

Albourne & Sayers Common: A Shared Vision for a Connected Rural Future

Prepared jointly by Albourne Parish Council, Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council, Sayers Common Village Society, and WILD (Watchdog for Intrusive Local Development)

Date: November 2025

1. Introduction

This document sets out the shared vision of local councils and community organisations for the future of **Albourne** and **Sayers Common** in response to the significant development pressures now facing both villages.

It has been prepared jointly by **Albourne Parish Council, Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council, Sayers Common Village Society**, and **WILD**, representing the collective voice of local residents and their elected representatives.

Five major development schemes are expected to submit planning applications in the near future. Together, these developments present both a challenge and an opportunity — to ensure that growth takes place **within one coherent masterplan** that respects the rural character of our existing communities, protects our environment, and delivers lasting benefits.

This document represents the **community-led vision** that we expect to shape and inform that process. It recognises the inevitability of some development but insists that growth be **responsible, coordinated, and beneficial** — not at the expense of existing residents or the rural environment that defines our villages.

2. Shared Vision Statement

To create a connected and sustainable rural community where Albourne, Sayers Common, and the new neighbourhoods grow together through careful masterplanning, shared infrastructure, and a strong sense of place — while protecting the quality of life, environment, and rural identity of existing residents.

We support development that strengthens both villages and connects them through shared amenities, green corridors, and active travel routes. However, we **oppose** any form of growth that leads to unacceptable **adverse impacts** - including the loss of open countryside, increased flood risk, noise pollution, and above all, **substantial increases in traffic volumes** along existing narrow and already-congested rural roads.

We envision a well-planned area that delivers on sustainability, affordability, and design excellence, yet safeguards peace, safety, and local distinctiveness.

Our guiding concept is a “**20-minute landscape**” - a rural interpretation of the 20-minute neighbourhood model. This means that residents, old and new, should be able to reach key services and amenities - schools, employment, healthcare, shops, and recreation - within 20 minutes by walking, cycling, or low-impact transport. This approach underpins a socially connected and environmentally balanced community.

3. Design and Delivery Principles

The following six principles define how the community expects development to proceed. They represent **minimum standards** for the forthcoming masterplan.

3.1 Movement & Mobility – Safe, Connected, and Low-Speed

Traffic management is the foremost concern for existing residents. Rural lanes already operate beyond their safe capacity.

Key commitments:

- A **comprehensive movement framework** must coordinate all development sites under a single plan.
- A **20mph rural zone** should be designated for the B2118–Reeds Lane–B2116 corridor, reinforced with physical traffic-calming measures.
- A **construction traffic management plan** must be created for the entire masterplan area, controlling haul routes, vehicle type, and timing, with continuous monitoring and enforcement.
- No construction traffic should pass through village centres or residential roads.
- Active travel routes and public transport options must be in place from the earliest construction phases.
- Through-traffic on the east–west axis should be discouraged to maintain safety and community amenity.

These measures are essential to avoid the most serious adverse impact feared by residents: a **major and permanent increase in vehicular traffic** through Albourne and Sayers Common.

3.2 Water & Landscape Stewardship – Managing a Shared Resource

Water management is a defining local issue. The Sayers Common area lies within the **Upper Adur catchment** and is prone to surface flooding.

Key commitments:

- Deliver separate surface and foul water systems with a new shared pumping station built early in the programme.
- Extend flood mitigation obligations beyond development boundaries to protect existing properties and roads.
- Require a joint **blue-green infrastructure plan** linking drainage, ecology, and amenity.
- Include a construction-pause clause in the event of major flooding.
- Integrate water circularity — including harvesting, recycling, and permeable design — into the masterplan.

3.3 Community & Social Infrastructure – Shared Spaces that Bind Communities

Every development must contribute to a coordinated **community infrastructure strategy** that enhances facilities for all residents.

Key commitments:

- A **centrally located Community Hub**, equidistant between the two villages and new sites, providing a multi-use hall, flexible space for health, childcare, and community activities, and potential co-location with green space and recreation.
- Phased delivery of facilities **early in development**, not as late-stage additions.
- Existing village halls to be retained and adapted to complement the new hub.
- Inclusion of **affordable housing** across all developments to support a balanced, inclusive community.

3.4 Digital, Energy & Construction Innovation – Building for the Future

Development should showcase the best of modern sustainable construction and digital infrastructure.

Key commitments:

- Use **Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)** to reduce build time, cut disruption, and improve energy efficiency.
- Ensure all new homes are built to **Future Homes Standard** or better, progressing toward **net zero and passive house performance**.

- Encourage designs that minimise energy demand, reduce fuel poverty, and integrate renewable energy and smart-grid technology.
- Require EV charging, gigabit broadband, and digital inclusion for all homes.
- Explore opportunities for local energy collaboration or district-scale energy systems.

Energy sustainability and water circularity must be embedded at the **core of the masterplan**, not treated as optional extras.

3.5 Nature & Biodiversity – A Living Landscape Network

The area's natural character must be preserved and enhanced through coordinated ecological design.

Key commitments:

- Pool **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)** contributions to fund landscape-scale improvements guided by the **Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy**.
- Deliver connected **green corridors** linking development sites, hedgerows, and woodland edges.
- Create new habitats, wildflower meadows, and tree belts that maintain visual separation between settlements.
- Establish a community-led ecology and monitoring group.

3.6 Design & Character – Distinct Villages, Coherent Identity

Design quality must express the rural identity of Albourne and Sayers Common while providing varied and inclusive housing.

Key commitments:

- Adopt a shared **design code** aligned with the *National Design Guide* principles of context, identity, and stewardship.
- Limit building heights to two storeys in rural zones.
- Preserve key views, heritage settings, and landscape patterns.
- Mix housing types and tenures, including affordable and smaller homes for local people.
- Ensure architectural variety and use of locally appropriate materials.

4. Governance and Delivery Framework

To ensure accountability and continuity, we propose a **Joint Community–Developer Delivery Board**, chaired by MSDC and including parish councils, developers, WILD, and local representatives.

Key functions:

- Oversee infrastructure delivery and Section 106 allocation.
- Manage construction traffic coordination across all sites.
- Monitor implementation of design and sustainability standards.
- Administer pooled funds for biodiversity, infrastructure, and community projects.

This governance model will prevent fragmented, uncoordinated delivery and ensure that promises made at planning stage are delivered in practice.

5. Five Non-Negotiable Commitments

#	Commitment	Rationale
1	A single, district-endorsed masterplan covering all five major sites	Prevent piecemeal, incoherent development
2	Comprehensive, coordinated transport and flood management plan	Protect people, property, and the rural environment
3	Early delivery of the community hub and active travel network	Build identity, inclusion, and cohesion
4	Binding design and sustainability code	Preserve character, achieve net zero, ensure quality
5	Joint governance structure with local representation	Secure transparency, accountability, and community voice

6. Our Villages in 2035 – The Future We Envision

By 2035, **Albourne and Sayers Common** will remain distinct but closely connected. Residents will walk or cycle safely between **green corridors, schools, employment, health services, social activities, and shops**, enjoying the convenience and sustainability of a well-planned rural environment.

Careful masterplanning will have managed construction intelligently, coordinated across all sites to minimise disruption, and delivered modern, efficient homes that meet net-zero standards. Flooding will be under control through landscape-led water management, and active-travel routes will link the villages seamlessly.

The community hub will stand as a vibrant centre for local life — where generations mix, volunteers lead activities, and services operate close to home. Affordable homes will have enabled young families and key workers to remain within the villages, sustaining social balance.

New housing will be energy-efficient, low-carbon, and resilient. Biodiversity will have increased through connected green corridors, and the landscape will retain its rural beauty.

Above all, both villages will still feel like **villages** — peaceful, safe, and welcoming, where growth has enhanced rather than eroded the qualities that make this place special.

7. Endorsements and Next Steps

Endorsed by:

- **Albourne Parish Council**
- **Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council**
- **Sayers Common Village Society**
- **WILD (Watchdog for Intrusive Local Development)**

Next Steps:

- Presentation to **JTP** and **MSDC** at the forthcoming masterplanning meeting.
- Agreement on inclusion of these principles in the unified masterplan.
- Establishment of the proposed **Joint Delivery Board**.

- Continued collaboration to ensure development that strengthens our communities while protecting the rural environment and quality of life.