites in very close proximity to one another, is capable of providing at least one year’s supply of the housing requirement for the plan period, i.e. 504 dwellings”. Consequently, the call for sites focused on the larger urban periphery strategic housing locations, and the balance of smaller land allocations around the urban edge and at the rural service centres will be made in the Development Delivery Local Plan that will follow the Core Strategy.

1.9 The first step in the assessment process discounted sites that were located outside of the strategic development locations identified on the key diagram of the draft Core Strategy 2011 because their development is not critical to the delivery of the strategy. Housing sites that were not located adjacent to the urban area were also discounted. Some of these discounted sites will be given further consideration during the preparation of the Development Delivery Local Plan when the balance of Maidstone’s housing needs will be allocated.

1.10 All of the alternative potential development sites in the strategic development locations have been assessed equally using sound evidence. A Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which informs various stages of plan preparation, has been undertaken for the alternative sites and is available on the Council's website. The conclusions of the SA have helped to inform the selection of sites for development, as well as highlighting where mitigation measures will be required to minimise the impact of development on the environment. A viability appraisal is now underway to test the delivery of all of the Core Strategy policies, including the proposed site allocations, before publication consultation in December.

1.11 Mitigation measures to reduce the impact of development on the landscape are required for all development proposals, making the best use of existing landscape features together with additional structural and internal landscaping. Improvements to highways and public transport are essential. So too is the permeability of individual sites, through the provision of pedestrian and cycle links giving access to existing and new housing and employment areas, open space, shops and community facilities. Mitigation measures appropriate for each site are set out in the proposed site allocation policies.

1.12 The main issues raised by respondents during the 2011 consultation on the draft Core Strategy were given initial consideration by Cabinet in July 2012⁽²⁾. One of the issues respondents raised was the lack of individual dwelling targets for rural service centres.

1.13 The draft Core Strategy set a single housing target for greenfield development of 1,130 dwellings, to be distributed amongst the five rural service centres of Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst. In the context of setting the overall housing target for the borough, the distribution of the 1,130 dwelling target between villages was in fact illustrated in a Cabinet report of 9 February 2011. To provide clarity for the public and the development industry, and to assist with the preparation of neighbourhood plans, the dwelling targets have been included in this document for public consultation.

1.14 The consultation period for this document commences on 17 August 2012 and closes at 5.00pm on 1 October 2012.

1.15 The Council encourages respondents to make comments on the document through its on-line consultation portal, but is also happy to accept submissions by email and by post. A comments form is available to download from the LDF webpage (www.maidstone.gov.uk/ldf) on the Council's website and is available by post on request.

Comments can be made:

Online at: maidstone-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal

By email at: LDF@maidstone.gov.uk

By post to:
Spatial Policy
Maidstone Borough Council
Maidstone House
King Street
Maidstone ME15 6JQ

2 Cabinet report Core Strategy Public Participation Consultation: Key Issues and Responses 25 July 2012

Policy NPPF1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012, and the key theme running through the framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Planning Inspectorate has published a model policy for local plans, as a way for councils to meet the expectations of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The model policy addresses the need to proactively engage with applicants in order to find solutions to problems and, where there are no up-to-date policies, to grant planning permission without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2.2 The Local Plan is the plan for the future development of Maidstone, drawn up in consultation with the community. It can contain a number of documents, including core strategies or other planning policies (which under former regulations are called development plan documents). The term includes old policies from the Maidstone Borough wide Local Plan 2000, which have been saved under the 2004 Act.

NPPF1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

When considering development proposals, Maidstone Borough Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. The Council will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies of the Council's Local Plan, and where relevant with policies in neighbourhood plans, will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant planning permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:

1. Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
2. Specific policies in the National Planning Policy Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Strategic housing sites

3.1 Housing sites allocated in this section are expected to be developed in line with the policies of the Maidstone Local Plan unless it is otherwise specified in the relevant allocation policy.

3.2 One of the key challenges for all of the strategic sites is connecting them into the existing urban and rural fabric. Communities already exist in Maidstone and the new developments, where appropriate, will take advantage of existing facilities and services. Where new services are provided on these sites, they need to be accessible to the existing communities, the integration of new and existing communities is essential.

Strategic housing location to the north west of the urban area

3.3 The north west of Maidstone has been identified as a strategic location for housing development in the 2011 Core Strategy consultation document. In this location improvements to the local transport infrastructure are required to accommodate further housing. A transport assessment will identify the scope of improvements required to the junctions (and associated approaches) at:

- i. M20 junction 5 and Coldharbour roundabout (where junction 5 connects to the A20);
- ii. A20 London Road with St. Laurence Avenue (20/20 roundabout);
- iii. B2246 Hermitage Lane with A20 London Road;
- iv. B2246 Hermitage Lane with Heath Road and St. Andrew's Road;
- v. Fountain Lane with A26 Tonbridge Road; and
- vi. A26 Tonbridge Road with Queen's Road and St. Andrew's Road.

3.4 These improvements will incorporate, where feasible, enhancements to the public realm that make progress for pedestrians and cyclists easier.

3.5 Some of the junctions listed are outside of the borough boundary, although, as part of its duty to cooperate, Maidstone Borough Council is working with Kent County Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council in this area to ensure delivery.

3.6 In addition to the physical infrastructure listed, a circular bus route will be sought that benefits public transport users in and around the north west strategic location; this route will run via the town centre, B2246 Hermitage Lane, Maidstone Hospital, Howard Drive and A20 London Road.

3.7 As the local education authority, Kent County Council is seeking the provision of a one form entry primary school [provided on the size of a two form entry site] within the north west strategic location. The site, and the requirement, is still subject to confirmation of need, although East of Hermitage Lane was identified as an appropriate location for this provision in the Maidstone

Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000. The council will provisionally identify East of Hermitage Lane as the location for a new primary school, but policy SS1b is caveated in recognition of the need to confirm this requirement.

3.8 The National Planning Policy Framework requires the policies of the Core Strategy to be tested for their cumulative viability. In the north west strategic location, because of the proposed transport infrastructure improvements, the council will be looking closely at the range of contributions that developments can make to ensure that no proposed allocation is affected to the degree of being deemed unviable.

SS1 - Strategic housing location to the north west of the urban area

In the north west strategic location, as depicted on the Policies Map, the council will allocate the following land for residential development:

- a. Bridge Nursery.
- b. East of Hermitage Lane.
- c. West of Hermitage Lane.

Sites in the north west strategic location will contribute, as proven necessary, towards junction improvements (and associated approaches) at:

- i. M20 junction 5 and Coldharbour roundabout (where junction 5 connects to the A20);
- ii. A20 London Road with St. Laurence Avenue (20/20 roundabout);
- iii. B2246 Hermitage Lane with A20 London Road;
- iv. B2246 Hermitage Lane with Heath Road and St. Andrew's Road;
- v. Fountain Lane with A26 Tonbridge Road; and
- vi. A26 Tonbridge Road with Queen's Road and St. Andrew's Road.

Contributions towards a circular bus route will be sought that benefits public transport users in and around the north west strategic location; this route will run via the town centre, B2246 Hermitage Lane, Maidstone Hospital, Howard Drive and A20 London Road.

Sites will not be released for development until an agreement has been signed in regard to these improvements.

Specific requirements for each site are detailed in the sites policies.

Policy SS1a - Bridge Nursery

3.9 Bridge Nursery, as shown on the Policies Map, is located adjacent to the borough boundary with Tonbridge and Malling at the north western edge of Allington, opposite to the junction of the A20 London Road with Beaver Road.

3.10 The site was previously allocated in the Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000, but it was not developed during the life of that plan. Subject to the protection of a number of natural elements on site, it is proposed that it will accommodate 165 dwellings at a density of approximately 30 per hectare. The natural features of the site to be protected where appropriate include the mature hedgerow along the frontage with the A20 London Road, trees protected by a (woodland) tree preservation order (TPO)⁽³⁾ and any trees that form part of the wood in the north east corner of the site that are not subject to TPO.

3.11 At the far north eastern boundary of the site and curving round to the west is the Maidstone East railway line. In this part of the allocation noise attenuation measures will be necessary to provide a comfortable living environment.

3.12 Beneficial to this site is the immediate location of a wide range of local facilities. Pedestrian connections will be sought so that residents can take advantage of the Mid Kent Shopping Centre, Allington primary school and nearby health facilities. The sports ground at Castle Way provides close and convenient access to open space. The council requires that the current informal access through the woods is enhanced in a complimentary manner to ensure that the sports ground is within easy reach for new residents.

3 N^o. 2 of 2002.

SS1a - Bridge Nursery

Bridge Nursery is allocated for residential development. A development brief, to be approved by the Borough Council, will detail the way in which residential and infrastructure elements are delivered in an integrated and co-ordinated manner. This will address the following:

On site:

1. Provision of 165 dwellings (at an approximate density of 30 per hectare);
2. Affordable housing will be delivered on site as per the wider Core Strategy target (set generally at 40% of dwellings with a 15 units threshold) unless viability testing of the Bridge Nursery site and the north west strategic location (to be undertaken) indicates otherwise;
3. All dwellings will be constructed to the wider Core Strategy target for Code for Sustainable Homes (level 4 from 2013, level 5 from 2016) unless viability testing of Bridge Nursery site and the north west strategic location (to be undertaken) indicates otherwise;
4. Noise attenuation measures appropriate for residential dwellings adjacent to the Maidstone East railway line;
5. Retention of any trees that form part of the north east corner of the site;
6. Retention of the hedge bordering A20 London Road, except at the point of access to the site; and
7. Securing vehicular access to the site from A20 London Road only.

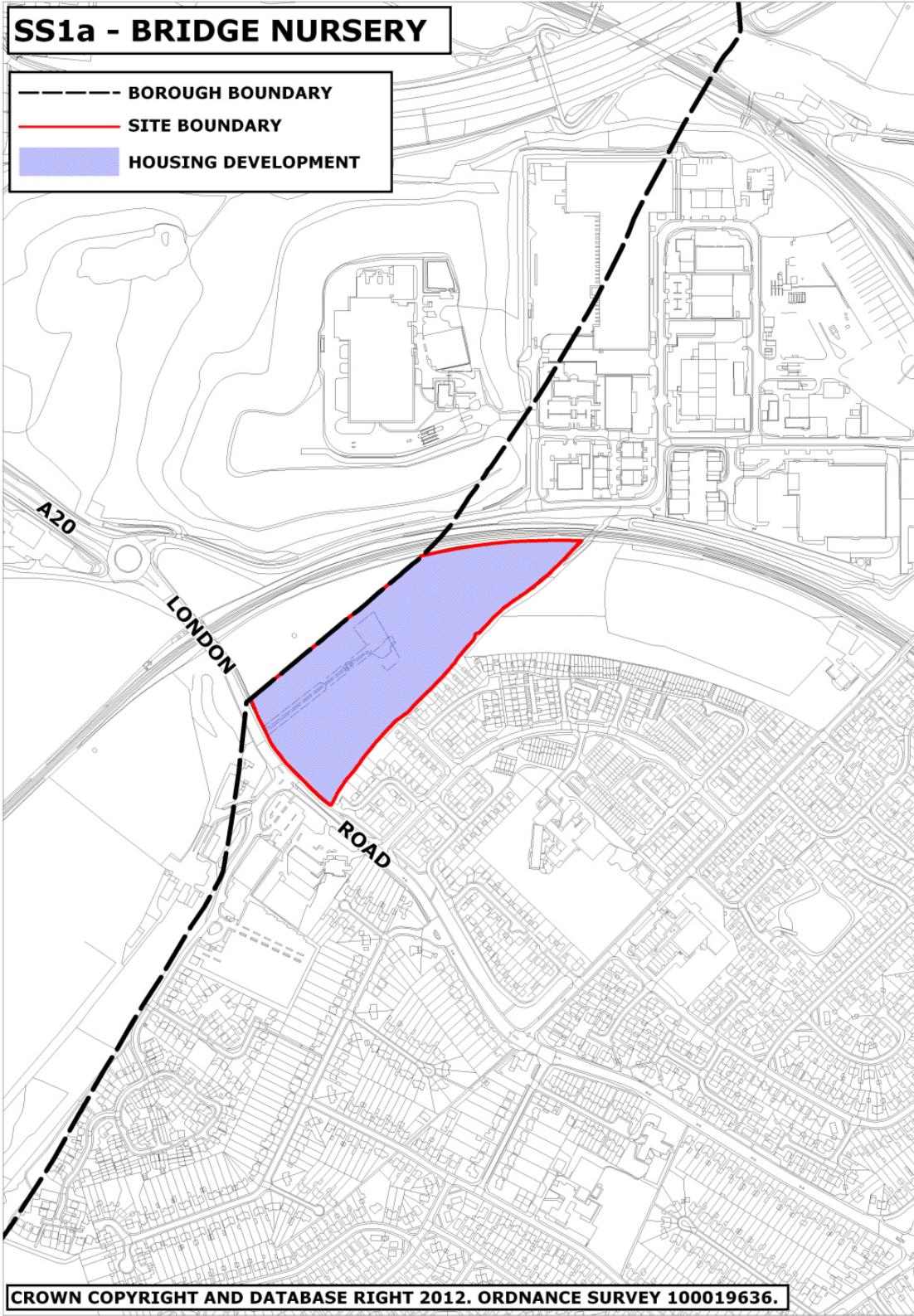
Off site:

8. Complimentary enhancement of the informal pedestrian link through the north eastern end of the site into the sports ground off of Castle Road; and
9. Pedestrian and cycle links to existing residential areas, shops, schools and health facilities.

Financial contributions:

10. Provision of appropriate contributions towards education, health, open space and community facilities.

3 . Policy SS1 - Strategic housing location to the north west of the urban area



Policy SS1b - East of Hermitage Lane

3.13 East of Hermitage Lane, as shown on the Policies Map, is situated south east of the existing Hermitage Lane to Howard Drive (in Allington) footpath/restricted byway. The area of land identified for development is comprised of two portions – the larger, open field bounded by Howard Drive to the north east and footpath KB19 to the south east; and the reservoir site within that field.

3.14 The primary vehicular access to the site will be taken from Hermitage Lane, preferably through a partial upgrade of the current footpath/restricted byway that links Hermitage Lane to Howard Drive unless an archaeological survey indicates that this is not possible. An access restricted to buses, emergency vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles will be formed opposite to Maxwell Drive, through the two dwellings on Howard Drive that comprise part of the East of Hermitage Lane site. This access is restricted in order to maintain road hierarchy, yet allow a new bus service for new and existing settlements in the north west, therefore maintaining suitable transport connections to the existing Allington community.

3.15 Taking into account the TPO⁽⁴⁾ on site and the provisional requirement for a primary school⁽⁵⁾, this allocation will accommodate 415 dwellings at a density of approximately 30 per hectare.

3.16 Community and health facilities will also be provided on site subject to confirmation of need. These facilities will be located together with any primary school to make the most efficient use of land.

3.17 The smaller field at the south western end of the site will be retained as informal/natural open space. This is in recognition of a number of factors, including archaeological advice that development in the north western portion of this field should be avoided, the setting of Maidstone Hospital, access issues, existing woodland and the ability to screen a large part of the development from view, as well as the need to provide open space for the new development.

3.18 Development at East of Hermitage Lane provides an opportunity to utilise Barming railway station for local public transport access into Maidstone and for longer journeys to London. A simple, yet necessary part of this opportunity is to make the access to the station as easy as possible. The council is seeking the provision of a direct footpath, complementary in character, across the field from the new houses and joining Hermitage Lane at the closest point achievable to Barming railway station.

4 N^o 5 of 1996. N^o 36 of 2003.

5 Refer to supporting text for policy SS1.

SS1b - East of Hermitage Lane

East of Hermitage Lane is allocated for residential development. A development brief, to be approved by the Borough Council, will detail the way in which residential and infrastructure elements are delivered in an integrated and co-ordinated manner. This will address the following:

On site:

1. Provision of 415 dwellings (at an approximate density of 30 per hectare);
2. Affordable housing will be delivered on site as per the wider Core Strategy target (set generally at 40% of dwellings with a 15 units threshold) unless viability testing of the East of Hermitage Lane site and the north west strategic location (to be undertaken) indicates otherwise;
3. All dwellings will be constructed to the wider Core Strategy target for Code for Sustainable Homes (level 4 from 2013, level 5 from 2016) unless viability testing of the East of Hermitage Lane site and the north west strategic location (to be undertaken) indicates otherwise;
4. Transfer of land and/or contributions for primary education (subject to confirmation of need)⁽⁶⁾;
5. Provision of appropriate community and health facilities (subject to confirmation of need);
6. Provision of a buffer along the north eastern boundary of the site (rear of Howard Drive dwellings), incorporating existing protected trees, to be agreed with the council;
7. Protection of the wooded character of the footpath running along the south eastern boundary of the site;
8. Subject to approval following an archaeological survey, securing private vehicular access to the site from B2246 Hermitage Lane only, preferably utilising and incorporating necessary improvements to the footpath and restricted byway that runs south west to north east across the northern boundary of the site; and
9. Securing an access for buses, emergency vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles only to the site from Howard Drive.

Off site:

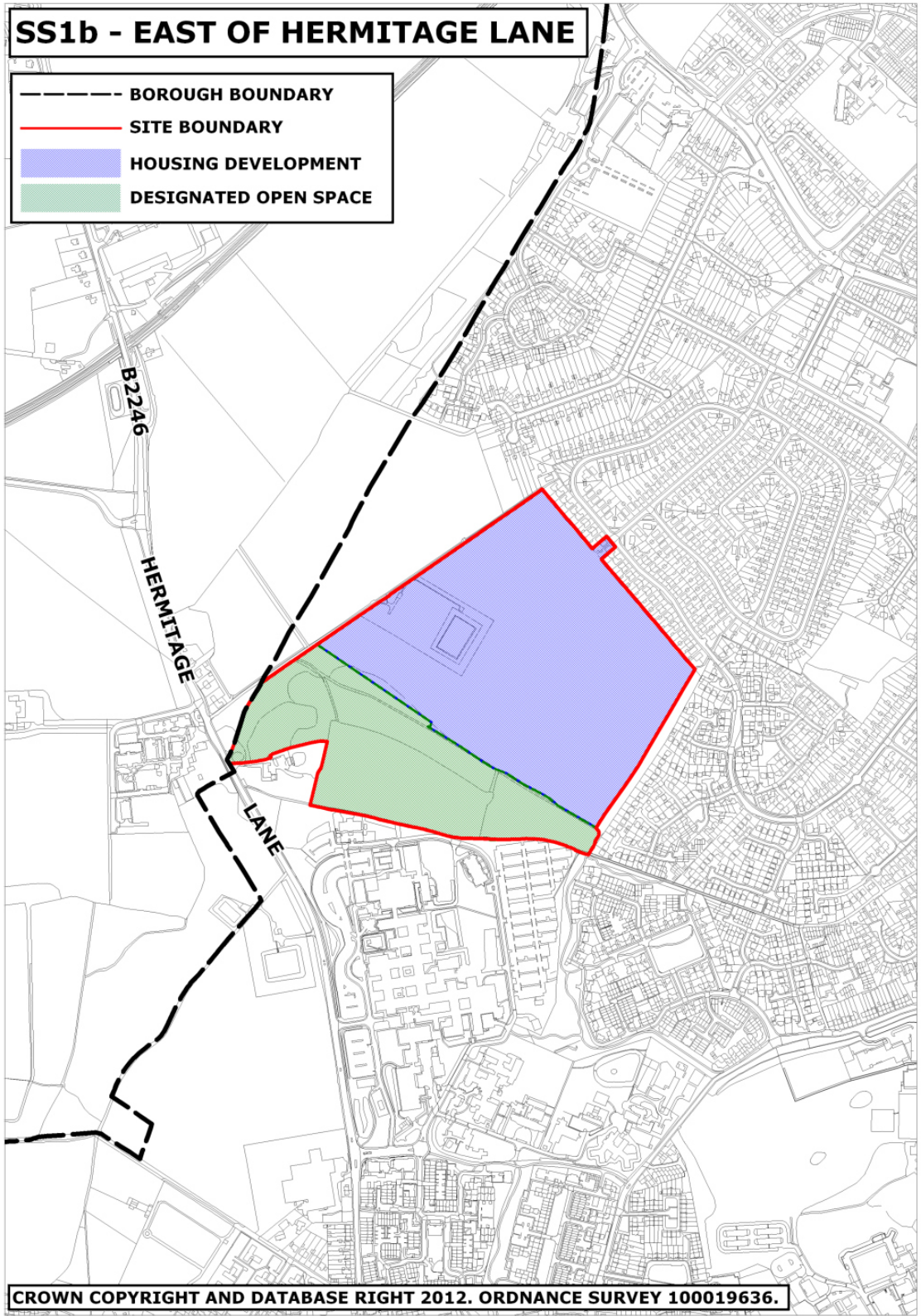
9. Pedestrian and cycle links to existing residential areas, shops, schools and health facilities, including links through to Howard Drive and Queen's Road via Freshland Road; and
10. Provision of a direct pedestrian footpath, complimentary to the current character of the orchard and open fields, running north west from the site and joining B2246 Hermitage Lane at the closest point achievable to Barming railway station.

Financial contributions:

11. Provision of appropriate contributions towards education, health, open space and community facilities;

6 Refer to supporting text for policy SS1.

12. Contribution towards the provision of an appropriate pedestrian and cycle route on B2246 Hermitage Lane; and
13. Contribution towards increasing the size of Barming railway station car park (subject to confirmation of need).



Policy SS1c - West of Hermitage Lane

3.19 West of Hermitage Lane is located opposite Maidstone Hospital on B2246 Hermitage Lane. The allocation, as depicted on the Policies Map, is comprised of two portions of land – the larger portion of land fronts Hermitage Lane and is shaped like an arrow pointing west, while the smaller portion of land is located at the tip of the arrow lying on a south west/north east axis. The larger portion of the site is directly adjacent to the border with Tonbridge and Malling.

3.20 Where the site adjoins the Tonbridge and Malling boundary there is a large area of identified ancient woodland. Ecological advice from Kent County Council advises that at this location the woodland should be protected by a 30 metres wide buffer running the length of the site/borough boundary.

3.21 Allowing for restricting factors, this site is allocated for 300 dwellings at a density of approximately 30 per hectare.

3.22 Vehicular access to the site will be secured from the Hermitage Lane frontage only. Running south from this access a pedestrian footpath will be provided to link up to the point where the existing footpath on the western side of Hermitage Lane ends, this will provide safe access for residents to the local facilities at St. Andrew's Park and beyond. A safe crossing point will also be required for pedestrians close to the access, this is for people walking north, as the footpath at this point is on the eastern side of Hermitage Lane.

3.23 Oakapple Lane, which joins Hermitage Lane 280 metres south of the Hermitage Lane frontage also provides access to the site, although this will be restricted to pedestrians and cyclists, as the north western half of the lane is unmade and enjoys a semi-rural character. As part of the development the unmade section of Oakapple Lane will be enhanced in a complementary nature which protects its existing character, yet achieves a safe means of access.

3.24 In recognition of the existing open character on this section of Hermitage Lane, the Hermitage Lane frontage of the development will incorporate landscaping that is sympathetic to its current character and the housing density at this part of the site will be reduced in accordance with this.

SS1c - West of Hermitage Lane

West of Hermitage Lane is allocated for residential development. A development brief, to be approved by the Borough Council, will detail the way in which residential and infrastructure elements are delivered in an integrated and co-ordinated manner. This will address the following:

On site:

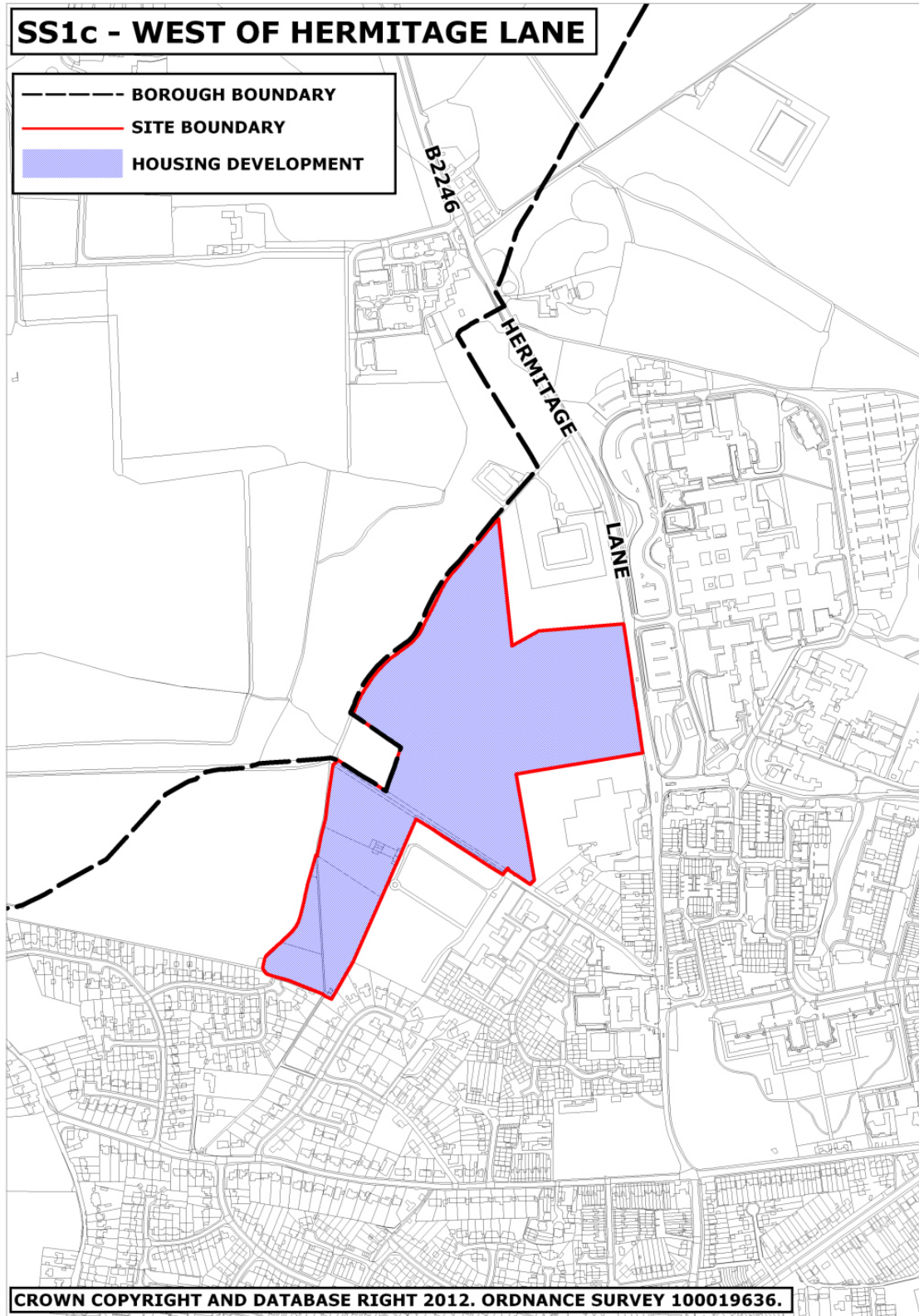
1. Provision of 300 dwellings (at an approximate density of 30 per hectare);
2. Affordable housing will be delivered on site as per the wider Core Strategy target (set generally at 40% of dwellings with a 15 units threshold) unless viability testing of West of Hermitage Lane site and the north west strategic location (to be undertaken) indicates otherwise;
3. All dwellings will be constructed to the wider Core Strategy target for Code for Sustainable Homes (level 4 from 2013, level 5 from 2016) unless viability testing of the West of Hermitage Lane site and the north west strategic location (to be undertaken) indicates otherwise;
4. Inclusion of a 30 metres wide landscape buffer along the north west boundary adjacent to the designated area of ancient woodland;
5. Provision of landscaping on the B2246 Hermitage Lane frontage to maintain an element of its current open character;
6. Provision of a new pedestrian footpath along the B2246 Hermitage Lane frontage of the site, linking south along the western side of Hermitage Lane to the existing footpath;
7. Provision of a pedestrian crossing point close to the site access on Hermitage Lane; and
8. Securing vehicular access only from B2246 Hermitage Lane.

Off site:

9. Complementary enhancement of the unmade section of Oakapple Lane, retaining the features that are integral to its character; and
10. Pedestrian and cycle links to existing residential areas, shops, schools and health facilities, incorporating a link along the unmade section of Oakapple Lane.

Financial contributions:

11. Provision of appropriate contributions towards education, health, open space and community facilities;
12. Contribution towards providing a new cycle lane on B2246 Hermitage Lane; and
13. Contribution towards increasing the size of Barming railway station car park (subject to confirmation of need).



Strategic housing location to the south east of the urban area

4.1 The south east of Maidstone has been identified as a strategic location for housing development. In this location, improvements to local transport infrastructure are required to accommodate further housing. The transport enhancements considered necessary are:

- i. An in-bound bus lane from Willington Street to the A229/A274 junction;
- ii. The improvement of the Willington Street / A274 Sutton Road junction;
- iii. A new roundabout to be provided from on the A274 to allow access to Langley Park site;
- iv. A new access road of a width suitable to accommodate contra-flow traffic and adjacent footways between Gore Court Road from the western boundary of Bicknor Wood and A274 Sutton Road;
- v. Widening Gore Court Road to a suitable width to accommodate contra-flow traffic with a footway on the eastern side of the carriageway between White Horse Lane and A274 Sutton Road; and
- vi. A pedestrian and cycle crossing on the A274 to link the allocated development sites.

4.2 A transport assessment will identify the scope of improvements required to the junctions.

4.3 The local education authority, Kent County Council, is seeking the provision of a two form entry primary school within the south east strategic location. The site and the requirement is still subject to confirmation of need, although Langley Park on Sutton Road is the preferred location. Policy SS2(a) is caveated in recognition of the need to confirm this requirement.

4.4 The National Planning Policy Framework requires the policies of the Core Strategy to be tested for their cumulative viability. In the south east strategic location, because of the proposed transport infrastructure improvements, the Council will be looking closely at the range of contributions that developments can make to ensure that no proposed allocation is affected to the degree of being deemed unviable.

SS2 - Strategic allocation in South East Maidstone

In the south east Maidstone strategic location, the Council will allocate the following land for residential development as shown on the policies map:

- a. **Langley Park**
- b. **North of Sutton Road**
- c. **North of Bicknor Wood**

Sites in the south east strategic location will contribute towards, as proven necessary:

- i. The provision of a bus lane from Willington Street to the A229/A274 junction;
- ii. The improvement of the Willington Street / A274 Sutton Road junction;
- iii. A pedestrian and cycle crossing on the A274 to link the allocated development sites; and
- iv. The provision of land or funding for a 2 form entry primary school, or suitable enhancements to existing primary schools subject to justification of need.

Sites will not be released for development until an agreement has been signed with regard to these improvements.

Further specific requirements for each site are detailed in the sites policies.

Policy SS2a - Langley Park

4.5 Langley Park is located adjacent to Maidstone's urban fringe, south of the A274 Sutton Road, and is a large site of 34 hectares allocated in the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan 2000 for mixed uses including housing, community facilities, light industry and a park and ride facility. Experience over the past several years has shown that there is little market interest in the industrial development of the Langley Park site. Furthermore, an in-bound dedicated bus lane is now favoured instead of a park and ride facility in this area.

4.6 For these reasons the Borough Council considers it appropriate to seek to promote a sustainable development of approximately 600 dwellings at Langley Park which will primarily deliver family housing with appropriate community facilities, open space and transport linkages to integrate the site into the existing urban area.

4.7 Langley Park is the largest residential allocation in the Core Strategy and its development, together with other planned housing development in this vicinity, will have a significant impact on local services and facilities. As such, the site is considered an appropriate location for a new primary school, community hall, convenience store and potentially a pub/restaurant. Given the size of the development, the retention of a large area of natural open space in the southern section of the site and the provision of formal and informal open space and play facilities across the site is important for recreational purposes.

4.8 Appropriate off-site highway works will also be necessary to enable sustainable linkages between the site, existing neighbouring areas and Maidstone town centre. Pedestrian and cycle connections and a dedicated in-bound bus lane from Willington Street to the A229/A274 junction will enhance accessibility to existing residential areas and the town centre.

4.9 The relatively open nature of the land and the harsh appearance of the existing settlement edge at the site's western boundary necessitate the need for a comprehensive landscaping scheme, which provides the opportunity to create a softer gateway to Maidstone's urban edge in this location. To ensure the site positively responds to the character and appearance of the area, development should be softened along the eastern and western boundaries of the site by substantial and layered tree planting. In addition, it is proposed that the open space running southward down from the ridge to the watercourse flowing from Langley Loch will be retained.

SS2a - Langley Park

Langley Park is allocated for residential development. A development brief, to be approved by the Borough Council, will detail the way in which residential and infrastructure elements are delivered in an integrated and co-ordinated manner. This will address the following:

On Site:

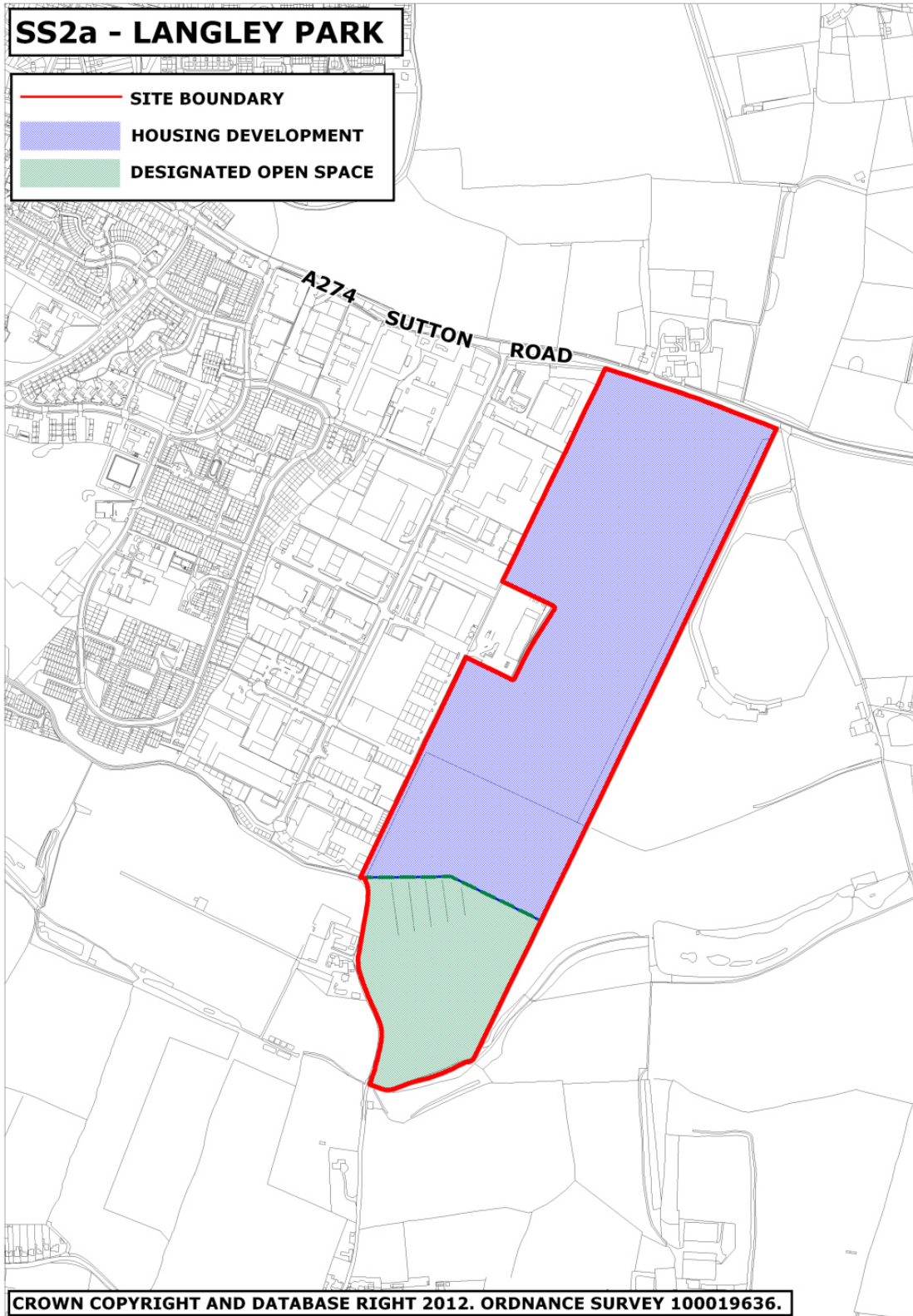
1. Provision of approximately 600 dwellings at an average density of 30 dwellings (net) per hectare across the whole site;
2. Affordable housing will be delivered on site as per the wider Core Strategy target (set generally at 40% of dwellings with a 15 units threshold) unless viability testing of the Langley Park site and the south east strategic location (to be undertaken) indicates otherwise;
3. All dwellings will be constructed to the wider Core Strategy target for Code for Sustainable Homes (level 4 from 2013, level 5 from 2016) unless viability testing of the Langley Park site and the south east strategic location (to be undertaken) indicates otherwise;
4. Provision of appropriate shopping facilities for the needs of the development;
5. Provision of an appropriate community facility for the needs of the development;
6. Provision of at least 6 hectares of open space for a public park in the southern section of the site;
7. Provision of a minimum 10 metres wide structural landscape buffer to the south of the developable area, to screen development from the site's southernmost area of open space;
8. Provision of a minimum 10 metres wide structural landscape buffer provided and maintained along the eastern boundary of the site; and
9. Provision of a minimum 15 metres wide structural landscape buffer along the western boundary of the site.

Off Site:

10. A suitable junction to be provided onto the A274 only, with cycle and pedestrian links to other existing residential areas, Bircholt Road and Brishing Road; and
11. A pedestrian and cycle crossing on the A274 to link the site to allocated development sites to the north.

Financial Contributions:

12. Appropriate contributions to health and education.



Policy SS2b - North of Sutton Road

4.10 Land north of Sutton Road lies adjacent to Maidstone's urban fringe along Sutton Road and is a large site of approximately 9 hectares allocated for housing in the Local Plan 2000. A key factor in the allocation of this site was the retention and protection of Bicknor Wood and Bicknor Hole which lie to the north and west of the site respectively and which, together with a strip of woodland projecting southwards along the eastern boundary of the site, function as a strong visual boundary and enclosure to development. Retention and protection of Bicknor Wood and Bicknor Hole and the subsequent enclosure of the site to the east remain a priority. A 15 metre landscape buffer to the north and west of the site and a 10 metre structural landscape buffer at the site's eastern boundary will ensure this is achieved.

4.11 The site abuts the urban edge of Maidstone and is therefore well located with regard to existing services. The site has an extensive frontage to a main road, the A274, along which there are regular bus services into, and out of Maidstone. Accessibility from the site to the town centre will be further improved by the provision of a bus lane from Willington Street to the A229/A274 junction, a separate access road from Sutton Road through the site to Gore Court Road from the western boundary of Bicknor Wood and pedestrian and cycle linkages from the site to existing and new residential areas. As such, the site is considered an appropriate location for approximately 285 dwellings, with associated open space and play areas. Considering its close proximity to Langley Park, the site will also benefit from a local convenience store, community facility and extensive open space.

SS2b - North of Sutton Road

North of Sutton Road is allocated for residential development. A development brief, to be approved by the Borough Council, will detail the way in which residential and infrastructure elements are delivered in an integrated and co-ordinated manner. This will address the following:

On Site:

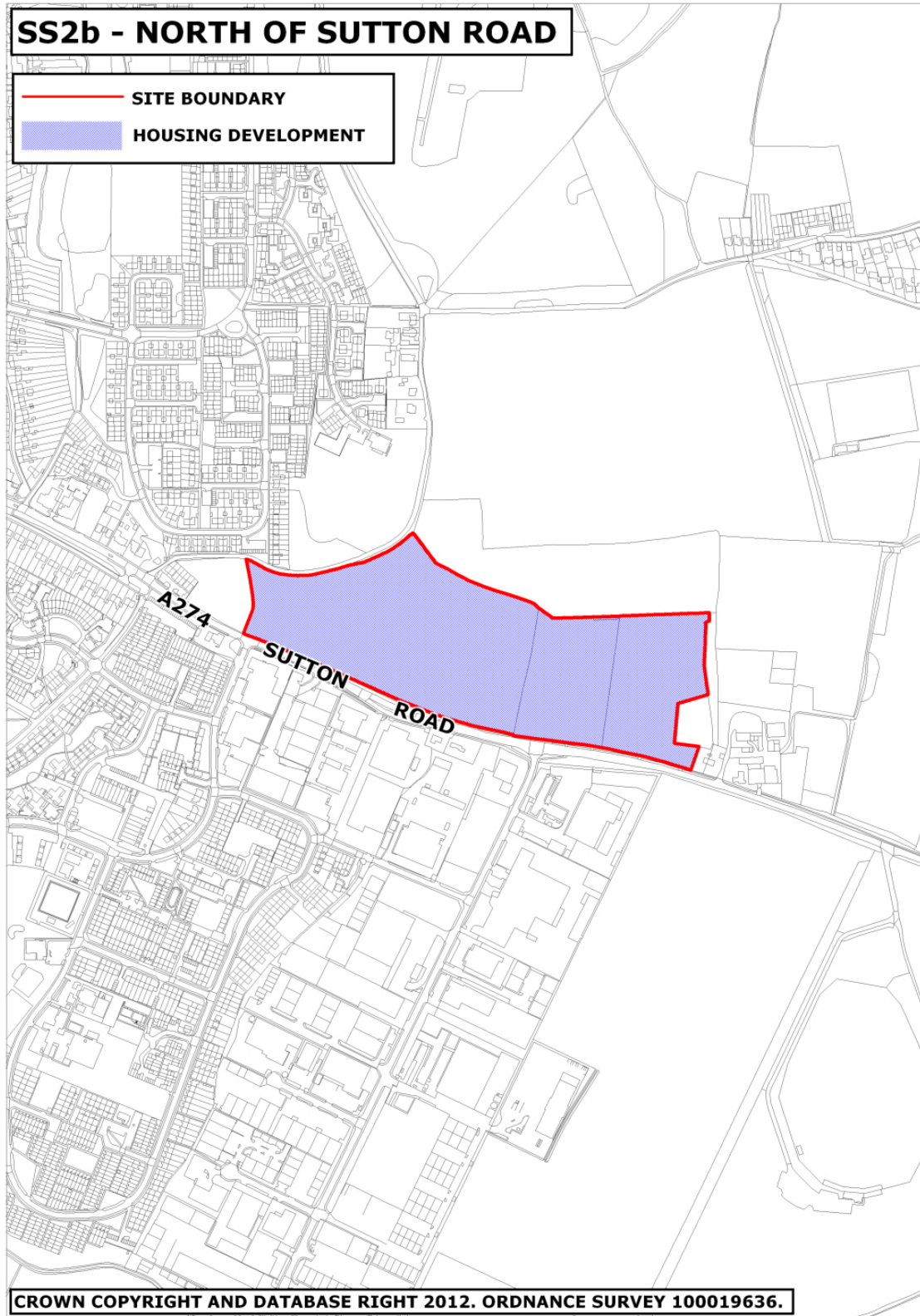
1. Provision of approximately 285 dwellings at an average density of 30 dwellings (net) per hectare across the whole site;
2. Affordable housing will be delivered on site as per the wider Core Strategy target (set generally at 40% of dwellings with a 15 units threshold) unless viability testing of the North of Sutton Road site and the south east strategic location (to be undertaken) indicates otherwise;
3. All dwellings will be constructed to the wider Core Strategy target for Code for Sustainable Homes (level 4 from 2013, level 5 from 2016) unless viability testing of the North of Sutton Road site and the south east strategic location (to be undertaken) indicates otherwise;
4. A new access road of a width suitable to accommodate contra-flow traffic and adjacent footways between Gore Court Road from the western boundary of Bicknor Wood and A274 Sutton Road;
5. The provision of a 15 metre landscape buffer along the site's northern boundary incorporating a pedestrian route and cycle way, which will be constructed and planted before the occupation of the first dwelling; and
6. Provision of a minimum 10 metres wide structural landscape buffer provided and maintained along the eastern boundary of the site.

Off Site:

7. Pedestrian and cycle links to existing residential areas, A274 Sutton Road and Gore Court Road including a pedestrian and cycle crossing on the A274 to link the site to Langley Park.

Financial Contributions:

8. Appropriate contributions to social and community infrastructure, health and open spaces.



Policy SS2c - North of Bicknor Wood

4.12 Land north of Bicknor Wood is a 14 hectare, level, rectangular field adjacent to Maidstone's urban fringe, north of Sutton Road. The site is bounded by Gore Court Road to the west, White Horse Lane to the north and Bicknor Wood to the south. The site is rural in character and is partly screened from Gore Court Road and White Horse Lane by mature trees and hedgerows.

4.13 Bicknor Wood, to the south of the site, separates the site from land North of Sutton Road which is allocated in policy SS2(b). Extending the eastern section of Bicknor Wood to meet East Wood, which is adjacent to White Horse Lane, would form a visually attractive buffer between the site and the open countryside to the east. This is considered necessary to ensure development on site does not cause undue harm to the rural character of the area.

4.14 Despite being a larger site than its adjacent allocation to the south, the site is considered suitable for less development, approximately 190 dwellings, to reflect the more rural context in which it would sit. The location of the site in close proximity to Gore Court Road, Sutton Road and land north of Sutton Road, makes it possible to link the site to proposed highways improvements in this area and thus allows good access to services and public transport.

4.15 Gore Court Road, at the western boundary of the site, would need improvements to connect with planned highways infrastructure on land north of Sutton Road. As such, it is recommended that this infrastructure is in place prior to any development on site. Cycle and pedestrian linkages to existing and new residential areas are also required, and the Council would expect on-site cycle and pedestrian routes to ensure sustainable modes of travel are encouraged.

SS2c - North of Bicknor Wood

North of Bicknor Wood is allocated for residential development and will not be released until:

- a. access from Sutton Road to Gore Court Road is completed in association with policy SS2(b); and
- b. a woodland belt of at least 80 metres in width linking the eastern section of Bicknor Wood to East Wood is planted.

A development brief, to be approved by the Borough Council, will detail the way in which residential and infrastructure elements are delivered in an integrated and co-ordinated manner. This will address the following:

On Site:

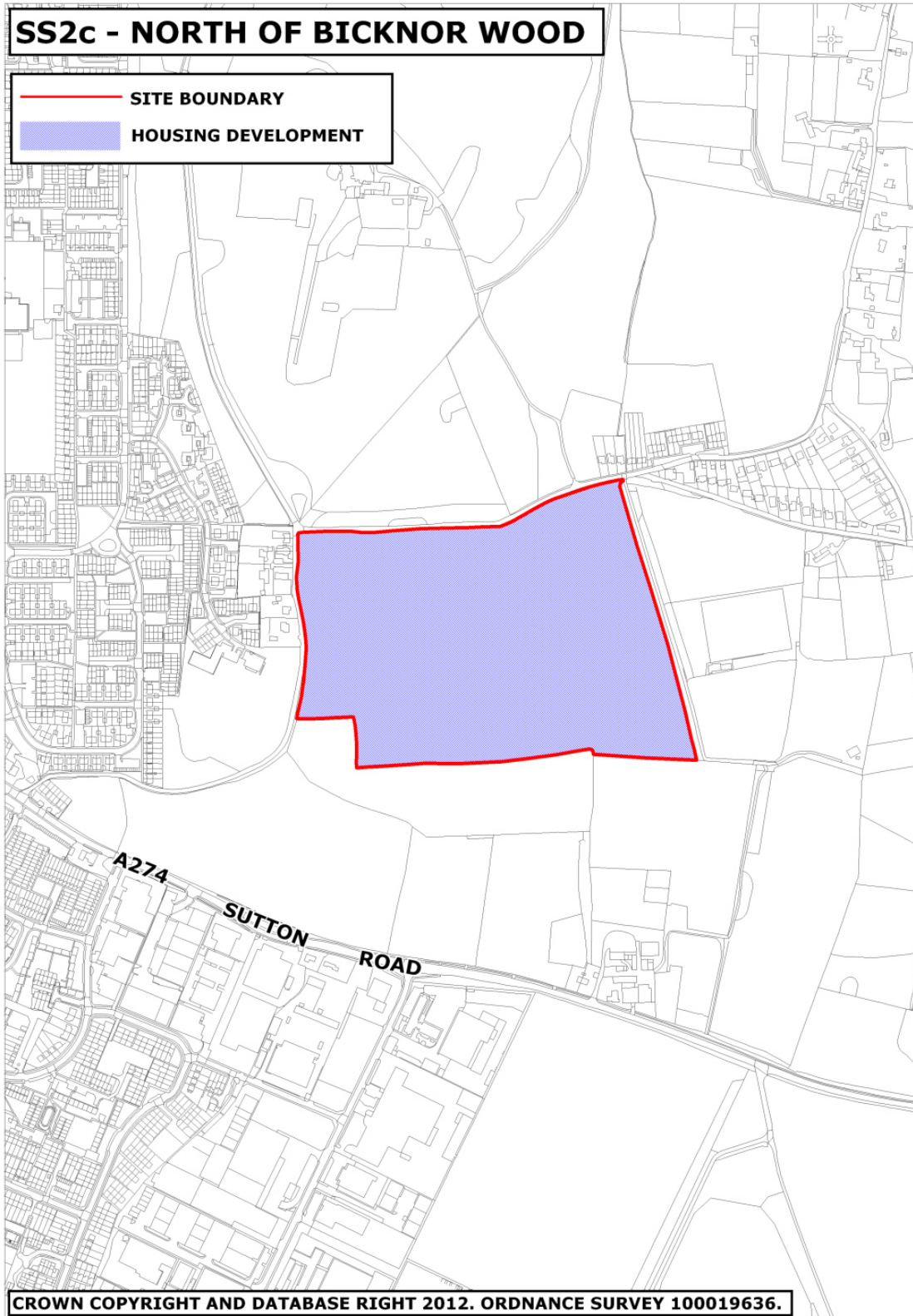
1. Provision of 190 dwellings at an average density of 30 dwellings (net) per hectare across the whole site;
2. Affordable housing will be delivered on site as per the wider Core Strategy target (set generally at 40% of dwellings with a 15 units threshold) unless viability testing of the North of Bicknor Wood site and the south east strategic location (to be undertaken) indicates otherwise;
3. All dwellings will be constructed to the wider Core Strategy target for Code for Sustainable Homes (level 4 from 2013, level 5 from 2016) unless viability testing of the North of Bicknor Wood site and the south east strategic location (to be undertaken) indicates otherwise;
4. Provision of a 15 metre wide landscape buffer along the site's boundary with Bicknor Wood incorporating a pedestrian route and cycle way, which will be constructed and planted before the occupation of the first dwelling; and
5. Provision of a woodland belt of at least 80 metres in width to link the eastern section of Bicknor Wood to East Wood.

Off Site:

6. Pedestrian and cycle links to existing residential areas, White Horse Lane and Gore Court Road.

Financial Contributions:

7. Contributions to widen Gore Court Road to a suitable width to accommodate contra-flow traffic and a footway on the eastern side of the carriageway between White Horse Lane and A274 Sutton Road; and
8. Contributions to social and community infrastructure, health and education.



Policy SS3 - Land at Woodcut Farm

5.1 There is a unique opportunity in the borough to provide a prestigious business park at Junction 8 of M20 that is well connected to the motorway network and that can provide for a range of job needs up to 2026.

5.2 Land at Woodcut Farm is allocated to provide for a mix of business uses comprising industrial, offices and distribution/logistics. Prestigious office development is sought, such as that required by company headquarters, providing complementary provision to the town centre.

5.3 The site, which is some 25.8ha in size, is situated to the west of the A20/M20 junction (junction 8). It comprises the wedge of land lying between M20 to the north east and A20 to the south west. The site is agricultural land, divided into fields by hedgerows which predominately run in a north-south direction. The site is also bisected north-south by a watercourse which eventually runs into the River Len to the south of A20. The land is undulating, the ground rising up from either side of the watercourse. To the south the site borders a number of dispersed properties which front onto A20 (Ashford Rd). To the south east the site is bounded by Musket Lane. To the north west lies Chrismill Lane and a substantial tree belt which fronts onto this lane. The site boundary then follows the hedge belt which adjoins Chrismill Lane approximately half way down its length and links to the complex of buildings at Woodcut Farm and turns south to A20, running along the eastern boundary of the fields which front onto the Woodcut Farm access.

5.4 The site is located in the countryside and lies within the setting of the nationally designated Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The site falls within the White Heath Farmlands landscape character sub-area ⁽⁷⁾ where landscape condition is poor overall, partially because of the fragmentation caused by the existing highway infrastructure. Landscape sensitivity is recorded as moderate, the landscape providing the setting of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

5.5 Development will be planned with careful attention to the site's visual and physical relationship with the AONB, responding to the site's topography and natural landscape features. Through the means of a development brief, the scale, design, siting, use, orientation, levels and lighting of buildings and associated development will be defined alongside infrastructure and landscaping requirements.

5.6 To achieve a high quality scheme in this prime location, low density development will be delivered in a parkland setting created through the retention and enhancement of existing tree and hedge belts, including those subject to tree preservation orders ⁽⁸⁾, and substantial additional structural landscaping within the site in the form of shaws and woodland blocks. Landscape buffers will also be established along the principal site boundaries, including to help provide a setting to the Grade 2 listed Woodcut Farmhouse and to help secure the residential amenity of nearby residential properties.

7 Landscape Character Area Assessment 2012 - ref 49-2

8 TPO 19 of 2007 & TPO 17 of 2007

5.7 Buildings will cover no more than 40% of the site. This figure excludes the western most field, of some 7ha in area, which is reserved as an undeveloped area to include an enhanced landscape buffer to establish a clear and strong boundary between the development and the wider countryside to the east of Bearsted.

5.8 The lower lying area of the site, to the east of the stream, is better able to accommodate larger footprint buildings with heights restricted to a maximum of 14m. To the west of the stream the land rises steadily and is suited to smaller footprint buildings up to 8m in height.

5.9 There are archaeological remains in the immediate vicinity of the site, including an Anglo-Saxon burial site. Measures appropriate to the actual archaeological value of the site, revealed by further survey as needed, will be addressed in the development brief for the site. There are no statutory or non-statutory sites of nature conservation importance within the site and the County Ecologist advises that the potential for impacts on designated sites is limited. As is normal practice for a proposal of this nature, an ecological scoping study will be required to establish the presence of, and potential for, any impacts on protected species.

5.10 Vehicular access to the site will be taken from A20 Ashford Road and the development will make off-site contributions to junction improvements in the following locations, subject to more detailed analysis through a Transport Impact Assessment:

- improving the M20 Junction 8 and the west-bound on-slip and merging;
- improving the A20 Ashford Rd/M20 link road roundabout;
- signalising the A20 Ashford Rd/Penford Hill junction;
- signalising the A20 Ashford Rd/Eyehorne Street/Great Danes Hotel access; and
- improvements to the Willington Street/A20 Ashford Rd junction.

5.11 A Travel Plan will be required to demonstrate how development will deliver improved access by sustainable modes, including by cycling and public transport.

SS3 - Land at Woodcut Farm

Land at Woodcut Farm as identified on the policies map is allocated for mixed employment development.

A development brief, to be approved by the Borough Council, will detail the way the employment, landscaping and infrastructure elements are delivered in an integrated and co-ordinated manner that respect the site's visual and physical relationship with the North Downs AONB. This will address the following:

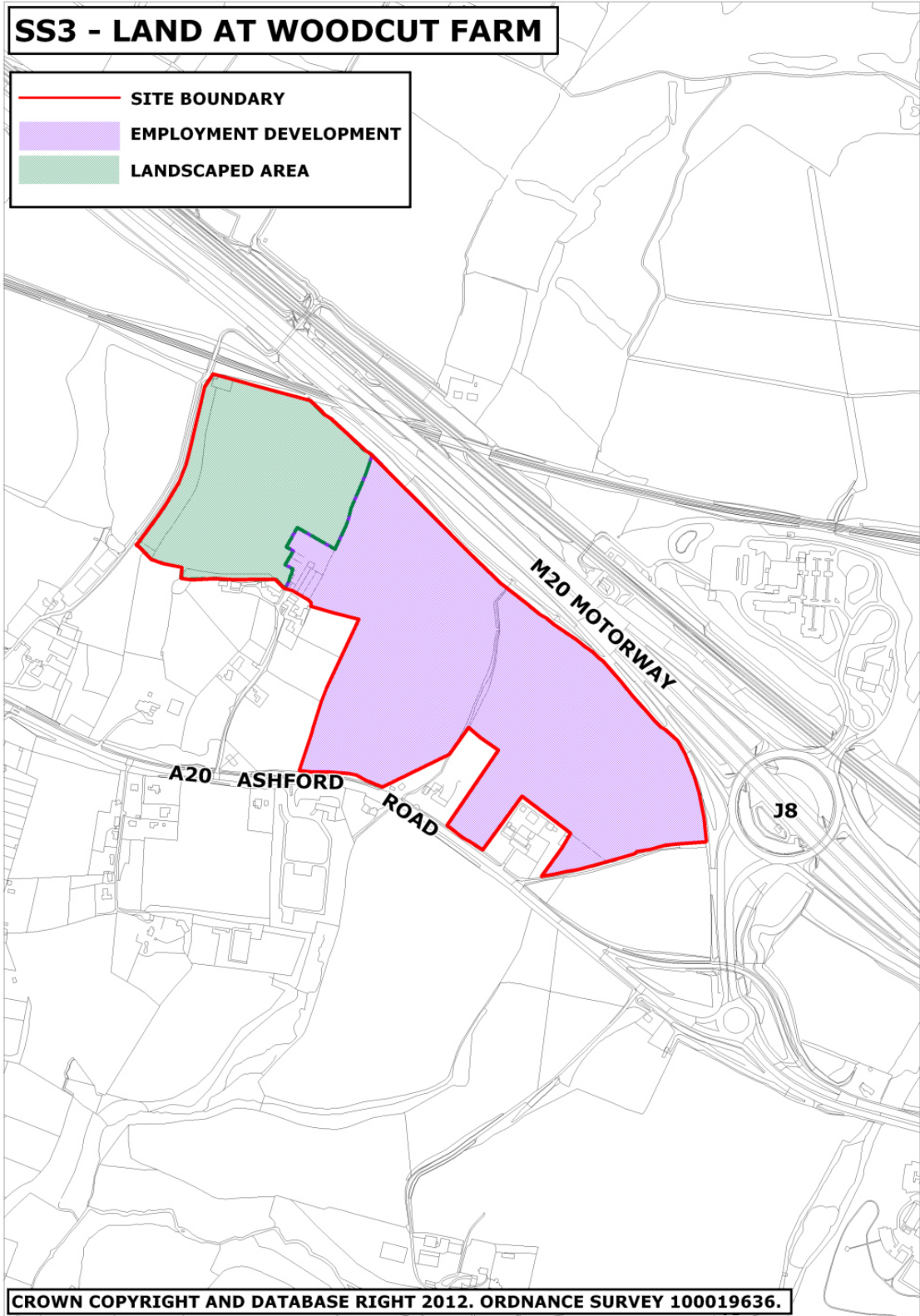
On site:

1. Provision of up to 49,000sqm of mixed employment floorspace comprising light industry (B1c), general industry (B2) and premium offices (B1a) with limited distribution/warehousing (B8);
2. The creation of a spacious parkland setting for development through the addition of substantial internal landscaping such that buildings will cover not more than 40% of the developed site area;
3. Use of landscape buffers of at least 15m in width along the site's boundaries to M20 and to Musket Lane and to help secure the setting to Woodcut Farmhouse (Grade 2 listed) and the amenity of residential properties at Chestnuts and White Heath. Development will have a landscaped frontage to A20;
4. Securing the 7ha field to the north west of Woodcut Farm as an undeveloped landscape area including the addition of a landscape buffer of at least 30m along the eastern boundary of this field . Future management of this area will be secured by means of legal agreement;
5. Larger footprint buildings will be accommodated in the field to the east of the stream up to a maximum unit size of 15,000sqm with building ridge heights not to exceed 14m;
6. Development on the field to the west of the stream will comprise smaller units with graded building heights that take account of the site's topography. Building ridge heights not to exceed 8m;
7. Securing vehicular access to the site from A20 Ashford Road;
8. Measures to address the archaeological interest on the site, as revealed through appropriate survey;
9. Measures to protect habitats and species of importance, as revealed through ecological survey, are identified alongside appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures; and

10. Development is support by the implementation of a Travel Plan to be approved by the Borough Council.

Off site:

11. Development will contribute, as proven necessary through a Transport Impact Assessment, to improvements at the following junctions:
 - i. Improving the M20 Junction 8 and the west-bound on-slip and merging;
 - ii. Improving the A20 Ashford Rd/M20 link road roundabout;
 - iii. Signalising the A20 Ashford Rd/Penford Hill junction;
 - iv. Signalising the A20 Ashford Rd/Eyhorne Street/Great Danes Hotel access; and
 - v. Improvements to the Willingdon Street/A20 Ashford Rd junction.



Policy SS4 - Newnham Park

6.1 Newnham Park is a 28.5ha site located to the north of the urban area adjacent to junction 7 of the M20 motorway. It is approximately 2.5km from the town centre and is one of the prime gateways into Maidstone. The site is bounded by Horish Wood to the north and Pope's Wood to the east, which is ancient woodland and a designate Local Wildlife Site. To the south is Bearsted Road, beyond which are Vinters Park Crematorium, Vinters Park Local Nature Reserve, and the Grove Green housing estate. The eastern boundary is formed by the A249 Sittingbourne Road, beyond which are Eclipse Business Park and the Hilton Hotel. Newnham Court Shopping Village dominates the western part of the allocation, and the Kent Institute of Medicine and Surgery (KIMS) hospital is under construction on the northern perimeter of the site together with a new access road. The hospital is due to open in 2014.

6.2 Although the KIMS hospital will be privately funded and operated, national health service (NHS) patients as well as private patients will be treated there (stipulated by legal agreements attached to the planning permission). The hospital will provide specialist medical facilities, many of which are not available at NHS or private hospitals in Kent, and will act as a catalyst for additional medical facilities, research and medical teaching. The Maidstone Medical Campus will create a specialist knowledge cluster that will attract a skilled workforce to support the Council's vision for economic prosperity.

6.3 Newnham Court Shopping Village has been developed (and continues to develop) in a piecemeal fashion over time and, consequently, the visual impact of this site is poor. The site comprises a range of facilities including a garden centre, a number of ancillary retail units, cafés, a veterinary surgery, a childcare nursery, and a quantum of small business uses. The landowners of the Shopping Village are currently seeking to make improvements to buildings and car parking. The redevelopment of the site is achievable through the development management process, but the inclusion of the Shopping Village within the medical campus allocation will deliver a comprehensively planned development that will provide quality buildings in a parkland setting.

6.4 To the far south east of the development site is a rectangular field of 3.03 hectares, which is bounded by Pope's Wood to the north and east, Bearsted Road to the south and proposed development to the west. This field is identified for new woodland planting, to be developed as a parkland nature reserve, and transferred into the ownership of the Borough Council or maintained by a Trust for its future protection.

6.5 Newnham Park is located in the countryside and lies within the setting of the nationally designated Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), where particular attention needs to be paid to protecting and conserving the distinctive character of the landscape. The site is reasonably well screened by mature woodland to the north and east, mature trees and other vegetation along Bearsted Road to the south, and sparser planting on the western boundary. However, there are long and medium distance views of the site from the North Downs; limited views from Gidds Pond Cottages and properties located to the

south east of the allocation; and views from local roads. There are existing landscape features within the site boundaries, which should be retained where possible, and the site is subject to tree preservation orders⁽⁹⁾.

6.6 Given the location and containment of the Newnham Park site, the allocation will not compromise the Council's strategy of avoiding coalescence between Maidstone and the Medway Towns.

6.7 The topography of the site is gently undulating, sloping down from the north west and from the south east perimeters into a shallow valley of a stream that runs north-south through the site. Newnham Park is partially developed and the remainder of the site is arable fields.

6.8 The County Ecologist has submitted initial advice based on a broad consideration of site proposals, and concluded that there are constraints to development particularly to the use of the site along the boundaries with the Local Wildlife Site/ancient woodland where a landscape buffer would be required. There is also potential for indirect impacts to the Vinters Park Local Nature Reserve if the stream and corridor is affected by proposals. Most of the site is of limited ecological value, the areas of interest primarily focused at the edges of the site and along the stream. However, much of the site lies within the Kent Biodiversity Partnership's Mid Kent Greensand and Gault Biodiversity Opportunity Area, which means the area has been identified as offering the best opportunities for habitat enhancement, restoration or creation. This does not present a planning constraint, but it offers opportunities to develop targeted habitat mitigation and enhancements as part of the site's development. Development will have regard to a full ecological survey, to be approved by the Borough Council.

6.9 The site falls within the Weaving Fringes landscape character area⁽¹⁰⁾, where condition is moderate overall and sensitivity is low because of the varied land uses and urban fringe influences. The summary of actions are: improve and reinforce the more distinctive and characteristic elements, e.g. ancient woodland, streams, traditional buildings and open landscape at Newnham Court Farm, which strengthen the setting of the Kent Downs AONB; and avoid significant encroachment of the urban edge where it would detract from the open foreground to the Kent Downs AONB. Given the relationship of Newnham Park to the AONB and its landscape setting, the Borough Council will prepare a local landscape assessment to inform the development brief.

6.10 Newnham Park will be developed in a high quality environment: in a woodland/parkland setting with appropriate provision of open space. The layout of development will make best use of the site's topography in order to minimise the impact of long and medium distance views from the AONB. A robust internal landscape structure will be provided through new planting and green areas, building on existing landscaping within and around the site. New planting will be of locally appropriate native species. Detailed mapping will be required to identify the most sensitive areas of the site in terms of its landscape and biodiversity to guide development.

9 TPO No.1 of 2001 and TPO No. 13 of 2010

10 Landscape Character Area Assessment 2012 - ref 14-1

6.11 A minimum 30m structural landscape buffer between built development and the edge of ancient woodland on the northern and eastern perimeter will be provided, to ensure that trees within the woodland are not compromised. This buffer will include tracts of planting extending into the body of the development to assist in creating the parkland setting. A minimum 10m landscape buffer will be planted on each side of the stream running through the site, providing a minimum 20m buffer. Use will be made of the existing watercourse to manage surface water drainage and, subject to an ecological survey, could be linked to a series of water bodies created by using Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) principles.

6.12 New woodland will be planted on the rectangular field to the south east of the allocated site, to provide net gains in biodiversity and ecological connectivity between the large expanses of Horish Wood and Pope's Wood. It will also serve to further enclose and screen new development.

6.13 An archaeological watching brief will be required.

6.14 New buildings at Newnham Park will be built to a high standard of design and sustainable construction to reflect the site's prime location as a gateway into Maidstone. Building heights will be restricted to two storeys and careful attention will be given to construction materials, particularly the use of green roofs to mitigate the impact of long and medium distance views from the North Downs. Large blocks of buildings will be unacceptable in the parkland setting. And low level lighting will be required where practical.

6.15 The medical campus will provide for up to 200,000m² of specialist medical facilities. Appropriate uses on the site will include hospital or healthcare facilities, specialist rehabilitation services, medical related research and development, central laboratory facilities, and medical training. Development will be planned in a comprehensive manner by means of the development brief. The brief will specify that the medical facilities on the area to the south of the KIMS hospital and west of the stream will be delivered in advance of those being provided on land to the east of the stream.

6.16 Replacement facilities at Newnham Court Shopping Village will be provided in the vicinity of the existing footprint. In order to assess the impact of proposals on the town centre, a retail impact assessment will be required for both comparison and convenience goods. If the cumulative quantum of retail development is more than 500m² greater than that which is existing on site, then only uses which are complementary rather than in conflict with the vitality and viability of the town centre will be acceptable. A reasoned justification for any departure from this criterion must be submitted with any planning application. Consequently, new additional retail floorspace, such as cafés, restaurants and public houses, together with banks and estate agents, are unlikely to be acceptable. Similarly, leisure uses such as cinemas and bowling alleys, and other uses that are likely to conflict with the town centre, will not be permitted. The town centre functions successfully due to the mix of uses in close proximity to each other. Conversely, retail premises that have a unique and recognised "out of town" format are likely to be acceptable on the allocated site because conflict with the town centre would be unlikely.

6.17 Critical to the successful development of Newnham Park is the provision of appropriate transport infrastructure. Vehicular access to the site will be taken from the New Cut roundabout, with bus and emergency access from the A249 Sittingbourne Road. A bus interchange will be provided as part of the retail redevelopment, together with a car park management plan. A Travel Plan will be required to accompany any planning application. Permeability is an important aspect of the site's development, and enhanced pedestrian and cycle links to the residential areas of Grove Green, Vinters Park and Penenden Heath, and to Eclipse Business Park, will be provided.

6.18 Off site highway improvements will include:

- Capacity improvements, and the provision of pedestrian crossing facilities, at the Bearsted roundabout (Bearsted Road/A249 Sittingbourne Road) and the New Cut roundabout (Bearsted Road/New Cut Road);
- The upgrading of Bearsted Road between Bearsted roundabout and New Cut roundabout to dual carriageway;
- Traffic signalisation of the M20 motorway junction 7 roundabout;
- Provision of a subsidised shuttle bus to operate between the site and the town centre, via New Cut Road and Ashford Road;
- Bus priority measures on New Cut Road, where feasible, and traffic signal priority measures at the junction of New Cut Road and the A20 Ashford Road; and
- Improved bus links to the site from the residential areas of Grove Green and Penenden Heath.

6.19 The shuttle bus will complement the existing park and ride facility in the vicinity of Newnham Park, which caters for long-term commuter parking. Land at Newnham Park will not be released for development until a legal agreement for off-site highway works has been agreed and signed.

Policy SS4 - Newnham Park

Newnham Park is allocated for a medical campus, retail park and nature reserve, as identified on the policies map. A development brief, to be approved by the Borough Council, will detail the way in which medical facilities, retail redevelopment and the nature reserve, together with integral landscaping and supporting infrastructure, are delivered in an integrated and coordinated manner. The development brief will address the following:

On site:

1. Provision of a maximum 200,000m² of specialist medical facilities set within an enhanced landscape structure;
2. Replacement retail facilities at Newnham Court Shopping Village, confined to the vicinity of the existing footprint of the current retail park;
3. Creation of a parkland nature reserve of 3.03ha on land to the south east of the site, as shown on the policies map, to be transferred to the Borough Council or maintained by a Trust;
4. Construction of high quality buildings of a sustainable design that reflect the site's prime location as a gateway to Maidstone;
5. Mitigation of the impact of development on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting by the provision of new and the retention and enhancement of existing structural and internal landscaping, by the use of the topography in site layout plans, by the restriction of building heights to a maximum of two storeys and the use of low level lighting, and by the use of green roofs where practical;
6. Medical facilities on land to the south of the hospital and west of the stream will be delivered in advance of medical facilities on land to the east of the stream;
7. The cumulative quantum of retail floorspace will be restricted to the provision of up to 500m² above that which already exists, and any additional retail floorspace above this limit must be complementary to town centre uses and the need for an out of town location justified;
8. Submission of a retail impact assessment for both comparison and convenience goods, to be approved by the Borough Council, in order to assess the impact of retail park proposals on the town centre;
9. Provision of a minimum 30m landscape buffer along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site to protect Ancient Woodland, with tracts of planting extending into the body of the development;
10. Provision of a minimum 10m landscape buffer on both sides of the stream running north-south through the site (minimum 20m width in total);
11. Submission of a full landscape assessment and ecology survey, to be approved by the Borough Council;
12. A watching archaeological brief;
13. Vehicular access to the site from the New Cut roundabout, with bus and emergency access from the A249 Sittingbourne Road;
14. A bus interchange as part of the retail redevelopment together with a car park management plan;

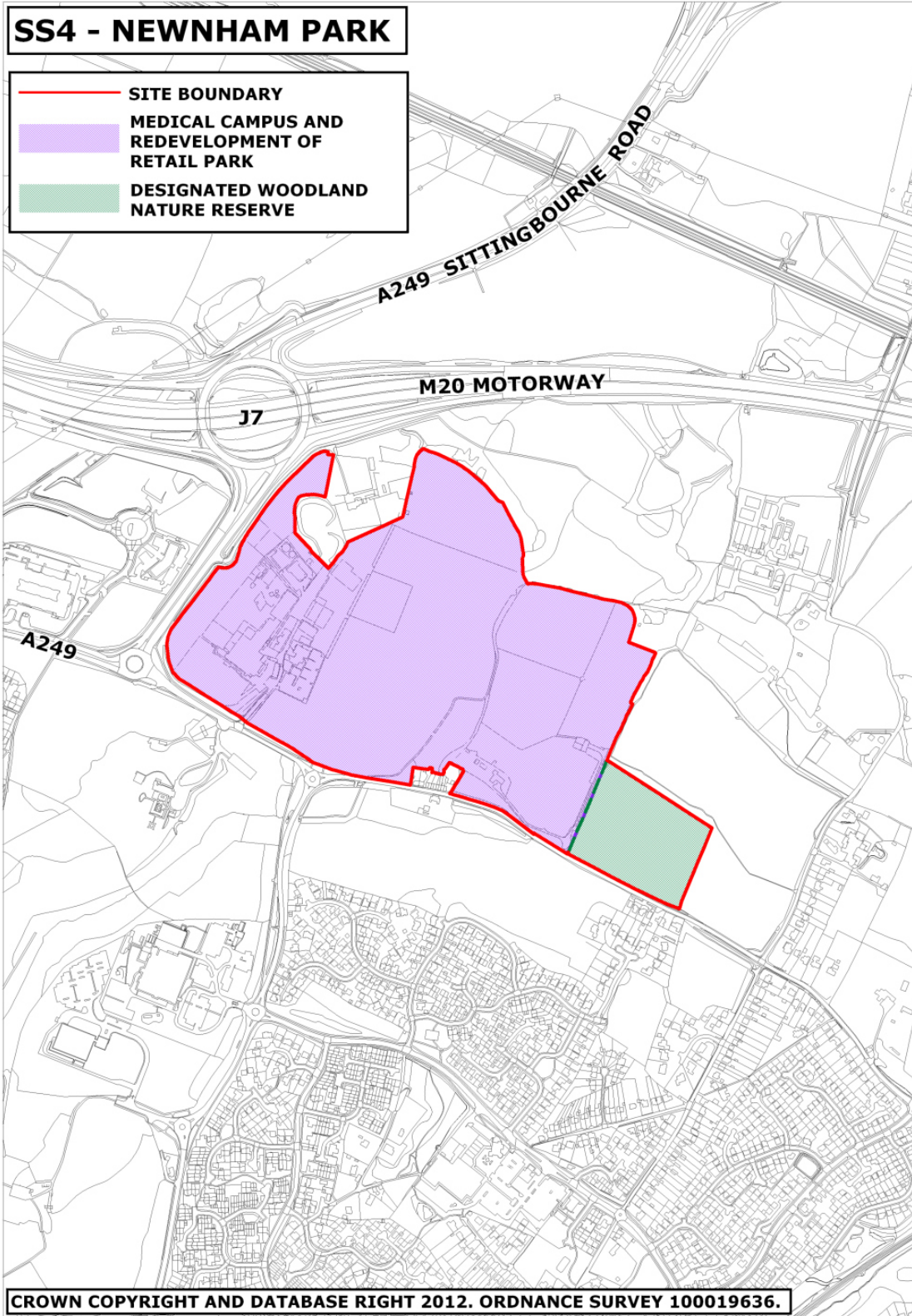
15. Enhanced pedestrian and cycle links to the residential areas of Grove Green, Vinters Park and Penenden Heath, and to Eclipse Business Park; and
16. Submission of a Travel Plan, to be approved by the Borough Council.

Off site:

16. A signed legal agreement for off-site highway improvements prior to the commencement of development;
17. Capacity improvements to the Bearsted roundabout at the junction of Bearsted Road with the A249 Sittingbourne Road, together with the provision of pedestrian crossing facilities;
18. Capacity improvements to the New Cut roundabout at the junction of Bearsted Road and New Cut Road, together with the provision of pedestrian crossing facilities;
19. The upgrading of Bearsted Road to a dual carriageway between Bearsted roundabout and New Cut roundabout;
20. Traffic signalisation of the M20 motorway junction 7 roundabout;
21. A subsidised shuttle bus to operate between the site and the town centre, via New Cut Road and Ashford Road;
22. Bus priority measures on New Cut Road, where feasible, and traffic signal priority measures at the junction of New Cut Road and the A20 Ashford Road; and
23. Improved bus links to the site from the residential areas of Grove Green and Penenden Heath.

Financial contributions:

22. Provision of appropriate contributions towards highway improvements.



7.1 The following distribution of 1,130 new dwelling on greenfield sites at the rural service centres will be included in policy CS1 of the draft Core Strategy, which is the borough wide strategy setting out the spatial distribution of development. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2009 and the Strategic Sites Assessment 2009 demonstrated an adequate choice of sites to meet this target.

CS1 additional text

Appropriate greenfield sites, to accommodate in the order of 1,130 new dwellings alongside suitably scaled employment opportunities, will be allocated at the edges of the five rural service centres of Harrietsham (315 dwellings), Headcorn (190 dwellings), Lenham (110 dwellings), Marden (320 dwellings) and Staplehurst (195 dwellings).