

Welcome

Cedardrive Ltd would like to welcome you to this exhibition about our proposals for new homes, community facilities, parkland, and a much-needed relief road for Hawkhurst, the need for which has been discussed since at least 1992.

We are a family-owned company that has been involved with Hawkhurst Golf and Squash Club since 1972.

We are proposing a development which would include:

- A relief road linking the A268 High Street with the A229 Cranbrook Road, and associated works to the Highgate crossroads, helping reduce traffic and thus improve air quality in the centre of Hawkhurst
- New homes of various sizes, including social and sheltered housing, of which 375 will be on the golf course land, plus 34 homes on the Springfield site which has already been allocated for housing, giving a total of 409 homes
- New community facilities/public car parking
- Pedestrian and cycle routes linking to the village centre
- Open spaces, play facilities and parkland

Please take your time to view the information panels here today and ask any questions you may have of the project team present.

The team behind the project includes ETLA, a leading landscape architecture consultancy based in Canterbury which has great experience of projects within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Green Belt. It has helped drive the landscape-led masterplan.

Guy Hollaway Architects is a Kent-based architecture firm experienced in masterplanning contemporary and bespoke developments with a focus on design-led architecture.



DHA of Maidstone is managing the project and has extensive experience in highways matters.

We welcome your feedback. Please feel free to fill out one of the forms available here today and leave it in the box by the door as you leave, or you can visit our website

www.hawkhurstreliefroadandhomes.co.uk and submit your views there.



Why?

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is being set an ambitious housing target by the Government, which it has to meet. This is a particular challenge for the borough when it comes to identifying suitable sites as more than three-quarters of the land within its boundaries lies within the Green Belt.

Meanwhile, congestion in the centre of Hawkhurst caused by the traffic light-controlled Highgate junction of the A268 and A229 is a blight on the village.

As part of our proposals, a relief road would be included which would link the A268 High Street with the A229 near Gills Green. There are currently no other proposed relief road routes for Hawkhurst and no viable schemes to reduce congestion by altering the layout of the crossroads junction.

The new relief road would not only serve as access for residents of the new homes but also has the potential to divert through traffic away from the centre of the village, reducing air pollution and benefiting current residents as well as newcomers.

While all of Hawkhurst, including existing built up areas as well as the golf course land, is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it falls outside of the Green Belt and will be set its own housing target by the borough council.

This site provides the opportunity to provide high-quality housing, close to existing village services, while making a significant contribution to meeting the new homes target. The borough's need for housing cannot be met solely from developing smaller brownfield or infilling plots.

Congestion in the centre of Hawkhurst caused by the traffic light-controlled Highgate junction of the A268 and A229 is a blight on the village.



The golf course today

The scheme would be built on around 45 acres of land that is currently home to Hawkhurst Golf and Squash Club.

The golf clubhouse and two squash courts are at the southern end of the site, along with the main access from the A268. The rest of the land runs north alongside the A229 as far as Gills Green.

Today, the course is an under-used resource that has seen a significant decline in membership in recent years. It is a nine-hole course at a time when demand has always been for 18-hole courses.

The clubhouse building is dated and has limited space at ground floor level, making it challenging to host events suitable for the whole community. Such events could be better delivered within new community facilities.

There are more than 10 golf courses within a 15 mile radius of Hawkhurst, with a mix of 9, 18 and even 36 holes. For example, the highly-rated Dale Hill Golf Club and hotel has two full 18 hole courses, and is just four miles from Hawkhurst.

The land the golf course occupies lies outside of the Green Belt and while it falls within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty it is not accessible to the general public. Our plans include a new country park on the part of the course running alongside Cranbrook Road, opening an existing area of green space up to local residents, with footpaths linking into the surrounding countryside.

We have taken great care to ensure our landscape-led design is sympathetic and wholly in keeping with the surroundings.

The majority of the new homes proposed would be about a 10-minute walk away from the centre of Hawkhurst and its shops and services.

The site offers a unique opportunity for Hawkhurst to meet its proposed housing allocation at a location that is at the heart of the village, rather than in outlying areas of the parish, and with little visual impact on the wider landscape.

The clubhouse building is dated and has limited space at ground floor level, making it challenging to host events suitable for the whole community.



The master plan



The master plan



The Proposals

Our proposals are for new homes of various sizes, including social and sheltered housing, of which 375 will be on the golf course land, plus 34 homes on the Springfield site which has already been allocated for housing, giving a total of 409 homes.

The new units would include detached, semi-detached and terraced homes, apartments, sheltered housing units and self-build plots, giving a total of 161 new buildings.

As our planning application will be made in outline form, we are not seeking permission for detailed building designs or layout at this stage.

However, we have produced an indicative masterplan which shows how the development could look.

The southern and Springfield sites would be separated from the northern area by Gills Green Park, a parkland zone with pedestrian and cycle links to the village centre. This will open up an area of existing green space that is currently not accessible to the public while maintaining the natural gap between Highgate and Gills Green.

We have worked hard to ensure our proposed development shows different character attributes in different areas and responds to the surrounding built environment and context within which it sits.



Community benefits

An advantage of a development of this size is that it in addition to a relief road we are able to contribute to other community benefits.

We are in discussions with Hawkhurst Parish Council about what the community would like to see provided on our site for everyone’s benefit– including a new car park – or if they would prefer a contribution to facilities elsewhere, or even both. We would welcome your views today too.

Our proposals include a new country park on land not currently open to the public, green spaces and links to the local footpath network, encouraging residents old and new out into the countryside.

There is the potential for air quality in the centre of the village, particularly at the crossroads, to be improved as the new relief road will divert traffic away and it is anticipated the number of lorry movements through the centre of the village could fall.

There are no shops, cafes or restaurants included in our proposals which will lead to an increase in footfall in Hawkhurst village centre, benefiting businesses there.

To divert traffic to the new relief road, the Cranbrook Road arm of the Highgate crossroads will be closed to traffic, opening up many possible uses – for example a new focal point for the village – for what is currently a congested stretch of road.

A new country park would be created on this area of green space not currently open to the public



The Cranbrook Road arm of the Highgate crossroads will be closed to traffic, opening up many possible uses – for example a new focal point for the village – for what is currently a congested stretch of road.



Neighbourhood Plan

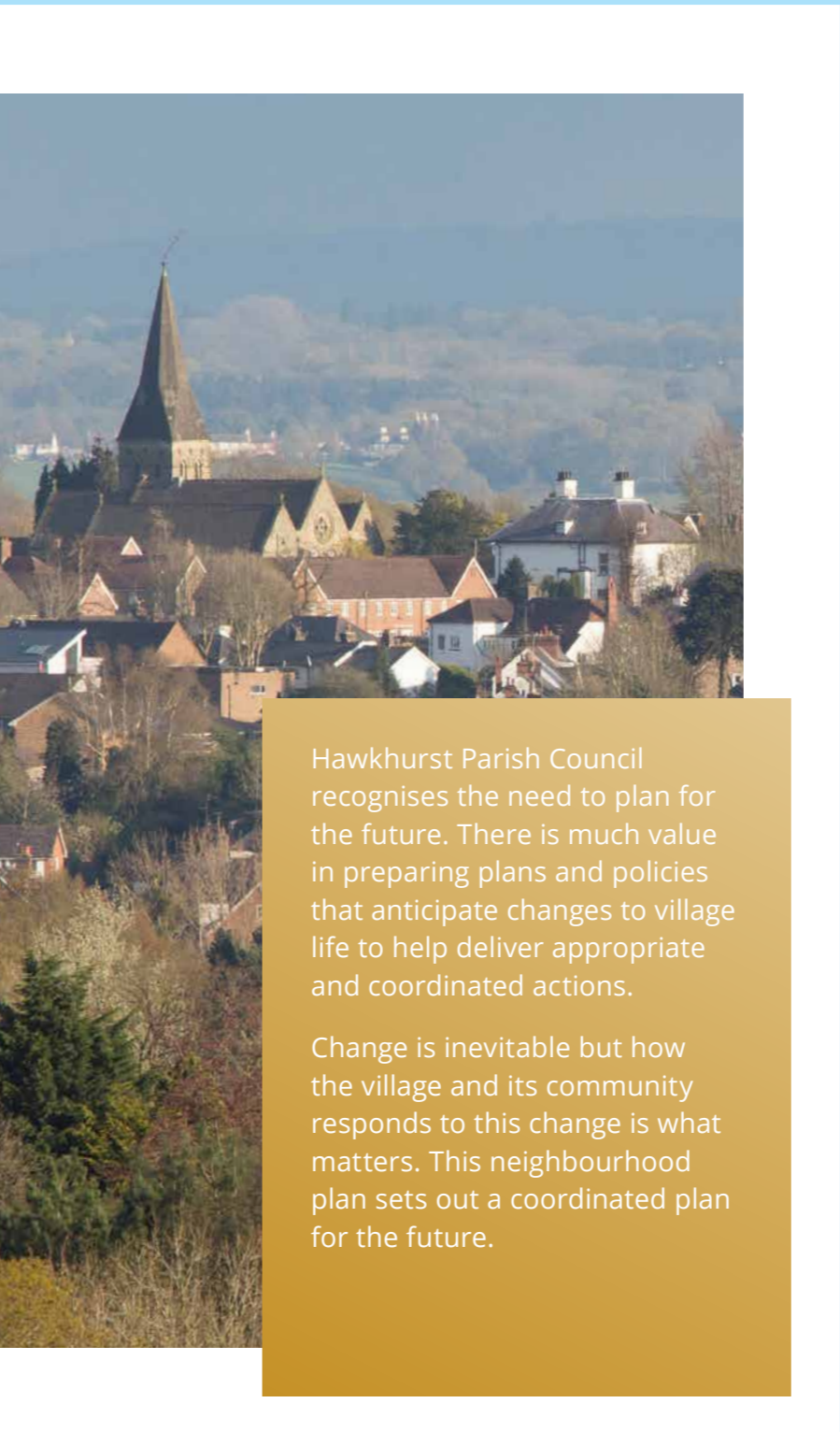
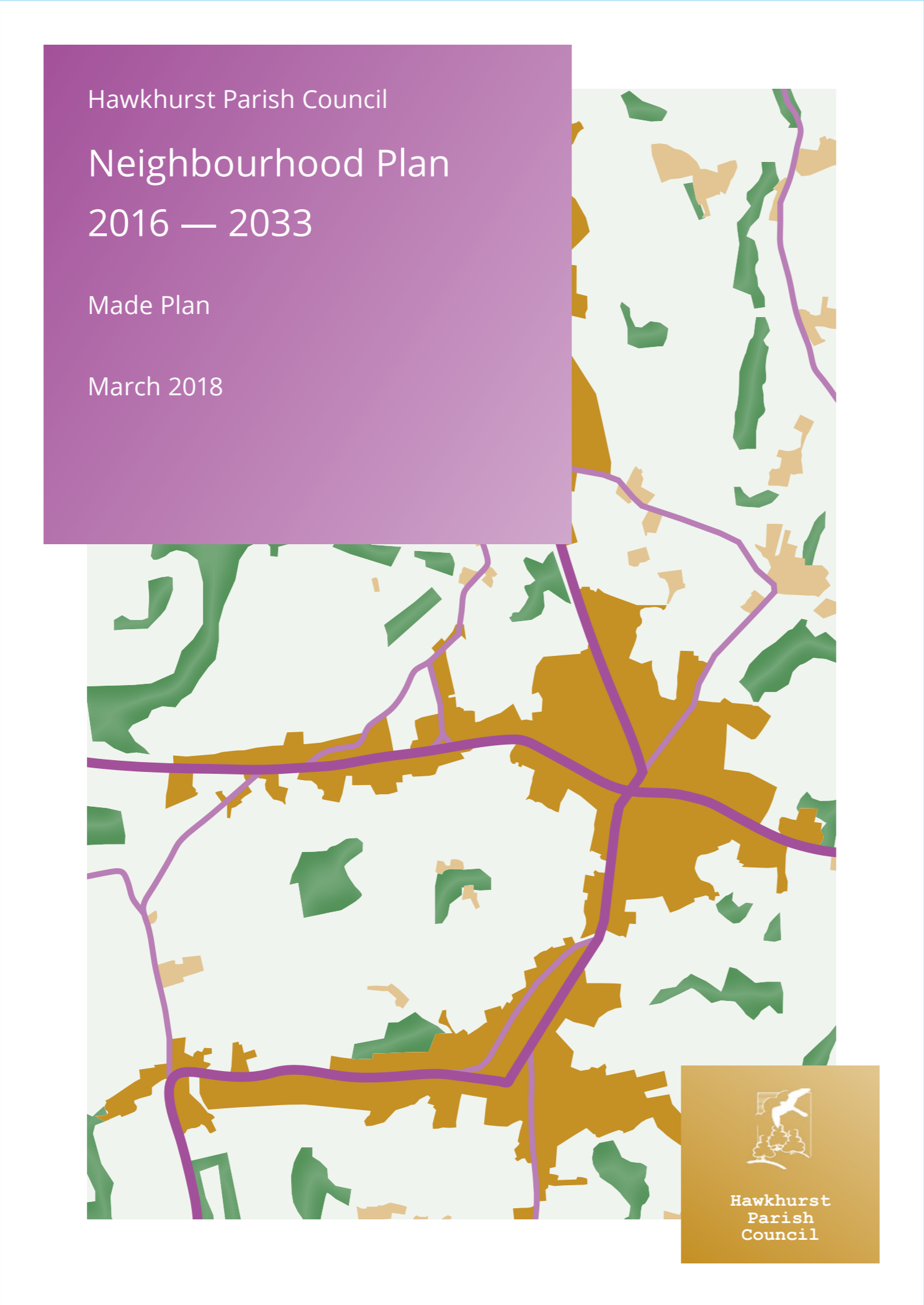
In drawing up our masterplan we have paid close attention to the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2033.

In particular the proposals take account of the Neighbourhood Plan by:

- Enabling substantial changes to the crossroads, which will ease traffic flow reducing vehicle queuing, improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists; and provide the opportunity to enhance the character and environment of the village centre;
- Ensuring that Gills Green and Highgate will remain as clearly distinct settlements;
- Creating new, convenient and attractive pedestrian and cycle links between Highgate and Gills Green, and into the countryside beyond;
- Providing a mix of house types, including affordable housing, sizes and tenures;
- Contributing towards the delivery of other community facilities;

In our application we will show that the proposals comply with Policy HP1(b) as there are exceptional circumstances which should enable a larger development than would otherwise normally be allowed. In particular:

- There is an urgent and substantial unmet need for housing in the borough, which is significantly greater than that which was anticipated in the Neighbourhood Plan;
- Uniquely, our proposals can enable substantial improvements to the local road network to help alleviate long-standing problems at the central Highgate crossroads for which no other viable solution has been identified since the 1990s. There are no other sites which are able to provide a relief road which could provide the same level of benefit;
- The proposed development would therefore have the twin benefits of delivering much-needed local housing which in turn enables the delivery of the relief road;
- The proposal also delivers a range of other benefits to the local community including car parking for village centre users and a new public park;
- Whilst the development is of a larger scale, the indicative masterplan has been designed so that the development forms a number of smaller-scale clusters, in accordance with the general aims set out in the Neighbourhood Plan, and includes affordable housing.



Visual impact

The landscape surrounding Hawkhurst is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a scenic, intricate landscape with many historic features including ancient woodlands, narrow streams, complex topography, mature hedgerows and narrow sunken lanes.

The landform of the site has been profiled and engineered to create a golf course and is under management as a golf course. Therefore, while it sits within the context of an AONB landscape, internally the site lacks many of the sensitive features found within an AONB.

The natural contours of the land on which the golf club sits in combination with the established vegetation along its boundaries means that few existing homes overlook the site and that views into it are relatively localised.

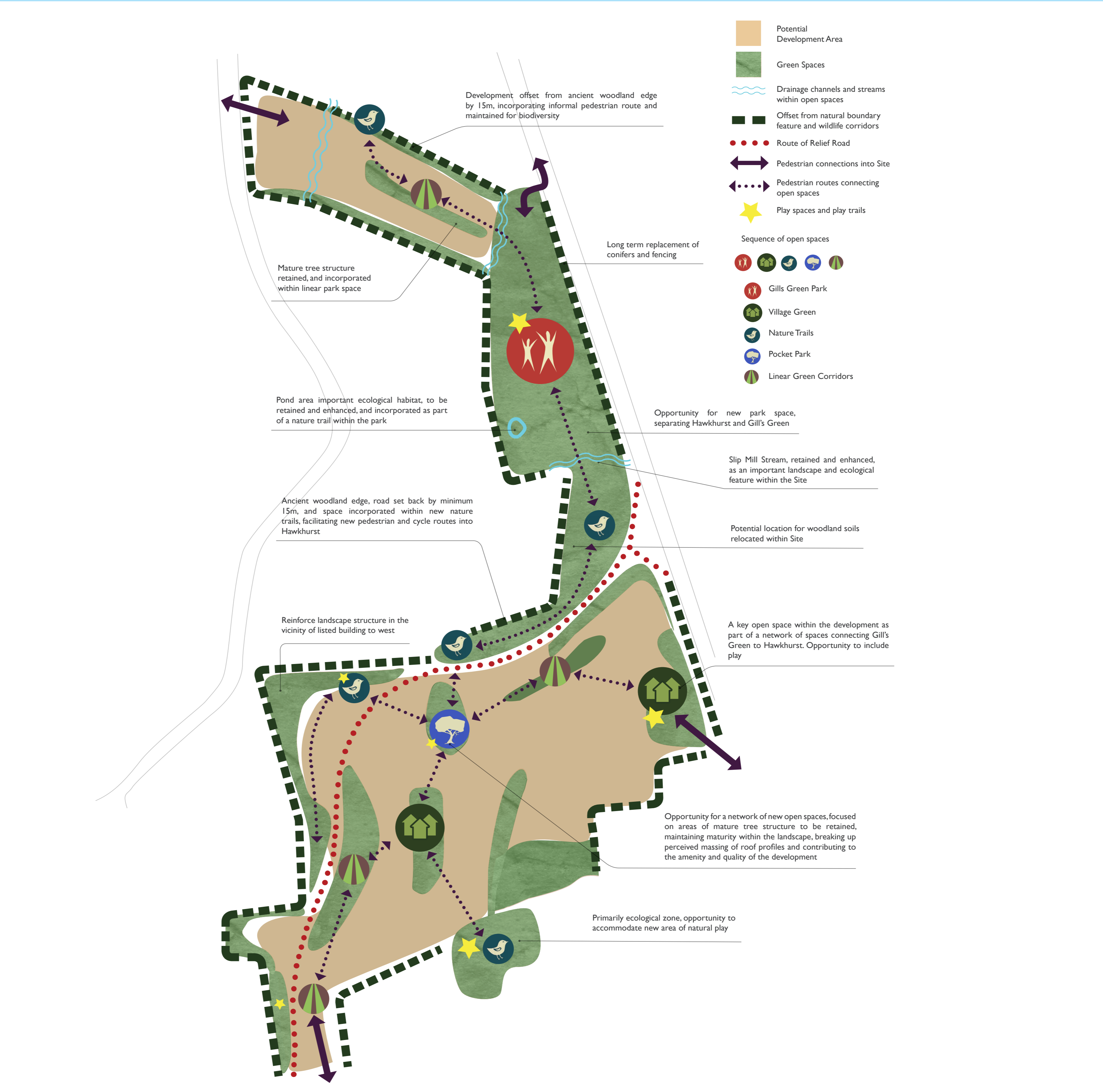
Our scheme proposes development that is sensitively sited within the site to reduce the visual impact as far as possible. The boundary

vegetation provides an important screening function and is also a sensitive feature in ecological terms, and it will be retained as far as possible, with the exception of the site access points.

Our proposals include a substantial new country park to maintain the distinct gap between Hawkhurst and Gills Green. This will open up a green area not currently accessible to the public, to be designed in a natural way to make the most of the existing landscape features, including the pond and streams.

Our evolving scheme is a landscape led response to the environmental context of the site and its location within the AONB.

The scheme seeks to limit impacts on the AONB and create a strong landscape structure within which the new homes will be located, with substantial new opportunities for recreation, play and nature trails.



A new relief road

A relief road to ease the pressure on the village centre has been discussed since the 1990s, and all the while traffic through the crossroads has continued to grow significantly with ever lengthening queues on all approaches.

As all the land for this scheme is owned by Cedardrive, our proposals are the perfect opportunity to provide a significant piece of badly-needed local infrastructure that will benefit Hawkhurst as a whole.

Being in single ownership means the proposals can be brought forward in an holistic and strategic way and a development of the size proposed here allows for the delivery of new facilities for Hawkhurst.

The road would be brought forward at an early stage, with the vast majority of its route able to be constructed with minimal disruption to existing traffic flows as the land for it lies entirely within our site.

It is important to stress that what is being proposed is a relief road, not a by-pass. While having sufficient capacity for HGVs and through traffic, it will be designed to be similar to a typical village road having a single carriageway, 30mph speed limit, and appropriate lighting for pedestrian crossings and around junctions.

We are in discussions with the highways authority about how HGVs can be encouraged to use the relief road, with the closure of the Cranbrook Road arm of the Highgate crossroads helping with this.



Environmental Impact Assessment

We are making every effort to ensure our proposals have as little impact on the environment on our site and in the surrounding area as possible.

We are currently compiling a thorough Environmental Impact Assessment which will be submitted as part of our application to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in due course.

Extensive habitat surveys have been undertaken and mitigation proposed where appropriate.

The existing golf course is heavily maintained with tees, fairways and greens mowed on a regular basis. Once complete, the green spaces and new parkland included within our proposals will be left to evolve and develop more naturally.

Surrounding woodland will be unaffected by these proposals and mature trees on site will be retained wherever possible and additional tree planting will take place. While there is a bat population, the retention of the vast majority of mature trees on and around the site means there will be minimal disruption to their roosting areas or feeding flightpaths.

With the route of the relief road entirely within the boundaries of our land, the construction period will have minimal impact on traffic flows, with only minimal disruption as the junctions with the existing roads are constructed.



What next?

Following this public consultation, we will carefully consider all feedback as we finalise our planning application.

The application itself will be in two parts – a full and detailed application for the relief road and an outline one for the new homes.

We expect to be in a position to submit the application to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council later this spring and anticipate it will take at least four months from the date of submission before a decision is reached.

If the application is approved we expect the further preparatory work required before work can start on site to take another 12 months, meaning construction of the relief road could begin in mid 2020.

Contact

Details of our proposals are available via our website **www.hawkhurstreliefroadandhomes.co.uk**, from where you can also submit feedback.

If you would like any further information or have any questions relating to our proposals, please contact **info@hawkhurstreliefroadandhomes.co.uk**

Or write to:
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