

Swale Borough Council

Swale Important Local Countryside Gaps

Draft final report
Prepared by LUC
January 2021



Swale Borough Council

Swale Important Local Countryside Gaps

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Project aims

1.1 The aim of the Important Local Countryside Gaps study is to undertake an independent review of the land around the settlements of Faversham and Teynham. It will provide an evidence base on the role these areas play in providing a sense of separation between settlements; safeguarding the open and undeveloped character of the land; and guarding against coalescence.

1.2 This study does not review the existing Important Local Countryside Gaps in the current Local Plan: Bearing Fruits (adopted 2017) as these were found to be sound at the previous Local Plan Examination.

1.3 The sense of separation provided between settlements relates to the character of the gap as well as its size. Small gaps can be effective in maintaining settlement separation if they have a rural character and provide separation, perhaps as a result of a distinct topography, presence of vegetation which limits inter-visibility between the settlements, or containing a distinct landscape feature. On the other hand, large gaps may not be effective if they have a suburban character, lack vegetation or have clear inter-visibility between the settlements, and lack any other features that might provide a sense of separation such as a distinct topographical or landscape feature.

Background and policy context

1.4 Protection of existing settlement pattern and gaps is not specifically mentioned in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019), nor the associated PPG. However, the concept of settlement gaps is broadly consistent with the NPPF, in that: “*Strategic policies...should make sufficient provision for ...conservation and enhancement of the natural built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure*” (NPPF paragraph 20) and “*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by...protecting and enhancing valued landscape*” (NPPF paragraph 170).

1.5 In Swale, Important Local Countryside Gaps were defined and set out in the 2008 Local Plan. The boundaries were reviewed and updated in Technical Paper 6 in 2014, and confirmed in Bearing Fruits, the 2017 adopted Local Plan.

1.6 The purpose of the Important Local Countryside Gaps, as defined in Policy DM 25 of the Swale Local Plan (2017) are to:

- maintain the separate identities and character of settlements by preventing their merging;
- safeguard the open and undeveloped character of the areas;
- prevent encroachment and piecemeal erosion by built development or changes to the rural open character; and
- influence decisions on the longer-term development of settlements through the preparation and review of Local Plans.

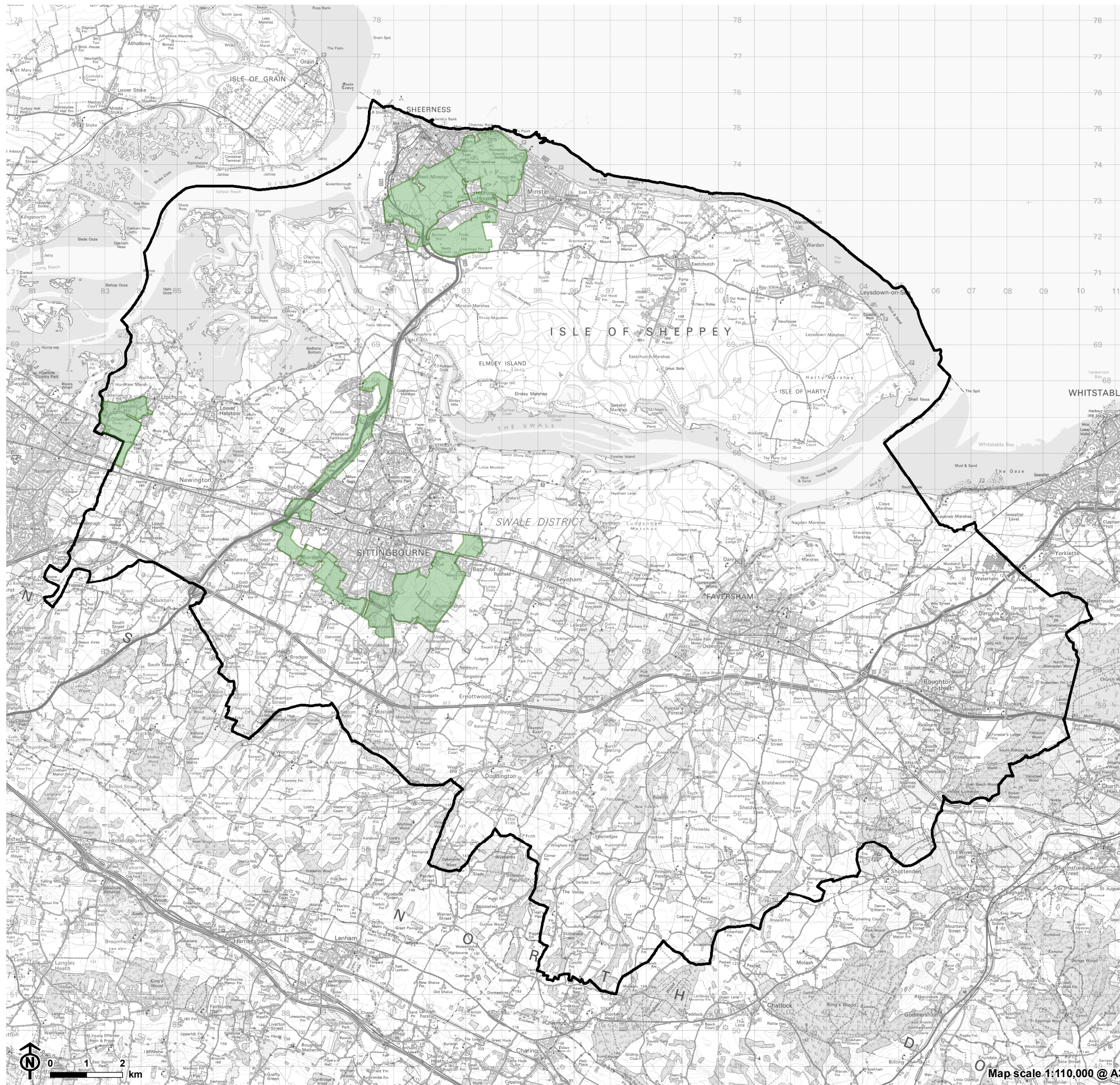
1.7 The current defined settlement gaps are below, and illustrated on **Figure 1.1**:

- Sittingbourne and the satellite villages of Bapchild, Rodmersham Green, Tunstall, Borden, Chestnut Street, Bobbing and Iwade;
- Upchurch and the administrative boundary with Medway Council; and
- Queenborough, Sheerness, Minster and Halfway.

1.8 These settlement gaps have been successful at fulfilling the function for which they were intended given the considerable pressure for new development experienced in the borough, notably for housing. As the policy has been accepted at the Local Plan Examination in 2017, the existing gaps are deemed to be robust, and will not form part of this review.

1.9 In preparing evidence for the current Local Plan Review and in the light of the emphasis on a more even distribution of development across the whole borough this study provides evidence on the need for and boundaries of additional ILCGs around the settlements of Faversham and Teynham.

Fig 1.1: Existing Important Local Countryside Gaps



- Swale Borough Council Boundary
- Important Local Countryside Gap

Chapter 2

Methodology

Methodology

2.1 An essential element in reviewing areas for local designation is the adoption of a consistent, systematic, and transparent process.

2.2 There is currently no prescribed method for assessing 'gap' designations. Strategic gap policies have generally been found sound at Examination when they are supported by robust and up-to-date evidence to justify the extent or purpose of the gaps identified and are focused on protecting specific areas between settlements (rather than all rural areas outside settlements).

2.3 The criteria-based approach used in this study draws from LUC's experience in undertaking similar reviews elsewhere in the UK and lessons learned from our involvement in Local Plan examination, as well as the specific requirements of the Council. It was drawn up in discussion with Swale BC Planning Officers.

Key stages and tasks

2.4 The areas between the following settlements have been assessed for their potential to be included within the Important Local Countryside Gaps policy:

- Faversham and Ospringe
- Faversham and Goodnestone
- Faversham and Oare
- Teynham and Bapchild
- Teynham and Lynsted

2.5 In agreeing the extent of the study area for Faversham, a 'green belt' around the whole of the settlement was considered to be inappropriate with the M2 proving a firm southern boundary and separation to the outlying hamlets in the wider rural area. The absence of an Important Local Countryside Gap designation south of the M2 does not suggest that these are suitable areas for future development.

2.6 The following key tasks were undertaken, to confirm the new Important Local Countryside Gaps, and identify their characteristics.

Evaluation criteria

2.7 The evaluation criteria were developed by LUC drawing on previous strategic gap studies, which have been assessed as robust through the Local Plan examination process. They have been refined to reflect the particular landscape and settlement pattern of Swale.

2.8 Each of the Important Local Countryside Gap assessments were undertaken using the criteria set out in **Table 2.2:**.

Desk review

2.9 The desk review involved a two-step evaluation. The potential gaps were assessed against the criteria set out in **Table 2.2:**, to understand how the identity of the adjacent settlements and the landscape and visual characteristics of the gap contribute to its character as open and undeveloped land. Each criterion was given a rating as set out in **Table 2.1:** with commentary on whether the area meets, does not meet or partially meets criteria for designation.

Table 2.1: Ratings

| Key | |
|-----------------|--|
| Fully meets | |
| Partially meets | |
| Does not meet | |

2.10 Sources of information used for the desk study include:

- 1:25,000 OS mapping

Table 2.2: Important Local Countryside Gap assessment criteria

| Criterion | Explanation | Indicators of a weak gap | Indicators of a strong gap |
|---|---|---|--|
| Existing settlement identity and pattern | Assess the extent to which the settlements or neighbourhoods that lie adjacent to the gap have an individual townscape character and identity that contribute to existing settlement pattern. | The individual townscape character, form and pattern of the settlements or neighbourhoods that lie adjacent to the gap are not distinct. Loss or partial loss of the gap would not adversely affect the existing settlement pattern. | The individual townscape character, form and pattern of the settlement or neighbourhoods that lie adjacent to the gap are distinct. The presence of Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings are indicators of individual settlement character. The gap plays a role in settlement separation and pattern. |

- Conservation Area Appraisals
- Google Earth
- Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal
- Swale Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

2.11 The gaps were evaluated against practical considerations, as set out in **Table 2.3:** including their extent, boundaries and potential for enhancement.

2.12 The issues were summarised, concluding whether the area meets the criteria for designation as an Important Local Countryside Gap.

Field verification

2.13 Field checking was undertaken in December 2020 to review information on the ground and test and refine the draft Important Local Countryside Gap assessment and boundaries. The field survey was undertaken from roads and public rights of way.

Final report and boundaries for the Proposals Map

2.14 The outputs of the evaluation exercise are presented in **Chapter 3.**

2.15 GIS maps of the proposed gaps and their boundaries were mapped at 1:25,000, and provided as a separate output as Shapefiles. These will form part of the Proposals Map for the Local Plan. The boundaries generally follow recognisable physical features, the defined built-up area boundaries or the boundaries of committed development or allocations. (See note on boundaries below).

| Criterion | Explanation | Indicators of a weak gap | Indicators of a strong gap |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|
| Landscape character | Assess the landscape character of the area between the settlements or neighbourhoods and any land use and landscape features within the gap that contribute to its character as open and undeveloped land. | <p>There are significant man-made features or urban land uses that contribute to the developed character of the landscape.</p> <p>The area lacks typical elements of rural vegetation e.g. farmland, hedges, trees etc, which contribute to an undeveloped character.</p> <p>The area has a suburban character and residential areas outside defined settlement boundaries weaken the perception of the gap as 'countryside'.</p> | <p>Existing rural land uses contribute to the open and undeveloped character of the landscape, e.g. agriculture, horticulture, forestry.</p> <p>The landscape has significant landscape features that contribute to its undeveloped character.</p> <p>There is a low density or absence of development.</p> |
| Visual character | Assess the visual character of the area between settlements and any views to settlements or from settlements into the open countryside that contribute to that character and provide visual separation between settlements or neighbourhoods. | <p>Views to and from the settlement do not contribute positively to the visual character of the area.</p> <p>There is a clear inter-visibility between the settlements due to a lack of vegetation. Intervisibility alone does not indicate a weak gap and this criteria interplays with settlement identity and pattern e.g. intervisibility of contrasting settlement types may contribute to a stronger gap function.</p> | <p>Views to and from the settlement contribute positively to the visual character of the area (e.g. views mentioned in the Landscape Character Assessment/ Conservation Area appraisal).</p> <p>There are limited/no views between settlements. Landscape elements, such as hills, ridges, and/or tall vegetation within the gap contribute to the sense of visual separation between the settlements.</p> <p>Alternatively, where there is intervisibility or a narrow gap, the view shows clearly differing settlement character and identity e.g. between an expanding urban edge and distinct rural village.</p> <p>Open vistas and long views may also indicate a strong gap where they are an important part of the character of the landscape</p> |

Table 2.3: Practical considerations

| Criterion | Explanation | Indicators |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Gap extent | <p>Assess the role of the extent of the gap in maintaining physical separation between settlements or neighbourhoods.</p> <p>What is the physical extent of the area between settlements? What are the key routes between settlements?</p> <p>Appropriateness of distances will vary from area to area and are intrinsically linked to characteristics and features of the landscape which sits between settlements i.e. gaps should have the sense of leaving one settlement, moving through the gap before entering a different settlement.</p> | <p>The gap is less than 2km away from a neighbouring settlement</p> <p>The gap should be of sufficient size to make it practical to develop policies for its protection, management and planning.</p> <p>A distance further than 2km could be considered too great to prevent the coalescence of two settlements.</p> |
| Boundary defensibility | <p>Boundaries of the existing Important Local Countryside Gaps should follow physical features on the ground, taking into account potential new boundary features that may alter the risk of settlement coalescence.</p> <p>Review the pressures on the land between the settlements from draft allocations and promoted sites.</p> | <p>The gap is not subject to draft allocation, or future infrastructure projects.</p> |
| Potential for enhancement | <p>Review existing environmental designations (both national and local level ecological and cultural heritage designations), priority habitats and recreational features (including PRoW, cycle paths, open access land/registered common land, allotments, amenity green spaces) to provide an indication of the value of the landscape.</p> <p>Other sources of information include Swale Blue/Green Infrastructure.</p> <p>Use this to consider the potential enhancements to existing open space, wildlife areas, cultural heritage and access to the countryside (via PRoW etc).</p> | <p>Presence of green space and recreational values- highly accessible green space, presence of PRoW, recreational facilities e.g. sports pitches, play areas and parks</p> <p>Ecological values (environmental designations indicating higher Green Infrastructure value (indicated through the presence of SSSI, SINCs, National and Local Nature Reserves, Ancient Woodland etc).</p> |

2.16 These indicators work in combination, and an Important Local Countryside Gap will not need to fulfil all the criteria equally. The assessments are based on professional judgement, taking account of the complex interplay between the criteria, as well as instances where some criteria might be more important to a particular Important Local Countryside Gap.

Limitations

2.17 This is a strategic-level study undertaken at a scale of 1:25,000.

2.18 The gap boundaries are chosen to be functional, defensible and pragmatic and where possible following defined features on the ground including roads, tracks field boundaries or occasionally rights of way. This means that the

gaps may include some areas that are not critical to a gap function but are included for practical reasons.

2.19 Similarly, the boundaries of the gaps are taken up to the existing settlement edge represented by built development/settlement boundary or the extent of proposed allocations. In many cases, the proposed allocations create the need for designation of a new Important Local Countryside Gap. The definition of a critical area of gap away from the existing settlement edges would not be practical or defensible.

2.20 Finally, it should be noted that an Important Local Countryside Gap is not a landscape quality designation and gaps may include degraded elements or features including for example abandoned land, areas of polytunnel/glasshouses, quarries or limited development. The key requirement is that overall, they have a rural/countryside character and are not developed.

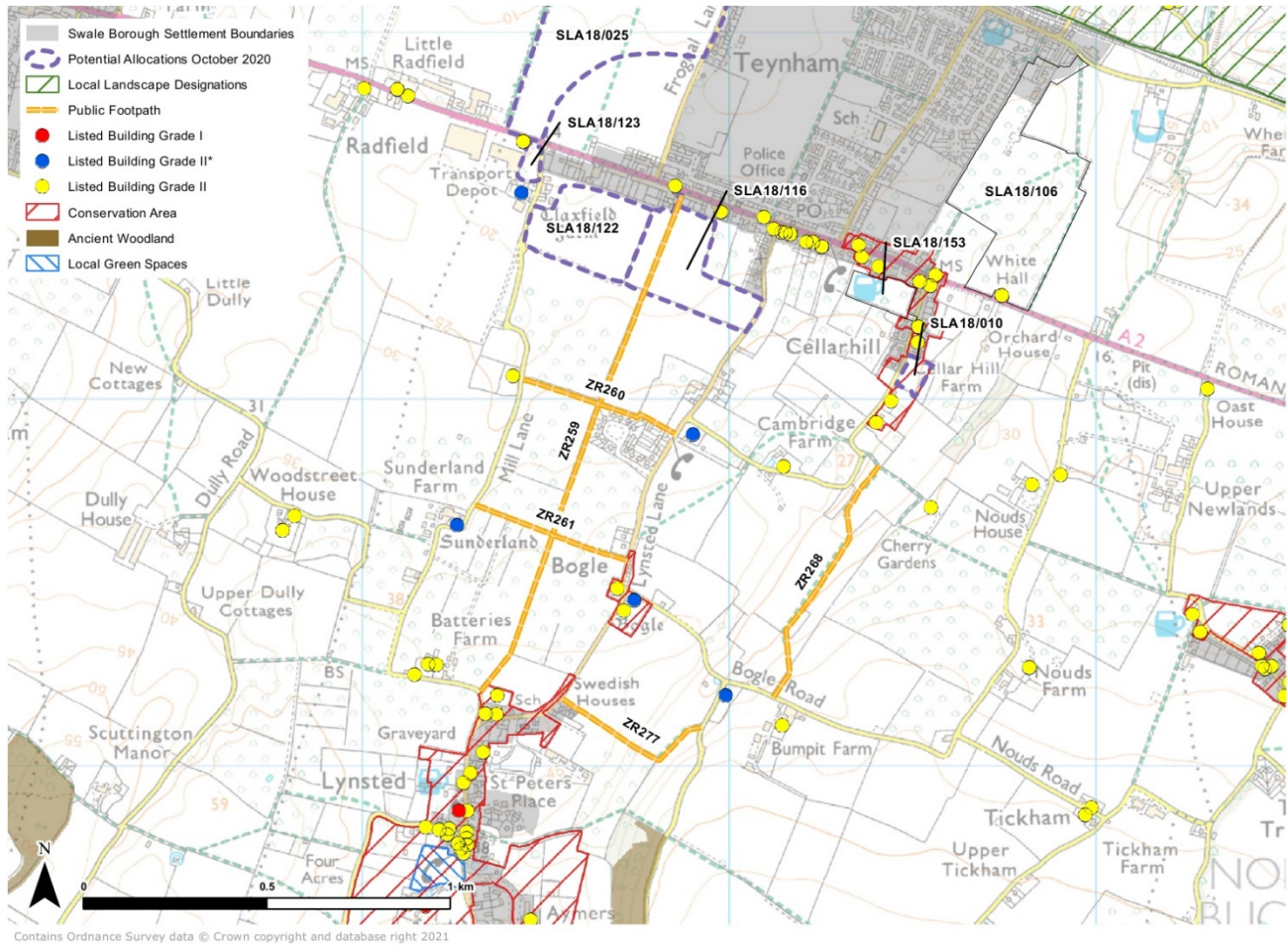
Chapter 3

Important Local Countryside Gap Assessments

3.1 This chapter presents the results of the study of the five potential Important Local Countryside Gaps against the agreed assessment criteria.

Teynham and Lynsted

Location and context designations



Teynham to Lynsted

Representative photos



Mature orchards and shelterbelts provide enclosure along public rights on way within the gap



The landscape is more open and expansive in the north of the gap, with clear views of the edge of Teynham, development along the A2 and industrial development at Sittingbourne

| Summary information | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Location and extent of area | The area lies to the south of Teynham and north of Lynsted |
| Landscape character context | <p>LCA 26: Lynsted Enclosed Farmlands around the village of Lynsted and to the east comprising mixed farmland, orchards and pasture</p> <p>LCA 29: Rodmersham Mixed Farmlands to the west and north comprising areas of more open arable farmland</p> <p>The area forms part of the fruit belt landscape that descends northwards from the lower dip slope of the Kent Downs.</p> |

| Assessment criteria | Rating | Commentary |
|--|-------------|--|
| Existing settlement identity and pattern | Fully meets | <p>Lynsted is a historic village with a linear form which is still intact. The farms in Lynsted parish were prosperous, and there are a number of Listed Buildings dating from before 1650, including the Grade I listed church of St Peter and St Paul. The whole village is covered by a Conservation Area, which extends up Lynsted Lane. The Conservation Appraisal states that Lynsted “is one of the Borough’s most attractive villages”.</p> <p>Teynham is a linear settlement formed along the A2 London Road, which has grown to encompass Cellarhill to the east and expanded north from the 1960s. There are a number of Listed Buildings along the A2, and the eastern edge of the village is designated as part of the Cellar Hill, Lynsted and Greenstreet Conservation Area, which covers a group of important timber-framed medieval buildings. Teynham is contained between the A2 London Road to the south and Lower Road and the railway line to the north.</p> <p>Teynham and Lynsted have distinct, separate identities and characters. The rural landscape between Teynham and Lynsted plays an important role in the separation of these settlements, and in maintaining the settlement pattern. When travelling between the settlements, for example along Lynsted Lane, there is a clear sense of leaving and arriving at each and a transition from countryside to settlement.</p> |
| Landscape character | Fully meets | <p>The majority of the area between Teynham and Lynsted is in agricultural use - the land between Lynsted Lane and Mill Lane (Claxfield Road) to the north of Lynsted is in use as traditional orchards, with windbreak hedges and mature orchards providing a small-scale enclosed landscape character. North of footpath ZR260, closer to the settlement edge of Teynham, the land is in arable use and is much more open. The land east of Lynsted Lane is in smallholding use, including sheep grazing south of Bogle Road.</p> <p>There is a strong network of shelterbelts and hedgerows throughout the area, which provide a rural character. The dry valley which runs to the east of Lynsted is noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal as an attractive local feature and is a noticeable landscape feature extending between Lynsted and Teynham.</p> <p>The historic hamlet of Bogle lies at the crossroads of Lynsted Lane and Bogle Road within the gap area. There is an early 20th century small development at Batteries Close, and some modern</p> |

| Assessment criteria | Rating | Commentary |
|---------------------|-------------|--|
| | | <p>infill houses along Lynsted Lane, which gives the perception of more development, particularly in the north closest to Teynham.</p> <p>The area as a whole maintains an open rural, and undeveloped character, despite some linear development along the connecting lanes. Overall, the lanes retain a winding rural quality.</p> |
| Visual character | Fully meets | <p>Narrow lanes with strong hedgerows, combined with the orchards, create an enclosed character south of footpath ZR260. The Conservation Area Appraisal for Lynsted notes that <i>“the overall combination of buildings, topography and trees results in a fairly enclosed village environment”</i>.</p> <p>North of footpath ZR260 the landscape is much more open, and there are views to the edge of Teynham, north-east to the transport depot at Radfield and beyond to the paper mill at Sittingbourne. There are also longer distance views north to the Isle of Sheppey. East of Lynsted Lane the views are more enclosed by topography, hedgerows and shelterbelts.</p> <p>There are no views from within Lynsted village to Teynham or from Teynham to Lynsted reinforcing the rural character of the area.</p> |

Practical considerations

| Considerations | Commentary |
|------------------------|---|
| Gap extent | <p>The gap between Teynham and Lynsted is around 1.2km. The main routes between Teynham are along Mill Lane (Claxfield Road) and Lynsted Lane by road. Drivers along these roads have the perception of leaving one settlement and travelling to another, despite the presence of some linear development.</p> <p>Public footpath ZR259 runs directly between the two settlements, and users of the footpath have a distinct sense of travelling between two settlements, including emerging from the more enclosed southern section of the footpath to the open section in the north, with views of the edge of Teynham.</p> |
| Boundary defensibility | <p>There are three potential allocations to the south of Teynham: SLA18/153, SLA18/116 and SLA18/122. The northern boundary of the potential gap will run along the southern settlement boundary of Teynham and the southern boundary of these potential allocations. The boundary to the west is defined along Mill Lane (Claxfield Road) - if the boundary were further west the area would not function as maintaining the gap between Lynsted and Teynham.</p> <p>The eastern boundary is more difficult to define with fewer physical features on the ground. The footpaths are however permanent mapped features and delineate an appropriate eastern boundary that defines the gap but does not include extensive areas of land around Nouds which maintain a strong rural character but do not fulfil a ‘gap’ function.</p> <p>In order to be a clear and defensible boundary, the eastern boundary is defined to follow footpath ZR277 from the north-east corner of Lynsted, and then take footpath ZR268 to meet the south-eastern settlement boundary of Teynham. Although there has been coalescence, a rural gap to the west of Cellarhill will retain its separate character from the rest of Teynham. A rural setting is also important to the Listed Buildings at Cellarhill, particularly as the Conservation Area is on Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register. The south-eastern boundary of the gap will cut through the dry valley, which continues to the north. The eastern slopes of the dry valley are not included within the gap extent; however, this does</p> |

| Considerations | Commentary |
|---------------------------|--|
| | <p>not diminish the importance of this landscape feature as part of the setting of Lynsted.</p> <p>The southern boundary is the northern settlement boundary of Lynsted, where a marked transition from village to countryside is experienced.</p> |
| Potential for enhancement | <p>There are no national or local level ecological designations within the area between Teynham and Lynsted. There are small areas of priority habitat traditional orchard around Cellarhill east of Lynsted Lane. Conservation and sensitive management of these should be encouraged, and the possibility of extending the traditionally managed orchards should be explored. Other relevant enhancements noted in the LCA include the restoration and extension of the hedgerow network, and provision of field margins/buffers within arable fields</p> <p>There are a number of Listed Buildings on Mill Lane (Claxfield Road), Lynsted Lane and Cambridge Lane, including in the historic hamlet of Bogle, which is designated as a Conservation Area. The setting of these heritage assets should be enhanced.</p> <p>Lynsted Lane, Mill Lane (Claxfield Road) and Cambridge Lane are designated as Rural Lanes, which contribute to the rural amenity, nature conservation and character of the landscape. There are opportunities to enhance the rural characteristics of these roads. There are a number of public rights of way in the gap between Teynham and Lynsted, which can be enhanced to increase access to and enjoyment of the countryside.</p> <p>Although not within the gap itself, enhancements to further integrate the transport depot at Radfield into the landscape should be explored, as it is prominent in views to the southern edge of Teynham. This could include planting a more natural buffer. The potential allocations south of Teynham should include buffering with hedgerows, tree planting and community orchards, to maintain the rural character of the gap between Lynsted and Teynham.</p> |





Summary and recommendations

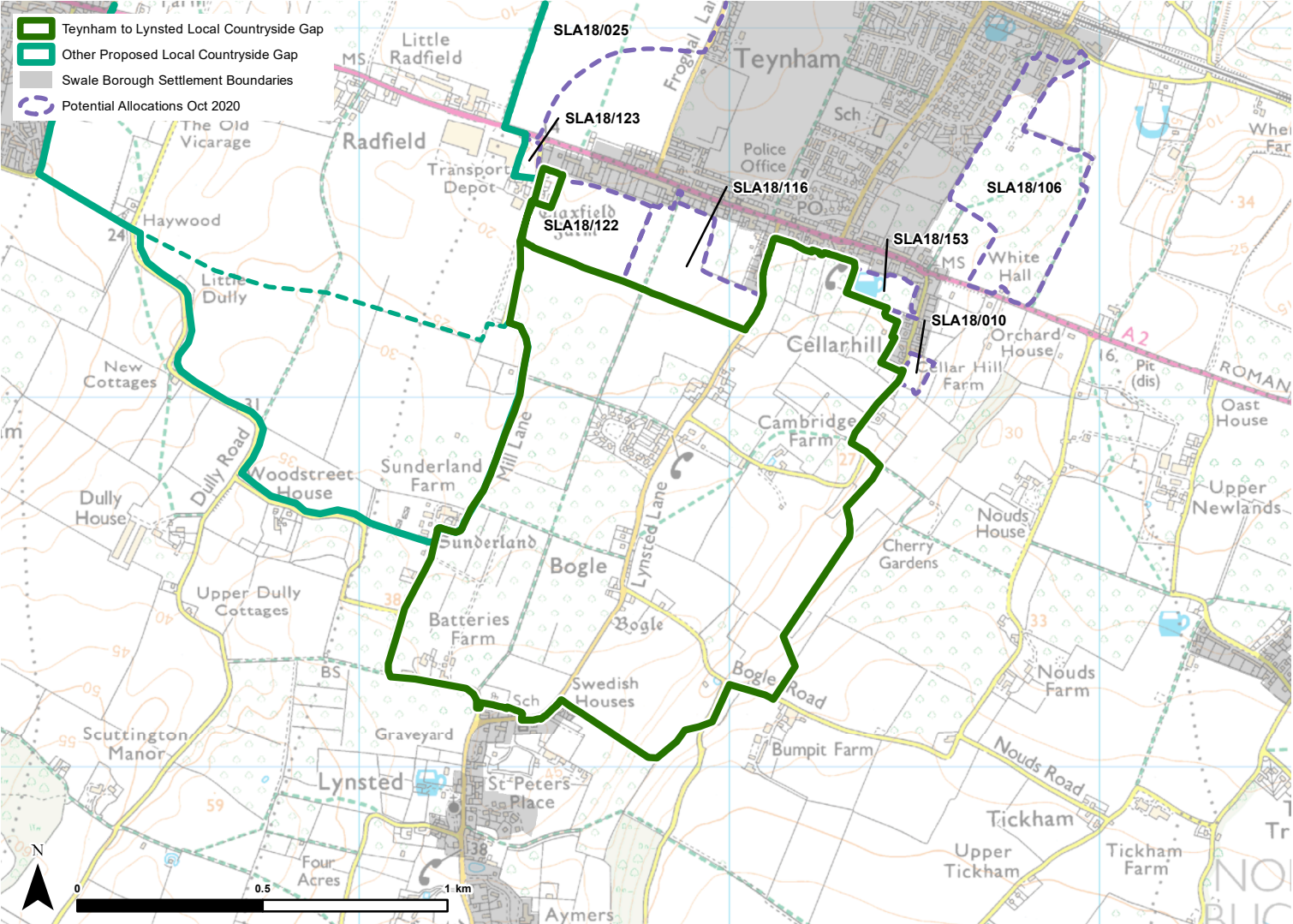
3.2 The analysis above indicates the area between Lynsted and Teynham meets the criteria for designation as an Important Local Countryside Gap, as the area has a rural character which separates the two settlements. Teynham and Lynsted each have a distinct character and identity, and people travelling between the settlements, whether on foot or by vehicle, have an experience of leaving one distinct settlement and travelling to another. Lynsted has an attractive rural village character, and between Teynham and the northern boundary of the village there is a notably transition from countryside to the village.

3.3 There are no views between Lynsted and Teynham, which contributes to their character as separate settlements. The area between the settlements is in agricultural use and it retains a rural countryside character with an absence of urbanising/urban fringe influences.

3.4 There are opportunities to extend the priority habitat traditional orchard throughout the area, and potential for improved buffering of the transport depot at Radfield and of the potential allocations south of Teynham. There is a strong public right of way network which can be enhanced to increase access and enjoyment of the countryside.

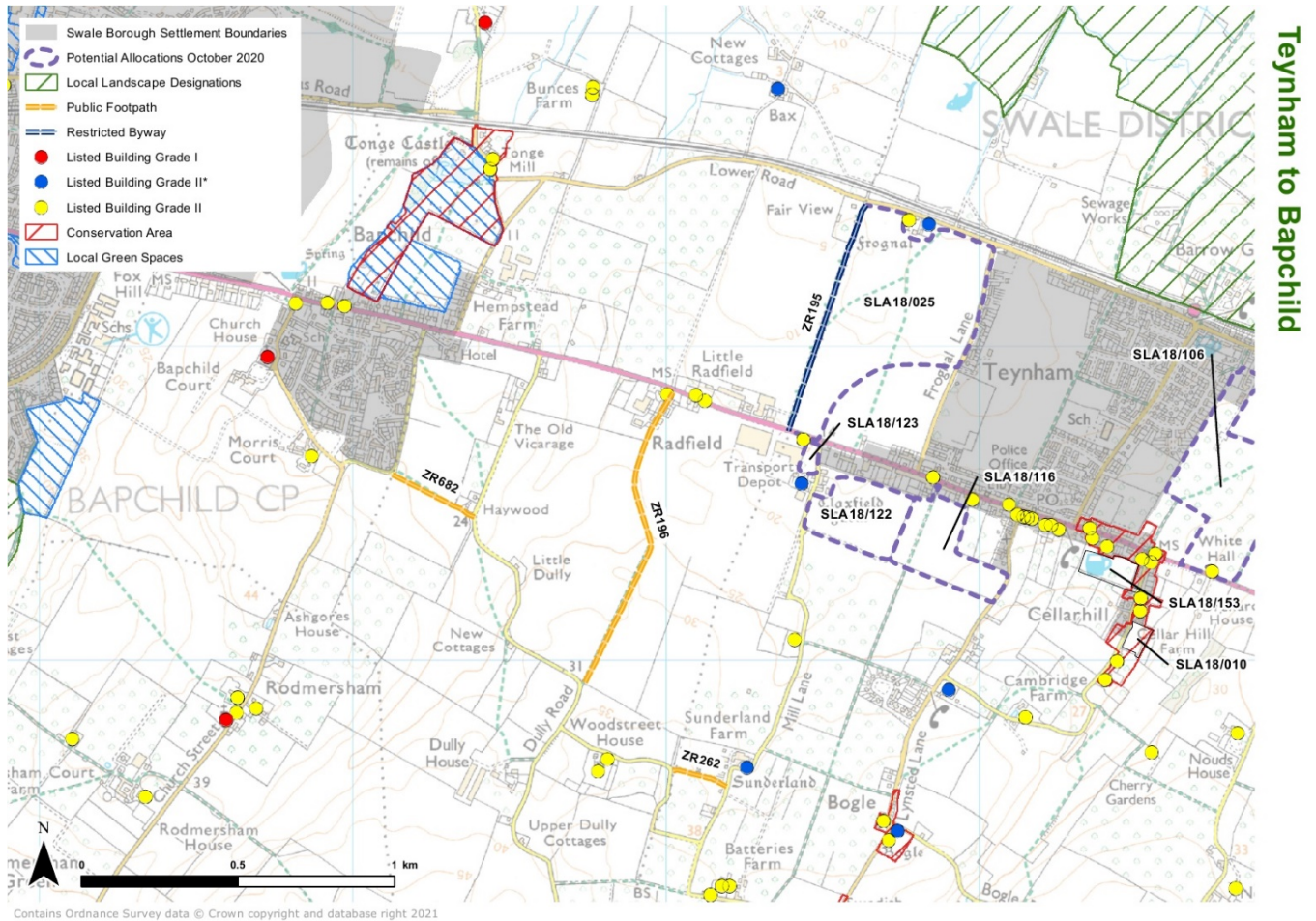
Teynham to Lynsted

-  Teynham to Lynsted Local Countryside Gap
-  Other Proposed Local Countryside Gap
-  Swale Borough Settlement Boundaries
-  Potential Allocations Oct 2020



Teynham and Bapchild

Location and context designations



Representative photos



Newly planted fruit growing and the prominent transport depot at Radfield, adjacent to the Teynham settlement boundary



Arable fields adjacent to Bapchild settlement edge, looking north towards A2

| Summary information | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Location and extent of area | The area lies north and south of the A2, between Teynham to the east and Bapchild to the west. |
| Landscape character context | LCA 29: Rodmersham Mixed Farmlands LCA 31: Teynham Fruit Belt These are both part of the Fruit Belt landscapes that extend along the lower dip slope between the North Downs and Estuary, with intensive arable farming and horticulture. |

| Assessment criteria | Rating | Commentary |
|--|-----------------|---|
| Existing settlement identity and pattern | Fully meets | <p>Teynham is a linear settlement formed along the A2 London Road, which has grown to encompass Cellarhill to the east and expanded north from the 1960s. There are a number of Listed Buildings along the A2, both within the settlement boundary and along the A2 to the west of Teynham. Teynham is contained between the A2 London Road to the south and Lower Road and the railway line to the north. The western part of the settlement contains linear industrial and residential development along the A2 and a proposed housing allocation (SLA18/122) consolidating development east of Claxfield Farm, south of the A2 and to Frognaal at Lower Road north of the A2 (SLA18/025), creating a more consolidated extended edge to Teynham.</p> <p>Bapchild was a linear settlement along the A2, which has grown south of the A2 during the 20th century. Bapchild is largely contained by the A2 to the north, although housing extends on Hempstead Lane north of the A2. Panteny Lane provides the eastern extent and Church Street the western settlement boundary. There are three Listed Buildings on the A2 in the west, and the Grade I listed church of St Lawrence in the south-west. The eastern settlement edge is contained by residential development along Panteny Lane south of the A2, and Hempstead Lane north of the A2. Hempstead House Hotel is located within the settlement boundary and marks the approach to Bapchild along the A2 from the east.</p> <p>There is linear and employment development at Radfield west of the settlement boundary of Teynham, which reduces the undeveloped nature of the gap to an extent.</p> <p>Bapchild and Teynham are perceived as distinct separate settlements along the A2 London Road, despite occasional intervening development.</p> |
| Landscape character | Partially meets | <p>The majority of the undeveloped area between Teynham and Bapchild is in agricultural use, with intensive fruit growing and mature orchards between Mill Lane (Claxfield Road) and Dully Road, and arable land west of Dully Road. North of the A2 are unmanaged fields, orchards and the Bapchild Cricket Club pitch, which although is not a 'natural' feature, provides an open green space along the A2.</p> <p>Residential houses along the A2 and employment development at Radfield in the east and Hempsted Farm in the west, locally weaken the perception of the gap as 'countryside'.</p> |
| Visual character | Fully meets | The linear settlement pattern of Teynham and inclined topography result in very limited views between Teynham and |

| Assessment criteria | Rating | Commentary |
|---------------------|--------|---|
| | | <p>Bapchild along the A2 or from the southern edge of Bapchild east towards Teynham, contributing to their sense of separateness.</p> <p>To the north and south of the A2 the views are generally enclosed, although there are some open views north to the marshes of the Swale and south towards the Kent Downs AONB. There are open expansive views to the east of footpath ZR196, as the fruit growing has not matured, and more enclosed views to the west due to the mature orchards, with filtered views towards the residential edge of Bapchild through areas of fruit trees and some more open views to Teynham particularly the large, exposed farm building and industrial development near Radfield.</p> |

Practical considerations

| Considerations | Commentary |
|------------------------|---|
| Gap extent | <p>The gap between the settlement boundaries of Teynham and Bapchild is 1.2km, however the perception of the gap is smaller due to development along the A2. The function of the gap between the two settlements is to preserve an undeveloped corridor either side of the A2, to avoid the perception of continuous coalescence of development from Sittingbourne to Teynham.</p> <p>The A2 is the main route between the settlements, and despite the short distance between them, there is a sense of leaving one settlement and travelling to another when travelling along the road.</p> <p>There are no public rights of way which run directly between Teynham and Bapchild. Users of footpath ZR196 which runs south of Radfield have views of both settlements, and a sense of being in an undeveloped countryside area between the settlements.</p> |
| Boundary defensibility | <p>There are two potential allocations between Teynham and Bapchild, both adjacent to Teynham, SLA18/123 and SLA18/025.</p> <p>The gap to the north of the A2 is defined along the western boundary of the potential allocation at Teynham, along restricted byway ZR195, and along the railway line in the north which provides a defensible physical boundary. The north-western boundaries are defined by Church Road and Hempstead Lane at Tonge, and along the existing settlement boundary of Bapchild to the A2. Although the area east of Tonge is not integral to maintaining the separation of Bapchild and Teynham, the existing Important Local Countryside Gap between Bapchild and Sittingbourne lies to the west of Church Road/Hempstead Lane and leaving a small area of land outside the gap designation would be an anomaly and therefore it is included here.</p> <p>South of the A2, the eastern boundary of the gap follows the settlement boundary of Teynham down Mill Lane (Claxfield Road), and then turns west along the field boundary. The area to the south does not meet the purpose of maintaining the gap between Teynham and Bapchild, and so although there is no physical boundary to follow, the boundary of the gap continues across the field to join Dully Road at Haywood. The boundary continues along footpath ZR682 to the settlement boundary of Bapchild and continues north along Panteny Lane and around Hempstead Hotel to meet the A2. Alternatives for this southern boundary are presented below.</p> <p>It is recognised that this Important Local Countryside Gap does include areas of more developed land at Hempstead Farm and Radfield, as to exclude these areas</p> |

| Considerations | Commentary |
|---------------------------|--|
| | would weaken the gap in the areas adjacent to the settlements which offer greatest potential for enhancement. |
| Potential for enhancement | <p>There are no national or local level ecological designations within the area between Teynham and Bapchild, and there are no recorded priority habitats.</p> <p>Enhancements noted in the LCA include the restoration and extension of the hedgerow network, and provision of arable field margins/buffers to improve habitat connectivity at the local scale. The conservation and sensitive management of older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a priority.</p> <p>Creation and management of a green rural frontage, including woodland screening to the proposed development sites to the west of Teynham is a key opportunity to help integrate development into the countryside.</p> <p>There is a cluster of Listed Buildings at Radfield, and the setting of these heritage assets should be enhanced, particularly where they are in close proximity to the existing employment development.</p> <p>Dully Road and Mill Lane (Claxfield Road) to the south of the A2 and Lower Road to the north of Teynham are designated as Rural Lanes, which contribute to the rural amenity, nature conservation and character of the landscape. There are opportunities to enhance the rural characteristics of these roads, through gapping up of hedgerows and reducing road signage/clutter where possible.</p> <p>The roadsides along the A2 should be enhanced, with further planting and replacement of hedgerows. Further enhancements are recommended to integrate the transport depot at Radfield into the landscape, including planted buffers/tree screening.</p> |

Summary and recommendations

3.5 The analysis above indicates the area between Teynham and Bapchild is a small gap between two distinct settlements threatened by linear development and coalescence along the A2. The expansion of Teynham westwards in the form of new housing allocations means that an Important Local Countryside Gap is now desirable in this location. It is recommended that the area is designated as an Important Local Countryside Gap to avoid the coalescence of Teynham and Bapchild. Although the main threat to coalescence is along the A2 corridor, the proposed gap extends north and south of the A2, to ensure that the settlements remain separate.






3.6 The map below indicates the boundary. These are drawn to the existing settlement edges recognising that the gap does include areas of more developed countryside at Hempstead Farm and Radfield. It would be difficult to justify excluding these small areas from the gap.

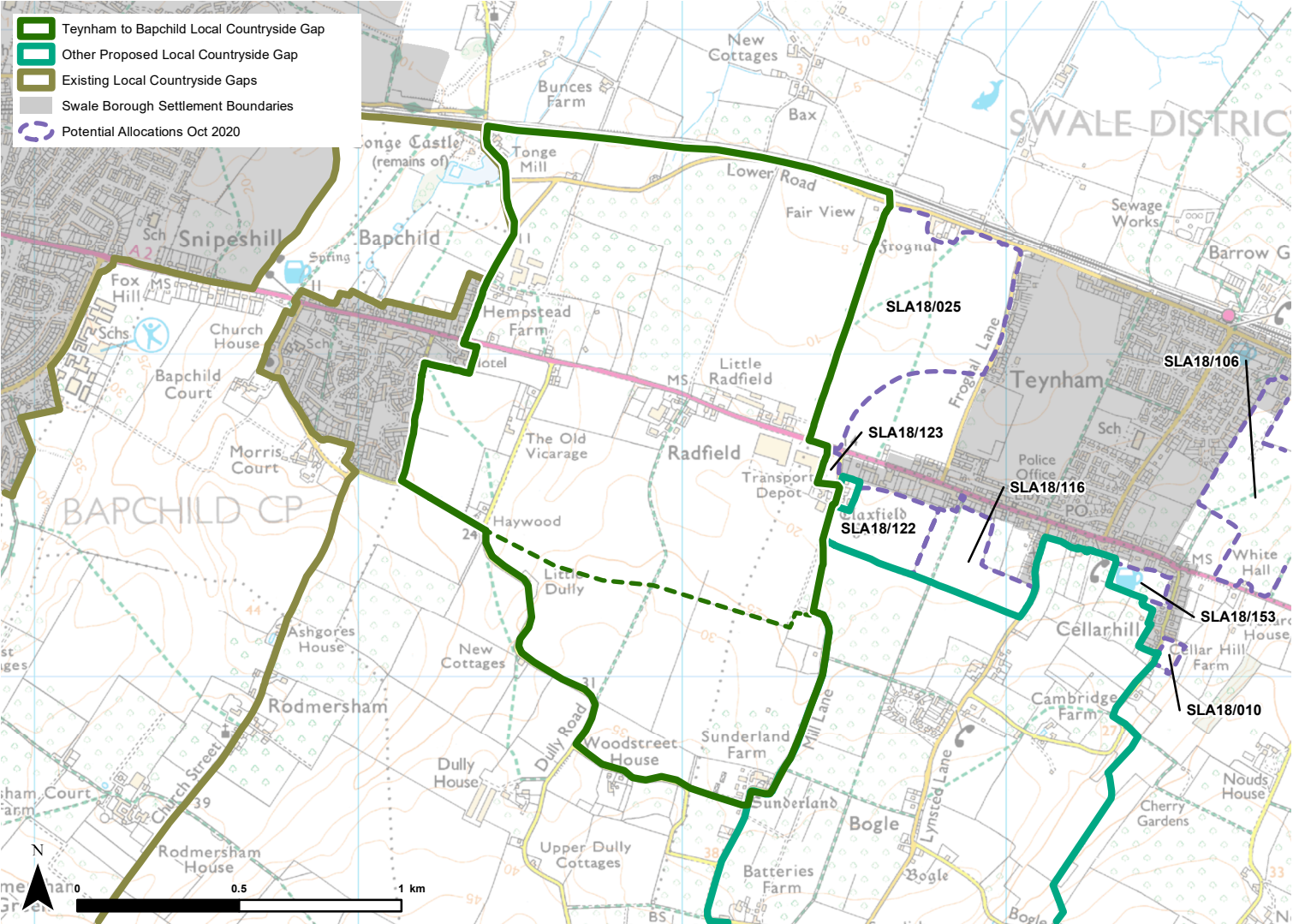
3.7 There is no physical boundary to define the southern boundary and the map below shows two options:

i) the essential gap south of the A2 (shown with dotted line)

ii) the wider gap defined by physical boundaries along Dully Road, Wood Street and Mill Lane (Claxfield Road), which includes a southern area of countryside that does not specifically fulfil a gap function.

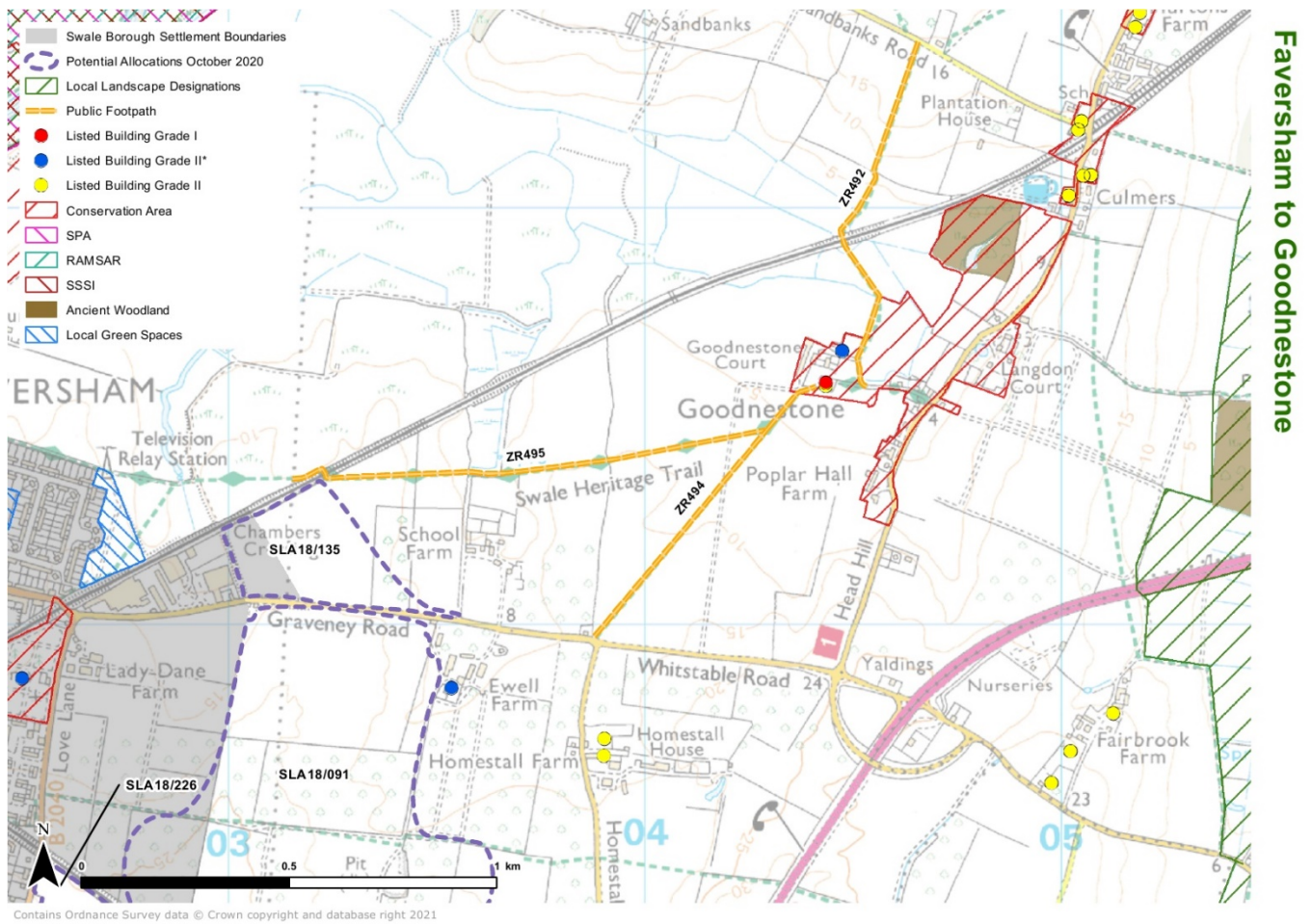
Teynham to Bapchild

-  Teynham to Bapchild Local Countryside Gap
-  Other Proposed Local Countryside Gap
-  Existing Local Countryside Gaps
-  Swale Borough Settlement Boundaries
-  Potential Allocations Oct 2020



Faversham and Goodnestone

Location and context designations



Representative photos



Extant hop fields, which provide a rural setting to the eastern edge of Faversham



Rural setting to the Grade I listed Church of St Bartholomew, Goodnestone

| Summary information | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Location and extent of area | The area lies to the east of Faversham and to the west of Goodnestone. |
| Landscape character context | LCA 20: Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt LCA 21: Graveney Arable Farmlands These are both part of the Fruit Belt landscapes that extend along the lower dip slope between the North Downs and Estuary, with a mix of intensive arable farming and horticulture. |

| Assessment criteria | Rating | Commentary |
|--|-------------|--|
| Existing settlement identity and pattern | Fully meets | <p>Faversham is historic market town and port, which grew around the small navigable waterways of Faversham and Oare in the north of the town. Faversham was an important settlement in the Saxon period and became a member of the Cinque Port Confederation in the 11th century as a limb of Dover. Unusually for the area, Faversham developed separately to the Canterbury-London route (now the A2). Although Faversham has expanded to the A2 and beyond in the south, the original settlement pattern is still legible. Much of the heritage of Faversham is still intact, and the town is covered by several Conservation Areas.</p> <p>The eastern part of Faversham contains historic features within the Preston-next-Faversham and Faversham Conservation Areas, including Faversham Cemetery, together with 19th and 20th century housing. A new housing development east of Love Lane is currently under construction. The eastern edge of Faversham is therefore now modern residential development and has expanded considerably in recent years.</p> <p>Goodnestone is a small hamlet grouped around Head Hill Road and Goodnestone Lane, which originated as a Saxon settlement. The whole of Goodnestone is covered by a Conservation Area, which includes the Grade I listed church of St Bartholomew and Grade II* listed Goodnestone Court.</p> <p>The two settlements are separate and distinct, with the modern residential edge of the market town contrasting with the small historic hamlet at Goodnestone which is perceived as part of the wider rural area.</p> |
| Landscape character | Fully meets | <p>The area between Faversham and Goodnestone is in varied agricultural use, with areas of fruit growing, arable and pasture. There are extensive polytunnels north and south of Whitstable Road, which are noticeable manmade features in the landscape, enclosed by shelterbelts of poplar and alder.</p> <p>There is limited development within the gap area – there are some scattered farm buildings however these do not compromise the sense of undeveloped land within the gap. Oast houses at School Farm and along Head Hill contribute to the rural landscape character, as do the extant hop fields and mature cherry orchards which provide a distinctive rural setting to the immediate east of Faversham.</p> |
| Visual character | Fully meets | The Conservation Area Appraisal for Goodnestone states that orchards and hop fields are significant typically Kentish features |

| Assessment criteria | Rating | Commentary |
|---------------------|--------|---|
| | | <p>around the settlement, although these have declined in recent years. There remains a strong rural character at Goodnestone.</p> <p>High hedgerows along Graveney Road, Whitstable Road and Head Hill Road limit views between the edge of Faversham and Goodnestone. A hop field south of School Farm provides a strong rural screening element close to the expanding edge of Faversham.</p> <p>The recent eastward expansion of Faversham means that there are some views to development from this area, e.g. along footpath ZR495 (Swale Heritage Trail) reinforcing the need for a 'gap'</p> |

Practical considerations

| Considerations | Commentary |
|---------------------------|---|
| Gap extent | <p>The gap between Faversham and Goodnestone is 1.5km.</p> <p>Graveney Road/Whitstable Road are the main routes between the settlements, and when travelling along the road there is a perception of leaving the settlement at Faversham and being within a rural landscape. Goodnestone is a small hamlet with a distinct sense of place, centred around the medieval court and church and vernacular settlement along Head Hill and is wholly rural in character.</p> <p>The Swale Heritage Trail runs from the north-eastern edge of Faversham to Goodnestone, and users of the route travel through undeveloped countryside.</p> |
| Boundary defensibility | <p>There are two potential allocations which will expand the settlement boundary of Faversham to the east – SLA18/135 north of Graveney Road/Whitstable Road and SLA18/09 to the south of Graveney Road/Whitstable Road.</p> <p>The boundary of the gap to the north follows the railway line as a defensible physical boundary. The north-eastern boundary follows footpath ZR492 to Goodnestone Lane, which marks the main area of settlement at Goodnestone. The eastern boundary then follows Head Hill to its junction with Graveney Road/Whitstable Road. The undeveloped land to the east of Head Hill is important as a rural landscape but it does not have a function in maintaining the separation of Goodnestone and Faversham and its therefore excluded from the gap.</p> <p>The southern boundary of the gap follows Graveney Road/Whitstable Road to the eastern boundary of potential allocation SAL18/135, which will mark the new settlement edge of Faversham.</p> <p>Faversham has extended considerably to the east, and the proposed allocations mean that an Important Local Countryside Gap is now a requirement in this area to maintain the separation of Faversham and Goodnestone.</p> |
| Potential for enhancement | <p>There are no national or local level ecological designations within the area between Faversham and Goodnestone, although the Graveney Dykes and Pasture Local Wildlife Site lies to the north of Goodnestone. There are small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland and traditional orchard in the landscape between the two settlements.</p> <p>Enhancements noted in the LCA include the restoration and extension of the hedgerow network, and provision of arable field margins/buffers to improve habitat connectivity at the local scale. The conservation and sensitive management of older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a priority.</p> <p>There are Listed Buildings at Homestall House and Ewell Farmhouse, and the setting of these heritage assets should be enhanced. The rural setting of</p> |




| Considerations | Commentary |
|----------------|--|
| | <p>Goodnestone church should also be conserved. The aim should be to maintain a distinctive landscape setting to Faversham including strengthening locally important land uses of traditional orchards and hops.</p> <p>In some areas the polytunnel structures have degraded the landscape and here the shelterbelt hedges and field margins are important in providing integration and landscape structure and should be enhanced.</p> <p>Creation and management of a strong green rural buffer, including woodland screening to the proposed development sites to the east of Faversham is a key opportunity to help integrate development into the countryside.</p> <p>Graveney Road, Homestall Lane and Head Hill Road are designated as Rural Lanes, which contribute to the rural amenity, nature conservation and character of the landscape. There are opportunities to enhance the rural characteristics of these roads, including through gapping up hedgerows and reducing unnecessary road signs and lighting.</p> |

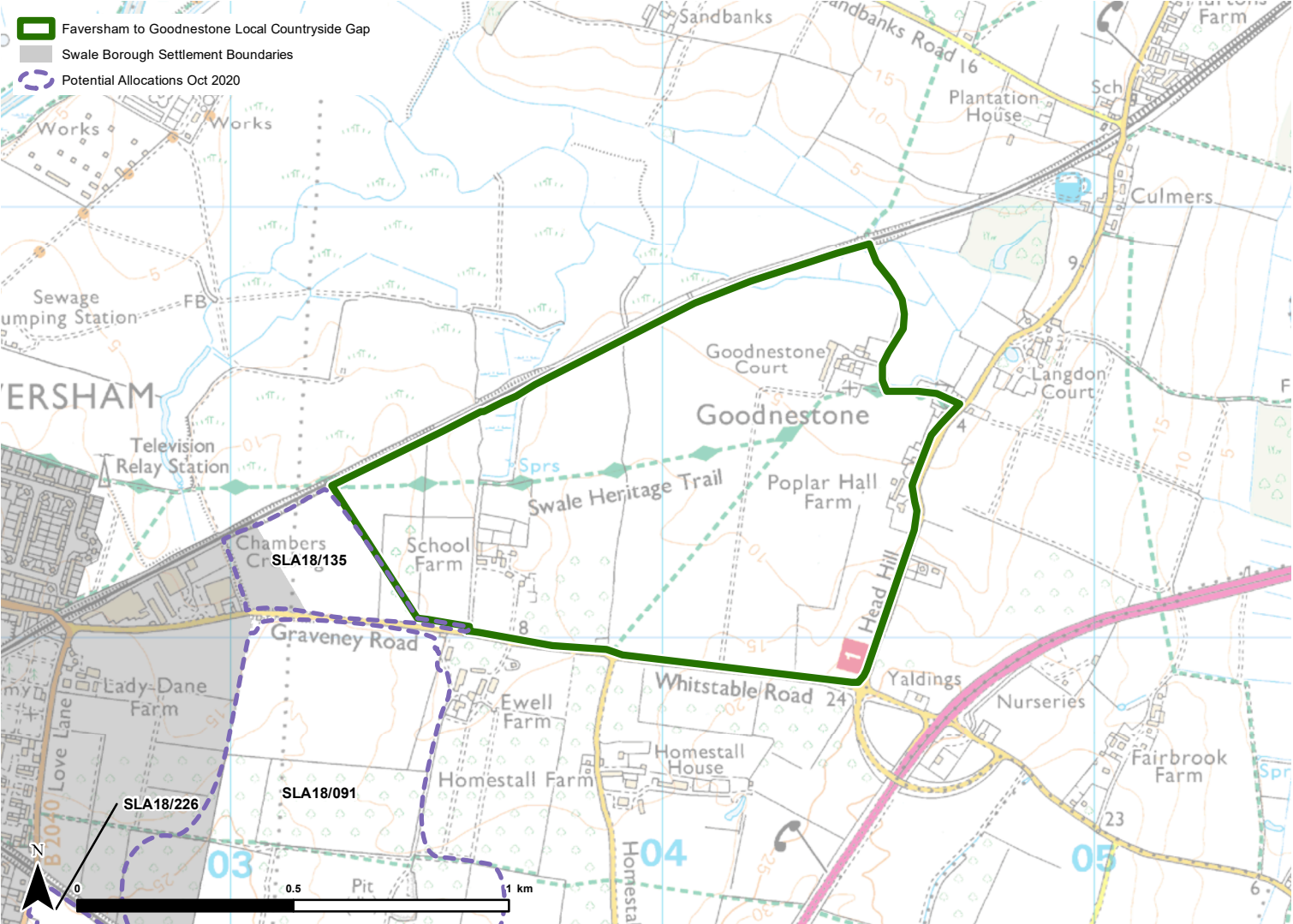
Summary and recommendations

3.8 The analysis above indicates the area between Faversham and Goodnestone meets the criteria for designation as an Important Local Countryside Gap. Faversham and Goodnestone each have a different and distinct character, and the gap is a rural, undeveloped landscape. The rural surroundings and setting of both Faversham and Goodnestone are an important part of their character and should be conserved as a 'gap'.

3.9 The extension of Faversham eastwards and the opening up of views to the new residential edge further enhances the need for a gap. Further development of infill along Graveney Road/Whitstable Road or Head Hill would erode the sense of a gap in this location.

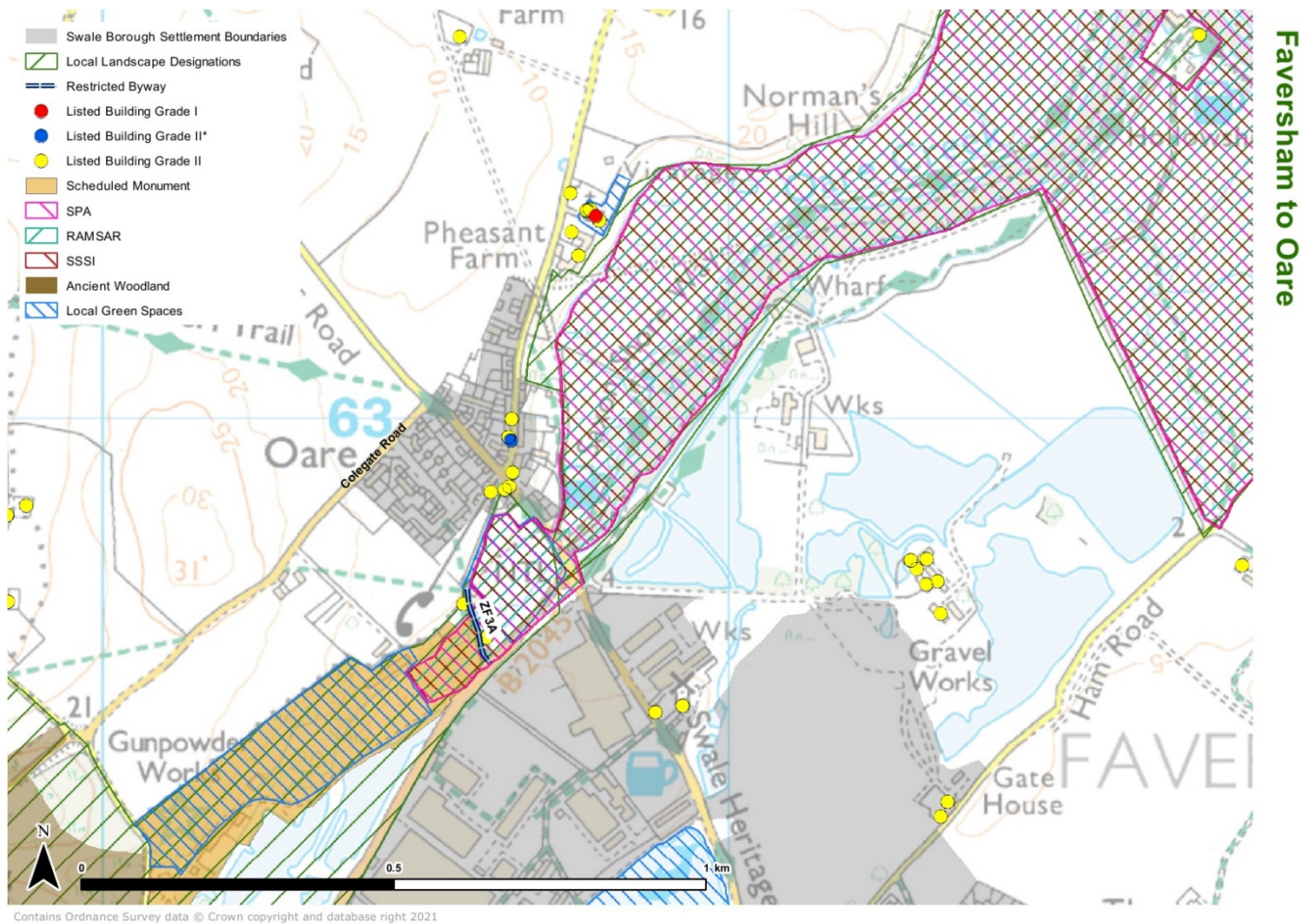
3.10 The area between the settlements is in agricultural use, and there are opportunities to extend the priority habitat traditional orchard and deciduous woodland throughout the area. There is a good public right of way network which can be enhanced to increase access and enjoyment of the countryside.

-  Faversham to Goodnestone Local Countryside Gap
-  Swale Borough Settlement Boundaries
-  Potential Allocations Oct 2020



Faversham and Oare

Location and context designations



Representative photos



The sloping Oare Creek valley, although small, provides a clear separation between Oare and the industrial edge of Faversham



View to the western settlement edge of Oare, across the rising slopes of the Oare Creek Valley and Oare Meadow nature reserve

| Summary information | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Location of area | The area lies between the village of Oare and the western settlement edge of Faversham, including the new residential development at Faversham Lakes. |
| Landscape character context | <p>LCA 08: Luddenham and Conyer Marshes</p> <p>LCA 17: Stone Arable Farmlands</p> <p>LCA 36: Doddington and Newnham Dry Valleys</p> <p>The area is at the confluence of a number of character areas where the dry chalk valley descending from the downs meets the Oare Creek and marshes on the Swale. The village of Oare is located on the edge of the arable farmlands on the old coastline forming a ridge rising up to the west of the creek and marshes. To the east of the creek the farmland contains flooded pools of former gravel workings, scrub and woodland, boatyards and isolated industrial uses.</p> |

| Assessment criteria | Rating | Commentary |
|--|-------------|---|
| Existing settlement identity and pattern | Fully meets | <p>Faversham is historic market town and port, which grew around the small navigable waterways of Faversham and Oare in the north of the town. Faversham was an important settlement in the Saxon period and became a member of the Cinque Port Confederation in the 11th century as a limb of Dover. Unusually for the area, Faversham developed separately to the Canterbury-London route (now the A2). Although Faversham has expanded, the original settlement pattern is still legible. Much of the heritage of Faversham is still intact, and the town is covered by several Conservation Areas. To the west there has been significant development and infill, merging Faversham with Davington. The western edge of Faversham comprises commercial/industrial warehouses along Oare Road and the Western Link, with recent residential development at Faversham Lakes extending east of Oare Road. This development is in the view from Oare.</p> <p>Oare is a small village on the former coastal ridge to the west of Oare Creek. The 13th century church of St Peter is on the north-eastern edge of the village. Oare is a linear settlement along The Street – most of the buildings date from the 1800s, with some modern infill between The Street and Colegates Road. Oare Creek maintains a strong sense of separation from Faversham. The character of the village is strongly related to the open views across the marshes, moored boats on the creek and open land to the water to the east. The marshes and creek form an important setting to Oare.</p> <p>Although the distance between the settlements is small, they have distinct and separate identity and character, with Oare being a distinct rural village on the western side of the creek in contrast to the large market town of Faversham to the east.</p> |
| Landscape character | Fully meets | <p>The land between Faversham and Oare contains Oare Road/The Street, Oare Creek, wetlands and valley slope to the east and wetland meadow to the west. The wetland habitats to the west of Oare Road are designated as Oare Meadow nature reserve, managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust. Oare Creek and the valley slopes are part of the Swale Ramsar, SSSI and SPA. There is a children's playground at the top of the slope, at the settlement edge of Oare.</p> |

| Assessment criteria | Rating | Commentary |
|---------------------|-----------------|---|
| | | <p>The valley slopes of Oare Creek are undeveloped and open, with wetland characteristics and priority habitat grazing marsh and saltmarsh. Flooded pools formed by former gravel works lie to the south-east of Oare Creek, and although these are manmade features, they support the wider marshland and contribute to the open character of the landscape. There is some enclosure on the Faversham side of Oare Creek by trees and scrub, which also screens the industrial development/tip site.</p> <p>Youngboats dock yard is situated adjacent to Oare Creek, which partially diminishes the perception of an undeveloped gap when travelling along Oare Road, although the land use and presence of boats is compatible and there is a distinct sense of crossing a rural valley gap.</p> <p>Oare Creek and the associated sloping valley provides an undeveloped setting to Oare, and a clear landscape boundary between the village of Oare and the edge of Faversham.</p> |
| Visual character | Partially meets | <p>The large commercial warehouses on the western industrial edge of Faversham are visible from Oare, and do not contribute positively to the visual character of the village. There are longer views across Oare Creek and marshes to the north east which are critical to the rural character and setting of Oare, particularly in views from the east where the village and St Peter's Church can be seen perched on the old coastline above open valley slopes.</p> <p>Although the warehouses are prominent in some views from Oare, they do not occupy the whole of the view to the east, and the sloping valley sides of Oare Creek between the settlements provides an undeveloped foreground. From many parts of Oare the warehouses are less visible, and the spire of St Mary of Charity within Faversham can be seen, emphasising the separation of the settlements.</p> <p>The new residential development of Faversham Lakes is also visible in places and further reinforces the need for the gap designation. Intervening areas of open water, scrub and trees help retain the sense of a gap south of Oare Road and screen the industrial development/tip site in these views.</p> |

Practical considerations



| Considerations | Commentary |
|----------------|---|
| Gap extent | <p>The gap between Oare and the edge of Faversham at its narrowest is 120m along Oare Road although widens out along the valley.</p> <p>The Street/Oare Road is the main route between the settlements. Although the gap is small, people on The Street/Oare Road have a sense of travelling between settlements, particularly when crossing Oare Creek.</p> <p>Promoted walks run along the road between Oare and Faversham, including the Swale Heritage Trail. Public rights of way cross the open land to the west of The Street, linking Oare to the Western Link. Crossing Oare Creek and the Western Link give users of these public rights of way a strong sense of travelling between settlements leaving the market town and industrial edge of Faversham, crossing the distinctive creek and entering the small rural village of Oare.</p> |

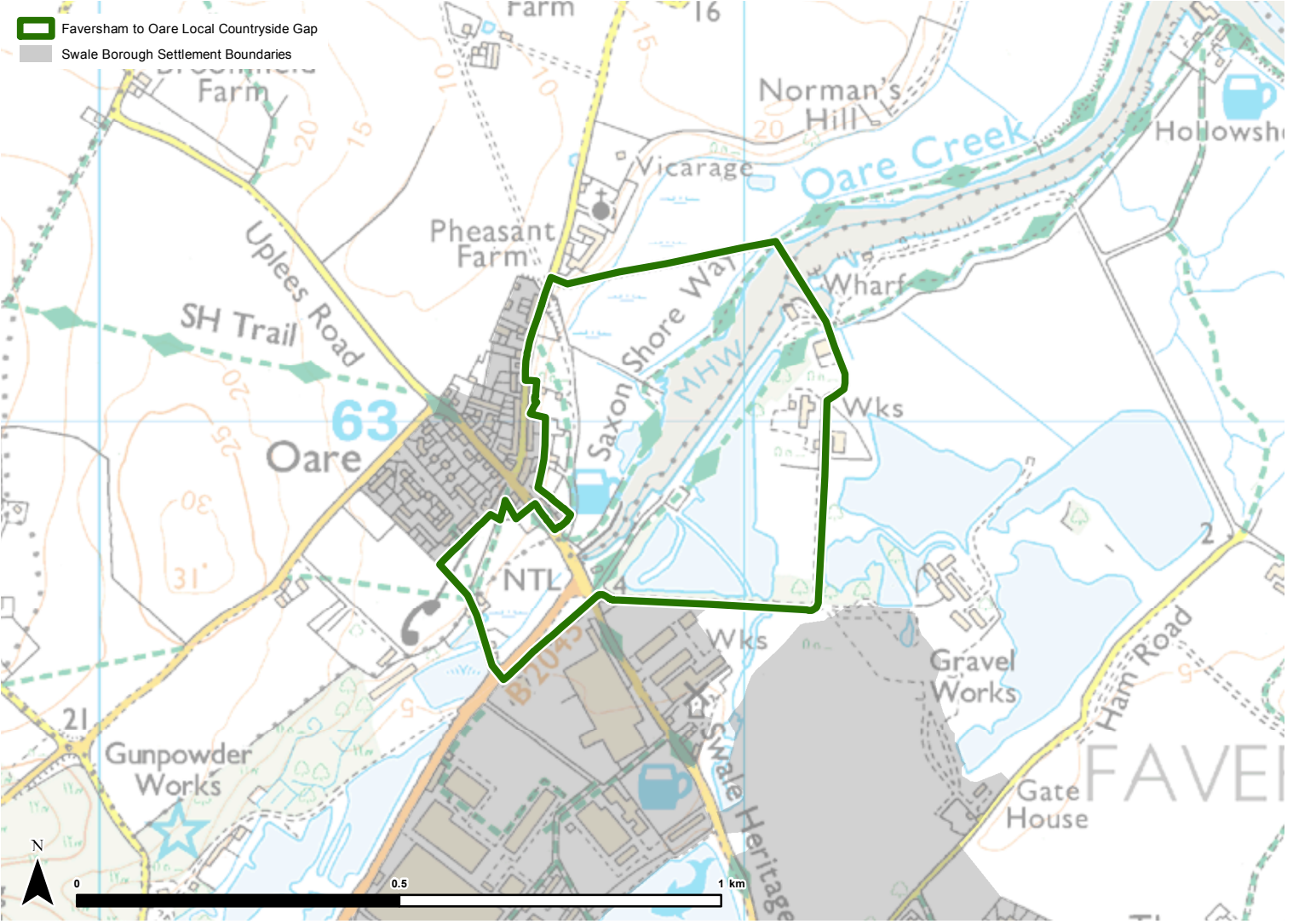
| Considerations | Commentary |
|---------------------------|--|
| Boundary defensibility | <p>There are no potential allocations in this area. Faversham has recently expanded to the west at Faversham Lakes, east of Oare Road.</p> <p>The gap boundary is proposed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Along the Faversham settlement boundary on Western Link, and north along restricted byway ZF3A and a field boundary to the south-western settlement boundary of Oare. ■ Along the Oare settlement boundary to the north-eastern point of Oare, and south along a track and a field boundary to Oare Creek. Note that this track means that the gap does not extend as far north as the church, although the slopes here are vital as the setting of Oare and the church. ■ To the east, the boundary crosses the creek and runs along the existing track to meet the Faversham settlement boundary at The Lakes development. It includes the works/tip site, but it is noted that this is well screened by tree and scrub cover in the wider landscape. |
| Potential for enhancement | <p>The area between Faversham and Oare is internationally designated as part of The Swale SPA and Ramsar site, and nationally as part of The Swale SSSI. The SSSI is in a favourable condition.</p> <p>The lower-lying areas are within flood zone 3, and the Shoreline Management Plan along Oare Creek, as part of unit E4 23, is for managed realignment over the next century.</p> <p>There are priority habitat mudflats and coastal saltmarsh on Oare Creek east of The Street/Oare Road. Priority habitat coastal floodplain grazing marsh lies either side of The Street/Oare Road. The meadow wetland to the west of The Street is designated as Oare Meadow nature reserve, and supports a number of wetland species and is popular for birdwatching.</p> <p>Enhancements noted in the LCA include the restoration and extension of grazing marsh and wetland habitats, and the restoration of the hedgerow network to improve habitat connectivity at the local scale.</p> <p>Grove Cottage and Grove House are Listed Buildings along the public right of way linking the Western Link and Oare. Oare gunpowder works lies to the south-west and is a Scheduled Monument. Although not within the gap, the landscape provides a rural setting to these heritage assets, which should be enhanced.</p> <p>Oare Meadow to the west of The Street is designated as a Local Green Space and is managed to conserve its valley/wetland character.</p> <p>The Street/Oare Road is designated as a Rural Lane, which contributes to the rural amenity, nature conservation and character of the landscape. There are opportunities to enhance this road, and increase its rural character, particularly the junction between The Street/Oare Road and the Western Link. This could include reducing signage, lighting and street clutter where possible, narrowing the roadway, and improving planting along the verges of The Street/Oare Road and the Western Link.</p> <p>In the future there may be opportunities to further enhance access linkages for pedestrians (Saxon Shore Way) along the eastern side of the creek, currently shared with heavy goods vehicles using the tip site. There may also be opportunities for wider natural restoration and management of this area.</p> <p>Green buffers and appropriate tree and scrub planting is important for all developments to help enhance the marshland setting.</p> |

| Considerations | Commentary |
|----------------|--|
| | <p>The settlement at Oare should continue to be perceived as a distinct linear settlement on the ridge with undeveloped slopes down to the creek – avoiding consolidation of buildings on the open slopes.</p> <p>The key function of the gap should be to prevent further consolidation of built development on the eastern edge of Oare and west of the Faversham Lakes residential development. The aim should be to maintain this as a rural area with low key developments limited to those associated with the creek and estuary (fisheries and boating). The sense of Oare as a distinct settlement on the valley ridge overlooking the creek should be maintained.</p> |

Summary and recommendations

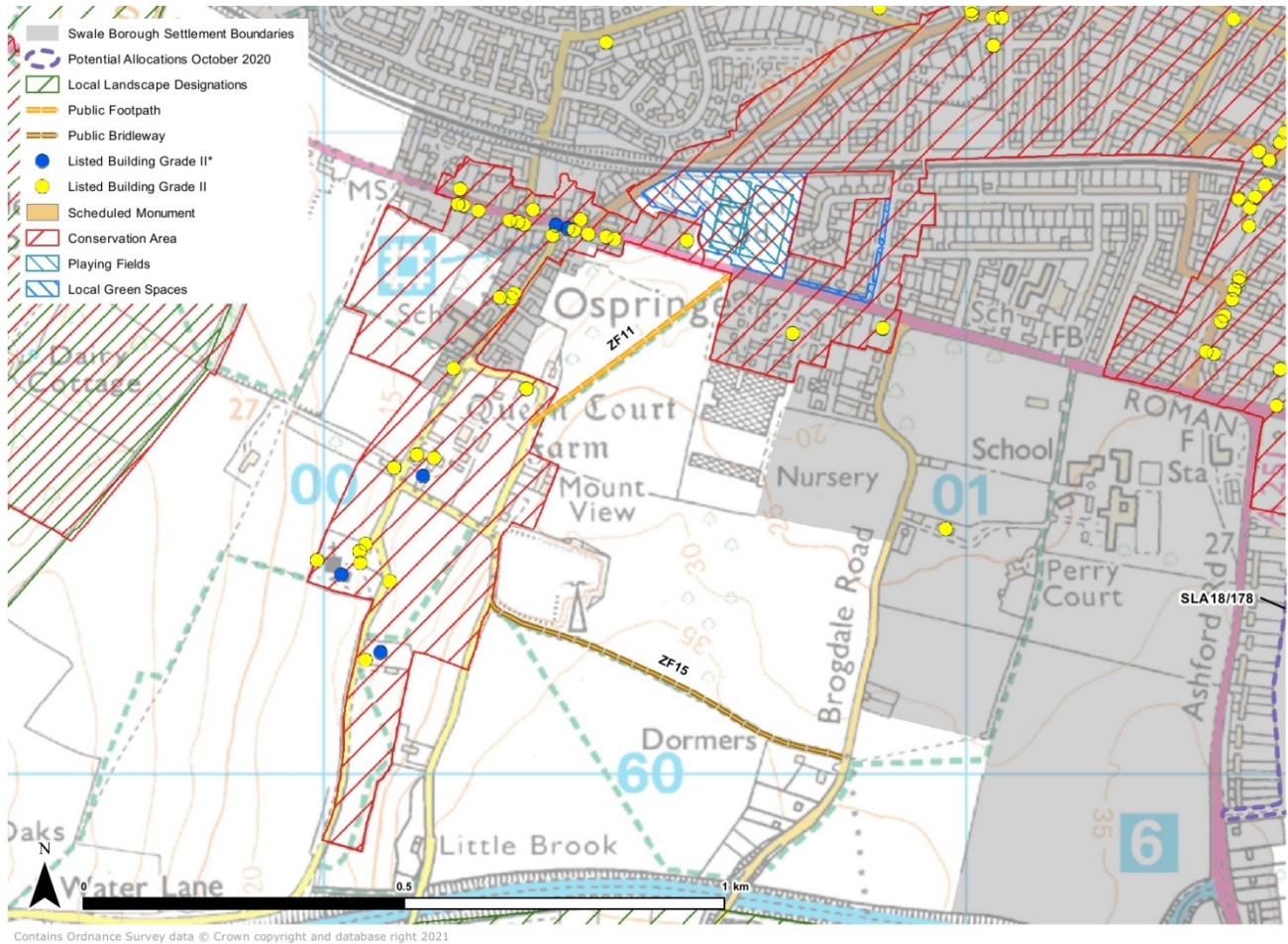
3.11 The analysis above indicates the area between Faversham and Oare meets the criteria for designation as an Important Local Countryside Gap, as the area between the settlements is important in maintaining the separation of Faversham and Oare. The settlements each have a very different character and identity, and despite the small size of the area, the valley of the Oare Creek is an important landscape feature providing a strong sense of separation between Faversham and Oare. The area is designated internationally, nationally and locally for its wetland habitats, which affords some protection from development. However, further designation as an Important Local Countryside Gap would emphasise the importance of maintaining the separate character and identity of the two settlements.

 Faversham to Oare Local Countryside Gap
 Swale Borough Settlement Boundaries



Faversham and Ospringe

Location and context designations



Faversham to Ospringe

Representative photos



Flat arable landscape looking towards the new settlement edges of Faversham



View down the dry nailbourne valley to Ospringe from the A2, across horse paddocks and mature orchards

| Summary information | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Location and extent of area | The area lies to the east of Ospringe and the new south-western boundary of Faversham represented by residential development along Brogdale Road. |
| Landscape character context | LCA 20: Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt, which extends from the southern boundary of the town to the foot of the Kent Downs dip slope, with a mix of arable fruit and hop production. |

| Assessment criteria | Rating | Commentary |
|--|-----------------|---|
| Existing settlement identity and pattern | Partially meets | <p>Faversham is historic market town and port, which grew around the small navigable waterways of Faversham and Oare in the north of the town. Faversham was an important settlement in the Saxon period and became a member of the Cinque Port Confederation in the 11th century as a limb of Dover. Unusually for the area, Faversham developed separately to the Canterbury-London route (now the A2). Although Faversham has expanded to the A2, and more recently, beyond, in the south, the original settlement pattern is still legible. Much of the heritage of Faversham is still intact, and the town is covered by several Conservation Areas. The historic town was clearly distinct from the smaller settlements of Ospringe and Preston located south close to the Roman road. Preston is now fully contained within the settlement area, and Ospringe partially. Expansion southwards means that the settlement edge in relation to this gap is modern comprising 20th and 21st century housing and glasshouses immediately south of residential development at Ospringe Place on the A2 London Road.</p> <p>Ospringe was a prominent place in the Saxon era, focussed around the church and Queens Court manor house. The London to Canterbury road (now the A2) was a principal route from London to Canterbury Cathedral and the Kentish ports, and Ospringe developed along the road in response to travelling trade. There are a number of Listed Buildings clustered along the A2, at Queens Court and on Water Lane to the church, which marks the southern boundary of Ospringe as it extends in linear form south from the A2 along the minor valley. The whole of Ospringe is designated as a Conservation Area.</p> <p>Although historically distinct and separate settlements, the expansion of Faversham in the 20th century has resulted in coalescence between the south of Faversham and the north of Ospringe. Despite this, as stated in the Ospringe Conservation Area Appraisal: <i>“Ospringe still retains a strongly distinctive and special character quite different from that of the much larger town”</i>.</p> |
| Landscape character | Fully meets | <p>The King George V Recreation Ground lies north of the A2. It is an open, undeveloped space, although does not appear as ‘countryside’ as it is in recreational use.</p> <p>The land immediately south of the A2 is in use as horse paddocks and a mature cherry orchard. There are glasshouses in the east adjacent to the Faversham settlement boundary screened by tall coniferous shelterbelts.</p> <p>Further south towards the M2 land use is a mix of arable and pasture and includes orchard and a small, abandoned quarry.</p> |

| Assessment criteria | Rating | Commentary |
|---------------------|-------------|---|
| | | <p>There is a distinct dry valley between Water Lane and Vicarage Lane, which had an intermittent stream or nailbourne running through it. The valley landform is a characteristic feature of the southern edge of Ospringe, and provides a landscape barrier between the village and the arable land to the east, as well as a rural setting to Ospringe church prominently located on the valley side.</p> <p>There is limited development within the area – a small row of houses on Mutton Lane and at Dormers on Brogdale Road, and a telecoms tower between Vicarage Lane and Brogdale Road. Historic farms and houses on Water Lane contribute to the rural character of this area.</p> |
| Visual character | Fully meets | <p>The dry nailbourne valley east of Water Lane provides a sense of enclosure in views from Water Lane, which is reinforced by overhanging trees and hedgerows on Vicarage Lane and Mutton Lane.</p> <p>Views in the north of the area from footpath ZF11 are open, with the edge of Ospringe visible to the west down the valley slope. Views from bridleway ZF15 to the north and south-east are also open, with the new settlement edge of Faversham clearly visible. Development to the east of Brogdale Road is largely screened by roadside vegetation.</p> <p>Despite their proximity there are limited views from the south-eastern boundaries of Faversham to Ospringe across the undeveloped rural landscape.</p> <p>From the 'gap' views between settlements emphasis the distinction of Ospringe – with views of the roofscape extending south along the minor valley in contrast to the more modern edge of Faversham.</p> |


Practical considerations

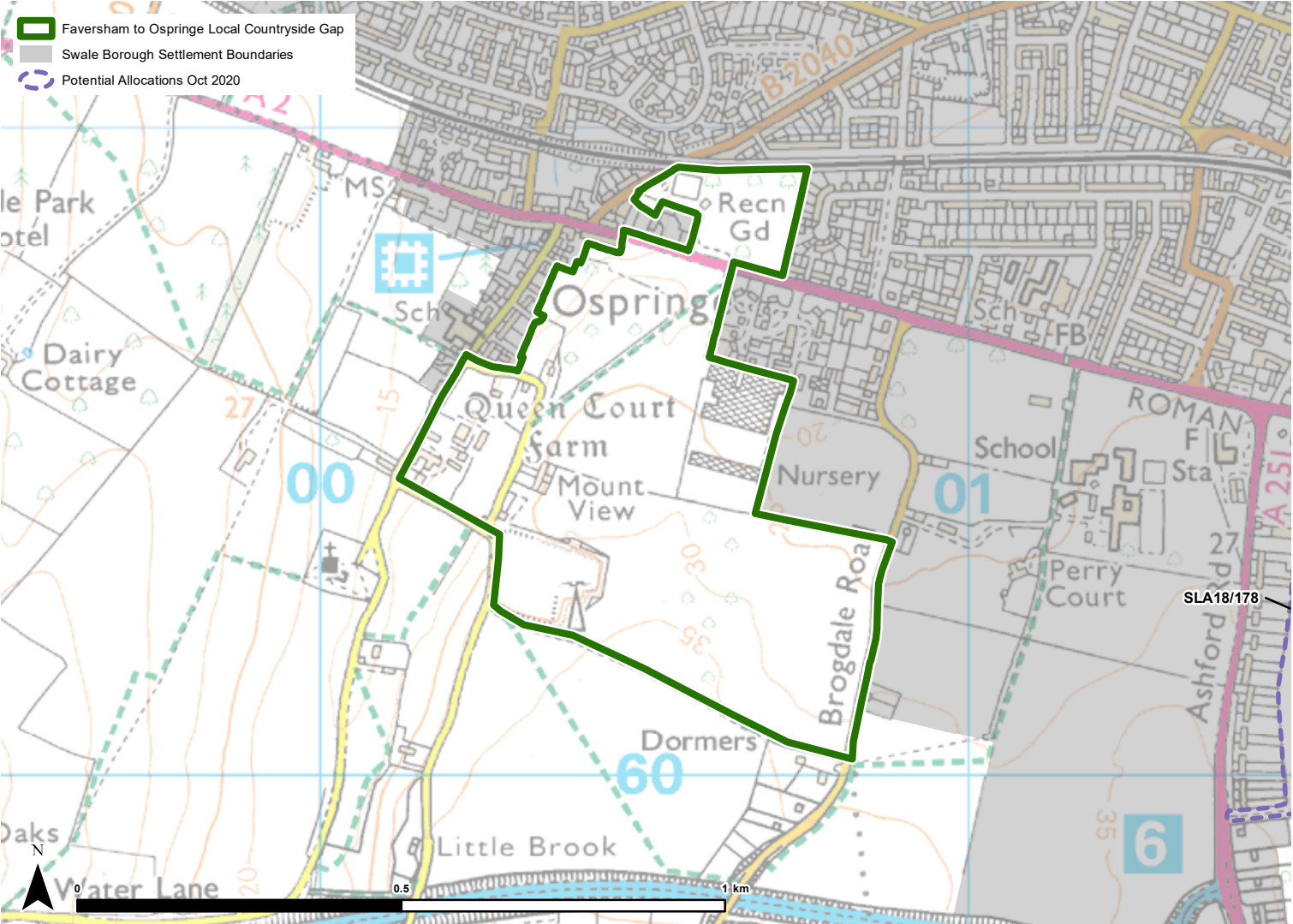
| Considerations | Commentary |
|------------------------|---|
| Gap extent | <p>The gap between Faversham and Ospringe is narrow, and ranges from 170m along the A2 to 600m in the south. As noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal for Ospringe there has already been some coalescence between the south of Faversham and north of Ospringe along the A2 in the west.</p> <p>The A2 London Road is the main route between Faversham and Ospringe. The open space either side of the road from the King George V Recreation Ground and fields, as well as views looking down the sloping land to the roofscapes of Ospringe, provide a sense of distinct settlements, despite the small distance.</p> <p>Public rights of way ZF11 and ZF15 run through the gap, and users of these paths have a perception of travelling between settlements, particularly because there is limited intervisibility between Faversham and Ospringe in the gap.</p> <p>Further south the landscape has a distinct rural character and provides a setting for the church, and although recognised as important in its own right is not considered to perform a specific 'gap' function between Faversham and Ospringe.</p> |
| Boundary defensibility | <p>There are no potential allocations in or adjacent to this area.</p> <p>The proposed gap boundaries are as follows:</p> |

| Considerations | Commentary |
|---------------------------|--|
| | <p>To the north along the existing settlement boundary of Faversham to encapsulate the King George V Recreation Ground, then follows the settlement boundary of Ospringe to the west.</p> <p>To the east the boundary extends along the settlement boundary of modern housing at Ospringe Place and the newly built residential development along Brogdale Road. The existing glasshouses are included as part of the gap although it is recognised that these have a more developed character. The boundary extends south along Brogdale Road to the housing at Dormers.</p> <p>The southern boundary is formed by the minor lane/bridleway ZF15 which cuts across to Vicarage Lane following the rural lane network along Vicarage Lane and Water Lane to meet the settlement edge, with the gap encompassing Queens Court Farm and Mount View. This includes the telecoms tower and small quarry within the gap.</p> <p>As noted above the dry valley to the south has an important landscape function but does not fulfil a gap function and is therefore excluded.</p> |
| Potential for enhancement | <p>There are no national or local designations in this area. There are areas of priority habitat traditional orchard to the east of Water Lane.</p> <p>Enhancements noted in the LCA include the restoration and extension of the hedgerow network, and provision of arable field margins/buffers to improve habitat connectivity at the local scale. The conservation and sensitive management of older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a priority. The site of the former quarry should be enhanced to provide landscape and wildlife value.</p> <p>The Ospringe Conservation Area extends into the gap between Ospringe and Faversham, and the setting of the Conservation Area should be enhanced. There are Listed Buildings at Queen Court Farm and Laurel Cottage, on the corner of Mutton Lane. The rural setting to these heritage assets should be enhanced.</p> <p>The King George V Recreation Ground is designated as a Local Green Space, and The Mount is a Grade II listed building in within the open space, formerly the Office for the Ministry of National Insurance.</p> <p>Water Lane is designated as a Rural Lane, which contributes to the rural amenity, nature conservation and character of the landscape.</p> <p>Enhancement of the modern settlement edge of Faversham to the east should be encouraged including the creation of native tree screening buffers to integrate development, and removal of conifer belts where possible.</p> <p>There is potential for enhancements to the A2 to make it more pleasant for pedestrians and connect the King George V Recreation Ground to the fields south of the A2.</p> |

Summary and recommendations

3.12 The analysis above indicates the area between Faversham and Ospringe meets the criteria for designation as an Important Local Countryside Gap. It is a small area, and Faversham and Ospringe have to some extent already coalesced in the north. However, both settlements still have a distinct character and Ospringe is still perceived as a distinct and separate village, and therefore a countryside gap should be maintained to prevent further coalescence.

-  Faversham to Ospringe Local Countryside Gap
-  Swale Borough Settlement Boundaries
-  Potential Allocations Oct 2020



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