

## West Grinstead Parish Council

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### Draft West Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan Local Gaps Policy – Landscape Review

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# Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION.....	3
2.0	BACKGROUND PAPER: RETENTION OF LOCAL GAPS – REVIEW.....	4
3.0	LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT (HDC, 2014) – REVIEW .....	5
4.0	NECESSITY FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF A LOCAL GAP .....	9
5.0	PROPOSED LOCAL GAP - REVIEW OF REPRESENTATIONS .....	11
6.0	CONCLUSIONS.....	18
APPENDICES AND FIGURES – BOUND SEPARATELY – (SEE LPL-REP-002-00)		

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document has been prepared for West Grinstead Parish Council (WGPC) following a review of representations received in response to the Regulation 14 Pre-Submission consultation on the West Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan (Draft WGNP).
- 1.2 The purpose of the document is to undertake a review of the WGNP Policy 1 – Retention of Local Gaps, between the settlements of Partridge Green, Jolesfield and Littleworth and to highlight where the WGNP Local Gaps Policy would add value to existing planning policies, consistent with the criteria set out within Horsham District Council’s Planning Framework – Policy 27.
- 1.3 This is undertaken to ensure that the contribution of the proposed Local Gap to preventing coalescence, whilst retaining the separate identity and amenity of the settlements concerned is sufficiently informed by evidence, in support of that submitted within the ‘Background Paper: Retention of Local Gaps’.
- 1.4 The review is supported by appendices which includes relevant planning policy, designations, landscape characterisation, historic landscape characterisation, historic map regression and a Landscape Capacity Appraisal, including key viewpoints, supported by relevant figures.
- 1.5 The methodology and conclusions of the Horsham District Landscape Capacity Assessment (HDC, 2014) are considered through an appraisal of Landscape Capacity across the proposed Local Gaps, which is described within **Section 3.0**, through reference to LLD Landscape Capacity Appraisal tables and supporting photographs provided within **Appendix F**, and supporting Figures.
- 1.6 This review enables recommendations to be provided on the contribution of respective areas of the Local Gap, and overall contribution of the Gap as a whole to be identified within **Section 4.0**. The assessment enables a critical review of key representations regarding the Draft WGNP to be undertaken within **Section 5.0**.
- 1.7 Finally, a conclusion is provided within **Section 6.0**, which includes recommendations regarding areas which could be removed from the proposed Gap without impacting on the ability of the countryside to significantly maintain the openness and break between the settlements.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND PAPER: RETENTION OF LOCAL GAPS – REVIEW

- 2.1 The WGNP is supported by a background document ‘Countryside and Open Space-Policy 1: Retention of Local Gaps’, prepared by Member(s) of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group. This document is referred to as ‘Background Paper: Retention of Local Gaps’ (*Background Paper*). A range of references are provided within its appendices, which are referred to within the main body of the report.
- 2.2 The focus of the review of the Background Paper is to ensure that the contribution of the proposed Local Gaps to maintaining the openness and break between the settlements is sufficiently informed by evidence.
- 2.3 The identification of landscape character and visual characteristics relevant to the identification of landscape and visual sensitivity and value would benefit from a consistent structure across respective areas identified, drawing on the additional evidence and appraisal provided by LLD within this report and supporting appendices.
- 2.4 Additional areas of published baseline or reinforced areas which would support the background document are included within the supporting appendices to this review, including the following:
- Planning Policy and Designations – Broader baseline review; (**Appendix A** and **Figure 3**);
  - Horsham District Landscape Capacity Study (April 2014) (**Appendix B** – Parallel baseline review, supported with extracts in **Appendix C**);
  - Sussex Historic Characterisation – Review of HLCA; (**Appendix B** and **Figure 4**);
  - Historic Ordnance Survey Mapping – Review of, (**Appendix B**) supported with extracts in **Appendix D**.

### 3.0 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT (HDC, 2014) – REVIEW

- 3.1 A review of the methodology and conclusions of the Horsham District Landscape Capacity Assessment (HDC, 2014), has been undertaken by LLD through a parallel assessment of Landscape Capacity for Small-scale residential development, across the proposed Local Gap. This has been undertaken to enable a consideration of both the evidence base for the conclusions on capacity provided by HDC, and to extend a comparable appraisal of capacity to areas outside of those considered by HDD, (to the north of LG1). The approach to this is defined within **Appendix E**, with the LLD Landscape Capacity Appraisal tables and supporting photographs provided within **Appendix F**, supported by **Figure 6**.
- 3.2 LLD consider that the baseline upon which the opinion of HDC is derived overlooks various sensitivities. Key oversight includes the falling landform associated with the feature of the River Adur tributary stream, and the time depth and continuity with the countryside beyond, resulting from the small scale field system, which both provide a spatial coherence to the countryside between Partridge Green, Jolesfield and Littleworth, informing their separate identity and amenity.
- 3.3 The perceptual experience of historic context and relative openness of the valley landform is additionally overlooked with the appreciation of the setting to the glimpsed (Grade II Listed) Joles Farm and more prominent (Grade II Listed) Buildings including Beauchamps, Barn to north of Beauchamps, and Blanches from Public Footpath No. 1840-1, which extends over the southern part of LG2 overlooked for example, (see **Viewpoint No. 2B**).
- 3.4 Due to the partial evidence base, regarding landscape character and visual sensitivity and associated landscape value provided within the HDC Landscape Capacity Assessment 2014, LLD consider that the resulting HDC assessment conclusions and Overall Landscape Capacity grading is not properly substantiated. The reasons for this opinion are provided below.

#### **Landscape Study Area PG1**

- 3.5 The 2014 Capacity Study allocates a **Moderate Landscape Capacity** for Small-scale Housing Development along the northern perimeter of Partridge Green within Horsham District Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA) PG1. LLD consider this to overlook various sensitivities, which would recommend (part) reallocation of **No/Low Landscape Capacity**, (relative to those areas appraised by LLD). This is due to the following reasons, provided respectively for Local Gaps 1 and 2, which are substantiated within the detailed assessment undertaken for the correlating Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCA) provided within **Appendix F – LLD Landscape Capacity Appraisal**:

Local Gap 1:

- 3.6 Blanches Farm Enclosed Agricultural (LLCA1), comprises of landscape features and qualities which are considered to be of High sensitivity to housing development, with Moderate visual sensitivity. Any small scale housing within this area would impact on the small scale field pattern within the River Adur tributary stream valley landform, which (together with areas further to the west along the northern edge of Partridge Green) provide a continuity of historic character, and contribute to the wider setting of (Grade II Listed) Buildings including Beauchamps, Barn to north of Beauchamps, and Blanches.
- 3.7 LLCA1 additionally provides a legible break between built form associated with the settlements of Partridge Green and (Grade II Listed) Buildings including Beauchamps, Barn to north of Beauchamps, and Blanches, located south of Littleworth, associated with the subtle landform slope which falls towards the tranquil landscape feature of the River Adur tributary stream along the northern edge of LLCA1. This landform is appreciated through breaks in the vegetation along Littleworth Lane and in glimpses from Public Footpath No. 1774-1 to the north east, (see **Viewpoint No. 1B**).

Local Gap 2:

- 3.8 Joles Farm Agricultural Tributary Valley (LLCA2), comprises of landscape features and qualities which are considered to be of High sensitivity to housing development, with Moderate - High visual sensitivity. Any small scale housing within this area would impact on the small scale field pattern within the River Adur tributary stream valley landform, which (together with areas further to the east and west along the northern edge of Partridge Green) provide a continuity of historic character with field patterns beyond.
- 3.9 LLCA2 provides legible separation between the settlements of Partridge Green, Littleworth and Jolesfield, associated with the legible valley landform, which falls towards a tributary stream of the River Adur, (locally known as The Coker). The tributary stream courses between the settlements of Littleworth and Jolesfield and Partridge Green, forming a legible valley landform with regards the connecting roadways of Littleworth Lane and Jolesfield (B2135).
- 3.10 Relatively open views can be gained across the tributary valley landform from Public Footpath No. 1840-1, which extends over the central part of this area (resulting in a highly conspicuous area) and from which an appreciation of the setting to the glimpsed (Grade II Listed) Joles Farm and more prominent (Grade II Listed) Buildings including Beauchamps, Barn to north of Beauchamps, and Blanches can be made, (see **Viewpoint No. 2B**).

## Landscape Study Area PG4

- 3.11 The 2014 Capacity Study allocates a **Low-Moderate Landscape Capacity** for Small-scale Housing Development along the western edge of Partridge Green within Horsham District Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA) PG4. LLD consider this to overlook various sensitivities, which would recommend (part) reallocation of **No/Low Landscape Capacity**, (relative to those areas appraised by LLD).
- 3.12 This is due to the following reasons, provided for Local Gap 3, which are substantiated within the detailed assessment undertaken for the Downs Link Enclosed Agricultural Tributary Valley (LLCA3), provided within **Appendix F – LLD Landscape Capacity Appraisal**:

### Local Gap 3:

- 3.13 Downs Link Enclosed Agricultural Tributary Valley (LLCA3) comprises of landscape features and qualities which are considered to be of High sensitivity to housing development, with Moderate-High visual sensitivity.
- 3.14 Small scale housing within this area would impact on the small scale field pattern within the River Adur tributary stream valley landform, which together with areas further to the east and west along the northern edge of Partridge Green provide a continuity of historic character with field patterns beyond, whilst providing legible separation between the settlements of Partridge Green and Jolesfield. Landform falls towards the tranquil landscape feature of the River Adur tributary stream (locally known as The Coker), which runs along the northern boundary of LLCA3, forming a legible valley landform, with the flood plain extending throughout the substantive part of the northern field and the north western part of the southern field. A small area to the south east corner of LLCA3 does align southwards away from the tributary stream valley. However, the small scale of this area and contribution to field pattern, including to the sequential perception of this from the linear routes of Church Road (B2135) and the Downs Link (Bridleway no. 3566-16) recommends its inclusion as part of the proposed Local Gap.
- 3.15 The rising ground in agricultural use contributes sequentially to the rural character and relative tranquillity for users of the Downs Link Long Distance Path (Public Bridleway No. 3566-16) as a rural backdrop whilst moving along the path, primarily when vegetation is out of leaf, (see **Viewpoints No. 3B and 3C**).

- 3.16 Views up the tributary valley landform from Public Footpath No.1847-1, (east of the Downs Link long distance footpath and cycleway), south west of Jolesfield, additionally contribute to the wider setting of (Grade II Listed) Eastcot, (see **Viewpoint No. 3D**).

### **Landscape Study Extension – To north of PG1**

- 3.17 LLD consider Jolesfield Common Agricultural (LLCA4), to comprise a landscape with **No/Low Landscape Capacity**, for small scale residential development, other than a small area as indicated. This is due to the following reasons, which are substantiated within the detailed assessment undertaken for LLCA4 provided within **Appendix F – LLD Landscape Capacity Appraisal**:
- 3.18 Jolesfield Common Agricultural comprises of landscape features and qualities which are considered to be of Moderate - High sensitivity to housing development, with High visual sensitivity. Any small scale housing within this area would impact on the small scale field pattern within the River Adur tributary stream valley landform, which (together with areas further to the south between Partridge Green and Jolesfield) provide a continuity of historic character with field patterns beyond, whilst providing legible separation between the settlements of Partridge Green, Littleworth and Jolesfield.
- 3.19 Landform falls towards the tributary stream (locally known as The Coker) to the south. However the gradient is more gentle, associating more with the settlement about the hilltop at Littleworth and the locally level feature of Jolesfield Recreation Ground (Village Green), which appears on the 1879 OS map, within the earlier unenclosed landscape of Jolesfield Common; The fieldscape to north west of Jolesfield Recreation Ground presents a visually more irregular and more patchwork association of landform and vegetation, drawing towards a ponded area surrounding with scrub, (west of which a separate tributary watercourse drains west towards the River Adur) and which provides a sense of the earlier Jolesfield Common, (see **Viewpoint No. 4A**). This landscape contributes to the setting of the (Grade II Listed) West Grinstead, Dial Post, Littleworth and Partridge Green War Memorial, (see **Viewpoint No. 4B**).
- 3.20 Through reference to **Figure 7**, an irregular area of some 1 hectare in size north of allotments, within the extended gardens of residential properties south of Mill Lane, to the west of Littleworth might be considered for Small scale residential. This is due to the existing enclosed character of this area, which is associated more with the residential area to the north than the countryside within the tributary valley or rural setting to the Jolesfield Recreation Ground (Village Green) or (Grade II Listed) West Grinstead, Dial Post, Littleworth and Partridge Green War Memorial.

#### 4.0 NECESSITY FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF A LOCAL GAP

- 4.1 The cumulative contribution of the areas identified on the Policies Map of the WGNP Local Gaps Policy would prevent coalescence, whilst retaining the separate identity and amenity of the settlements of Partridge Green, Jolesfield and Littleworth, consistent with the criteria set out within Horsham District Council's Planning Framework – Policy 27, preventing significant reduction to the openness and 'break' between settlements.
- 4.2 The Local Gap Policy defined for this area through the WGNP adds value to existing planning policies (*including Strategic Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character and Strategic Policy 26: Countryside Protection*), through defining the landscape character and spatial relationship of the intervening countryside between the settlements of Partridge Green, Jolesfield and Littleworth. Without this spatial definition there remains a risk that piecemeal encroachment from small scale development could be allowed, which would cause harm to the openness and 'break' between the settlements of Partridge Green, Jolesfield and Littleworth.
- 4.3 This is highlighted by the following landscape and visual characteristics, substantively defined for the proposed gap in general through reference to the evidence base collated within **Appendix F**:
- 1) Historic field patterns with time depth and connectivity with the countryside beyond, forms a countryside break between Joles Farm, Partridge Green and Littleworth. The field patterns are historically characterised as resulting from cohesive assarts, with time depth to the medieval period. Within the northern part of LG2 and LG1 the fields retain their condition and small-scale field pattern albeit of a later character, resulting from formal enclosure. Together, these areas draw together a continuity with field patterns further to the east and west as some of the few remaining areas of countryside in the area which have not been subject to informal modern field amalgamation. These areas provide a rural context, sense of place and break between the respective settlements;
  - 2) The falling landform associated with the feature of the River Adur tributary stream provides a spatial coherence to the countryside between the settlements, informing their separate identity and amenity. Falling landform associated with the feature of the River Adur tributary stream, which courses between the settlements of Littleworth, Jolesfield and Partridge Green, with settlement at Partridge Green and Littleworth located on the higher and more plateaued areas of landform, and that of Jolesfield in a more discrete position along Jolesfield (B2135);

- 3) The valley landform of the River Adur tributary stream is mostly experienced and viewed by vehicular users and pedestrians along Littleworth Lane, Church Road / Jolesfield (B2135), and the Downs Link, (*Public Bridleway No. 3566-16*) which are afforded glimpses through the intervening vegetation, (see **Viewpoints No.1A, 2D, and 3A, 3B, 3C and 3E**). The rising ground in agricultural use contributes sequentially to the rural character and relative tranquillity for the regular recreational users of the Downs Link Long Distance Path (Public Bridleway No. 3566-16) as a rural backdrop whilst moving along the path, primarily when vegetation is out of leaf, (see **Viewpoints No. 3B and 3C**). A comparably filtered perspective can be gained of the contribution of LG1 in glimpses from Public Footpath No. 1774-1 to the north east, (see **Viewpoint No. 1B**);
- 4) However, the historic context and relative openness of the valley landform is best appreciated from Public Footpath No. 1840-1, which extends over the southern part of LG2 and from which the setting to the glimpsed (Grade II Listed) Joles Farm and more prominent (Grade II Listed) Buildings including Beauchamps, Barn to north of Beauchamps, and Blanches can be appreciated within the valley, (see **Viewpoint No. 2B**);
- 5) A comparable perspective of the valley landform of the River Adur tributary stream can be gained from the north of LG3, where views take in both the tributary valley landform rising to the south from Public Footpath No.1847-1, south west of Jolesfield, and the contribution of this to the wider setting of (Grade II Listed) Eastcot at Jolesfield, (see **Viewpoint No. 3D**);
- 6) Rural character and time depth associated with the Jolesfield Recreation Ground (Village Green), and countryside across the northern part of LG2, which contributes to the separate identity and amenity of Littleworth, relative to Jolesfield and Partridge Green beyond. Perceptually experienced from Jolesfield Recreation Ground (Village Green) and Public Footpath No. 1839-1, as a transitional area between the tributary valley to the south and a more localised tributary watercourse which flows west from a ponded area along the north western edge of LG2, whilst contributing to the setting of the (Grade II Listed) West Grinstead, Dial Post, Littleworth and Partridge Green War Memorial, (see **Viewpoint No. 4B**).

## 5.0 PROPOSED LOCAL GAP - REVIEW OF REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 The following representations regarding the Draft WGNP are reviewed:

- *Horsham District Council (Including letter to WGPC, (HDC Gavin Curwen, 23 September 2019); letter to WGPC, (HDC Norman Kwan, 22 January 2019); and WGNP Healthcheck Comments, (HDC, July 2018);*
- *White Young Green Reg 14 Objection Letter, including Appendix I (i) Barton Wilmore - Land to the North of The Rosary, Church Road, Partridge Green: Landscape and Visual Appraisal (On behalf of Reside Developments Ltd, September 2019);*
- *Sigma Planning Services Reg 14 Response, including Appendix Gi Allen Scott - Land North of The Rise, Partridge Green - Landscape review of SHELAA site SA 274, (On behalf of Rydon Homes, September 2019).*

**Horsham District Council (Including letter to WGPC, (HDC Gavin Curwen, 23 September 2019); letter to WGPC, (HDC Norman Kwan, 22 January 2019); and WGNP Healthcheck Comments, (HDC, July 2018)**

- 5.2 Horsham District Council (HDC) Gavin Curwen letter of 23 September 2019 provides support to the proposed Policy 1: Retention of Local Gaps. However, they strongly recommend that both LG2 and LG3 are amended to not incorporate the southern fields which adjoin the Partridge Green settlement edge.
- 5.3 Within LG2, this area extends down the tributary stream valley side to the stream edge, within which HDC officers consider that there is moderate capacity for development. Within LG3, this area extends across the southern field to the boundary with the northern field, within which HDC officers consider that there is low-moderate capacity for small scale development. These areas are described as not functioning to prevent coalescence with another settlement and contrary to Policy 27: Settlement Coalescence of the HDPF.
- 5.4 HDC Norman Kwan letter of 22 January 2019 requests detailed assessment of the proposed gaps in order that additional value is provided to HDC's existing policy and that suitable gap boundaries are defined. HDC additionally highlight that the proposed Local Gaps proposals map is in conflict with Horsham District Council's SHELAA site assessments and landscape capacity study which are identified as having assessed as an example that land to the north of Partridge Green village has 'moderate' landscape capacity to support future development. HDC recommend that the proposed Local Gaps are reassessed and redefined through detailed assessment to identify where there are some opportunities and capacity for development adjacent to the existing settlement boundaries in detail.

5.5 Detailed informal comment by HDC (22 January 2019) is provided on individual gaps as follows:

*Local Gap 1 - There is merit to LG1 as a local green gap. This site is shown on the landscape capacity study (LCS) as having Moderate capacity for development under area PG1, due to a combined moderate landscape and visual sensitivity. PG1 includes a wider study area than the site itself and when assessed individually, the capacity of the site for development is considered limited or low as it would result in the loss of the awareness of a spatial break between Partridge Green and Littleworth and therefore loss of their identity as separate settlements. This is mainly the result of the shorter gap between the end of Partridge Green and Beauchamps and the likelihood of any development in this field to be accessed from Littleworth Lane which would result in loss of hedgerow and consequently exacerbate the impression of urban sprawl.*

*Local Gap 2 – the lower part of this area, adjacent to Partridge Green settlement boundary, also sits within the same capacity study area as above (PC1), and is appraised as having Moderate capacity for development due to the combined Moderate landscape and visual sensitivity. With regards the visual sensitivity definition, Moderate means it is considered that there is likely to be some scope for mitigating visual impacts. It is suggested that the gap is amended to leave the fields immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary outside of the LG designation. Purely from a landscape point of view and subject to sensitive design, these two fields have the capacity to absorb development without significant harm to the character and visual amenity of the wider area and if available, could positively contribute to the expansion of Partridge Green and meet housing need. The field boundary to the north could be strengthened to act as a buffer and continue the strong landscape belt present north of Staples Hill. To the western boundary, development could be in line with Staples Hill and to the east aligned with the properties at The Rise to mitigate urban sprawl along Littleworth Lane and coalescence with Littleworth.*

*Local Gap 3 – sits within PG4 of the LCS. The study area once again encompasses a bigger area than the proposed local gap itself and has been assessed as having Low to Moderate capacity for small scale development. However, a specific mention to the LG3 is made: ‘... but there may be some capacity in the two fields between Church Road and the Downs Link’. The visual sensitivity of the area is shown as Low to Moderate due to the area being mostly well screened by existing features such as trees and topography. Officers have considered this site for an application in 2016 and although the quantum of development proposed wasn’t appropriate, the fields in question do have the potential and landscape capacity to accommodate some development, subject to good design, and there is scope to mitigate visual impacts. The impression gained from the area is that this gap (between Partridge Green and Jolesfield) is to some extent already compromised by the development along Church Road all the way to Staples Hill.*

*Unsympathetic development could exacerbate the urban sprawl and result in coalescence between the two settlements but sensitive design could mitigate/limit any visual encroachment into the wider landscape and provide much needed housing. Taking into consideration the landscape qualities of each field individually, topography, boundaries and location etc, it is suggested that the proposed local gap designation is amended to include only the most northern field and leave the southern field closest to the settlement boundary free from such policy restriction. This would address coalescence concerns but also allow for settlement expansion if needed.*

*To conclude, it is recommended that the local gaps LG2 and LG3 are amended to leave the fields immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary without such constraints and more in line with the findings of the LCS.'*

- 5.6 HDC Healthcheck comments of July 2018 request that a robust evidence paper should be produced to support the Local Gap Policy, which addresses recommendations arising out from the HDC Landscape Capacity Assessment 2014. Regarding Criterion 1. 'No significant reduction in the openness' HDC identify that the WGNP, Para 4.6 highlights that: *'The Parish is characterised by both small scale intricate field patterns of pasture and some larger scale arable fields, scattered woodlands, hedgerows and shaws which create enclosed areas and restrict views'*. This assessment is highlighted as appearing to be in conflict with the assertion that the surrounding countryside is open.
- 5.7 LLD consider that the baseline upon which the opinion of HDC is derived overlooks various sensitivities as highlighted within **Section 3.0**. Key oversight includes the falling landform associated with the feature of the River Adur tributary stream and the time depth and connectivity with the countryside beyond, resulting from the small scale field system, which both provide a spatial coherence to the countryside between Partridge Green, Jolesfield and Littleworth, informing their separate identity and amenity.
- 5.8 The perceptual experience of historic context and relative openness of the valley landform is additionally overlooked with the appreciation of the setting to the glimpsed (Grade II Listed) Joles Farm and more prominent (Grade II Listed) Buildings including Beauchamps, Barn to north of Beauchamps, and Blanches from Public Footpath No. 1840-1, which extends over the southern part of LG2 overlooked for example, (see **Viewpoint No. 2B**).

- 5.9 Due to the partial evidence base, regarding landscape character and visual sensitivity and associated landscape value provided within the HDC Landscape Capacity Assessment 2014, LLD consider that the resulting HDC assessment conclusions and Overall Landscape Capacity grading is not properly substantiated.
- 5.10 For example, HDC (2014) consider that area PG1 has Moderate capacity for Small Scale Housing. The areas which HDC considered might accommodate this without resulting in unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts are indicated within the HDC Healthcheck comments of July 2018, detailed within the HDC letter to WGPC, (HDC Norman Kwan, 22 January 2019) and spatially clarified within the HDC letter to WGPC, (HDC Gavin Curwen, 23 September 2019).
- 5.11 LLDs opinion is that for the areas of PG1 appraised for LG1 and LG2, there is **No/Low Landscape Capacity**. This would preclude the areas identified by HDC being recommended for small scale residential development and for the reasons provided above within this **Sections 3.0** and **4.0** of this report would recommend their incorporation within the proposed Local Gap.
- 5.12 For example, HDC (2014) consider that area PG4 has Low-Moderate capacity for Small Scale Housing. The areas which HDC considered might accommodate this without resulting in unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts are detailed within the HDC letter to WGPC, (HDC Norman Kwan, 22 January 2019) and spatially clarified within the HDC letter to WGPC, (HDC Gavin Curwen, 23 September 2019).
- 5.13 LLDs opinion is that for the areas of PG4 appraised for LG3, there is **No/Low Landscape Capacity**. This would preclude the areas identified by HDC being recommended for small scale residential development, and for the reasons provided above within **Sections 3.0** and **4.0** of this report would recommend their incorporation within the proposed Local Gap.
- 5.14 Regarding the suggested contradiction between the description of landscape character within the parish and the contribution of the Local Gap to openness, LLD accept that small scale intricate field patterns result in some enclosed areas and restricted views. However, within the Local Gap the relationship of field pattern boundaries is subsumed within the tributary valley landform, which opens up views over and through hedgerow fields to the rising land which results, such as from Public Footpath No. 1840-1, which extends over the southern part of LG2, (see **Viewpoint No. 2B**).

**White Young Green Reg 14 Objection Letter, including Appendix I (i) Barton Wilmore - Land to the North of The Rosary, Church Road, Partridge Green: Landscape and Visual Appraisal (On behalf of Reside Developments Ltd, September 2019)**

- 5.15 White Young Green (September 2019) highlight that they do not consider there to be justification for the inclusion of LG3 within the Local Gap. The Barton Willmore Landscape and Visual Appraisal identifies that the housing to the south and east gives rise to a perception of being on the edge of settlement, which could be 'rounded off' by introducing housing across the southern field (Phase 1) and if appropriate part of the northern field (Phase 2), which would result in the boundary between Partridge Green and Jolesfield being drawn along the tributary stream.
- 5.16 LLD understand that whilst there is a perception from along the Downs Link or Church Road of being on the edge of settlement when immediately adjacent to the southern boundary, or Church Road along the eastern boundary, there is a greater perception of the falling landform associated with the feature of the River Adur tributary stream and the time depth and connectivity with the countryside beyond, resulting from the small scale field system. This provides a spatial coherence to the countryside between Partridge Green and Jolesfield, informing their separate identity and amenity. Whilst visibility from the adjacent Downs Link Long Distance Path (Public Bridleway No. 3566-16) and Church Road, do substantively comprise of glimpsed views through vegetation, the sequential nature of these views and the sensitivity of the receptors, particularly along the Downs Link highlight the importance of the rising ground in the appreciation of the association between settlement and landform, (see **Viewpoints No. 3B** and **3C**).
- 5.17 The historic context and relative openness contributed by the valley landform is best appreciated from Public Footpath No.1847-1, south west of Jolesfield (to the north of LG3), where views take in both the tributary valley landform rising to the south and the contribution of this to the wider setting of (Grade II Listed) Eastcot at Jolesfield, (see **Viewpoint No. 3D**).
- 5.18 To suggest that the gap between two settlements can be defined by the feature of a tributary watercourse alone, as implied by White Young Green and Barton Wilmore is to disparage the basis for a Local Gap between Partridge Green and Jolesfield at all. To take this approach overlooks the falling landform associated with the feature of the River Adur tributary stream and the time depth and continuity with the countryside beyond, resulting from the small scale field system, both of which contribute to the sense of openness and gap between settlements.

- 5.19 Barton Wilmore identify that: *'As the Site does not extend any further north than the existing BUAB (i.e. any closer to Jolesfield), it provides no significant physical break/separation between Partridge Green and Jolesfield,[...]. The Local Gap designation is therefore of no significance in this location and results in an inappropriate restriction of development that is unacceptable in spatial, landscape and visual terms. Accordingly, LG3 should be removed from the draft of the WGNP.'* (ibid, p31)
- 5.20 LLD disagree. The settlement anomaly resulting from the extension of Partridge Green down the tributary stream valley side across Staples Hill, (north of St Michael and All Angels Church) introduces an exception to the settlement pattern. LLD consider that this introduces a conflict with the coherence and legibility of the landscape rather than establishing a precedent which should be replicated. Should this approach be extended into LG3, LLD consider that the resulting impact would be both incongruous, whilst significantly breaking the gap and sense of openness between the settlements of Partridge Green and Jolesfield to the detriment of both the spatial coherence to the countryside setting and the separate identity and amenity of Partridge Green and Jolesfield.

**Sigma Planning Services Reg 14 Response, including Appendix Gi Allen Scott - Land North of The Rise, Partridge Green - Landscape review of SHELAA site SA 274, (On behalf of Rydon Homes, September 2019)**

- 5.21 Sigma Planning Services (September 2019) agree that the identification of a Local Gap on the eastern side of Littleworth Lane is a reasonable policy in principle. However, they suggest that the extent of the designated area is larger than necessary and that the essential elements of the gap can be protected with a suitably and sensitively designed development scheme. The amendment to the draft Plan that Rydon seeks is therefore to reduce the extent of the LG1 designation so that it is limited to the western end of the site currently identified and/or some text is introduced to explain that the designation does not seek to do more than is necessary to protect the main characteristics of the gap and development proposals will not be prevented in principle but must demonstrate that the important features of the gap are maintained.
- 5.22 Sigma Planning Services and Allen Scott (September 2019) identify the important elements of the gap area as the frontage to Littleworth Lane and the setting of the heritage assets to the north. The northern part of the site is identified as most important to protect the setting of the heritage assets. The Littleworth Lane frontage is described as defined by a strong hedge and trees, with limited views across the field to the east, with the perception of the gap being therefore more dependent upon the site frontage rather than the deeper part of the site. They identify that there are very limited views from any other public viewpoint.

- 5.23 Allen Scott identify that the southern parts of the site stands on higher ground and is discernible from Public Footpath FP1174 and Littleworth Lane. Allen Scott additionally identify that: *'Littleworth Lane is a northern gateway into Partridge Green and establishes the green character of the village setting for those approaching and leaving Partridge Green';* with *'Generally a rural character prevails spreading out from the site northwards'* and *'Potential perceived coalescence between Partridge Green and Littleworth was considered a part of character and appearance.'*
- 5.24 Allen Scott identify that based on the landscape framework, a development framework for the Site could provide: *'1. A better relationship to The Rise, particularly with regards to the pattern, scale, set back and height of dwellings along the higher ground where the site adjoins the rear of existing properties; 2. Retention of the open field in the northern parts of the western parcel to protect the character of Littleworth Lane but also to maintain the setting of the listed buildings; 3. A substantial set back from Littleworth Lane in the southern part such that new dwellings do not influence the character of the lane; 4. An access road from Littleworth Lane that reflects the size and scale of a farmstead entrance [...]. 5. A demonstration of architectural density, massing and character to contribute positively to local distinctiveness as well as recognition of issues such as visibility of parking, lighting and light spill.'*
- 5.25 LLD consider that the baseline upon which the opinion of Sigma Planning Services and Allen Scott (September 2019) is derived overlooks various sensitivities. Key oversight includes the falling landform associated with the feature of the River Adur tributary stream and the time depth and continuity with the countryside beyond, resulting from the small scale field system, which both provide a spatial coherence to the countryside between Partridge Green and Littleworth, informing their separate identity and amenity.
- 5.26 LLD consider that any small scale housing within this area would impact on the small scale field pattern within the River Adur tributary stream valley landform, which (together with areas further to the west along the northern edge of Partridge Green) provide a continuity of historic landscape character in proximity to the respective settlement edges and the countryside beyond.
- 5.27 LG1 additionally provides a legible break between built form associated with the settlements of Partridge Green and the (Grade II Listed) Buildings south of Littleworth, which is primarily experienced through breaks in the vegetation along Littleworth Lane, (see **Viewpoint No. 1A**) and in glimpses from Public Footpath No. 1774-1 to the north east, (see **Viewpoint No. 1B**). It is primarily the southern part of the Site on rising ground which is seen in these views.

- 5.28 The context and legibility of the location along the tributary stream valley side, including the more elevated southern part of LG1 is considered by LLD to contribute to the wider setting of (Grade II Listed) Buildings Beauchamps, Barn to north of Beauchamps, and Blanches. This is due to the spatial coherence which landform presents, relative to settlement pattern, either associated with the plateaued areas or of greater time depth associated with the valley sides.
- 5.29 The falling landform associated with the feature of the River Adur tributary stream provides a spatial coherence to the countryside between the settlements of Partridge Green and Littleworth, informing their separate identity and amenity. Should the association between field pattern and landform be encroached upon in this location, the resulting impact would be both incongruous, whilst significantly breaking the gap and sense of openness between the settlements of Partridge Green and Littleworth to the detriment of both the spatial coherence to the countryside setting and the separate identity and amenity of the settlements.

## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The proposed Local Gap is considered to be substantiated for allocation, through reference to the evidence base and opinion provided within this report in support of that submitted within the 'Background Paper: Retention of Local Gaps'. The cumulative contribution of the areas identified on the Policies Map of the WGNP Local Gaps Policy would prevent coalescence, whilst retaining the separate identity and amenity of the settlements of Partridge Green, Jolesfield and Littleworth, consistent with the criteria set out within Horsham District Council's Planning Framework – Policy 27, preventing significant reduction to the openness and 'break' between settlements.
- 6.2 The Local Gap Policy defined for this area through the WGNP adds value to existing planning policies (*including Strategic Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character and Strategic Policy 26: Countryside Protection*), through defining the landscape character and spatial relationship of the intervening countryside between the settlements of Partridge Green, Jolesfield and Littleworth. Without this spatial definition there remains a risk that piecemeal encroachment from small scale development could be allowed, which would cause harm to the openness and 'break' between the settlements of Partridge Green, Jolesfield and Littleworth.
- 6.3 LLD consider that the various representation received, including from Horsham District Council overlook various sensitivities. Key oversight includes the falling landform associated with the feature of the River Adur tributary stream, (known locally as 'The Coker') and the time depth and continuity with the countryside beyond resulting from the small scale field system. Both of these are considered to afford a spatial coherence to the countryside between Partridge Green and Littleworth, informing their separate identity and amenity.

- 6.4 LLD consider that any small scale housing within this area would impact on the small scale field pattern within the River Adur tributary stream valley landform, which provide a continuity of historic landscape character in proximity to the respective settlement edges and the countryside beyond.
- 6.5 Recommendations regarding areas which could be removed from the proposed Gap without impacting on the ability of the countryside to significantly maintain the openness and break between the settlements are provided below.
- 6.6 Through reference to **Figure 7**, an irregular area of some 1 hectare in size north of allotments, within the extended gardens of residential properties south of Mill Lane, to the west of Littleworth (LG2A), might be considered. This is due to the existing enclosed character of this area, which is associated more with the residential area to the north than the countryside within the tributary valley or rural setting to the Jolesfield Recreation Ground (Village Green) or (Grade II Listed) West Grinstead, Dial Post, Littleworth and Partridge Green War Memorial.