

# Benenden Neighbourhood Plan Consulting on the Rough Draft



# Today's session

- Your chance to hear about the proposed Neighbourhood Plan;
- First - setting the scene, particularly around what the plan can and can't achieve;
- Then - explaining how we plan to meet our targets for new homes in the Parish;
- Finally - tell you about the next steps for the Plan, and time for questions.

Exhibition: please take time afterwards to review the proposals on display about Housing Design, Transport & Infrastructure, Business, and the Green Environment. These are important elements of the Plan.

Setting the scene

# Benenden – Parish overview



- Parish 2630 Hectares, around 99% in the High Weald AONB;
- Parish population: 1824 residents\* in 837 homes. 123 of the buildings are Grade 2 listed;
- Benenden is between 16 to 19 miles from Maidstone, Ashford, Hastings and Tunbridge Wells;
- Remote from towns & jobs with poor public transport links.

\* 2011 Census, excluding 550 Benenden Schoolgirls but including school staff

# Benenden – Parish overview



- Benenden and Iden Green village centres are Conservation Areas;
- Benenden ‘Core Village’ has 272 homes. Housing density is less than 10 dwellings per hectare (dph);
- 186 Local Authority/Housing Association homes built since WW2, 80 still managed by Housing Associations;
- TWBC Housing Needs Survey 2018 identified a need for **30** affordable homes by 2023.

# NDP – the Village Vision

The Parish of Benenden in 2033 will be a thriving, peaceful and rural place to live, work and rest. Its village feel and historic beauty will have been preserved through sympathetic and managed growth. We will have retained our existing major employers. Farming and other small businesses will be encouraged. We will offer everyone the chance to be part of an inclusive and vibrant community.

We will support:

- Locally led development with a mix of well-designed, high quality, sustainable and affordable housing alongside other homes that enhance the existing built and natural environment.
- Infrastructure enhancements; managing traffic growth, improving connectivity, and enhancing community facilities for health & recreation.
- A balanced community; with small businesses and home working providing employment; pubs, clubs and shops providing an active social scene, and quality of life retained through existing green spaces, footpaths and dark skies.

# Housing targets

# The UK is not building enough homes

- UK population is growing by around 390,000 people annually. Successive Governments have failed to build enough homes to meet this need;
- This Government has set a target of 300,000 new homes each year;
- They have targeted Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) with 15,200 new homes by 2033. TWBC have already given consent for around 5,700, so they have 9,500 left to plan;
- As part of their new Local Plan TWBC are setting targets for each Ward & Parish.

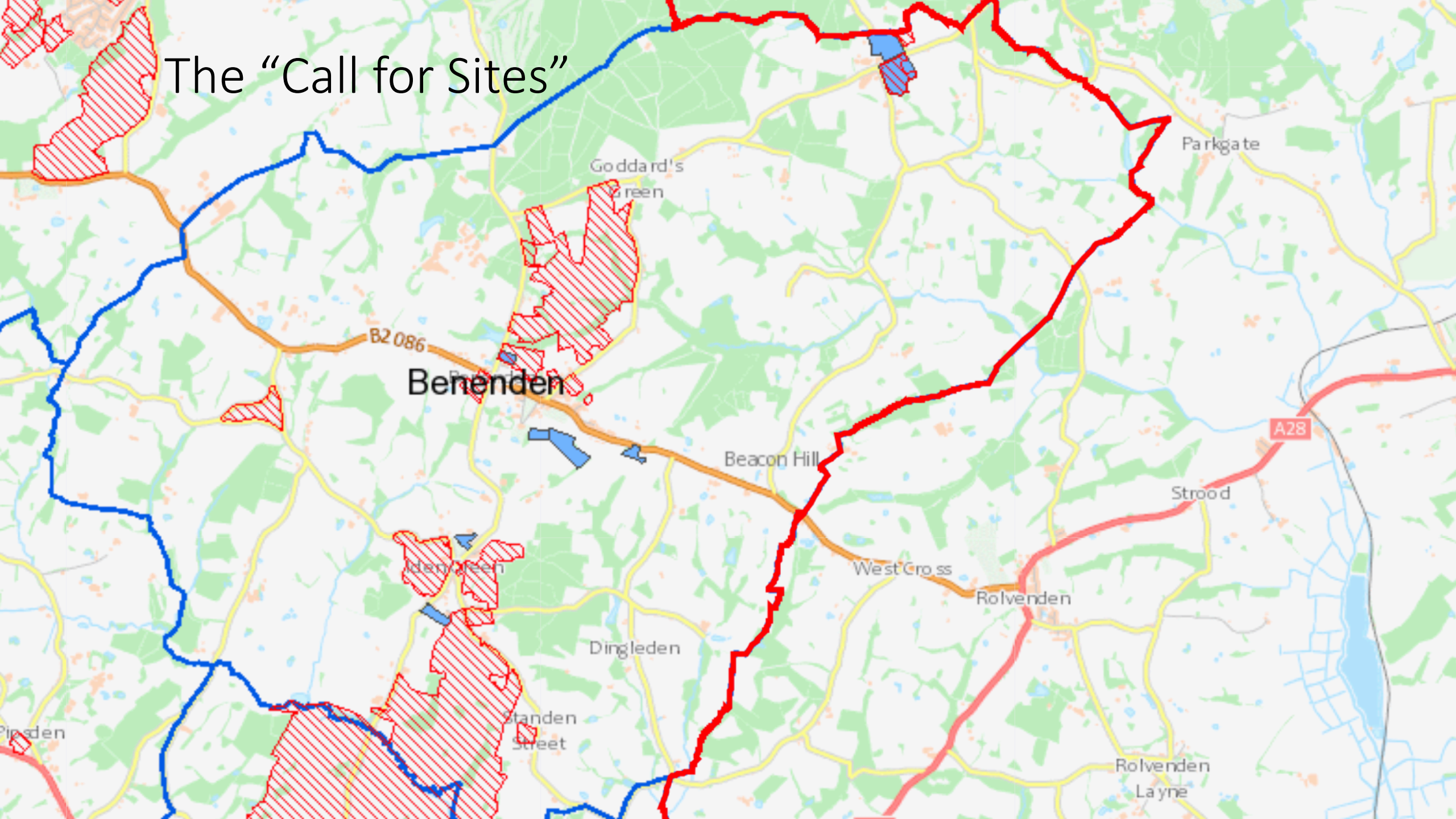


# TWBC initial planning approach

TWBC must meet their target. To set Parish targets they looked at:

- How many homes have existing Planning Permission;
- They invited landowners to submit extra land = Call for Sites;
- TWBC reviewed the sites to identify those most suitable, based on a rural housing density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph);
- They produced a target for each Parish, with any 'windfall' on top;
- TWBC wanted to then agree how to deliver this number with each Neighbourhood Plan team / Parish Council.

# The "Call for Sites"



# TWBC initial proposal for Benenden

	New Homes	Affordable Homes
2 sites have planning permission (Benenden Hospital South, Walkhurst Rd)	36	12
TWBC assessment: 7.3 out of 127 hectares offered under Call for Sites, at 30 dph	218	76
<b>Total</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>84</b>

Any additional suitable sites identified would be added to our target.

'Rules of engagement'

# Neighbourhood Plans give communities a voice

Localism Act (2011) established Neighbourhood Plans. Local communities can shape development within National & Borough planning objectives.

## **We Can:**

- Allocate sites for new homes and business;
- Have local policies to guide future development;
- Set out design guidance and codes;
- Safeguard important local greenspaces;
- Support village services and jobs;
- Prioritise parish projects for developer contributions.

## **We Cannot:**

- Ignore National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- Contradict Local Authority Planning Policy;
- Plan for fewer homes than TWBC target;
- Protect large tracts of land;
- Set such a high bar that new development becomes unviable.

# The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

This provides rules for Local Authorities and Neighbourhood Plan teams. Planners should:

- Maximise building on previously developed land ('brownfield sites');
  - TWBC very keen to find 'brownfield sites' outside the AONB to protect the rural character.
- Make efficient use of land. Planned rural housing density is normally 30 dwellings per hectare;
- Minimise development on:
  - Green Belt, National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Identify sites that will be developed, not a 'wish list'. Sites should be:
  - AVAILABLE = landowner will offer the site for building;
  - SUSTAINABLE = close to or capable of creating facilities;
  - DELIVERABLE = cost-effective for developers.

# The NPPF favours larger sites

Large sites offer economies of scale. Under NPPF guidelines and current TWBC policies:

- Developers are only required to make a contribution towards affordable homes for sites of over 11 homes;
- Developers are only obliged to fund local projects for sites of over 10 homes;
- Part of the Parish Target can be made up by future 'windfall' if it can be demonstrated that the plan is realistic;
- Smaller sites do not produce funds for local affordable housing or local investment in facilities. These were important elements that the village asked for during the workshops.

# Benenden NDP approach



# Village mandate for the NDP team

The 2015 Parish Plan, and the NDP workshops and input provided the NDP team with guidance on the village needs and wishes:

- Parish Plan – 8.5 new homes per year. Over 18 years = 153 new homes by 2033;
- Provide enough affordable housing to meet local need;
- Provide strong protection for the environment such as local wildlife sites, ancient woodland and views;
- Small, scattered development and appropriate housing density to reflect Benenden's rural character;
- Secure funding for community projects from developers to improve local infrastructure.

# Benenden counter-offer

The NDP team disagreed with TWBC's initial target. Our approach:

	New Homes	Affordable Homes
2 sites have planning permission (Benenden Hospital South, Walkhurst Rd)	36	12
NDP assessment: 4.6 from 127 hectares offered under Call for Sites, at average 22 dph	95	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>55</b>

Any additional suitable sites would allow Benenden options on how to meet any agreed target.

**TWBC agreed to a target of 'around 100 homes' – in addition to existing permissions**

# Larger sites were offered

- Of 20 sites offered by landowners 18 provide capacity for more than 15 homes on each site;
- The NDP team asked TWBC planners, and our consultants if we could limit development to small corners of these sites;
- They advised very strongly against this:
  - Sites with clear, pre-existing boundaries can be contained more effectively.
  - Beware the 'hammerhead junction' leaving access to the rest of the field.

# Example of a typical plan for development



Typical 'hammerhead junction' for access to the next field...

# The challenge faced by the NDP team

NDP team have tried to balance village needs and wishes within the National planning rules, and the sites offered by landowners:

- TWBC have recognised a lower housing density is a better fit given the nature of our selected sites;
- The housing target agreed with TWBC now aligns well with the Parish Plan;
- By selecting medium-sized sites the plan secures local affordable housing and developer investment in local projects;
- Around 20% of the target housing will be delivered by ‘windfall’ sites, in smaller developments of fewer than 4 homes.

# The proposed sites

This Plan delivers 80% of our target homes on

FOUR Sites:

3 'brownfield' sites,

1 'greenfield' site for Almshouses,

Two of the 'brownfield' sites are outside the AONB

20% on small sites of 4 or fewer homes

LS16 Uphill



# LS 16 Uphill today



# LS16 Uphill

Classed as a previously developed site, with 1 large house and garden, of 0.8 hectare. No restrictions such as ancient woodland.

Issues:

- Vehicle access onto New Pond Road and additional traffic at the cross-roads;
- Pedestrian access to the village is along New Pond Road;
- Extends Benenden's village envelope.

Proposal: 18 - 20 homes, of which 6 - 8 affordable. Housing density of 25dph (similar to Horton's Close).

The developer must:

- Retain as many trees, hedging as possible to maintain seclusion – may impact numbers
- Provide a footpath for pedestrians into Benenden;
- Provide funds to improve traffic safety at Benenden crossroads.

277- Feoffee

277 Feoffee today



# 277 Feoffee

This site is a green field, of 1.46 hectares. Creating a buffer for ancient woodland limits development to 1 hectare.

Issues:

- Vehicle movements on Walkhurst Road, and via the War Memorial;
- Extends Benenden's village envelope.

Proposal: 22 - 25 homes, of which 12 - 14 affordable (Almshouse Trust). Housing density of 25 dph (similar to Rothermere Close).

The developer must:

- Protect the ancient woodland next door;
- Provide a footpath for pedestrians to Benenden;
- Provide funds to manage traffic safety on Walkhurst Road;
- Retain views for residents of Harmsworth Court.

424 Hospital South side

# 424 Hospital South side - today



# 424 Hospital – South side

A previously developed site outside the AONB, with many redundant buildings.

Total site is 4.8 hectares, but protecting wildlife sites, green spaces and woodland limits development to 2.4 hectares.

Benenden Hospital Trust have existing permission to build 24 homes.

Issues:

- More vehicles using Goddards Green Road, and Castleton's Oak cross-roads;
- Very limited facilities at East End;
- East End is a small settlement: additional homes will require additional facilities.



# 424 Hospital – South Side

Proposal: 22 - 25 homes on top of the permission for 24. This will include 8 - 10 additional affordable homes.

There will be between 46 - 49 houses at density of around 21 dph.

The developer must:

- Protect existing Local Wildlife Sites and woodland;
- Develop only the curtilage of existing buildings;
- Contribute to reducing the impact of extra traffic: such as a school minibus service, a new footpath, and a cycleway into Benenden;
- Provide playground, a shop & café and a hub for the community;
- Provide funds for additional affordable housing in Benenden itself.

Benenden Hospital Trust to provide a clear long-term plan for entire campus.

LS40 Hospital North side

# LS40 Hospital North side today



## LS40 Hospital North side

Total site is 3.7 hectares, outside AONB, with 18 existing homes. Wildlife sites and green spaces protection limits development to 1.6 hectares.

Issues:

- More vehicles using Goddards Green Road, and Castleton's Oak cross-roads;
- Very limited facilities at East End;
- East End is a small settlement: additional homes will require additional facilities.

## LS40 Hospital North side

Proposal: 23 – 25 new homes, on top of the existing 18, which will be refurbished or re-developed. Including a total of 10 - 12 affordable homes. Once complete there will be 41 - 43 homes here, at a density of 22 dph.

The developer must:

- Meet all the requirements for Hospital South site;
- Protect the Local Wildlife Site on the former cricket pitch;
- Wait to start development until all the homes on the South side (site 424) are completed.

# Summary of our preferred sites

Site	Location	Min homes	Max homes	Affordable homes
Existing permissions at Walkhurst Rd and Benenden Hospital south		36	36	12
Draft Plan Proposals:				
LS16 Uphill	'Brownfield', inside AONB, close to facilities	18	20	6 - 8
277 Feoffee	'Greenfield' for Almshouses, inside AONB, close to facilities	23	25	12 - 14
424 Hospital South	'Brownfield', outside AONB, facilities to be provided	22	25	8 - 10
LS40 Hospital North	'Brownfield', outside AONB, facilities to be provided	22	25	10 - 12
<b>Total planned sites</b>		<b>85</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>36 - 44</b>

# Affordable Housing

- The Housing Needs Survey says we need 30 affordable homes by 2023;
- The Plan delivers around 40 affordable homes plus 12 that already have permission, around 52 in total;
- Affordable homes at Feoffee will be built by the Almshouse Trust. They will remain as affordable homes for local people;
- A number of Housing Associations could provide Benenden's affordable housing;
- Example: English Rural Housing manage Vyvyan Cottages and part of Hortons Close. They could help ensure our new homes remain affordable and for local people.
  - Talks have started with them about the other affordable homes in the plan;
  - They cannot progress until developer has formal planning consent.

## Smaller sites

- Only 2 sites offered were small enough to provide fewer than 5 homes:
  - Boughton House – Benenden;
  - Wandle Mill – Iden Green.
- Rather than take an increased target, we have reserved around 20% of our target for small sites as ‘windfall’;
- These and other small sites could qualify to complete our plan offering scattered ‘windfall’ development.



# Total Impact of Planned Development to 2033

Site	Location	Min homes	Max homes	Affordable homes
Existing Permissions at Walkhurst Rd and Benenden Hospital south		36	36	12
Draft Plan Proposals				
<b>Total planned sites</b>		<b>85</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>36 - 44</b>
Anticipated Windfall	Up to 20% of NDP Plan	18	19	0
<b>Total NDP plan</b>		<b>103</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>36 - 44</b>
<b>Total additional homes by 2033</b>		<b>139</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>48 - 56</b>

The Parish Plan anticipated building an average of 8.5 homes per year  
 2015 to 2033 = 18 years x 8.5 = **153**

This Plan delivers 80% of our target homes on

FOUR Sites:

3 'brownfield' sites

1 'greenfield' site for Almshouses

Two of the 'brownfield' sites are outside the AONB

20% on small sites of fewer than 5 homes

# Next steps

# Consultation phases

Feb – Apr 2019	Rough Draft launched	Your feedback to the NDP team	NDP team update based on your views and write a First Draft
May – Jul 2019	First Draft	Your feedback to the Parish Council & NDP team	NDP team update and create a Second Draft
Aug – Oct 2019	Second Draft	Your feedback to TWBC	NDP team update and create a Final Draft
Nov – Jan 2020	Final Draft	Independent Examiner checks for compliance; You can appeal to the Examiner. Parish Referendum	Plan is ‘made’. It becomes a formal Planning document

# The NDP team need your views on this Rough Draft:

- The Rough Draft is published on the NDP website. Hard copies are available today;
- Feedback via e-mail ([benenden.n.p@btinternet.com](mailto:benenden.n.p@btinternet.com)), or on the Comment Cards to the Parish Office or at the Shop;
- Formal Consultation has three stages: you will have 3 opportunities over 8 months to influence the plan.

Please tell us what you like and want to keep, as well are the areas you would want to see changed and why they should change.