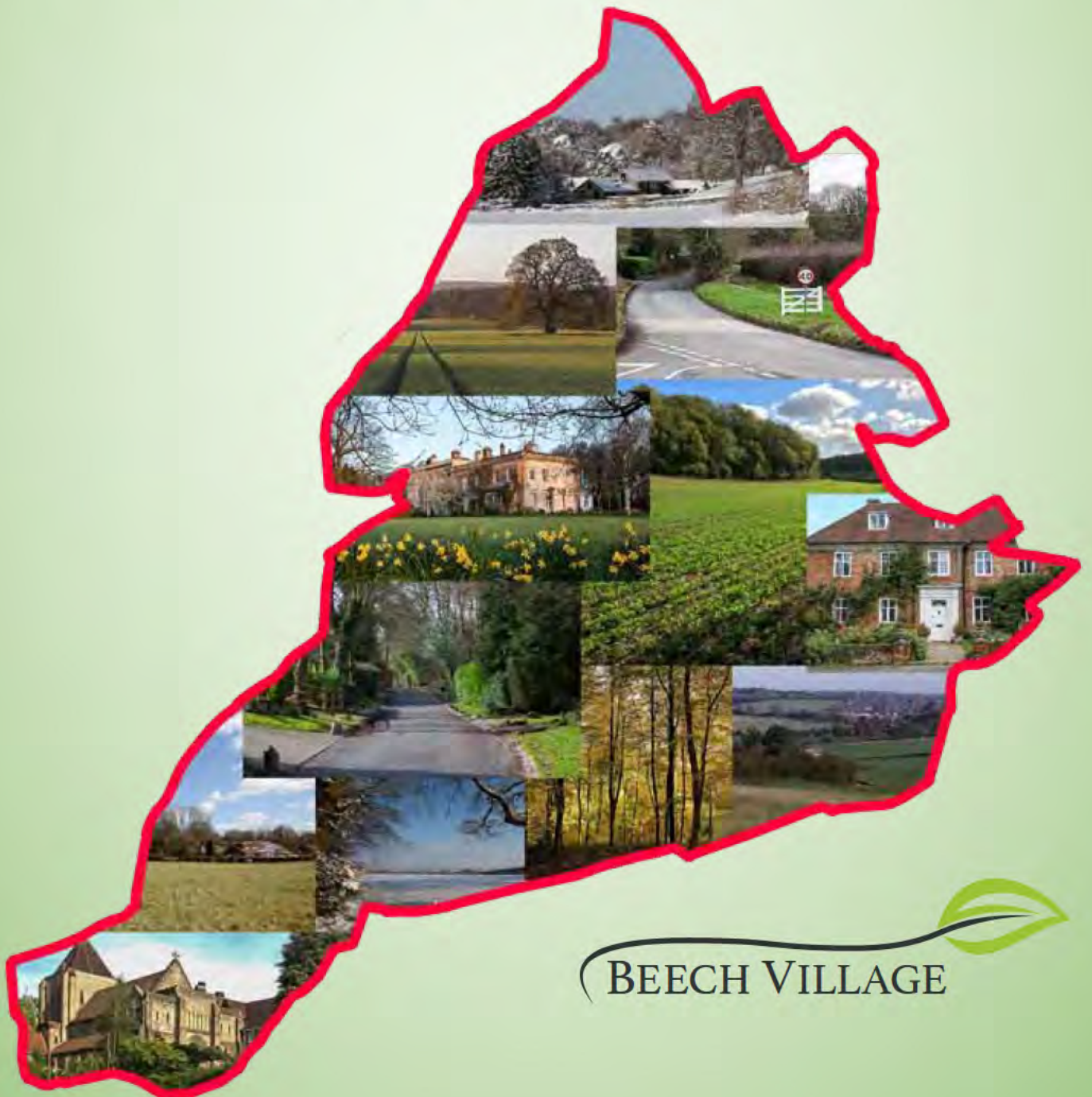


Beech Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2028




BEECH VILLAGE

Contents

Foreword	3
1. Introduction	4
1.1 About Neighbourhood Development Plans	4
1.2 The Neighbourhood Development Plan Period	4
1.3 The Neighbourhood Development Plan Area	4
2. Preparing the Neighbourhood Development Plan	5
2.1 The Plan Process	5
3. About Beech	6
3.1 History - From Farm to Village	6
3.2 Population	9
3.3 Environment	9
3.4 Housing	10
3.5 Local Economy	11
3.6 Highways, Transport and Communication	11
4. Vision	13
5. Policies	14
Introduction to Policies	14
List of Policies	14
Section 5.1 Countryside and Environment	15
Policy BPC01: Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity	16
Policy BPC02: Development outside the Settlement Policy Boundary	17
Policy BPC03: Preventing Coalescence with Alton and Medstead/Wivelrod.	18
Policy BPC04: Preservation of Amenity of Historic Parkland	20
Policy BPC05: Recreation Space – Local Green Spaces	21
Section 5.2 Housing	22
Policy BPC06: Development Setting and Scale	24
Policy BPC07: Building Design and Character	26
Policy BPC08: Housing Mix	27
Section 5.3 Local Economy	28
Policy BPC09: Site of the Departure Lounge and Village Businesses	29
Section 5.4 Highways and Transport	30
Policy BPC10: Managing the Impact of New Development on Traffic	33
Policy BPC11: Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycle Paths	34
Policy BPC12: Planning for Parking	35
Section 5.5 Infrastructure	36
Policy BPC13: High Speed Broadband and Mobile Communications	37
Policy BPC14: Drainage Infrastructure Requirements	38
6. Social Infrastructure	39
Education; Health; Community Facilities	39
7. Infrastructure Development Plan	40
Local Facilities & Services; Highway Improvements; Walkways & Cycle Paths	40
8. Monitoring and Review	41
Appendices	42
Appendix 1: Supporting Documents and Evidence Base	42
Appendix 2: Traffic Solution Survey (responses to Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire)	42
Glossary	43

Foreword

A Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is a new type of planning document, introduced in the Localism Act 2011, which allows local people to have a say in the future growth and development of their community.

The Beech Neighbourhood Development Plan sets out a number of policies, all of which have the aim of preserving the unique characteristics of Beech, whilst welcoming improvements and change that will ensure the vibrancy of the community in the future. The policies cover the protection of the countryside and local amenities, support local businesses and set standards for housing development. Although construction of homes is a controversial issue, Beech villagers appreciate the need for new housing to ensure a supply of suitable homes for local residents who wish to stay in the village close to family, friends or employment.

The Plan and its supporting background documents were prepared, following significant public consultation, by a Working Group set up by Beech Parish Council and consisting of:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] as well as a number of residents who assisted with door to door delivery and collection of the Residents' Survey.

On behalf of the parish of Beech I would like to thank everyone who has been involved with the project. I would also like to thank the following for their assistance and support: [REDACTED] of John Slater Planning Ltd.; Hannah Collier and Kevin Thurlow from the East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) Planning Policy Department for their advice and practical assistance; [REDACTED] Chartered Landscape Architect and his colleagues at the Terra Firma Consultancy Ltd; the Supporting Communities in Neighbourhood Planning programme, funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government and administered by Locality in partnership with the Royal Town Planning Institute (including Planning Aid); and the team at Mycommunity which provided grant funding to help with consultants' fees.

Finally, the Parish Council and the Working Group would like to thank all those residents who have participated in the public consultation events, responded to the survey and shown support for the Neighbourhood Plan.

[REDACTED]
Chair, Neighbourhood Plan Working Party Beech Parish Council
[May 2019]



1. Introduction

1.1 About Neighbourhood Development Plans

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a number of measures allowing communities to shape the future of their area and to deliver the sustainable development that they need. One of these measures is the neighbourhood development plan, which can set policies for the use of land for new development at a neighbourhood level. A neighbourhood development plan must be in general conformity with the local authority's strategic policies - in the case of Beech, those policies in the East Hampshire District Local Plan (as defined in the Glossary) - and national planning policy and must be based on evidence. Following community consultation, it must be examined by an independent examiner and must be approved by residents at a local referendum. The completed plan will become part of the development plan for the local area and will be used in determining planning applications.

A neighbourhood development plan cannot be used to stop development. There is a requirement for new homes nationally and every neighbourhood development plan must plan for new growth. Beech Parish Council resolved to prepare a plan so that the community could work together to shape the future of the village and have a say about where new homes should go and what they should look like, how the local economy should be supported, how the countryside and open spaces of the village should be protected and how local facilities and infrastructure could be improved.

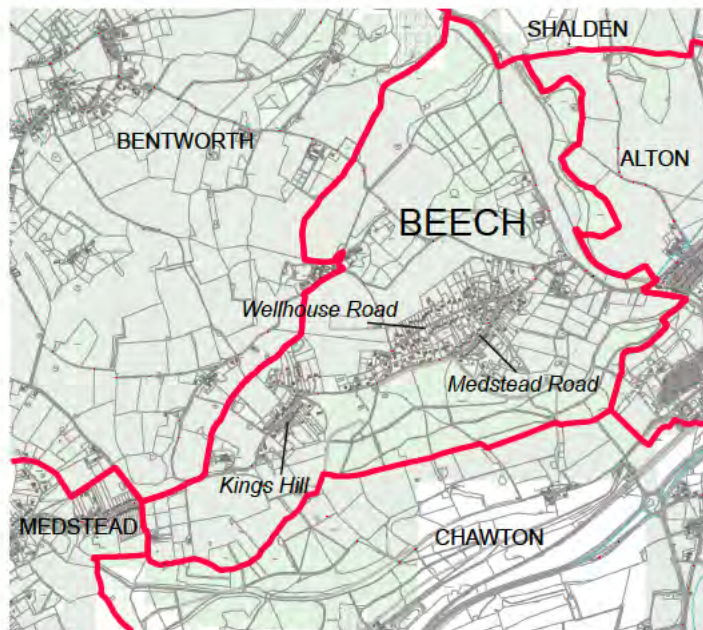
1.2 The Neighbourhood Development Plan Period

The Beech Neighbourhood Development Plan is for the period from 2019 to 2028, and will be subject to review and, if necessary, updating as described in Section 8 of this document. In particular, the Neighbourhood Development Plan will be reviewed following EHDC's adoption of its Local Plan 2017-2036, which is currently in draft form.

1.3 The Neighbourhood Development Plan Area

The area covered by the Beech Neighbourhood Development Plan is the whole of the civil parish of Beech, as shown in Map 1. The local planning authority, East Hampshire District Council (EHDC), formally designated the parish as a Neighbourhood Designation Area on 18th April 2017.

Map 1: Neighbourhood Designation Area.



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Throughout this document the 'Neighbourhood Designation Area' is interchangeably referred to as 'Beech', 'Beech Village' or 'Beech Parish' unless any of those terms are otherwise qualified.

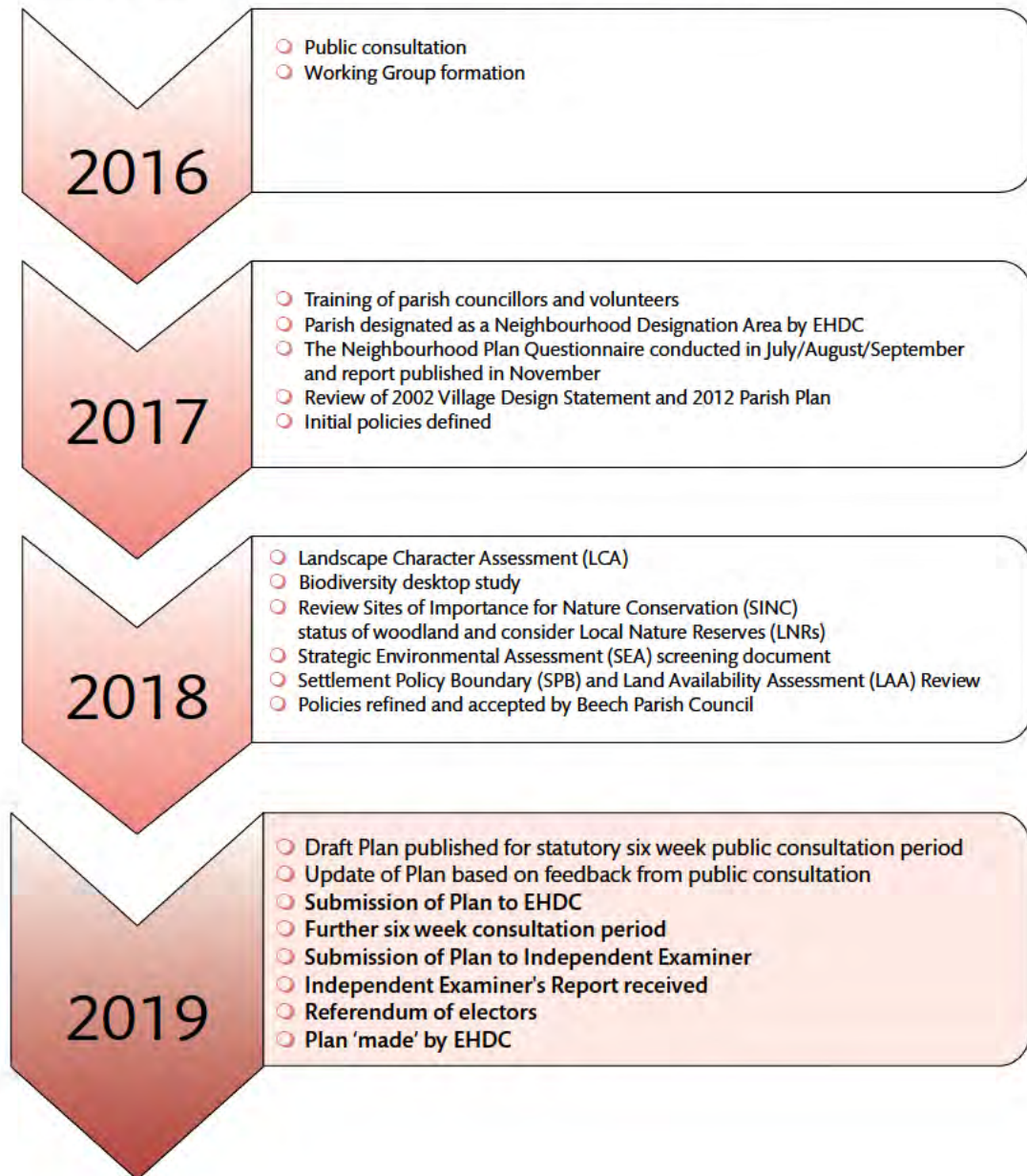


2. Preparing the Neighbourhood Development Plan

2.1 The Plan Process

The plan is based on the Village Design Statement 2002, The Parish Plan 2012, the responses to the 2017 Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire and public consultation in 2019.

The diagram below shows an overview of the Plan preparation process.



The process for preparation of the Neighbourhood Development Plan has been affected by EHDC's decision to produce a new Local Plan 2017-2036 to replace the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy 2014. EHDC announced its intention to prepare a new Local Plan in a news release on 19th January 2018, simultaneously publishing its intent in the East Hampshire Local Development Scheme January 2018. At that stage Beech Parish Council had agreed the Plan's policies in outline. The Parish Council subsequently resolved to continue to prepare the Plan so that it could be implemented as soon as possible, on the basis that to delay the Plan by over one year (i.e. to delay the 'making' of the Plan until after the adoption of EHDC's new Local Plan, planned for Autumn 2020) would not be in the best interests of the parish and its residents.



3. About Beech

This section contains a history and description of Beech and outlines the key issues that have influenced the Plan.

3.1 History - From Farm to Village.

The earliest known reference to Beech as a separate entity is in records dated 1190 referring to land at 'La Beche'. The Anglo-Saxon name of Tedena was first documented in 1168 and at that time the area of fertile land that represented Thedden was 1000 acres.

In 1233, the domain of Austin Canons - Selborne Priory was granted by Henry III to the Bishop of Winchester. The land comprising Thedden (and hence Beech) fell within that domain. In 1484 this land was transferred to Magdalene College, Oxford.

A court roll, dated 1467, suggests the manor of Beche north of Chawton was to be divided and farmed by neighbouring farmers.

The first farm to be built in Beech was Wyards Farm, a red brick house of mediaeval foundation. Wyards Farm is by far the oldest property in Beech, dating back to the 11th Century. It assumed much of its present appearance in the 1680s. It is protected as a Grade II* listed building. Wyards Farm is of particular interest in that it was well known to Jane Austen during the last two years of her life. In 1815, it was a farmhouse, and part of it was rented by young Mr and Mrs Ben Lefroy. The latter had been Anna Austen, the daughter of Jane's eldest brother James. Anna was very close to Jane and was the author of her biography. Two cottages were added to Wyards Farm post WWII and some of the land was used to build two bungalows near to Medstead Road in the 1980s. The land around the curtilage of Wyards Farm forms the central part of the area covered by the non-coalescence policy BPC03 relating to Beech and Alton.

Beech Park Farm was built in 1503 by a John Carpenter who paid rent for lands to Thedden. Beech Park Farm had a donkey wheel enclosure added in the 18th century. The well is said to be some 300ft deep. This structure still stands across the road from the farm in Wellhouse Road and is listed. Beech Park Farm is now renamed The Old Farmhouse.

Confusingly, Old Farm was a totally separate farming entity also dating from pre-Tudor times. It was a sister farm of Chawton Farm, and it farmed the area in the gap between Bushy Leaze Wood and Medstead. The land of Old Park Farm (as it is now called), south of Kings Hill, still exists as it was at the beginning of the 16th Century, other than for some remains of parkland which was added at the turn of the 19th century. This land forms part of the area covered by the non-coalescence policy relating to Beech and Medstead.

Between 1655 and 1695 a number of farm cottages known as Wellhouse Cottages were built. The historic listed house Norton Bavant was a later addition. The land it occupies was not built on when sold in 1857.

In all there are seven Grade II or Grade II* listed structures in the parish: The Old Farmhouse; Wyards Farm and Granary; Beech Barns Donkey Wheel House; Norton Bavant; Wellhouse Cottages; and the milestone on the Basingstoke Road, southeast of the entrance to Wyards Farm. (Full details of all items of historic interest in Beech can be found in the Historic Environment Record Search for Beech © 2018 Hampshire County Council.)

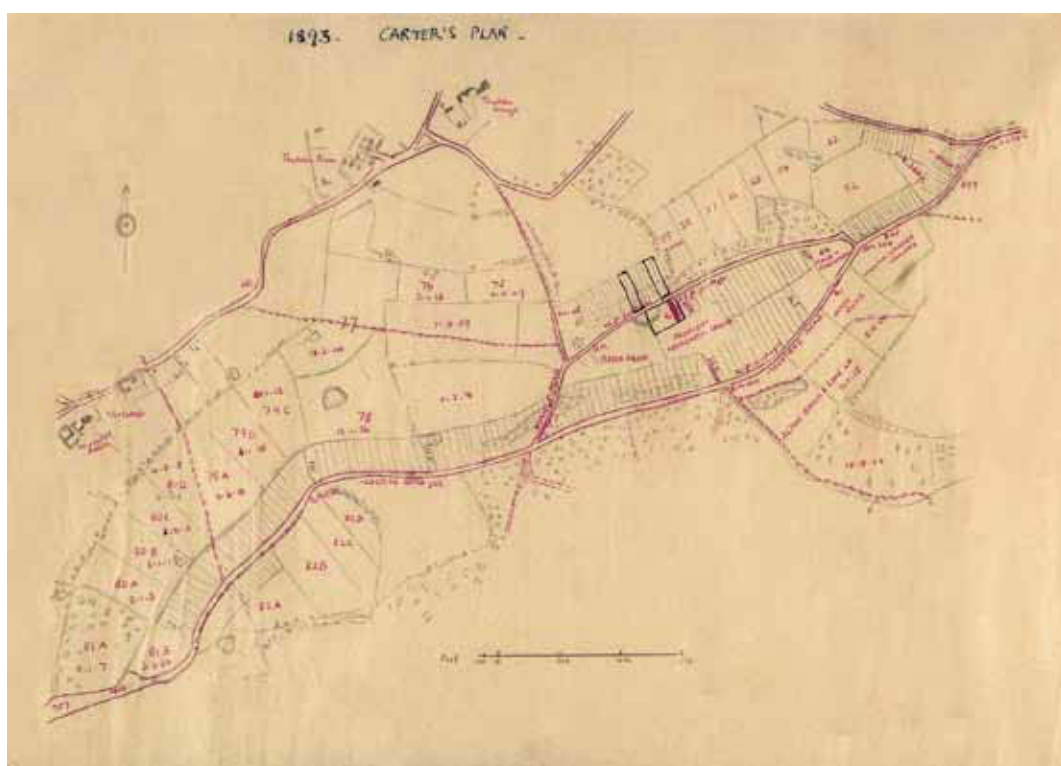
In 1808 at a public auction, Thedden, by then consisting of 369 acres of arable land and 116 acres of coppice land, was bought by Admiral Sir Laurence Halsted, who used his prize money to build a new mansion incorporating the previous manor and renamed it Phoenix Lodge, after his ship, and it remains much the same today. He added a coach house, two large walled kitchen gardens and a home farm. He also laid out the parkland following the fashion of the time, with rolling lawns that came up to the house, and trees planted in clumps and individually. In 1835 an industrialist, John Wood, purchased the property renaming it Thedden Grange. Between 1838 and 1844 John Wood built a new drive from Keepers Lodge (on the Basingstoke Road) to bypass the steepness of Snode

Hill. John Wood was a national figure having brought in the First Factory Act, which reduced the hours of child labour. He was also responsible for building the New Odiham Road and getting the railway to run via Alton through to Winchester.

One of the first examples of the village name Beech is in Greenwood's map of Hampshire dated 1826 (see right), which shows a 'Beech Farm' between 'Wivelet' (the current Wivelrod) to the west, and 'Wellhouse' to the east, now Wellhouse Road in the current Civil Parish of Beech. This is likely to be John Carpenter's 1503 homestead.



In 1892 Magdalene College sold the land encompassing Beech Park Farm to William Carter, who proceeded to sell off small parcels of land for housing - much of it built in the low-cost 'colonial' style of wood and corrugated iron. Some 50 plots were sold but few still survive. As the map below shows, the village Recreation Ground was created at this stage.



In 1894 part of the land to the west of Kings Hill was given to form Alton Abbey. Completed in 1904 the Abbey still exists as a religious community. As such, the Ecclesiastical Exemptions apply in respect of planning policy.

The Abbey, whilst Church of England, was not focused on the local community of Beech but on its own life of prayer, its overseas work and its work as a social ministry to 'men of the road' and distressed seamen, over 30,000 of whom had been helped by 1936. The work continues to this day.

In 1901 a Wesleyan Methodist chapel was established in Beech; though never a large community it was an enthusiastic one. The chapel was situated at the current entrance to the Recreation Ground. It reportedly had a school for some of its time, the only record of an educational establishment in Beech. The chapel was sold in 1938.

In 1902 a Commander Anstis gave a plot of land for church use opposite his house on Wellhouse Road. The Mission was built in the wooden style of many of the 'settlement' cottages and clad with painted corrugated iron. The bell, which was cast in 1871, came from one of Commander Anstis' early ships - the Tagus. In 1926 the official name changed from 'Beech Mission Church' to 'St Peter's, Beech' but it took until 1974 before the church became licenced to conduct weddings.

The end of the 19th century also saw the first commercial activity in Beech. In 1894, having bought the land that is now the Village Hall grounds, Vaux and Crampton's photo-engraving and printing works located to Beech. The printing works closed in 1904. The Beech Brickworks bought the land on Medstead Road opposite and was in operation until 1909. From 1903 to 1914 a garden nursery operated out of Nursery Gardens in Wellhouse Road. The nursery specialised in fir trees and many of the conifers in the village originate from that time.

In 1898 an off licence was opened at 26 Medstead Road. The house and off license was sold to Courage Brewery in 1905. A general store was added and this survived till the late 1970s. In the late 1920s Courage spent some £300 on plans and approval to build a public house on the grounds of what is now 41 Medstead Road only for the plan to be rejected at a village meeting.

During the inter-war years growth continued. In 1922, 75 freeholds were listed. In 1931 the property that was the old printing works was acquired and reshaped as the village hall, part of which still forms the current building. A local bus service was introduced, and in 1936 electricity came to Beech. After World War I, the people of Beech took care of what we now call infrastructure. A certain Mr Mills was employed to maintain the roads and keep the drainage ditches open. A Mr Snellock had a car repair shop and petrol pump at 51 Medstead Road.

The village ran its own health insurance scheme at the equivalent of 17.5p per annum (£7.20 at today's prices). It was great value as it included access to a midwifery service. In 1920 at 25 Medstead Road there was a tuberculosis ward associated with Lord Mayor Treloars Hospital in Alton.

Three competing bus companies ran services in the 1930s. Cricket and gardening clubs flourished.

After WWII the population growth continued, and water mains arrived in 1952. Development continued at such a rapid pace in the early 1960s that the local planning authority considered suspending planning applications in Beech because of sewerage issues. By 1964, just over 110 homes were registered. Mains sewerage did not arrive until 1975 and mains gas until 1994. In addition to the building of new properties, the original colonial-style housing was gradually being replaced by larger modern detached houses of high value.

In 1985, as part of a countrywide review, the Rural Dispensation Committee adjudicated that Beech was a distinct community and should not be considered as part of Alton. Beech Parish Council was eventually created in 1999.

In 2001 Beech had 197 homes and 535 residents. The Village Design Statement was published in 2002. This was an inspired document. Its guidelines included protecting views, trees and hillsides and restricting 'backland development'. It identified the need for parking provision and on-site turning circles. The statement sought official recognition of the gap between Alton and Beech. It called for traffic speed calming and better drainage measures. Since its publication the Village Design Statement has been largely successful in preserving the character of the village.

In 2006 EHDC's Local Plan Second Review recognised that, within a designated area of Beech, plot sizes should be maintained at a minimum of 0.2 hectares, to ensure that the character of the area is not harmed.

Thanks to the generosity of local inhabitants in an appeal for funding, supported by the National Lottery, a new Village Hall began construction in 2008 and opened in 2010.

In 2012 a Village Parish Plan was produced. It called for faster broadband speeds and better mobile phone signals. It recommended a 20 mph speed limit on Medstead Road, and for the building of smaller homes. The plan emphasised the need to formalise the gap between Beech and Alton, and called for play areas on the Village Hall green and the Recreation Ground (these play areas are now well established).

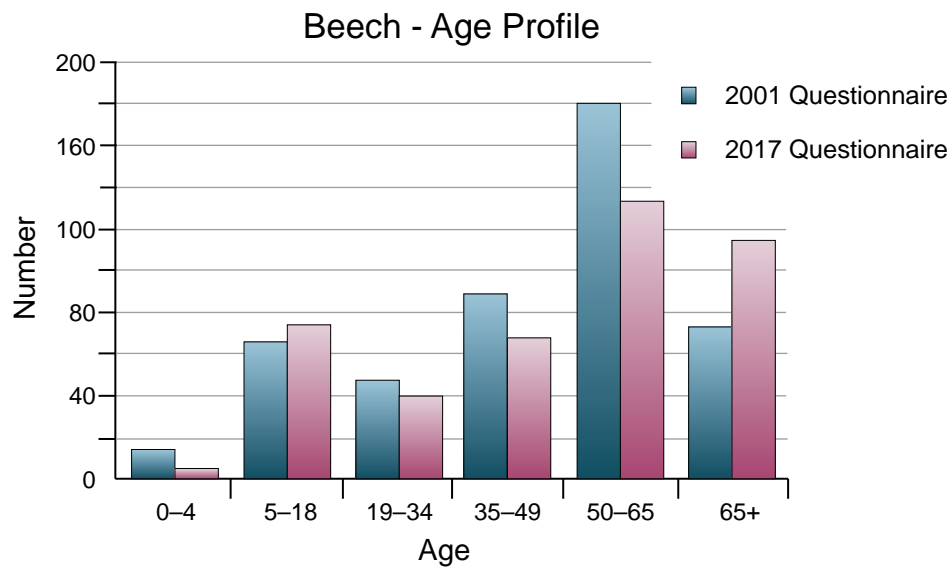


3.2 Population

Census data records the population of Beech Parish was 539 in 2001 and 532 in 2011. The 2015 electoral roll for Beech listed 457 people of voting age living at 228 different addresses.

The population age profile analysed from the 2001 and 2017 village questionnaire responses shows Beech residents to be a mixture of retirees and mainly mature families.

The years between the surveys saw a move towards more senior residents.



3.3 Environment

The parish is one of the Northern Villages in East Hampshire District. Beech lies immediately to the west of Alton and consequently relies on that town for its higher order facilities. It has a church and a village hall but only a minimal bus service. Its main environmental features are shown on Map 2.

The village falls within the Four Marks Clay Plateau Landscape Character Area (as defined in the East Hampshire Landscape Character Assessment, July 2006), which is defined by the extent of a shallow but virtually continuous deposit of clay with flint which caps the chalk bedrock geology.

According to the Neighbourhood Character Study for East Hampshire District Council (Dec 2018): 'The village of Beech has a linear nature, sitting largely within a narrow valley that descends (by minor road) for almost two miles from Alton Abbey, which at 217 metres is one of the highest points in Hampshire, to the Alton - Basingstoke trunk road at 106 metres. The area in which Beech is situated is primarily rural. The parish totals 526 hectares and is a broad mix of woodland, farmland and, in the village area, residential developments. In the past, the area has had an agriculturally based economy, although this influence has declined with modern farming practices. The village is now primarily a residential area, serving surrounding business areas with little commercial activity within the village boundary.'

The distinctive nature of Beech village is, in the large part, defined by the countryside and environment in which it is located. It is atypical of the North East Hampshire Area, being a linear village built in a valley surrounded by an attractive small-scale landscape containing two small farms, historic buildings, a 19th century country house and ancient woodlands.

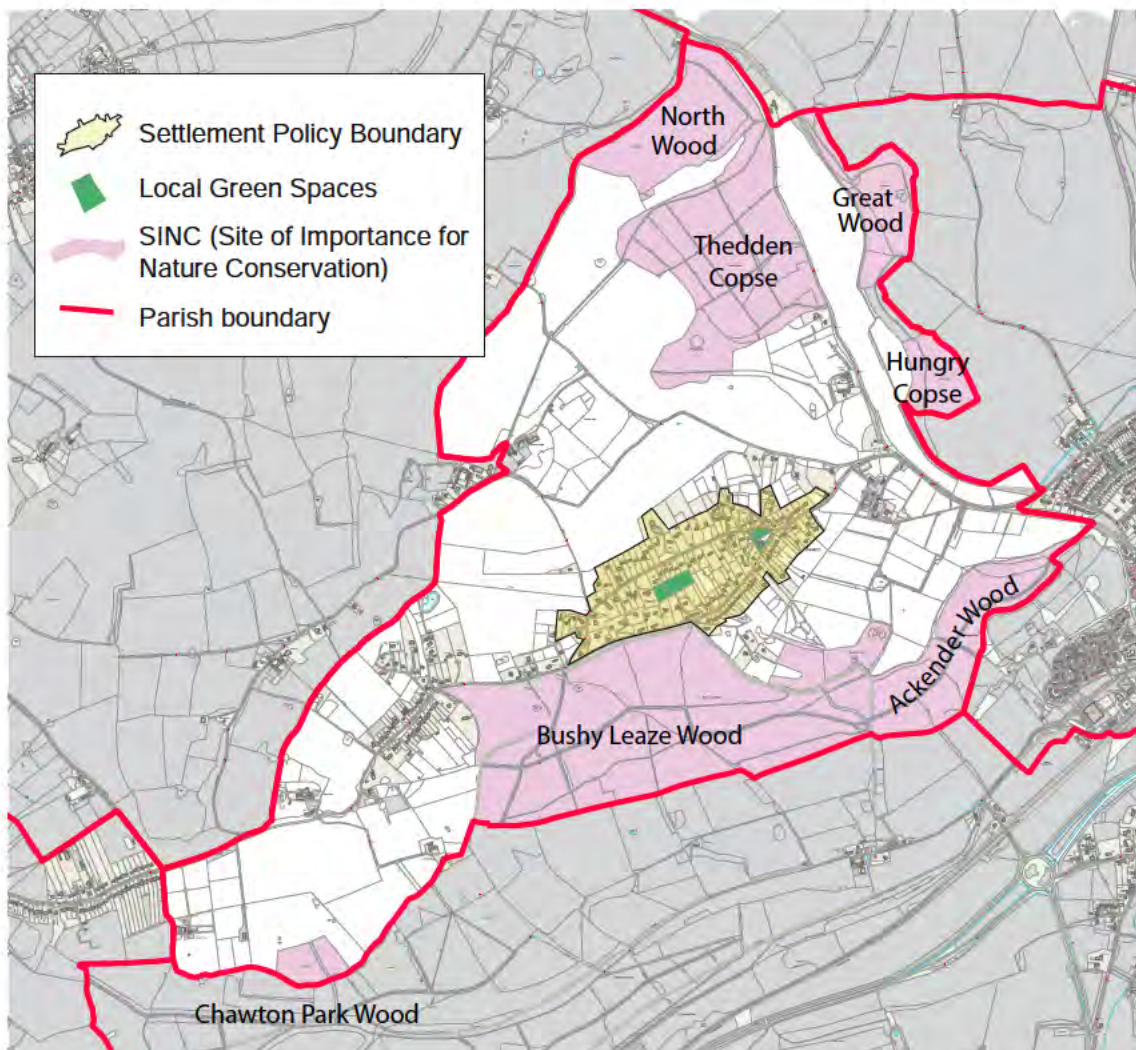
There is a rich and varied pattern of habitats, species and biodiversity, recognised by the varied landscapes within the parish. The parish is made up of three large areas of open space, with farmland and ancient woodland, and has six Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).

A number of protected species have been reported in and around the village, as recorded in the Desktop Biodiversity Report regarding Land at Beech Parish dated 24th April 2018 and prepared by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre.

The open countryside which surrounds the residential areas is easily accessible to the north, south, east and west, from many points in the village. The local network of bridleways and footpaths facilitates access to the countryside.

The main environmental constraint for the village is Bushy Leaze Wood, which adjoins the south side of the existing settlement. This is designated as a SINC, classified as an area of 'Other woodland where there is a significant element of ancient semi-natural woodland surviving'. The survival of this ancient woodland may be associated with the presence of several historic parklands in the vicinity.

Map 2: Environmental features in Beech Parish



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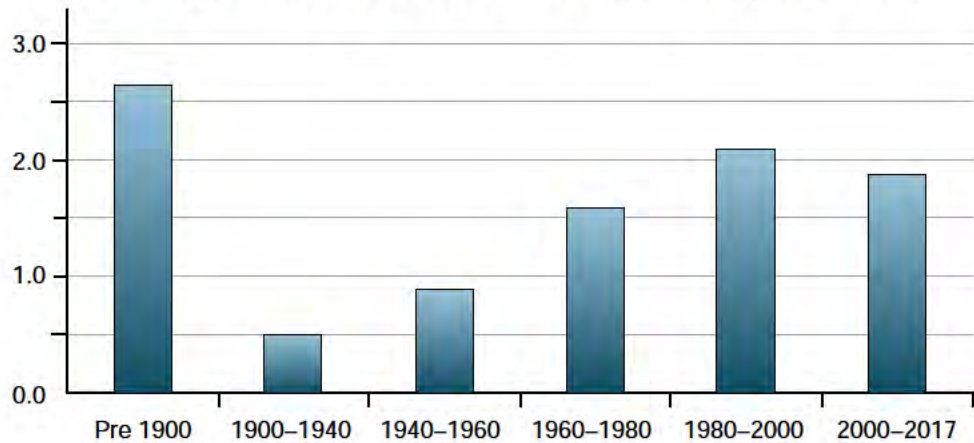
3.4 Housing

Since 1900 there have been no major housing developments within the parish, but there has been a small increase in the rate of new units being built each year, which reached a peak rate of two houses per year, in the period 1980–2000. Since that time of the rate of building has decreased slightly.

The number of rateable properties in 2018 was 236 of which 8 were annexes. In terms of council tax banding the table (page 11) shows the current breakdown:

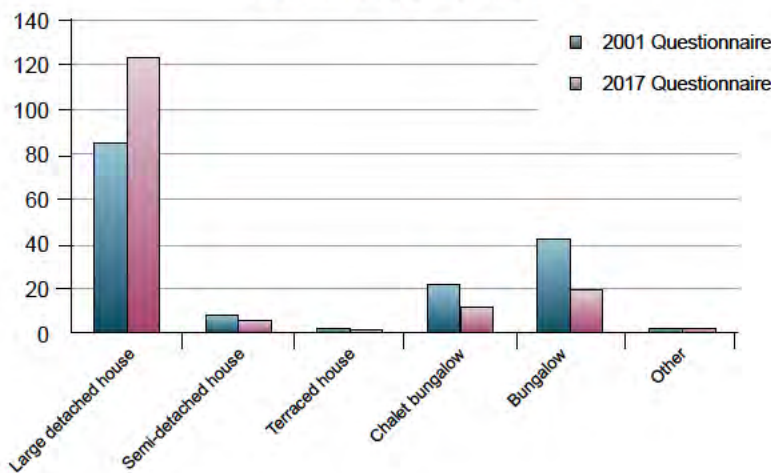
The banding is reflected in responses to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, which indicates a shift to larger homes since 2001.

Average number of additional houses built per annum



Sources: Parish of Beech Village Appraisal Report 2001
EHDC planning applications to 2017

Property type by number



Rates Band	Total
A	11
B	1
C	2
D	6
E	34
F	58
G	118
H	6
Parish total	236

Source: EHDC correspondence, April 2018

3.5 Local Economy

The questionnaire showed that 64% of family respondents had a family member working from home for an average of two days per week. The range of professions varied from the highly technical to marketing and arts-related occupations. In addition retirees are extremely active in charitable activities.

In terms of business premises located in Beech there is a café, a pet store and a self-storage facility on the A339. There is a garden ornament centre near the Abbey. Some homes offer B&B.

3.6 Highways, Transport and Communication

Like many rural villages, Beech has narrow roads and lanes, all without pavements. There is a perception that vehicles drive through the village too quickly, and pedestrians feel vulnerable in many places where they have to walk in the road. There are concerns about heavy goods vehicles using the village roads as a route to other destinations. Residents would like to see traffic calming measures, including a 20mph speed limit.

Community engagement has made it clear that the problematic combination of difficult junctions, narrow roads, lack of pavements, and traffic pressure on existing road infrastructure should be taken into account when considering the siting of any future development.

There are minimal bus routes serving the village.

Car ownership and use is high. The Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire records that respondents own a total of 410 vehicles. 5% of households have no car and 85% have two or more cars.

High speed broadband became available in the Medstead Road and Wellhouse Road area of the village during the summer of 2015. The area around Kings Hill received the service in summer 2018. Improving mobile signal reception throughout the village is considered to be essential.



4. Vision

In order to determine a vision for the parish that reflected the villagers' views, the following question was included in the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire.

*"What elements do you think we should incorporate into this vision?
You may tick more than one box, indeed as many boxes as you like."*

Element Number	Element	Count	158
1	Calm rural refuge from the urban expansion in Alton and Four Marks/Medstead	136	86%
9	Access to country walks/cycle lanes	128	81%
2	Surrounded by green spaces	122	77%
7	Sense of community	116	73%
5	Quality non-uniform housing	106	67%
3	Characterised by fine trees and hedges	105	66%
8	Large gardens	70	44%
4	Alpine feel with tree topped hills	57	36%
6	Additional smaller housing	49	31%
11	Shop and coffee shop	45	28%
10	Parish playgroup	32	20%

The following vision statement was subsequently adopted by the Parish Council:

The Parish of Beech will continue to preserve its character as a spacious village set in a rural landscape, while at the same time ensuring that it remains a vibrant, safe, and welcoming community and an attractive location for people to live.



5. Policies

Introduction to Policies

This part of the Neighbourhood Development Plan contains the policies that will help to meet the community's vision for Beech and address key issues that have been raised during consultation.

The policies relate solely to the use and development of land.

Any applications for development need to be determined with reference to:

1. National policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
2. The EHDC Local Plan (as defined in the Glossary).
3. The Beech Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The policies have been divided into sections for clarity:

- 5.1 Countryside and Environment
- 5.2 Housing
- 5.3 Local Economy
- 5.4 Highways and Transport
- 5.5 Infrastructure

Each policy section commences with introductory remarks, which outline the intent of the policies and refer to relevant evidence contained in the supporting documents and other evidence-based materials, which are listed in Appendix 1. Numbered paragraphs of supporting text follow and amplify each policy.

Note: The initial adopted version of this Plan will span EHDC's replacement of its Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (2014), in which the policies are known, by its Local Plan 2017-2036, in which the policies are currently in draft with their final form unknown. There will be a time lag between EHDC's adoption of its Local Plan 2017-2036 and the subsequent revision of this Plan. Therefore, in order to protect the interests of Beech, the policies in this Plan include provisions that may duplicate those in the policies in EHDC's Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy.

List of Policies

Section 5.1	BPC01	Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity
	BPC02	Development outside the Settlement Policy Boundary
	BPC03	Preventing Coalescence with Alton and Medstead/Wivelrod
	BPC04	Preservation of Amenity of Historic Parkland
	BPC05	Recreation Space – Local Green Spaces
Section 5.2	BPC06	Development Setting and Scale
	BPC07	Building Design and Character
	BPC08	Housing Mix
Section 5.3	BPC09	Site of the Departure Lounge and Village Businesses
Section 5.4	BPC10	Managing the Impact of New Development on Traffic
	BPC11	Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycle Paths
	BPC12	Planning for Parking
Section 5.5	BPC13	High Speed Broadband and Mobile Communications
	BPC14	Drainage Infrastructure Requirements



Section 5.1 Countryside and Environment

Objectives

- To protect and respect the landscape, wildlife, farm activity and countryside of the parish, and cherish its natural beauty.
- To minimise the impact of any future development on the landscape and scenic beauty of the parish.
- To ensure Beech remains a distinct village and avoid coalescence with Alton or Medstead.
- To recognise the importance of our woodlands: Bushy Leaze Wood, Ackender Wood, North Wood, Thedden Copse, Great Wood, Chawton Park Wood and Hungry Copse are all recognised as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Background and Intent

The NPPF emphasises that ‘an environmental objective [should be] to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment’.. Any planning application in Beech should consider the NPPF’s clauses which offer guidance on this point. In summary the NPPF states that ‘great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty’ and that ‘the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations’.

A Landscape Character Assessment of the village has been prepared as part of the evidence base for this Plan. This is an analysis of the character of the village with reference to a number of considerations, including landscape setting, layout, topography, roads and routes, green and natural features, important views, buildings and details. While the buildings in the parish are of many differing styles, there are several consistent features, such as the widespread use of boundary hedging, all of which contribute to the rural feel of the village.

Coalescence

The housing in Beech is predominantly in two distinct areas. The majority of the dwellings (some 66% of houses) and population are located in the Settlement Policy Boundary Area with a further 52 houses located on Kings Hill (some 23% of houses).

There are no designated strategic gaps between Beech and Alton or Beech and Medstead. There is a distinct separation from Alton, with a significant area of farmland that remains undeveloped. The area between Beech and Medstead is farm land containing Alton Abbey and a 15th Century farm house and some privately maintained parkland.

Recreation Facilities

There are two recreation spaces that are valued by the community: the Village Hall green and the Recreation Ground. Both spaces host children’s play areas with playground equipment.

The Recreation Ground, an open public space in the centre of the village, is popular with young children and dog walkers. It is used for the annual bonfire night event. There are no parking facilities at the Recreation Ground, and so when it is in use there can be parking problems along Wellhouse Road. Users of the Recreation Ground can by arrangement use the Village Hall car park.

The Village Hall is used for community events which include civil events, club/society meetings, seasonal parties, monthly social events and other celebrations. It is hired out to a number of local clubs and for weddings and other private functions. The hall’s meeting room is used by the Parish Council and is available for private hire.



Policy BPC01: Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity

- a) Proposals which retain existing green infrastructure, the remnants of old woodland cover in the parish and other wildlife habitats will be supported.
- b) Proposals which provide additional green infrastructure, and/or that nurtures or enhances the habitat corridors from Thedden Copse to Ackender Wood and Bushy Leaze Wood (and onward to Chawton Park Wood), will be supported.

1. The ancient woodlands, ponds and copses all form valuable green infrastructure assets of the parish and development proposals must ensure they are protected and maintained, and wherever possible, enhanced. This includes assets such as hedgerows, where proposals should consider the planting of replacement indigenous species and so avoid the use of, for example, coniferous plants, high walls and solid fencing.
2. EHDC policies on landscape and biodiversity state that development will be required to maintain, enhance and protect biodiversity throughout the district, in particular at Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation. However, apart from these areas of nature conservation designation, other areas of local value for wildlife, such as trees, hedgerows and other areas of biodiversity, need to be protected to ensure the sustainability of the parish's green infrastructure.
3. The EHDC policies add that, to protect green infrastructure and biodiversity in Beech, developers should produce Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) desk top studies or other environmental studies. These should identify specific characteristics of the parish and developers should seek the appropriate guidance to ensure these are protected.
4. Applicants for development planning permission should ensure that the mitigation detailed in Natural England's standing advice for ancient woodland and veteran trees is applied to any relevant planning proposal. The potential to impact Beech's ancient woodland should be clarified; for example, the provision of a 'buffer zone of semi-natural habitat between the development and the ancient woodland or veteran trees (depending on the size of the development, the minimum buffer should be at least 15 metres)'. It is implied in this policy that the aforementioned buffer should be such that its size extends beyond 15 metres should protection of local plant and wildlife so require, for example through the need for availability of foraging space, direct (winter) sunlight, natural drainage etc.



Policy BPC02: Development outside the Settlement Policy Boundary

- a) Land outside the Beech Settlement Policy Boundary (as shown in Map 2) will be considered as countryside and the only development that will be allowed will be development that has a need to be located in a countryside location, either for the purposes of agricultural, forestry or other rural enterprise or rural conservation needs; or through the conversion of redundant or disused rural buildings; or for non-residential development in accordance with Policy BPC09; or for essential utility infrastructure that cannot be located elsewhere; and where the development proposal complies with other policies within the development plan.
- b) Any development, whether housing or otherwise, outside the Settlement Policy Boundary (as permitted under the NPPF and the EHDC Local Plan) shall comply with the other policies of the development plan, including the policies of this Neighbourhood Development Plan.

1. The 'open countryside' within Beech Parish divides into six areas:
 - i. The valley above the source of the River Wey, around the A339.
 - ii. The land of and around Thedden Farm and Thedden Grange.
 - iii. The land around Kings Hill houses.
 - iv. The land around Alton Abbey and the land south of Wivelrod.
 - v. The land around Old Park Farm.
 - vi. The land around Wyards Farm.

This policy is aimed at ensuring future development truly protects the rural environment within Beech Parish.

2. The valley above the source of the River Wey is classic chalk downland. It forms part of the area between Beech and Alton, and our non-coalescence policy BCP03 applies.
3. The land around Thedden Farm and Thedden Grange is further covered by policy BPC04.
4. The land around Alton Abbey, south of Wivelrod, and around Old Park Farm and Wyards Farm is further covered by policy BPC03.
5. This policy is highly valued by the residents of Beech. Over 88% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire agreed (or strongly agreed) with the statement: 'The countryside outside the Settlement Policy Boundary should be protected from development unless it can be demonstrated that there is a genuine and proven need for a countryside location'.



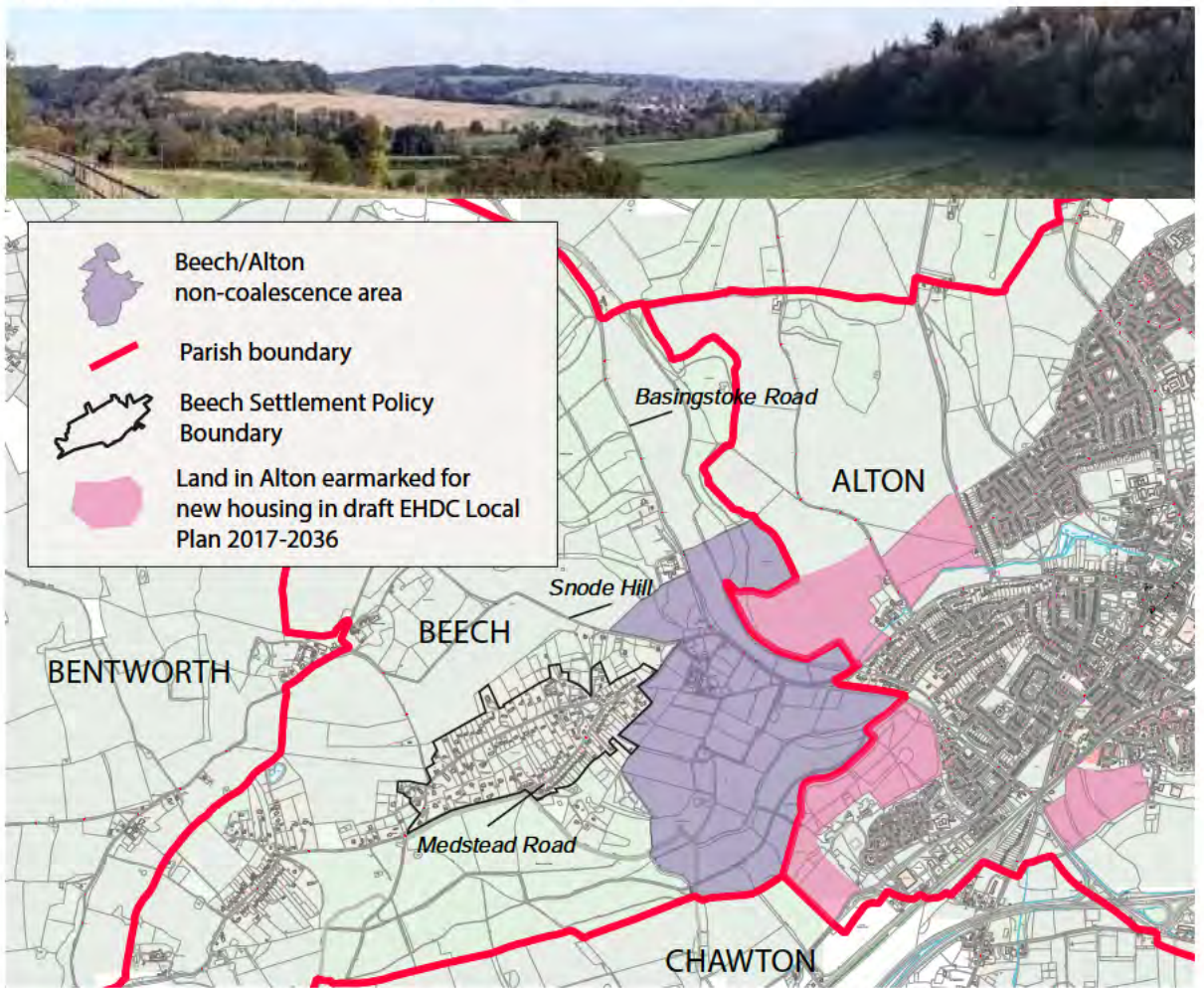
Policy BPC03: Preventing Coalescence with Alton and Medstead/Wivelrod

Development will not be permitted in the non-coalescence areas shown in Maps 3 and 4 if, individually or cumulatively, it would increase the risk of coalescence between Beech and Alton or between Beech and Medstead/Wivelrod.

In the defined non-coalescence areas any new development, or any increased intensification of development within existing curtilages, should not result in diminishing the separate identity of each of these settlements by reducing the openness and visual break between Beech and Alton or between Beech and Medstead/Wivelrod.

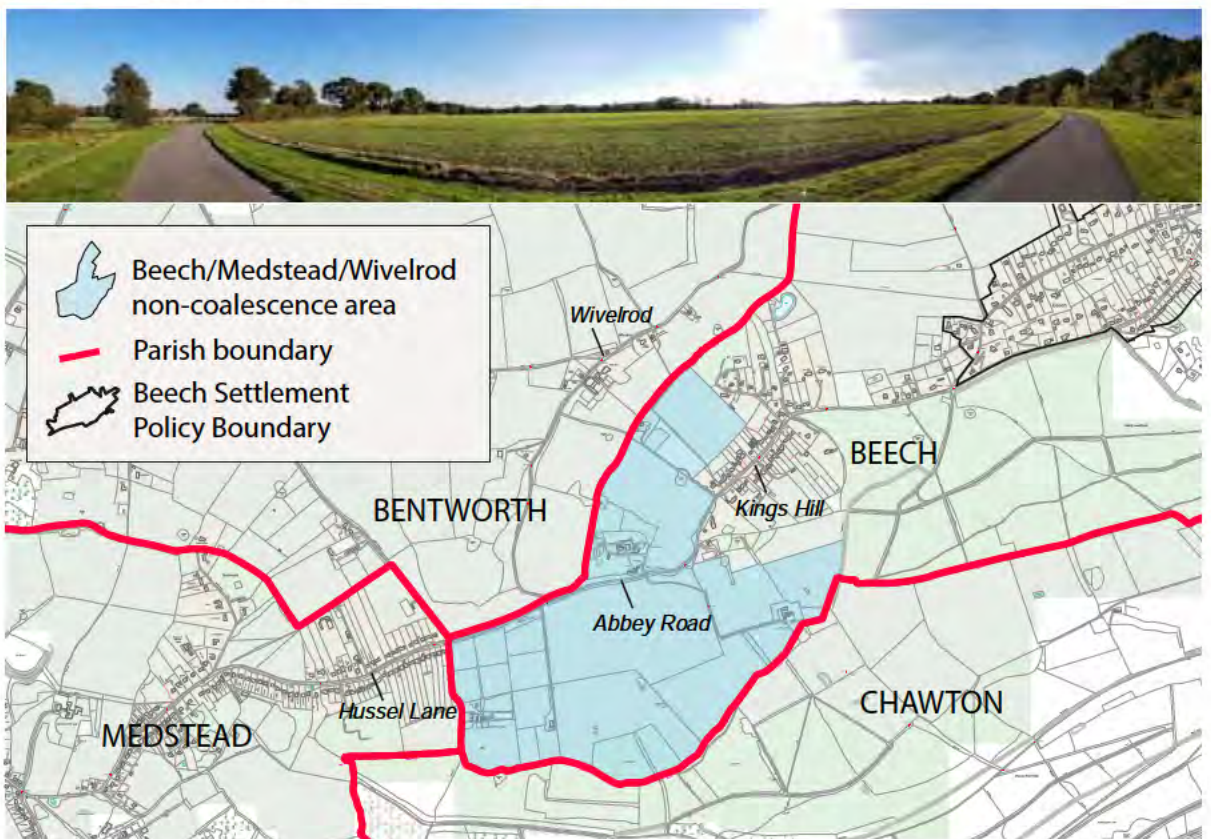
1. Since its settlement foundation in 1892 the land that covers the village of Beech has been a separate geographic entity from Alton and Medstead.
2. The Beech Landscape Character Assessment identifies a threat of coalescence with both Medstead and Alton and recommends that Beech should 'Maintain individual settlement identity and limit linear expansion and infilling between existing settlements e.g. Beech and Alton' and 'Retain an undeveloped rural road corridor along the A339 and important open gaps'. It also identifies resistance to 'the forces of change' which are a 'threat of coalescence with neighbouring settlements of Alton and Medstead'.
3. This policy is to ensure that Beech retains its separate identity as a settlement in line with the long-term goal of ensuring the maintenance of open land between settlements as reflected in EHDC planning strategy and policy.
4. This policy reflects the prospect of Alton's urban area expanding up to the majority of its shared boundary with Beech parish (and crossing into Beech at one location), as proposed in EHDC's Draft Local Plan 2017-2036. The current distance between Alton housing and Beech's Settlement Policy Boundary is only c.700 metres. The Alton housing sites proposed by EHDC would reduce that distance to only 450 metres and could form a firm precedent for further future development (west of Pertuis Way and west along the Basingstoke Road) that marches Alton even closer to Beech, if not for this policy.
5. The current gap between Medstead housing (Hussell Lane) and Beech housing (Kings Hill) is only c.950 metres. The current gap between Beech housing (Kings Hill) and the hamlet of Wivelrod (in Bentworth parish) is less than 400 metres.
6. Maintaining the gap between Beech and Alton is important for the retaining the habitat corridor between Thedden Copse and Ackender Wood, and maintaining the gap between Beech and Medstead is important for retaining the corridor between Bushy Leaze Wood and Chawton Park Wood, in line with policy BPC01.
7. This policy is highly valued by the residents of Beech, out of 171 Neighbourhood Questionnaire respondents, only 4 expressed disagreement with this proposal and 164 were in agreement.

Map 3: Beech/Alton non-coalescence area.



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Map 4: Beech/Medstead/Wivelrod non-coalescence area.



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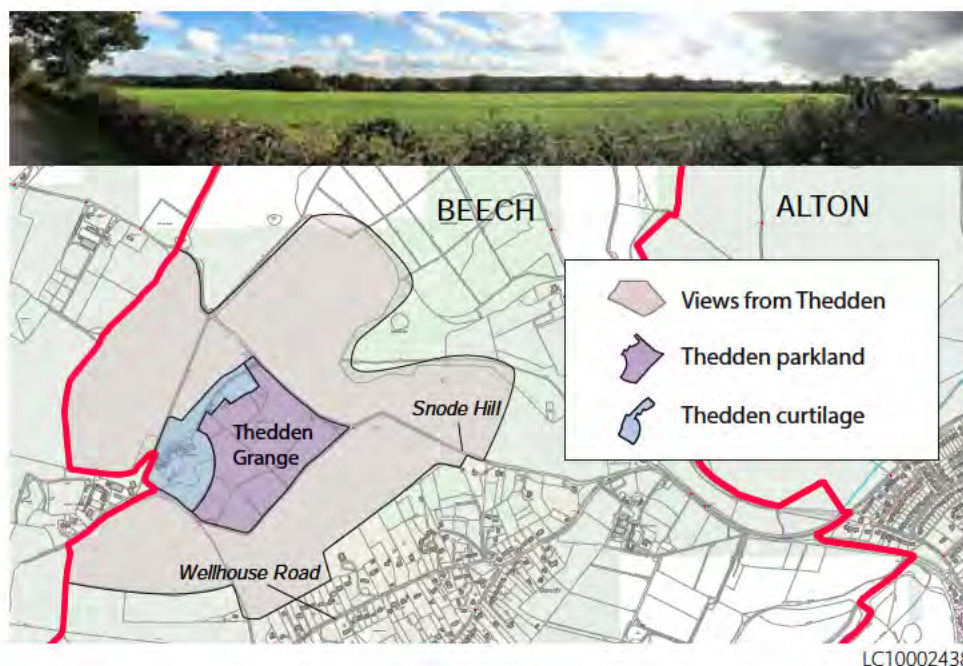


Policy BPC04: Preservation of Amenity of Historic Parkland

In order to protect the historic parkland at Thedden Grange, any development located in the area coloured grey on Map 5 should only be permitted where the type and scale of development is appropriate to Thedden Grange and its parkland and does not harm the parkland's amenity value or the views to and from it.

1. The parkland at Thedden Grange is mentioned as a historic landscape within the East Hampshire Wooded Downland Plateau Landscape Character Area (as defined in the Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment 2012).
2. In addition to woods and open farmland, the countryside within the plan area includes the historic parkland of Thedden Grange, which is enjoyed by the many Beech residents who regularly walk the lanes around the boundary. Existing trees, hedges and landscape features that demarcate the extent of the vista from the Thedden parkland area as shown on the map below should be retained.
3. Thedden, by its very nature, is a remote location away from other facilities and services. It is recognised, however, that the long established community at Thedden Grange has been instrumental in conserving and managing the parkland. Therefore in the event of a need for extra accommodation to sustain the community and continue the conservation effort (as supported in answers to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire), development within the Thedden Grange curtilage (as indicated in Map 5) will be supported by this plan. Care must be taken to construct such accommodation out of sight of the Thedden parkland, sited and designed so as not to detract from Thedden Grange and its surroundings, and in accordance with the policies in the development plan.

Map 5: View from Thedden towards Beech



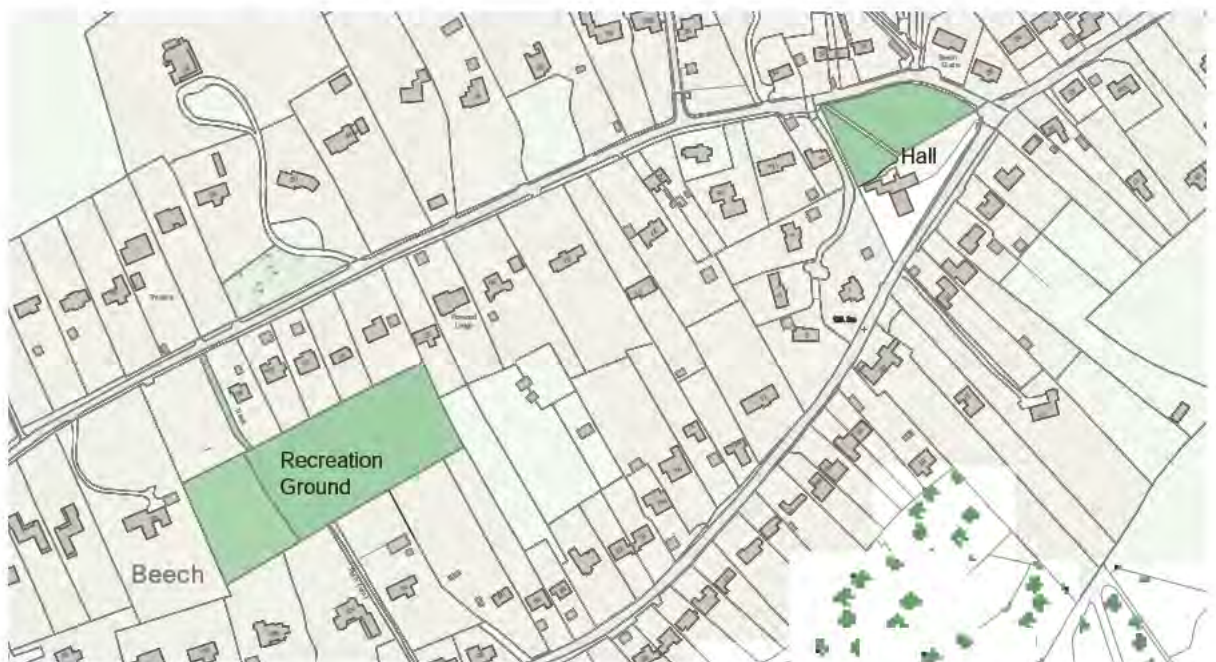
Policy BPC05: Recreation Space – Local Green Spaces

The following sites are designated as Local Green Spaces where there will be a presumption against any built development, except to enhance and/or improve recreational facilities:

- The green at the Village Hall
- The Recreation Ground

1. The Village Hall stands on a piece of land of about two acres situated in the fork of the principal road junction within the village area, and about half of the land forms a village green alongside the Hall. Some distance further up the hill, on one of the few pieces of flat land in the village area, is the open Recreation Ground (also about two acres) which has been used for football, cricket, rounders and other sports.
2. In 1963 the Beech Village Hall and Recreation Ground Trust was registered as a charity whose objects are:
'The provision and maintenance of a village hall and recreation ground for the use of the inhabitants of Beech and the neighbourhood without distinction of sex or of political, religious or other opinions, and in particular for use for meetings, lectures and classes, and for other forms of recreation (including physical recreation) and other leisure time occupation, with the object of improving conditions of life for the said inhabitants'
3. This policy is intended to offer protection for Beech village amenities by preventing any development (other than to enhance recreational facilities offered to the villagers) on the land in question. 95% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire were in favour of this.

Map 6: Location of Beech Village Hall and Recreation Ground



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Section 5.2 Housing

Objectives

The responses to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire showed that residents want Beech to remain a village and that its character should not be harmed by inappropriate new housing development, particularly that which might add to traffic problems in and around the village.

Background and Intent

Beech is an attractive place to live due to the surrounding countryside combined with accessibility to Alton and Basingstoke, travel hubs and employment areas. There are currently 236 dwellings in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

There is a growing elderly population and house prices are higher than the national average. Older residents do not wish to move from the village, but a number would like to move to smaller homes that are more suitable for their circumstances. As a result, some remain in larger homes that could be more suitable for family accommodation. In addition to downsizing needs there is a long-standing need for affordable housing for local people, particularly for young adults wishing to live independently and for young families. An appropriate housing mix must therefore suit elderly residents as well as first time buyers and those needing affordable homes.

There is limited space for new development within the Settlement Policy Boundary. Residents value the countryside and wish to protect it from inappropriate development.

A majority of residents accept the need for new homes. Responses to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire showed that 53% of respondents felt they would support some additional houses in the village. There is an expressed desire for a mixture of housing types, with highest support for small family homes for sale followed by downsizing homes for local people. However the overriding requirement stated by residents is that the landscape should be protected and no development should have a harmful impact on the countryside.

Identifying Housing Needs

The Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire identified a wish for smaller homes (with two or three bedrooms) for a number of people resident in the village, both for starter homes and for downsizing.

It is recognised that Beech is not considered by EHDC to be a village that is able, in itself, to support significant new development, and that Beech is part of a larger local housing market in the north west of East Hampshire District.

Housing Supply

No specific housing allocation has been made to Beech Parish by EHDC. EHDC has taken the position that Beech Parish is not a sustainable location for significant growth. As with all housing allocations this remains under review by EHDC.

Windfall sites are those not specifically identified or allocated for housing in a local development plan. All new developments within the Beech Settlement Policy Boundary in recent years have been on windfall sites. Windfall sites are expected to provide a supply of housing over the Plan period.

Because of the varied sizes of plots in Beech there should be scope for accommodating smaller plots to provide for people who wish to downsize and/or build homes for young families.

The Plan's Approach

It is the intention that new development reflects and respects the particular character of Beech and integrates into the prevailing character of the locality in which it is located (as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), available at www.beechpc.com). Gardens are an important feature of the locality, helping to integrate built development into the landscape setting of the village. The LCA recommends the following:

- Conserve the current density of settlement, including a minimum plot size of 0.2 hectares in the Special Housing Area designated by Policy H10 of the EHDC Local Plan 2nd Review 2006.
- Maintain individual settlement identity and limit linear expansion and infilling between neighbouring settlements.
- The existing form of settlement should be perpetuated by limiting development within garden spaces and peripheral plots, by emphasising the existing rhythm of building frontages as a reflection of plot size, and by maintaining the relationship this pattern has to the settlement as a whole.
- Seek to avoid redevelopment of plots with buildings of greater size/massing and incongruous (sub)urban style.

(NOTE: The use of the term 'settlement' in the LCA does not imply a planning designation but reflects landscape character)

Any new development should reflect the prevailing pattern and grain of development as described in the LCA. The LCA recommends that pressure for further infill development including building within front gardens of existing properties leading to increased housing density, loss of vegetation and loss of semi-rural streetscape should be resisted.

The measures in Policies BPC06, BPC07 and BPC08 will help to ensure that a high standard of development and design is achieved in Beech and will discourage development that looks out of place and is poorly integrated with its surroundings.



Policy BPC06: Development Setting and Scale

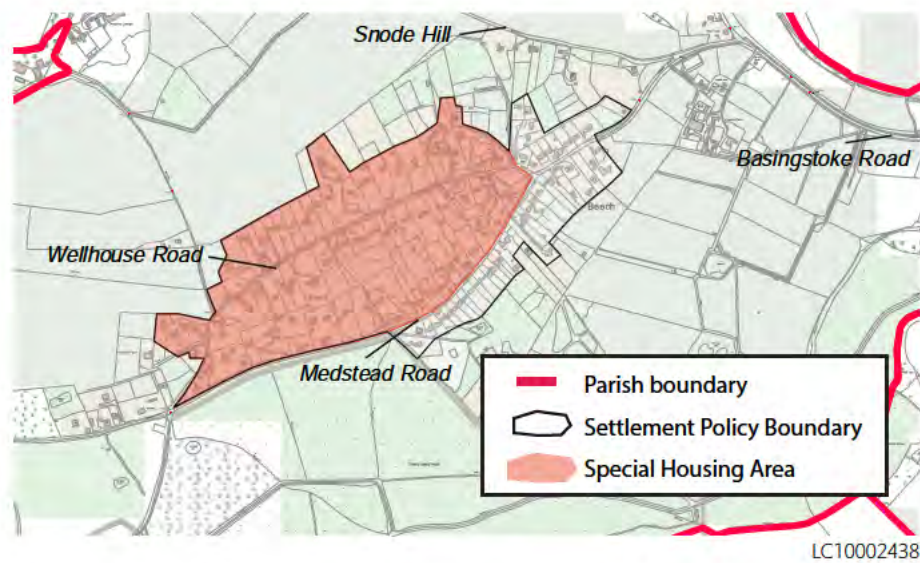
- a) Development proposals should not change the predominantly linear architectural character of the settlement within Beech's valleys which, together with the extensive mature green infrastructure, give the village its 'sense of place'.
- b) For all new developments, including those using existing garden space, all new dwellings and their gardens should be of a similar size, scale and massing to those in the area.
- c) The line formed by the roof tops of neighbouring buildings, when viewed from the highway, may not be raised as a result of the height of new buildings or constructions. In general, new buildings or constructions should not exceed two stories in height.
- d) For any infill development that is viewed as the completion of an otherwise substantially continuous line of dwellings, the new dwelling(s) should be of a comparable scale to at least one of the existing dwellings on either side of the new development, and should generally respect the existing building line. This will ensure that the existing setting and scale is maintained.
- e) No new building should be constructed at a location that is significantly further up a hillside than those buildings on the neighbouring plots. A new development on a hillside should not raise the height of the built-up area on that hillside (when viewed from across the valley).
- f) For new developments along Medstead Road, the linear character of the settlement should not be impacted through further backland development. A plot with vehicular access onto Medstead Road should not be subdivided in order to introduce a new built development to the rear of the existing building(s) on the plot.
- g) Within the Special Housing Area (shown in Map 7) there will be a presumption against the creation of a plot with an area of less than 0.2 hectare.
- h) The development of new dwellings in the front gardens of existing dwellings in Wellhouse Road will not be permitted, so as to contribute to preserving the character of the Special Housing Area.

1. This policy applies to all new development and redevelopment both inside and outside the Settlement Policy Boundary, which is shown on Map 7.
2. The LCA emphasises the need to conserve the current density of settlement in all parts of the village.
3. Policies BPC06(c) and (e) are intended to ensure the protection of the village skyline against the mature green infrastructure. The LCA supports these policies.
4. Within the Settlement Policy Boundary most of Wellhouse Road and the north side of Medstead road are designated a Special Housing Area, in which a 0.2 hectare minimum plot size is specified

for new dwellings so as to preserve the special character of low density housing set in well-wooded plots. This designated area and a 0.2 hectare minimum new plot size was first proposed and adopted by EHDC under Policy H10 of its Local Plan: Second Review (2006), following EHDC's own review and conclusion that the area merited such designation in order to 'retain the special character which makes a significant contribution to the environment of the settlement'. Its retention as Policy BPC06(g) is supported by the LCA.

5. Policy BPC06(h) formalises residents' long-held objection to building dwellings in the front gardens of houses in Wellhouse Road, which are generally set well back from the highway, as part of maintaining the character of the Special Housing Area. In responses to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, 125 out of 171 respondents supported this policy.

Map 7: Settlement Policy Boundary and Special Housing Area



Policy BPC07: Building Design and Character

- a) New buildings, including alterations, should demonstrate good quality of design and their design, layout and materials should reflect the predominant form of development in the immediate vicinity of that particular area, and preserve the overriding rural nature of the village. Appropriate innovative design will, however, be supported.
- b) The design of new buildings should ensure that the living conditions of neighbouring residents (including privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook) are not significantly adversely affected.
- c) New plot boundaries will be required to be enclosed and should be landscaped, preferably with hedges. As many as possible of the existing trees, hedges and landscape features that contribute to the amenity and character of the area should be retained.
- d) Any new external lighting should be designed to minimise light pollution and not to impact adversely on adjacent properties or road safety.
- e) Design elements that promote energy efficiency, energy savings, resource conservation and resource recycling will be strongly supported.

1. The design criteria for new development in Beech (as represented by Policy BPC07) have served the village well, being largely unchanged since they were first published in the Village Design Statement 2002. The Village Design Statement's provisions dealing with backland and infill development have been covered in Policy BPC06.
2. The LCA supports this policy in terms of the design and character of the buildings. The LCA also identifies the danger of destroying the rural feel of the village through the use of solid fencing and gates bordering public roadways and byways; Policy BPC07(c) is intended to ensure this does not occur.
3. Beech, with its proximity to the South Downs National Park, benefits from a near 'dark skies' environment which Policy BPC07(d) seeks to preserve.
4. Policy BPC07 is drawn up to complement EHDC Local Plan design policy, from which it is noted that design 'takes account of sense of place, safety and security'. It also states that 'Design which fails to take the opportunity for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions should not be acceptable'.



Policy BPC08: Housing Mix

Any new housing development within the plan area will be encouraged to provide for the housing need in Beech. Accordingly this plan will encourage the development of two or three bedroom homes, suitable for starter homes or those who wish to downsize.

1. 60% of the respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire agreed that the village should accommodate smaller homes for younger people; 58% felt that smaller homes for downsizing should be built. The questionnaire identified a total of 20 home owners wishing to downsize and remain in Beech; whilst of 29 homes with young adults needing starter homes, 9 of these young adults had a wish to remain in Beech. In general, detached homes of either one or two stories would be preferred. This policy reflects those wishes.
2. EHDC policies support restrictions to the size of replacement dwellings and extensions in smaller villages. They recognise the issues in Beech where there is limited residential development space within the Settlement Policy Boundary. This policy extends support for the development of smaller properties arising from infill and backland development.
3. The new residential developments anticipated by this plan are each likely to be of four homes or fewer per site, being windfall sites or housing permitted in the countryside in accordance with National and EHDC policy. It is acknowledged that the other policies in this plan may limit the possibility of such new developments providing two or three bedroom homes.
4. In the event that there is new residential development in the plan area that falls outside those anticipated in paragraph 3 above (for example, any rural affordable housing, or any housing site directly allocated in the future by EHDC, outside the current Settlement Policy Boundary), then this policy should apply



Section 5.3 Local Economy

Objectives

- To support local business and retain local employment.
- To encourage new business and employment opportunities into the area.

Background and Intent

The site of the Departure Lounge on the Basingstoke Road is adjacent to the A339 to the north east of the village and outside the Settlement Policy Boundary. There was once a commercial market garden at the site and its buildings have been converted into small business units. There is now an animal feed business, a storage business, and a café. The field adjacent to the café is used as a car boot sale site.

The EHDC Local Plan encourages the use of land for rural enterprise purposes, and Beech residents at consultation events have confirmed their support for businesses in the village and for retaining businesses on the Departure Lounge site.

Further development of the Departure Lounge site for business purposes should be limited to self-sustaining units, but there are constraints to development. Access is via a single entry point between two blind corners on the A339, a very busy road. Therefore regular access by large commercial vehicles is impractical and hazardous, and so any further development should be constructed in a way to be suitable for small businesses only. These constraints mean that any increase to the existing gross floor space on the site would be hard to support and this stance is in line with the current development plan policy.

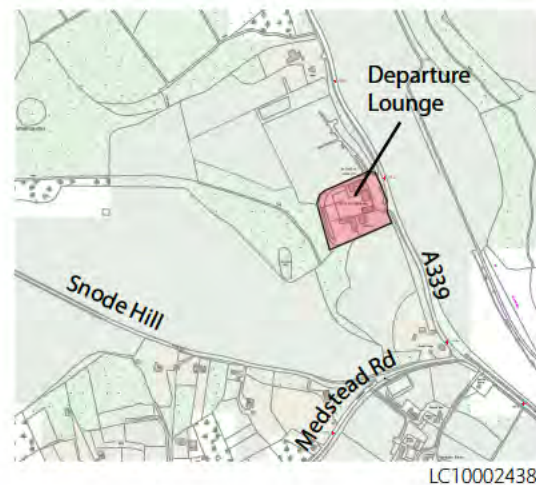


Policy BPC09: Site of the Departure Lounge and Village Businesses

Proposals that would result in the creation of new businesses or support the expansion of existing businesses within the Settlement Policy Boundary, or in redundant farm buildings or at the site of the Departure Lounge (as shown in Map 8) will be permitted, provided that they:

- a) Do not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity.
- b) Do not have an adverse impact on the highway, and provide an appropriate level of parking provision for those working at or visiting the premises.
- c) Do not conflict with any of the other policies in the development plan.

Map 8: Site of the Departure Lounge



1. The majority of business carried out in Beech is conducted by those working from home. Two thirds of homes in Beech have someone working from home for an average of 2.5 days per week.
2. The 14th century farms were once the only homes in Beech. Of those, Thedden Farm (situated outside the plan area) is still a very active farm and forms the majority of the land farmed in Beech. Wyards Farm, now listed, is no longer a working farm but does offer bed and breakfast accommodation and livery stabling; the countryside around the farm is used mainly for grazing horses. Old Park Farm is now home to a specialist outlet offering garden & architectural antiques as well as garden ornaments. Old Park Farm's farming activities mainly relate to grazing and hay production.



Section 5.4 Highways and Transport

Objectives

- To improve safety for all highway users, including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.
- To promote and support public transport and travel by foot, cycle and horse.
- To continue to support community transport initiatives.

Background and Intent

Beech is a rural parish and there are no major roads within the built up area. However, the busy A339 Alton to Basingstoke Road is within the parish boundary, with a major turning off this highway into the village centre. To the south of the plan area runs the A31 Guildford to Winchester Road (through Four Marks) and the A32 from Alton to Fareham, both of which create traffic cutting through Beech to the A339 and B3349 and on to the M3. In addition, significant development has occurred in Four Marks and Medstead, further increasing local traffic. As a result of these factors there has been an observable increase in traffic using Kings Hill and Medstead Road. The village centre can become particularly busy during periods of peak travel in early mornings and early evenings, as well as at school collection and drop off times.

Other than school and college buses, there is very limited public transport provision in the parish.

For most people living in the parish, the car is the only practical mode of transport, even for some of the shortest journeys within the village. There are no pavements along Medstead Road or Kings Hill, and with their restricted road width it makes walking extremely dangerous for pedestrians.

Better footpaths and public rights of way are needed within the village and connecting the village with Alton, and would help to address these issues and improve pedestrian safety.

Traffic Speed

Traffic speed and pedestrian safety have been key issues for Beech residents over many years. Although attempts have been made in the past to try to find ways to reduce the impact of traffic on the village, no simple solutions have been forthcoming. Traffic speed surveys carried out on behalf of the Parish Council show that the majority of vehicles comply with current speed limits, though some ignore them and the steeply downhill nature of the main road through the village means drivers often unwittingly exceed the speed limit. The widespread perception is that traffic moves too fast for the size and nature of the main village road.

Beech Parish Council monitors traffic using the village's Speed Limit Regulator (SLR). In Winter 2015 some 30897 vehicles used the Medstead Road in 77 days (an average of 400 vehicles per day, averaging 31.9mph through the village). Some 1088 vehicles (14 per day) had speeds in excess of 40mph.

In Spring 2018 the SLR registered some 16344 vehicles using the road in just 12 days, making the average number of vehicles 1362 vehicles per day. The 85th percentile speed was 32.2mph. Some 113 vehicles reached speeds between 40 and 60mph (about 10 per day).

Parking

Beech is a rural location where there is often a need to undertake trips for services, facilities and work by car. In addition to the householders, many homes include grown-up children, who need to travel by car for work and other reasons.

Car ownership in Beech is high. The Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire responses show that the majority of households (over 96%) own at least one vehicle. Over 85% own two or more vehicles, compared to the national figure of 24.66%.

Fortunately, due to a policy of on-property parking, Beech is not beset with on-street parking and congestion, other than temporarily in connection with delivery vehicles. This plan aims to ensure that the provision of sufficient off-street parking is maintained and that our narrow village roads are not blocked by vans and lorries whilst making deliveries.

Therefore the plan lays out the principle that new development, either in the form of a new unit or an extension to an existing property, that would result in additional bedroom space, should absorb the parking needs it creates.

Public Transport

In 2019 two bus routes ran through Beech Village:-

- School bus service no. 613, which runs (from Medstead and beyond) into Alton once each morning, and back from Alton (to Medstead and on to Basingstoke) once each afternoon, on school days only. Any member of the public may use this service.
- Bus service no. 208, which runs in a loop Alton – Beech – Medstead – Bentworth – Lasham crossroads – Alton three times (morning to lunchtime) each Tuesday and Friday. This service is subsidised by Hampshire County Council.

In addition, service no. 13X (running direct between Alton and Basingstoke) stops at the junction of Medstead Road and the A339 (a significant walk away for most villagers).

- The bus arrives direct from Basingstoke and departs for Alton only once on each weekday, in the early morning.
- The bus arrives from Alton and departs direct to Basingstoke twice on each weekday evening. NB: The regular bus service (no.13) between Alton and Basingstoke does not use the A339, but runs via Odiham.

A call-and-go, dial-a-ride service is offered by EHDC, but this usually requires booking one week in advance.

Overall, the available services make a weekday (not weekend) trip into Alton by bus feasible, but it is not possible to make a public transport day trip by bus to Basingstoke unless going via Alton and Odiham.

Cycling

National Cycle Routes 23 and 224 from Basingstoke to Alton offer a splendid ride through North Hampshire but bypass Beech via Medstead and Chawton. However, coming from Basingstoke or from Medstead it is not unusual for cyclists to cut through Beech via Abbey Road, Kings Hill and Medstead Road. 59% of Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire respondents feel that additional cycle paths should be built.

Public Footpaths & Bridleways

There are numerous public rights of way through and around the village linking to National Trails.

Community Views

Responses to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire confirm concerns about speeding traffic, with 91% of respondents considering it to be unsafe to walk along the main village road.

Residents confirmed a desire for road safety measures in a multiple selection question; out of 253 responses the highest number (48%) favoured a 20 mph speed limit option. The alternative option of traffic calming measures was supported by 33%. Full analysis by postcode is shown in Appendix 2; unsurprisingly the closer to the village centre the residents live, the higher the request for a 20 mph zone there was.



Policy BPC10: Managing the Impact of New Development on Traffic

- a) The location of any new development in the plan area should take into account the additional nature and volume of road traffic that would be generated by that development, and its cumulative effect (taken together with existing traffic volumes and speeds on the relevant roads) on the amenity and safety of Beech residents.
- b) Vehicle access to new developments should be designed to reflect the rural character of the roads in Beech.
- c) Access into any property should pay due regard to the safety of pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists. Design should ensure that vehicles can enter and leave the plot in forward gear. Design should allow adequate safe space for entrance gates, if fitted, to be closed whilst the exiting vehicle is parked off road.

1. The responses to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire highlighted the dangers of walking, cycling and horse riding along Medstead Road and Kings Hill, which not long ago were relatively quiet rural roads. 91% of villagers agreed it was dangerous to walk along Medstead Road. Appendix 2 sets out residents' views on a lower speed limit and other traffic calming measures.
2. Developments in Four Marks and Medstead, as well as natural and satnav-driven traffic diversion from congestion in the west side of Alton, have significantly increased traffic volumes in the village. The steep nature of Kings Hill and Medstead Road means that speed control requires significant care and concentration by drivers to remain within the speed limit.
3. The roads in Beech, particularly in the village itself, are characterised by: a narrow paved road width; no pavements; steep banks with narrow or no verges; and overhanging hedges and trees. All of these factors are detrimental to the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in particular.
4. It is important that vehicles can enter and leave a plot in forward gear, so as to avoid having to reverse out of the plot onto the highway, which is a significant safety hazard given the nature of Beech's roads as set out in paragraph 3.



Policy BPC11: Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycle Paths

- a) Where a development allows for improvement to the highway or the reinstatement or the creation of rights of way (i.e. footpaths, bridleways or cycle paths), the opportunities should be taken.
- b) Any new footway should be set back from roads, as far as is practical, and should be designed to respect the rural nature of the village. Green verges will be preferred to hard kerbs as footpath edgings.
- c) Work required to improve and consolidate the cycle route from Alton to the A339/Medstead Road junction will be supported.

1. Beech's 'official' footpaths and bridleways, as of December 2007, are published by Hampshire County Council in the document entitled 'The Hampshire Definitive Statement of Public Rights of Way' and are shown on Map 9.
2. Beech is proud of its footpaths and bridleways. Many are maintained through usage and there are a few that have been lost. Beech's inhabitants treasure their footpaths, so much so that 80% plus of villagers consider access to rural walkways and cycle routes to be a main attraction of living in Beech. Every opportunity should be taken when developments offer the possibility to restore the paths both in terms of their quality and their availability to the public.
3. EHDC's Cycle Plan 2004 identifies the existing cycle route from Beech to Alton. But this route has not been completed as envisaged in the Cycle Plan. Almost 60% of Beech residents feel that investment in a safer route would be worthwhile. The Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire responses show that the profile of Beech residents who cycle is closely linked to young couples and their children.

Map 9: Rights of Way



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Policy BPC12: Planning for Parking

Development proposals that generate an increased need for parking should provide adequate and suitable off-street parking. All new homes should include, within the development site, a minimum of one parking space per bedroom for each of the home's first three bedrooms.

1. This policy is required in order to minimise obstruction of the local road network, in the interests of the safety of all road users, including pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists, and in order to preserve the rural nature of all the roads in Beech Parish.
2. As the availability of public transport is very limited in Beech, reliance on motorised vehicles is very high.
3. The roads in Beech are narrow with steep banks and there are no pull in spaces. Therefore design of additional buildings and extensions should ensure that there is adequate parking within the plot. For planning purposes the availability of parking spaces at the Village Hall will not be taken into account.
4. Parking and turning points were a point raised in the Village Design Statement 2002. Developments of garages in front gardens, as well as changing the character of certain areas, have cut into turning circles and, in the interest of safety, the 'forward gear exit rule' should continue to be enforced. EHDC's Spatial Vision states that the level of parking provided with new housing will vary to reflect expected car ownership, accessibility to facilities and availability of public transport. This policy reflects that statement and the fact that Beech's narrow roads and traffic volumes would make on-street parking an unacceptable health and safety risk for its residents.



Section 5.5 Infrastructure

Background

A sustainable community needs access to a range of local facilities and services, and support from adequate infrastructure. New development generates new demands on infrastructure and services. This plan requires the immediate infrastructure needs of new developments to be identified and provided within the development itself, wherever possible, in order to avoid increased pressure on existing infrastructure. This includes green infrastructure measures to manage water use, and physical measures such as connection to utilities services and facilities for waste collection. Smaller developments may not individually generate a demand for additional facilities or infrastructure, but the cumulative effect of a number of developments can lead to deficiencies if not addressed.

Broadband and Mobile Phones

High speed broadband became available in Medstead Road and Wellhouse Road during the summer of 2015, and in Kings Hill in the summer of 2018. Plans for Thedden are unknown.

The mobile phone network is still very poor; the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire showed that 89% of users obtain a maximum of 2 bars at home, and 38% receive no signal at all at home.



Policy BPC13: High Speed Broadband and Mobile Communications

- a) Proposals which seek to provide access to a superfast broadband network or improve mobile phone reception within the plan area will be supported, subject to other development plan policies.
- b) To limit the use of additional overhead cabling, new developments should provide underground ducting and infrastructure, within the curtilage, to accommodate underground services.

1. This policy is designed to ensure that, when new services are connected to extended or new properties, minimal disruption will occur on the village's roads as the infrastructure support services will already be designed and be in place.
2. The Kings Hill area of Beech has benefited from the Hampshire Superfast Broadband program and now Fibre-to-the-Home is available for subscription. The lower parts of Beech had fibre rolled out by BT Openreach under their commercial investment programme, but regrettably there is no Fibre-to-the-Home offer at present and so there are copper wire connections from the Basingstoke Road telecoms cabinet. In lower Beech broadband speeds are adequate, but not ideal for commercial use.
3. Beech is still plagued by poor mobile phone services. The plan supports the provision of better mobile phone services within the parish.



Policy BPC14: Drainage Infrastructure Requirements

- a) Proposals for new development will be expected to demonstrate that the infrastructure for surface water disposal will be provided. This should be by disposal within the curtilage of the new development or by discharge to a public sewer or functioning watercourse.
- b) Surface water from the new development should not be discharged onto the public highway.

1. Beech regularly suffers from flash flooding as rain water from the surrounding hills rushes down onto Kings Hill, Wellhouse Road and finally Medstead and Basingstoke Roads. Under extreme conditions the lower Medstead Road can be flooded by up to two feet of water. The steep valley sides and channelling effect of the roads exacerbate this problem. The effect is illustrated in Map 10. In the aftermath, deposits of flint and chalk create a significant clearing up challenge.
2. Proposals to pave existing porous surfaces must take account of this policy.
3. Prior to construction commencing any developer proposing a development within Beech Parish shall submit a design for disposal of all surface water, taking into consideration flash flood occurrences, and noting that run off from farmland is a significant contributing factor to the amount of water that can flow through the village centre.

Map 10: Surface water drainage



LC10002438

Blue arrows denote direction of surface water flow (based on surface topography)



6. Social Infrastructure

Though outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Development Plan there has always been an awareness of the lack of facilities in Beech and its reliance on services provided by neighbouring communities. It would be remiss of the plan not to highlight the following.

Education

There are no schools in Beech. Local children attend a number of different schools but St Mary's, Bentworth is the primary catchment school with Amery Hill School, Alton being the secondary catchment school. St Mary's, Bentworth is approximately four miles from Beech and a local bus collects children from their homes to take them to and from school. Amery Hill School is two miles away. A school bus collects children from designated stops within the village. There is concern that the lack of pavements means reaching these bus stops puts children at risk from motorists.

Health

There are no healthcare providers in Beech. Residents have to travel to neighbouring towns and villages. Alton has the most healthcare facilities. The nearest GP practice is Chawton Park Surgery in Alton. It has a minor injuries unit and an independent pharmacy.

Patients who require hospital treatment will generally attend either Basingstoke or Winchester Hospitals.

Alton Community Hospital provides for outpatient physiotherapy and x-ray clinics, and Age Concern runs The Limes Day Centre there. The hospital provides a 24-bed inpatient facility for palliative care and supports the rehabilitation/further recovery needs of largely older patients following a spell in secondary care (at one of the area's general hospitals). The medical cover for the in-patient facility is provided by local GPs. Current health care policy seeks to treat more non-emergency and non-specialist cases close to where people live, and this plan supports that policy.

Community Facilities

Beech has two community facilities: the Village Hall and its grounds, and the Recreation Ground (see Policy BPC05). The two sites were gifted to the Beech Village Hall and Recreation Ground Trust in 1931. The Charity Commission accepted the land from the trustees and vested it in 'the official Trustee of Charity Lands' in 1932. The Beech Village Hall and Recreation Ground Trust was registered as a charity in 1963.

Beech does not have a shop or a public house.



7. Infrastructure Development Plan

Policy CP16 in the East Hampshire District Local Plan Joint Core Strategy states that the provision or improvement of facilities and services, required as a result of new development, will be secured through developer contributions either through S106 or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) mechanisms.

The Levy will normally be spent on infrastructure schemes in the local area of the scheme that generated it. Once a Neighbourhood Plan is in place, 25% of the Levy will be paid directly to the Parish Council for investment in the parish.

The Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party have identified a list of various infrastructure requirements and improvements to community services that would support new development during general community engagement and consultation for this Plan. The list will help the Parish Council to decide how to invest funding received from the Levy, once the scheme is in place.

Background to some of the requirements has been given elsewhere in the Plan. Some of the items will be harder to provide than others and some will require facilitation by or support and / or funding from other organisations or authorities. The list will be reviewed from time to time, but currently includes:

Local Facilities and Services

- Improvements to the Village Hall.
- Improvements to the Recreation Ground.
- Create a book swapping library from the telephone box in the village centre.

Highway Improvements

- Village traffic calming and road safety schemes.
- 20mph speed limit introduction on central village roads.
- Refurbishment and construction of a highways water drainage system.

Walkways and Cycle Paths

- Possible conversion of what was Grange Road (connecting Wivelrod Road to Medstead Road via the end of Wellhouse Road) to a dedicated cycle path with adjoining bridleway.
- Improved alternate footpath to Alton via Wyards Farm and possibly Bushy Leaze Wood.
- Improve other footpaths within the village.



8. Monitoring and Review

The Neighbourhood Development Plan covers the period 2019 to 2028. Monitoring will show whether the Plan's objectives and policies are working and whether sustainable development is being achieved.

The Parish Council will use the Plan when making its recommendations to EHDC on planning applications and will monitor both the progress of sites coming forward for development and the provision of infrastructure.

The Plan is based on the community's current needs and aspirations and these may change over the Plan period. If the Plan's objectives are not being met as expected or there are new challenges and concerns that need to be considered, the Parish Council will decide whether action, including a review of the Plan, is necessary.

The Parish Council will review and update, if necessary, the Plan each time that EHDC revises its Local Plan, which is at a minimum of five year intervals (as prescribed by the NPPF). The first such review and update is expected to occur after EHDC adopts its Local Plan 2017–2036, which is currently in draft form.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Supporting Documents and Evidence Base

Links to documents are on Beech Parish Council's website (www.beechpc.com).

Background Information

Beech & Beyond J G Wathen Avon Books ISBN 1 860331149
 The Parish of Beech Village Appraisal Report 2001
 The Parish of Beech Village Design Statement 2002
 Beech Parish Plan 2012
 Beech Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire Report October 2017
 Beech Landscape Character Assessment 2018
 Feedback from Consultation Events
 Desktop Biodiversity Report, Hampshire Biodiversity Records Centre
 Hampshire Garden Trust – Thedden Grange and Wyards Farm
 Hampshire Archives and Local Studies Hampshire Record Office ©Maps
 Hampshire Historic Environment Record
 Hampshire Intergrated Character Assessment 2012
 The Hampshire Definitive Statement of Public Rights of Way December 2007
 Hants-Surrey Border Methodist Circuit Archives
 Ordinance Survey Maps
 2011 Census England and Wales ONS Crown Copyright Reserved

EHDC Documents

EHDC Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy 2014
 EHDC Green Infrastructure Study August 2011
 East Hampshire Landscape Character Assessment July 2006
 Neighbourhood Character Study for East Hampshire District Council December 2018

Appendix 2: Traffic Solution Survey (responses to Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire)

Number of responses		20mph	Calming	No change	% 20mph	% calming	% No change
253	All Beech	122	83	48	48%	33%	19%
89		51	27	11	57%	30%	12%
26		14	8	4	54%	31%	15%
39		23	12	4	59%	31%	10%
16		8	6	2	50%	38%	13%
8		6	1	1	75%	13%	13%
66		30	18	18	45%	27%	27%
22		7	7	8	32%	32%	36%
18		8	4	6	44%	22%	33%
21		13	5	3	62%	24%	14%
5		2	2	1	40%	40%	20%
66		26	27	13	39%	41%	20%
18		8	6	4	44%	33%	22%
23		10	11	2	43%	48%	9%
20		6	8	6	30%	40%	30%
5		2	2	1	40%	40%	20%
32	Other & no postcode	15	11	6	47%	34%	19%



Glossary

Backland development: The process of developing rear gardens or vacant grass or woodland at the rear of properties within existing urban areas that are already largely developed. Some communities generally have large gardens or woodland/grazing lands at the rear of houses within settlement boundaries which, for various reasons, have not been included in the countryside when defining settlement boundaries. See also Infill development.

Biodiversity: The range and diversity of life (including plants, animals and microorganisms), ecosystems and ecological processes.

Community Facilities: Facilities that provide for the health and well-being, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): The Community Infrastructure Levy (the 'levy') is a tool for local authorities in England and Wales to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of the area. What kind of development is liable for the levy? The levy may be payable on development which creates net additional floor space, where the gross internal area of new build is 100 square metres or more. That limit does not apply to new houses or flats, and a charge can be levied on a single house or flat of any size, there are a number of exclusions, exemptions and reliefs from the levy that may be available.

Countryside: In the case of Beech for planning purposes is any area outside the Settlement policy Boundary.

Curtilage: The land immediately surrounding a house or dwelling, including any closely associated buildings and structures, but excluding any associated open fields or woodland.

Ecclesiastical Exemption: Works to places of worship for exempt religious denominations may require planning permission, but under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, they are exempt from listed building and conservation area consent.

EHDC: East Hampshire District Council.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA): A process whereby information about the environmental effects of a project are collected, by the developers or others, and take into account by the local planning authority in determining planning applications. Project types that should be subject to an EIA are listed in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999.

Green Infrastructure: Includes a network of multi-functional natural and semi-natural areas that enhance quality of life, personal health and community well-being and help facilitate travel, green tourism and adaptation to climate change.

Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC): Hampshire county organisation which offers extended Phase 1 or Phase 2 (to NVC level) vegetation surveys, winter bird surveys, management statements, management plans or desktop assessments.

Infill Development: The process of developing vacant or under-used parcels of land alongside existing roads within urban areas that are already largely developed. Communities generally have vacant land along the road side within settlement boundaries which, for various reasons, has been passed over in the normal course of urbanization. See also Backland Development.

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA): The process of identifying and describing variation in character of the landscape. LCA documents identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive by mapping and describing character types and areas.

Local Nature Reserve (LNR): A location that may be given protection against damaging operations. It also has certain protection against development on and around it. This protection is usually given via the local plan, (produced by the planning authority), and often supplemented by local by-laws.

Local Plan: The development plan document that sets out the spatial vision and objectives for East Hampshire District, together with the policies necessary to deliver that vision and objectives. The document is the EHDC Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (2014) together with the Saved Policies of the EHDC Local Plan: Second Review (2006). The document will be the EHDC Local Plan 2017-2036 when it is adopted and supersedes those earlier documents.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): First published in March 2012 sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies. It provides a framework within which local people and Councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans to reflect the needs and priorities of local communities.

Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB): The settlement policy boundaries usually define what are considered non-countryside area in villages and therefore define the areas that the planning policies relating to a group of buildings within a village encompasses. It must be noted that the settlement boundary is a planning designation only and has no other administrative relevance.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC): Every local authority in England has a system for identifying local sites which are of substantive nature conservation value. In Hampshire these are called Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): A generic term used to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. The European 'SEA Directive' (2001/42/EC) requires a formal 'environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use'.

