



Ringmer GBI Settlement Appraisal

Prepared for: Lewes District Council

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Introduction

This settlement appraisal is intended to provide a picture of the existing Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) in and around the settlement boundary and highlight opportunities for improvement.

It is divided into three parts:

Part 1: Local Context - which provides detail of existing local issues and relevant planning policy.

Part 2: Current GBI – which examines local GBI from the perspective of the five 'Why' Principles of the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework.

Part 3: Audit and analysis - which provides a summary of a selection of audited sites from the settlement and highlights potential opportunities for improvement.

Useful terms:

GBI – Green and Blue Infrastructure

SuDS – Sustainable Drainage Systems

PRoW – Public Rights of Way

SDNP – South Downs National Park

LGS – Local Green Space

NE – Natural England

BNG – Biodiversity Net Gain

LNRS – Local Nature Recovery Strategy

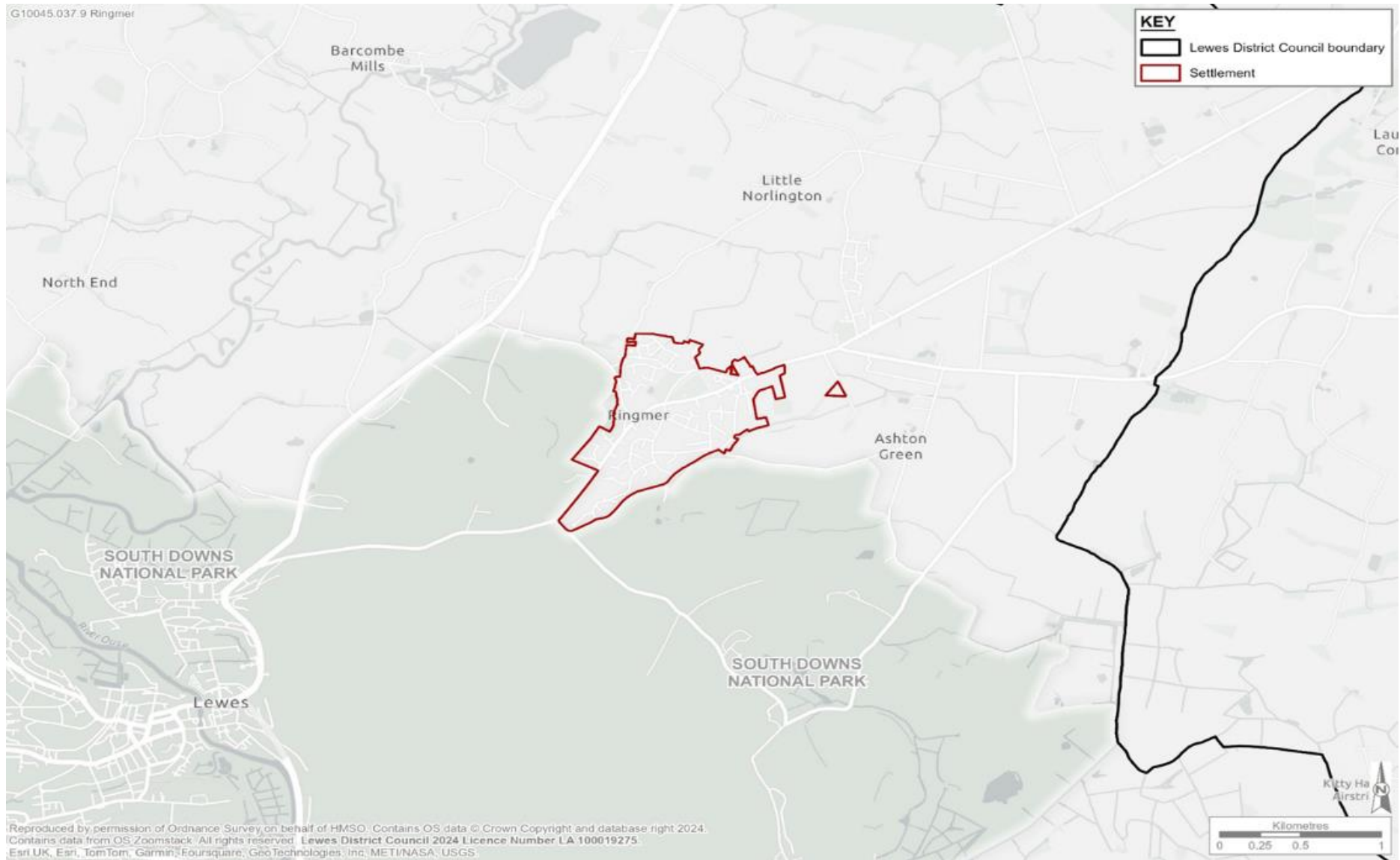


Figure 1: Ringmer Settlement Boundary as defined by Lewes District Local Plan Policies Map 2020.

Part 1: Local Context

1 Overview

Ringmer, identified in Figure 1, lies immediately north of the SDNP and approximately 3km northeast of Lewes. Ringmer is bound to the north and east by open countryside and to the south and west by the SNDP. Broyle Side is located approximately 465m to the northeast of Ringmer, and Broyle Side residents use many of the facilities, services and open spaces within Ringmer.

Ringmer is within Ringmer Parish which covers an area of approximately 2,589 ha, extending from downland landscape in the south of the Parish to a typical Low Wealden landscape to the north. The total population of the Parish is 4,765¹.

Ringmer is classified as a 'Rural Service Centre' in the Settlement Hierarchy Review (July 2023) due to being considered as a sustainable location with several key services and facilities that meet many day to day needs of the residents, but also rural hinterland residents from the wider Parish and beyond. Due to the services within Ringmer there are some employment opportunities, but many residents commute out of Ringmer to larger nearby towns or work from home.

Ringmer has a large village green at the centre of the village to the north of Lewes Road, which forms a focal point for the village and forms an important part of the village's historic character. The village green includes a cricket square, play provision and informal amenity greenspace for walking and informal recreation. There are good quality footpaths across the Village Green with benches for

relaxation. A talking bench is present to encourage residents to talk to each other and tackle loneliness.

Ringmer benefits from a high-quality built environment, especially in the conservation area around the Village Green. Ringmer has several listed buildings, including the Grade I listed medieval Ringmer church and several other medieval houses. The conservation area and listed buildings are an important part of the character of the village.

There is a high proportion of daily travel from Ringmer undertaken by private car, however there are sustainable travel options such as a bus service (Regency Route) which runs along the B2192 providing access to Brighton, Lewes, Hailsham and Eastbourne. There is also a cycle and footpath route alongside the B2192 from Ringmer to Lewes.

There are no railway links in Ringmer, so for residents wishing to travel by rail, the nearest train station would be in Lewes. The bus service from Ringmer to Lewes does not pass near Lewes railway station.

¹ Ringmer Parish 2021 Census Data <https://ringmer.parish.uk/census/>

2 Consultation

The Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (2016) (Ringmer NP 2016) undertook consultation in 2014. The following key themes were identified for the Ringmer Parish:

- Sustainability; and
- Balanced, healthy and inclusive community.

Lewes District Council with consultants at TEP, undertook consultation in 2023 to support a district-wide the GBI Study. As part of the consultation an interview was undertaken with a representative from Ringmer Parish Council.

The Parish Council representative stated that Ringmer has seen significant development which has increased the population and put pressure on services, infrastructure and green spaces. Ringmer residents and the Parish Council want to retain the “village feel” including the historic core of the village, which links to Natural England’s GI Principle 1: Nature Rich and Beautiful Places.

The B2192 runs from Lewes, through Ringmer to the A22 to the north. This is a narrow road, but is used heavily by HGVs. Residents have campaigned to reduce the speed of this road, especially through the village, as it creates barriers to leading an Active and Healthy Lifestyles (Natural England GI Principle 2). There is currently limited provision of safe walking and cycling routes along the road, however the Parish Council feel this is an opportunity. There is a good wider network of footpaths from the village into the countryside.

Another challenge faced by Ringmer Parish is flooding from the River Ouse, therefore SuDS have been implemented within Ringmer village. The Parish Council advised that the SuDS are not being maintained effectively and therefore have not provided suitable water attenuation. This in turn provides a barrier to achieving Natural

England GI Principle 4: Improved Water Management and Principle 5: Climate Change.

The Parish Council stated that they have good relationships with SDNP and Ouse and Adur River Trust and work with them closely to collaborate on local projects.



Figure 2: Ringmer Well & Pump

3 Local GBI Initiatives

There are several local initiatives in and around Ringmer including:

- **ECO Group Ringmer** – The ECO Group in Ringmer is designed so that residents within Ringmer can share their local and immediate environment by eco-friendly means. The group meets every third Thursday in the month. This group supports community cohesion by supporting residents to meet and share their local knowledge of eco-friendly living and help protect nature.
- **Storing the Storm** – Ringmer Scout Group work alongside the Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust to create small scale, local SuDS systems to slow surface water run-off and mitigate flooding challenges. This initiative supports the maintenance of the natural water cycle and sustainable drainage at a local scale, and it reduces pressures on the natural environment. The SuDS systems also support Ringmer to adapt to climate change whilst providing education and recreational community activities for young children to connect with nature, and understand the impacts of climate change.
- **Kings Academy Ringmer (formerly Ringmer Community College)** – Kings Academy Ringmer is actively involved in environmental activities and projects. The school has wind turbines and solar photovoltaic panels and has won the Ashden Award for Sustainable Energy. This initiative focuses on conserving energy and becoming more resilient to climate change as well as adapting the school environment to mitigate climate change. The project also aims to help meet net zero carbon and air quality targets.



Figure 3: Ringmer War Memorial

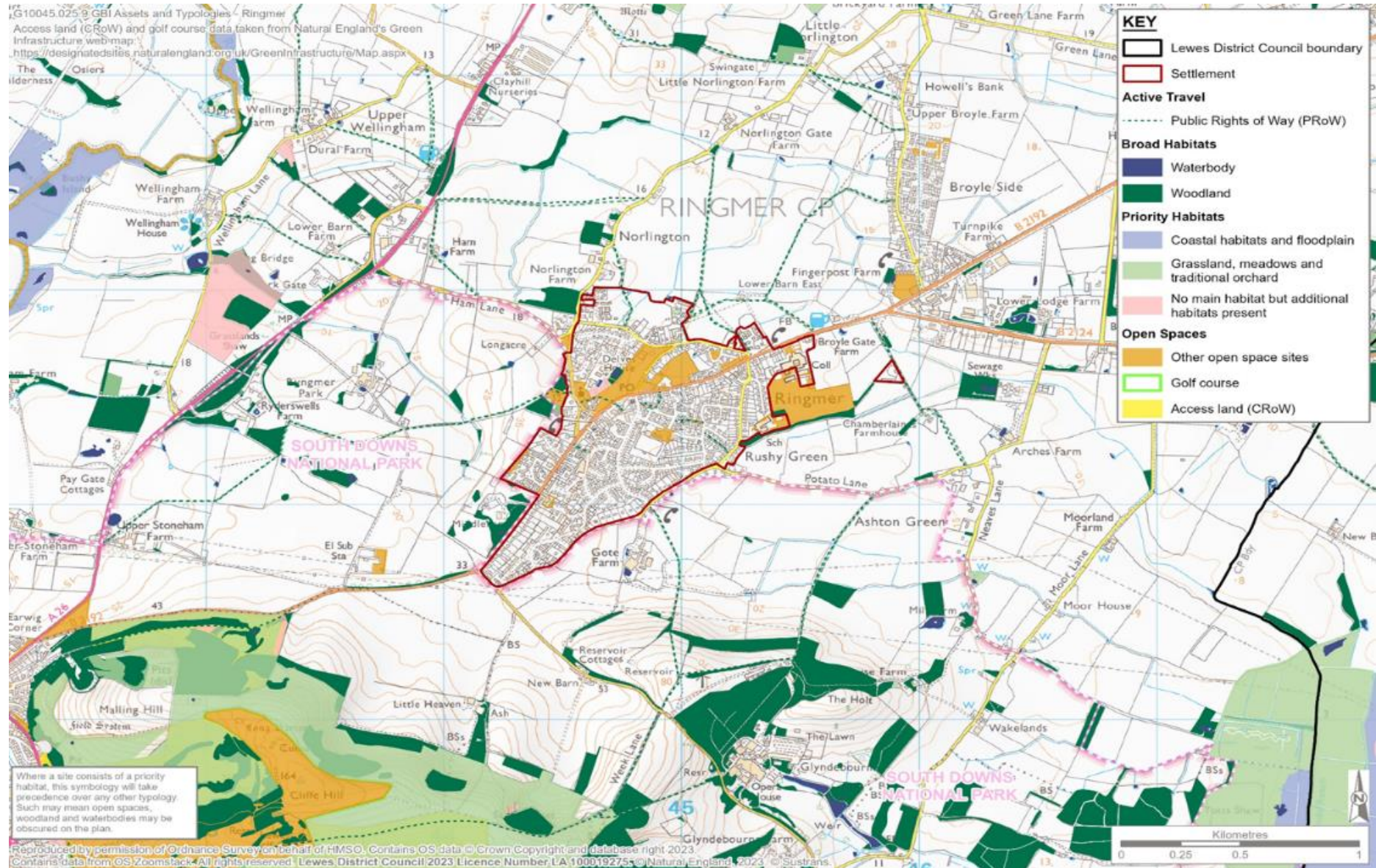


Figure 4: Current GBI Assets

4 Current GBI Assets

GBI assets in and around Ringmer have been mapped from desk-based assessment and are shown in Figure 4. There are several existing open spaces within the settlement, which support a wider network of GBI adjacent to Ringmer.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

ProW's are important routes which provide accessibility for residents and visitors to the open countryside. There are several ProW's which provide access from Ringmer to designated sites such as Plashett Park Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the north and the SDNP to the south.

From Ringmer there is a direct walking route to Lewes, through the SDNP and ecologically designated sites including Lewes Downs SSSI and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Malling Downs Nature Reserve.

Woodland/Waterbodies

There is a small area of woodland and waterbody within the settlement boundary adjacent to the Village Green, however most of the woodland and waterbodies comprise of smaller pockets and linear woodlands around the boundaries of Ringmer village (within Ringmer Parish).

These areas of woodland and waterbodies provide important habitats for foraging, commuting and nesting wildlife.

Habitats

There are woodland and waterbody habitats recorded in the Ringmer settlement boundary. The 'no main habitat' area within Ringmer indicates that priority habitats are likely to be present but further surveys are required to establish more detail.

Other Open Space Sites

Ringmer has several open spaces within and adjacent to the village. The open spaces within Ringmer comprise of the Village Green, which is an important focal point within Ringmer. These spaces link to other open spaces including Cheyney Fields and The Maples Allotments, Church of St. Mary grounds, Anchor Field and several areas of amenity green space within the residential areas of the village.

Kings Academy Ringmer and Norlington Fields Allotments also provide open space provision outside of the settlement boundary but are connected to Ringmer.

Landscape Designations

The SDNP lies adjacent to the settlement to the south and west of the settlement boundary.

5 Planning Policy and Strategy Review

A review of existing national, regional and local planning policy, strategies and evidence bases was undertaken as part of the district wide GBI Study and relevant findings are summarised below.

Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Core Strategy (2016), states Ringmer is within the ‘rural area of Low Weald’ which comprises of fields, mature hedgerow and areas of ancient woodland.

Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Core Strategy (2016) notes there will be a steady rise in population across the District that is expected to continue until 2030 and sets a vision for the ‘Low Weald’ villages and wider countryside describing an aspiration of what the area will be like by the end of 2030. The vision strikes a balance between meeting the community’s need for affordable housing and retaining and enhancing the attractive, distinctive local character. It also aims to deliver sustainable travel opportunities and safer roads particularly linking with the main railway line, whilst recognising that private car travel will still be necessary for many residents.

“Although the majority of recent development would have been directed to the urban areas of the district, development that meets the community’s needs for housing, including affordable housing, and supports the rural economy will have been sensitively accommodated, particularly in those settlements with the best range of community services and facilities and ease of access to employment opportunities.

With the London to Lewes railway line passing through this part of the district, further opportunities for sustainable travel, particularly to and from the stations of Plumpton and Cooksbridge will have been realised.

Although travel by the private car will still be, in many instances, the only practical way of accessing and travelling around this part of the district, improvements to road safety, including the lowering of speed limits in the villages, will ensure that this form of transportation is undertaken in the safest possible manner.”

Ringmer is constrained by the SDNP to the south, south-east and west, therefore growth is most likely to be located to the north and north-west. Spatial Policy 2 – Distribution of Housing, identifies that a minimum of 215 net additional units will be built in Ringmer and Broyle Side up to 2030, in addition to the strategic allocation at Bishops Lane, and existing commitments. The Ringmer NP has identified several potential sites for residential development up to 2030.

The Ringmer NP also provides policies aimed to retain the village’s character, regain sustainability, ensure a healthy and inclusive community and continue to work with SDNP authority cross boundary.

The Lewes Open Space Strategy (2020) identifies that there is 16.71ha of open space in Ringmer (which includes Broyle Side) equating to 3.43ha per 1,000 population. There is a surplus in Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms and Amenity Greenspace, but a deficiency in Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace, Parks and Gardens and Provisions for Children and Young People.

The council are in the process of drafting a new local plan which will set new housing requirements across the district, allocate development sites and set out up to date policies for new development.

6 Other Local Policies and Guidance

Landscape Character Assessment (2023)

The Lewes Landscape Character Assessment (2023) identifies that Ringmer is within the landscape character area of Eastern Low Weald (D) – D1 Glyne and Ringmer, Eastern Low Weald.

The forces for change relevant to GBI for Ringmer are:

- Climate change resulting in more extreme weather events, such as flooding due to rainfall patterns changing and heat stress relating to the landscape;
- Expansion of settlement areas and further linear development along road networks, which would expand urbanising influences.
- Increased agricultural pressure, further degradation of hedgerows and run-off into watercourses; and
- Improvements to the PRow network by local Sussex voluntary rights of way workers.

As described in the district wide GBI study, the GBI Management Guidelines set out in the LCA:

- Enhance recreational access, notably in the southern part of the Landscape Character Area;
- Encourage improvements to vegetation including hedgerows in varying condition;
- Encourage local natural flood management initiatives in combination with ecological initiatives and requirements;
- Retain and enhance the green and blue infrastructure network including as part of the wider ecosystem of the South Downs National Park;
- Support local initiatives to increase wildlife and biodiversity, including wildlife verges; and
- Continue to preserve and enhance the local PRow network.

7 Local Priorities

From the desk based evidence including local and neighbourhood planning documents, GIS mapping and consultation, Ringmer's local priorities are:

- Retaining a 'village feel' is important to residents including historical (conservation area), landscape and social connections;
- Ringmer should be a balanced, healthy and inclusive community;
- Ringmer village will work collaboratively with the SDNP authority;
- Improve accessibility to the open countryside;
- Increase accessibility between Ringmer and Broyle Side and public footpath and cycle path networks; and

Support community maintenance of SuDS features/ pondscape, and enhance green corridors (woodlands, streams, and other important wildlife habitats). Local priorities are taken from the Neighbourhood Plan, but only include priorities relevant to this GBI Study.

Part 2: Current GBI

In 2023 Natural England (NE) published a framework of Green Infrastructure (GI) Principles to guide the planning and implementation of GBI. In this section we consider the settlement in terms of the five ‘Why’ principles at local level.

8 Principle 1: Nature rich beautiful places

“To achieve nature rich and beautiful places at a local level, GI should:

- ***Thread biodiversity through the built environment connecting recreational, natural green and blue spaces;***
- ***Prioritise native species;***
- ***Be designed to connect people to nature; and***
- ***Contribute to site specific BNG requirements”***

Ringmer has a conservation area at the centre of the village, which supports the intrinsic “village feel” and historic character of the village. Like many other historic settlements in the area, Ringmer has a Village Green at the centre, which is made up of amenity grassland, crossed by footpaths and bound to the north by residential development, to the east by adjacent amenity greenspace, Cheyney Field and the B2192 and to the west by mature trees and a pond.

Cheyney Field is adjacent to the Village Green and Lawn Bowls Club. It forms part of the GI network for Ringmer, and comprises of a cricket square in the centre and long grassland, mature trees and hedgerow around the boundaries. In the eastern part of Cheyney Field there is a new wetland area, which provides a diverse habitat for amphibians,

birds, bats and other wildlife. Cheyney Field also provides some connectivity to the open countryside to the north of Ringmer.

There are no ecologically designated sites in Ringmer, however beyond the settlement boundary there are several designated sites, which are connected to Ringmer by the PRoW network. Plashett Park Wood is on the northern boundary of the Parish approximately 2.45km north of Ringmer. The woodland is classed as an ancient woodland and SSSI. The woodland appears on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map in 1816 and although some parts of the wood have been modified by conifer planting, the bulk is semi-natural. The woodland also has extensive areas of rides and several rare plants and a variety of butterfly and bird species.

Immediately south of Ringmer is the SDNP and the Lewes Downs SAC. Lewes Downs SAC is 146ha and protected due to the habitats of dry grassland, humid grassland, improved grassland and heath/scrub. Ringmer Parish Council works closely with SDNP Authority to ensure that the needs of residents and visitors are balanced with habitat and landscape conservation.

During consultation with the SDNP Authority it was highlighted that the SDNP Landscape Character Assessment (2020) has up to date information on Nature Recovery Opportunities and should be used to inform any development decisions close to the border. The landscape character area immediately south of Ringmer is classed as ‘Ouse to Eastbourne Scarp Footslopes’, which comprises the lowland shelf that lies at the foot of the steep northern slope of the South Downs, east of the Arun Valley. The footslopes form a transition between the steep chalk scarp to the south (towards Lewes town) and Low Weald to the north (Ringmer).

9 Principle 2: Active and healthy places

“To achieve active and healthy places at a local level GI should:

- ***Maximise health and wellbeing outcomes particularly in deprived areas and for disadvantaged groups;***
- ***Address issues of inequality in access to quality natural green space and routes, using the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (AGS); and***
- ***Be managed to deliver indirect benefits such as urban cooling, noise reduction, flood risk management and air quality improvements which can improve health outcomes.”***

Private car use is very high in Ringmer as most people commute out of the village for employment and services. A bus service runs every 30 minutes to Brighton and Eastbourne, which provides access to larger settlements, but due to extensions to the route the service timetable is changeable.

The B2192 runs from Lewes through Ringmer north to the A22. A footpath and shared cycle path runs alongside the road, which provides sustainable travel options from Ringmer to Lewes and the SDNP. There are some safety barriers to the use of the footpath and shared cycle path, due to the road being narrow and used frequently by HGVs and cars. The footpath/cycle way also ends in several places, where users have to cross the road to continue their journey. During consultation the Parish Council advised that residents have been campaigning recently to reduce the speed on this road, especially through the village. There have not been fatalities,

however the current speed reduces opportunities for residents walk or cycle safely along this road.

There is a good network of PRoWs within the local area, which leads to the SDNP and open countryside and provides walking opportunities for residents and visitors. Footpaths are signposted from within Ringmer, however these walking routes are not frequently used by residents. The Parish Council stated that there were no known barriers to usage of the ProW network, but there is lack of interest in walking locally. These walking routes are also not usually suitable for elderly, physically disabled or families with young children.

There are several open spaces which provide opportunities to undertake recreation, sport and play. The Village Green includes a Cricket Square, play provision for young people and informal spaces for walking, sport and play. Cheyney Fields also has a Cricket Square that is leased to Ringmer Cricket Club.

There is a Lawn Bowls Club, Croquet Club and Football Club (Ringmer AFC), which provide formal sports opportunities for residents of Ringmer and the wider community. There is one allotment site within Ringmer (The Maples) and one adjacent to the boundary to the north west (Norlington Field), which provide food growing, education, socialisation and recreational opportunities for residents.

10 Principle 3: Thriving and prosperous places

“To achieve thriving and prosperous communities at a local level GI should:

- ***Integrate services such as air quality regulation, flood risk management, noise mitigation, recreation, urban cooling, and pollination into development based on local needs;***
- ***Use early collaboration with adjacent local authorities, other developers, landowners, or infrastructure providers to create opportunities for jointly funded GI; and***
- ***Link to skills development, training and jobs by local employers, contractors, and training institutions”***

Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy, states that the non-farming rural economy within the rural area of Low Weald (which includes Ringmer) has seen considerable growth in recent years, due to farm diversification, the growth in knowledge dependent businesses and increasing levels of self-employment and home working.

As a Rural Service Centre (Settlement Hierarchy Review 2023), Ringmer has several small-scale services such as a butcher, baker, convenience store, pub and pharmacy, which boosts the local economy but also supports community cohesion. There also several sports clubs and community groups including football, cricket, croquet, Repair Café, Horticultural and Home Produce Club and Young Café at the Village Hall. Sports and community groups are mostly run by volunteers and attended by residents.

There are approximately nine Airbnb’s which attract visitors looking to explore the SDNP, but no B&B’s/hotels. Although there is a network of PRoWs leading from Ringmer into the SDNP, the Parish Council advised that these are not regularly used (see Active and Healthy Places). The Parish Council are aiming to increase the tourism offer within Ringmer.

Ringmer Parish Council stated during consultation that the village generally has an ageing population, however new development has brought many families into the village who use the local primary school and nursery, both of which are now oversubscribed.

Most residents commute out of Ringmer for employment, however there are several schools, nursing homes and local shops which provide some employment opportunities. Many of these jobs are filled by people commuting into the village from nearby towns, rather than those living in Ringmer.



Figure 5: ‘Time to Talk’ bench

11 Principle 4: Improved water management

“To achieve sustainable water management at a local level GI should:

- ***Provide sustainable water management including though sustainable drainage systems (SuDS);***
- ***Be adaptable to take account of the impacts of climate change;***
- ***Reduce site specific flood risks identified in flood risk assessments;***
- ***Improve water quality and help address existing sources of pollution;***
- ***Improve natural filtration where this will protect and enhance groundwater supplies;***
- ***Help connect recreational, natural green and blue spaces and provide opportunities for everyone to safely experience blue space;***
- ***Use water to enhance public open space for a variety of recreational uses, ensuring potential conflicts are managed;***
- ***Create and enhance habitats including re-naturalising river corridors and providing riparian buffer zones;***
- ***Soften estuary edges with coastal habitats that can act as buffers to coastal erosion and tidal flooding; and***
- ***Prioritise native species and ensure biosecurity principles are adhered to avoid spreading non-native invasive species and diseases.”***

Ringmer village is approximately 1.57km east of the River Ouse and therefore the village does not experience fluvial flooding, however the River Ouse does flood within the wider Ringmer Parish area. Ringmer Parish Council and local residents have implemented a scheme which intercepts surface water in the village, slowing the surface water flow and reducing the impact of flooding in the wider Parish. This has been achieved through the creation of a series of ponds with a capacity to hold 560,000 litres of water and control flow into the sub-surface drainage system. Local volunteers planted over 500 wetland plants on pond margins and 150m of hedgerow has been implemented. This project delivers multiple benefits for flooding, water quality and biodiversity and shows how urban areas can benefit from wetland habitat creation.

The Parish Council has stated that new development in the area has increased surface water run-off rates, meaning increased flooding of the River Ouse, which is a future challenge to be mitigated. A series of SuDS were installed as part of new development, but due to lack of maintenance, they are not currently effective at attenuating water.

New development has also put pressure on the sewage system within the area and has resulted in several breaches of the sewage system leading to pollution of streams and rivers, which feed into the River Ouse. This is a significant concern raised as part of the consultation with Ringmer Parish Council, who are trying to work collaboratively with Lewes District Council and Southern Water.

12 Principle 5: Resilient and climate positive places

“To achieve resilient and climate positive places at a local level GI should:

- ***Be audited using local information for instance using local resilience strategies and plans to improve the climate resilience of existing GI***
- ***Incorporate adaptive management to ensure GI is planned to provide multi-functional benefits and continues to do so as the climate changes”***

Ringmer Parish Council advised during the consultation that there have been several solar farms granted planning permission in the area. Solar farms provide sustainable energy, however the energy generated does not go to local residents or businesses. The Parish Council received payment from one of the first solar farms developed in the area, which was ring fenced for environmental projects in Ringmer.

There are several grass-roots projects being undertaken to tackle climate change in Ringmer, including the Eco Group Ringmer, a forum to share knowledge and ideas about nature conservation and the environment. The Storing the Storm initiative aims to slow down rainfall through small scale SuDS and supporting Ringmer adapt to climate change. Furthermore, Kings Academy Ringmer have undertaken environmental activities and projects including looking at solar and wind energy. This initiative focuses on conserving energy and therefore becoming a more resilient to climate change and adapting the school environment to mitigate climate change and help meeting net carbon zero and air quality targets.

These local projects show how residents and particularly the younger generation can lead and participate in environmental activity.



Figure 6: Cheyney Wetlands

Part 3: Audit and Analysis

13 GBI Site Audits

Site audits were undertaken in October 2023 to provide an indication of how local green and blue spaces are performing. The exercise is not intended as a comprehensive review of all GBI in the settlement as only a limited number of sites could be audited across the district. However, the audit methodology and scoresheets can be used by an open space practitioner to evaluate other green spaces and draw up improvement plans in the future if required. GBI assets were chosen in each settlement from existing GIS mapping data to cover a range of different uses and GBI services for people and nature.

Audits assessed the current contribution of the green space to the five “Why” principles of good GBI. The audit covered “Quality and Value” using a system derived from best practice methods associated with the Green Flag Award criteria², which was adapted to include additional criteria relevant to GBI.

The scores awarded in each category are classed from X to 4 outlined below:

- X - not appropriate;
- 0 - missing but needed;
- 1 - complete re-designed needed;
- 2 - major improvement needed;
- 3 - minor improvement needed; and
- 4 - no improvement needed.

² [Green Flag Award - Green Flag Award](#)

The audit also covered criteria of multifunctionality, connectivity, variety and distinctiveness, which are relevant to the NE “What” principles of good GBI.

Three GBI Assets were identified for Ringmer.

Site Audit Map

The site audit map shown in Figure 7 shows the settlement boundary of Ringmer and the 3 GBI sites audited, all of which were accessible by the public. Audit scores and further details are provided below.

Table 1 shows the Quality and Value scores from the site audits. Scores from site visits are based on a snapshot in time and should be considered in the context of local knowledge and other more detailed surveys where those are available.

Criteria	GI Principles	36. Ringmer Village Green (north) ³	37. Ringmer Village Green (south)	38. Cheyney Field
Social Criteria – Appropriately welcoming / Accessible to all	1,2,3	4	4	4
Social Criteria – Healthy, safe and secure	2,3	4	4	4
Social Criteria – Well maintained and clean	2,3	4	4	3
Social Criteria – Contribution to local amenity, vitality and sense of place	2,3	4	4	4
Social Criteria – Recreation, play and exercise value	2	4	4	4
Environmental Criteria - Diversity and Naturalness of Habitats	1	2	3	3
Environmental Criteria - Site Management and Habitat Diversity supports pollinators and soil invertebrate diversity	1	2	3	3
Environmental Criteria - Shade and Ventilation available to users	5	4	4	4
Environmental Criteria - Vegetation, land surface cover contributes to natural flood management	1,4,5	X	X	3
Environmental Criteria - SuDS or water quality management features visible and effective	4,5	X	X	3
Total Score	N/A	28	30	35
Potential Score	N/A	32	32	40

Table 1 Audit Scores

³ Sites 36 and 37 have been renamed for the purpose of this Appraisal. The sites are referred to as Ringmer Village Green, and The Green (Ouse Valley & Ringmer) in the Open Space Assessment.

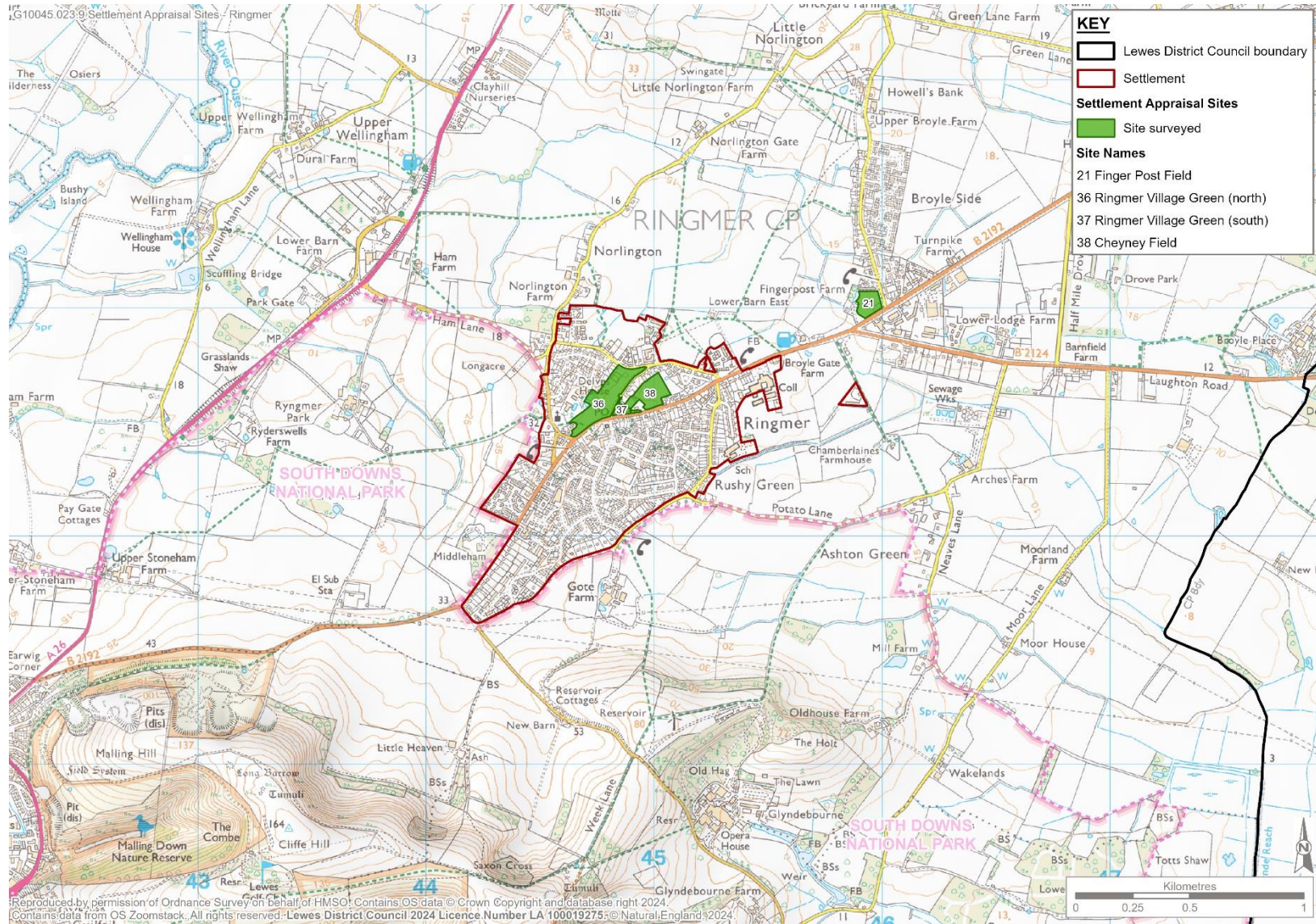


Figure 7: Site Audit Map

13.1 GBI Audit Scores

Two of the audited sites audited scored over 30 (Ringmer Village Green (south) and Cheyney Field) and both scored highly in several categories due to being good including signage, natural surveillance, clean and well maintained, space for recreation and play. Improvements could be made to increase the diversity of habitats, provide space for recreation and areas for natural flood management and SuDS where applicable. Cheyney Field has introduced a new wetland area, but this needs ongoing management to ensure it is established and maintains its long-term functionality.

Ringmer Village Green (north) – 28/32

Ringmer Village Green is at the centre of Ringmer and is an important part of the village's cultural and heritage character. The Village Green had maximum scores (4) in all areas apart from 'diversity and naturalness of habitats and site management and 'habitat diversity supports pollinators and soil invertebrate diversity'. This is because the open space is a formal amenity greenspace with footpaths and play. Opportunities to diversity habitat opportunities using wildlife meadows and tree planting could be explored.

Ringmer Village Green (south) – 30/32

The smaller area adjacent to Ringmer Village Green (north) is referred to as Ringmer Village (south) in this appraisal. It comprises a small area of amenity greenspace and formal flower beds adjacent to the Village Green (north) and Cheyney Field. The site is a part of a large network of open spaces within Ringmer. Furthermore, there is a pump and well historic feature within the site, which contributes to cultural and historical character of Ringmer. The site has maximum

scores (4) in all areas apart from 'diversity and naturalness of habitats and site management and 'habitat diversity supports pollinators and soil invertebrate diversity'. Similarly to Ringmer Village Green (north) this is a formal space and therefore less likely to have habitat diversity, however there are some areas of long grassland and trees. Formal flower beds also provide opportunities for pollinators and season interest for residents and visitors.

Cheyney Field – 35/40

Cheyney Field is restricted access as facilities are available only to members of particular clubs and groups. Dog walking and informal recreation for the general public are not permitted. It comprises a cricket square, private bowls green, croquet club and newly created wetlands and hedgerow. The site scored 3's and 4's in all areas including achieving the highest scores for good accessibility (appropriate to the parameters mentioned), secure and safe, contribution to the local community and shade and ventilation. The hedgerow and wetland areas require ongoing maintenance to ensure the newly created habitat reaches its full potential for habitat diversity and flood storage.

13.2 Multifunctionality

Multifunctionality (delivering multiple functions from the same area of GBI) is especially important in areas where provision of GBI is poor or scarce. GBI should deliver a range of functions and benefits for people, nature and place.

The three audited sites were assessed for their multifunctionality:

- **Ringmer Village Green (north)** – Ringmer Village Green is a multifunctional open space including formal play provision, and opportunities for socialisation, relaxation, exercise, and sports (cricket). Due to the formal nature of the open space, there are limited habitats which include mature trees and a pond on the western boundary. There may be additional opportunities in introduce more diversity of habitats, which will not only provide connectivity for wildlife but also slow surface water run-off.
- **Ringmer Village Green (south)** – The southern area of Ringmer Village Green is a separate and smaller open space compared to the Village Green (north) and Cheyney Field, but still provides multifunctional uses including space for dog walking, relaxation and small areas of trees and formal planting for pollinators.
- **Cheyney Field** – This open space has excellent multifunctionality with a balance between amenity and recreational use with cricket, croquet and bowls clubs and habitats including mature trees, long grassland and new wetland. This open space is an important GBI asset for Ringmer, providing benefits for residents and the environment.

13.3 Connectivity – to SDNP, Coast and other GI Assets

GBI should function and connect with the living network for both people and nature at all scales (e.g., within sites, and across regions and within a national scale). It should enhance ecological networks and support a variety of ecosystem services, connecting provision of GBI with those who need its benefits.

Three sites were assessed for their connectivity to the SDNP, the Coast and other GBI assets:

- **Ringmer Village Green (north)** – The Village Green is in the centre of Ringmer but the open space links to St. Mary’s Church at the south western end of the Site, which has a PRoW leading into the SDNP. However, there is no signage from the Village Green to this PRoW, which could encourage more residents and visitors to access the SDNP.
- **Ringmer Village Green (south)** – The Green is in the middle of Ringmer and although there is connectivity to the Village Green to the west, there is no direct access to SDNP from the open space. However as above, signage could link up these open spaces to the SDNP. The Green is also an important GBI asset connecting the Village Green and Cheyney Field.
- **Cheyney Field** – Cheyney Field is linked to both Ringmer Village Green north and south, creating an area of GBI in the centre of the village. However, there is no direct access from the site to the SDNP, but as above signage could provide direction for residents and visitors.

13.4 Variety and Distinctiveness

GBI should consist of a variety of types and sizes of green and blue spaces, green routes and environmental features (as part of a network) that can provide a range of different functions, benefits and solutions to address specific issues and needs.

Three sites were assessed for their variety and distinctiveness:

- **Ringmer Village Green (north)** – The Village Green is distinctive as a village green, central to the character of Ringmer. The Village Green has a good variety of GBI functions including recreation, play, benches for relaxation and socialisation which promotes active and health lifestyles. Furthermore, habitats such as trees and a pond on the western boundary create a natural and beautiful place to live and work. There are also distinctive views from the Village Green to the north.
- **Ringmer Village Green (south)** – Ringmer Village Green (south) forms a distinctive part of the character of Ringmer and the historic nature of the village. The open space isn't as distinctive as the Village Green (north) or Cheyney Field but does form an important part of the overall GBI within Ringmer.
- **Cheyney Field** – Cheyney Field has a variety of GBI functions (as detailed above in 13.2 Multifunctionality) and is distinctive as an outdoor sports facility with cricket square, signage for the croquet and bowls clubs. However, the open space also provides space for habitats and flood attenuation.

13.5 Capacity to accommodate change

Ringmer settlement is expected to accommodate an increasing population both locally and from further afield (section 5), which will then increase demand for green space for social use. The first five audit scores indicate how well a site is performing for people, with a maximum score of 20.

All GBI assets will also need to adapt to inevitable consequences of climate change and provide as many environmental services as possible (like temperature regulation and water management) to best serve local communities. The final five audit scores indicate how resilient a site is to the effects of climate change, with a maximum score of 20.

- **Ringmer Village Green (north)** – Ringmer Village Green (north) scored a maximum score (4) for all social criteria categories due to the open space being an important and popular GBI asset for residents but also an entrance for visitors into the village. The Village Green scored lower for physical environment due to the limited variety of habitats. Opportunities to expand the variety of habitats could be explored to increase climate resilience.
- **Ringmer Village Green (south)** – This site scored a maximum score (4) for all social criteria categories due to the open space being an important and popular GBI asset for residents. The site scored 10/12 for the physical environment due to there being a variety of habitats but this could be improved by explore more opportunities for habitats and SuDS where applicable.
- **Cheyney Field** - Cheyney Field scored 19/20 for the social criteria due to the contribution of recreational opportunities for the residents of Ringmer, however there were some areas of

the site which were not maintained i.e. disused cricket nets. The physical environment criteria scored 16/20 however minor improvements could be made in the newly created wetland and hedgerow area to ensure the area develops long term. This area provides a great opportunity to attenuate surface water runoff and ensure climate resilience for the future of the village.

14 Summary of GBI Opportunities for Ringmer

The evidence base, consultation and site audit results have been analysed and a summary of specific place-based opportunities is presented below following the five themes of the NE 'How' Principles which guide the delivery of GBI at a local level. A next step would be discussion with local experts and community leaders to further define and prioritise any detailed actions to take forward.

Partnership

Local residents and stakeholders should be at the centre of the planning and design process, and well informed about risks, trade-offs and what can realistically be achieved.

Encourage and support Ringmer Parish Council, community clubs and initiatives that explore and protect local wildlife according to local demand. Help existing grassroots wildlife groups and projects (like Eco Group Ringmer and Storing the Storm) to connect to regional initiatives that actively contribute to wider scale nature recovery projects and benefit from relevant funding.

Explore opportunities to enhance GBI assets like Ringmer Village Green (north and south) for habitat variety where appropriate but also support tourism opportunities such as signage to PRoW which link

Ringmer with the SDNP. Most of the GBI assets for Ringmer are within the centre, and opportunities should be explored to increase GBI assets within Ringmer and connectivity with SDNP and the surrounding countryside.

Explore collaborative working between Ringmer Parish Council, Lewes District Council and Southern Water to monitor breaches in sewage systems and plan solutions to reduce any pollution breaches into streams and rivers.

Evidence

Examine and collect information on the condition and usage of the PRoW's and signage to these routes, especially where they link Ringmer's GBI assets with the SDNP or the open countryside. This evidence base would provide an opportunity to improve accessibility for residents and visitors to the SDNP and the open countryside, therefore encourage active and healthy lives but also improve the tourism offering for Ringmer.

Policy & Strategic Planning

Continue to protect and enhance existing GBI assets through local and neighbourhood policies to ensure protection for open space long term. Develop a plan to increase Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace, Parks and Gardens and Provision for Children and Young People to address the existing open space deficiencies. This could include new provision at appropriate locations associated with new development if it occurs.

Design

Investigate opportunities for habitat variety wherever possible to improve climate resilience and reverse biodiversity decline. Furthermore, opportunities should be sought to retro-fit SuDS to slow the surface water run-off into the River Ouse and wider catchment.

New development should consider GBI on-site and how it links into existing GBI from the early stages of the design process.

Management

Enhance habitats wherever possible to encourage a variety of habitats and increase pollinating native species including at Ringmer Village Green (north), Ringmer Village Green (south), and Cheyney Field. Continue to manage new wetland at Cheyney Field to ensure functionality of flood management within the site.

Summary list of opportunities:

- Enhance GBI assets where appropriate for SuDS/flood management and variety of habitats;
- Continue to collaboratively work Lewes District Council and Southern Water to mitigate sewage breaches and pollution in streams and rivers, which run into the River Ouse;
- Review accessibility to PRow network from Ringmer to understand the quality of footpaths, barriers to accessibility;
- Provide sustainable and safe routes for walking and cycling to improve accessibility and connectivity between Ringmer and Broyle Side;
- Enhance and protect the existing open space network which provide GBI connectivity; and
- Provide on-site GBI provision in new housing development (where possible). If this is not possible a contribution should be made through planning obligations to support the enhancement of GBI in Ringmer.



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