

MID SUSSEX LOCAL PLAN

DEPOSIT DRAFT

TECHNICAL REPORT No.8

STRATEGIC GAP BOUNDARIES

AMENDMENTS INCLUDED FROM
1st MAY 2001 (D & T Committee)
23rd JUNE 2001 (Cabinet)

MID SUSSEX LOCAL PLAN DEPOSIT DRAFT

TECHNICAL REPORT

STRATEGIC GAP BOUNDARIES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Strategic Gaps are listed in the Structure Plan. The current version, West Sussex Structure Plan 1998 (not formally adopted), identifies seven such gaps within Mid Sussex District which are to be maintained and protected (Policy C5) These are:

- Burgess Hill and Hurstpierpoint/Keymer/Hassocks
- Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath
- Haywards Heath and Cuckfield
- Haywards Heath/Lindfield and Scaynes Hill
- Crawley and East Grinstead
- Crawley and Pease Pottage
- East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood.

1.2 The boundaries of Strategic Gaps are defined by Local Plans. This technical report explains how these boundaries have been defined in detail within the Mid-Sussex Local Plan.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Strategic Gaps have played a major role in strategic planning policy within West Sussex since about 1980 (West Sussex Structure Plan 1980). They are areas of countryside between settlements where it is necessary to place firm restraint on new development to maintain their separate identity and amenity. Only land which it is necessary to keep generally free from development in order to secure Strategic Gap objectives on a long term basis should be included within the gap. The primary role of Strategic Gaps is to maintain the strategic settlement pattern in West Sussex. Those gaps of local rather than strategic importance, such as those between smaller settlements, are identified as Local Countryside Gaps in the Local Plan.

2.2 The evolution of Strategic Gap policy and the evaluation of its success has been well documented by West Sussex County Council in a technical report 'Mind the Gap' (March 1999).

2.3 The Panel Report (May 1997) following the Examination in Public into the Deposit Draft version of the West Sussex Structure Plan, considered Strategic Gaps.

The Panel commented:

"1.58. We accept that the environmental constraints identified in the (Environmental Capacity) study are not all of equal weight. In particular, we think that the concept of the Strategic Gap is one that has been over-used and we heard evidence that in local plan preparation there is a tendency to draw the boundaries of Strategic Gaps more tightly than is strictly necessary.

1.59. We are satisfied that in principle Strategic Gaps have a proper planning function both to prevent the coalescence of settlements and to help maintain the character of the county as one of small to medium size free-standing towns. In that context they

provide an amenity role, but as we see it, they have not been defined for the express purpose of protecting the landscape or countryside, but rather to restrain development and to prevent the coalescence of settlements. There are other appropriate policies in the Deposit Draft Structure Plan (DDSP) which can be used if land adjacent to urban boundaries needs to be protected from development.

1.60. We believe that the DDSP in Policy C5(b) and the supporting text in para 8.21 gives clear advice on the definition of the boundaries of the Strategic Gaps, but WSCC may well wish to consider whether additional guidance should be given to the district councils on this issue.”

2.4 It can be seen that the Panel supported the principle of Strategic Gaps but were somewhat critical of the tendency to draw boundaries more tightly than was necessary. All Strategic Gap boundaries within Mid-Sussex have, therefore, been thoroughly reviewed during the preparation of the Local Plan. The test for development in the gaps as contained in C5, has also been amended in light of the panel’s comments. The ‘compelling circumstances’ test has been deleted. A copy of policy C5 is attached to this report at Appendix 1 with a copy of the corresponding Local Plan policy at Appendix 2.

2.5 It should also be noted that local countryside designations such as strategic gaps are recognised by the Government. In Planning Policy Guidance note 7 on the Countryside local authorities are required to base their designations on an assessment of the contribution of each area and to review their function as part of the Local Plan process

3.0 DEFINING THE GAPS

3.1 Policy C5 of the West Sussex Structure Plan 1998 (not formally adopted) states that the precise boundaries of Strategic Gaps will be defined in Local Plans. Paragraphs 7.19 to 7.21 of the Explanatory Memorandum of the Structure Plan outline the importance of the gaps and as highlighted by the panel, sets out the criteria for defining the precise boundaries of the gaps. These are important paragraphs and are therefore set out in full below:

“7.19 The settings of towns and villages are as important as the buildings and spaces which comprise their urban environment, and, if the individual character of a place is to be retained, its setting must be given close attention. A clear visual break seen when passing from place to place gives a recognisable structure to a group of settlements, establishing in travellers’ minds that they are arriving somewhere else. Very importantly, it helps to maintain the “sense of place” for residents of (and visitors to) the communities on either side. Past decisions about which land should be released for development have usually sought to prevent the coalescence of existing built up areas: this must continue.

7.20 The list in the policy includes those gaps which are of clear strategic significance. Additional gaps of more local importance are defined in some Local Plans.

7.21 Strategic gap boundaries should be defined in Local Plans to identify the land which contributes to the gap’s objectives, and to omit other land (which is still to be treated as open countryside and not, unless so indicated in the Local Plan, to be regarded as a reserve for future development). Regard should be had to the danger of cumulative erosion of the gap. The gap boundary should as far as possible follow some recognisable physical feature: lengths of it may be identical to the built up area boundary if it is evident that all land outside that boundary contributes to the objectives of the policy. Regard should also be had to the development requirements of this Structure Plan, although other options for accommodating the required development which do not infringe the Strategic Gap or other constraints should be preferred. If necessary, the County Council and the District Councils will draw up further advice to guide the implementation of this policy and to assist its defence at Local Plan Inquiries.’

3.2 The Strategic Gap boundaries defined within the Local Plan have been assessed against this set of criteria together with the additional countywide advice drawn up by the County Council together with the individual Districts/Borough (Strategic Policy Implementation Note). In summary these criteria are:

- The main objectives of strategic gaps as defined in the West Sussex Structure Plan are to prevent the coalescence *and* retain the separate identity and amenity of settlements.
- Only land which it is necessary to keep generally free from development in order to secure the objectives of strategic gaps on a long term basis should be included within them.
- Travellers (by all forms of transport) should be aware of a clear visual break when passing between settlements, providing them with the sense that they have left one settlement before they enter the next.
- The gap boundary should as far as possible follow some recognisable physical feature (e.g. a road, footpath, hedgerow, stream, field boundary etc) In some instances however it may be necessary to follow an administrative boundary which may not in itself follow a recognisable physical feature.
- Gap boundaries should coincide with built-up area boundaries if it is evident that all land outside that boundary contributes to the objectives of the policy.
- Regard should be had to the development requirements of the Development Plan
- The fact that some gaps are wider than others is of no significance in itself.
- An absence of existing urban activity within the gap is the ideal, although this may not always be realistically achievable.
- Intervisibility; land between settlements from which it is possible to see a built -up part of both settlements is likely to meet the objectives of the policy and is generally therefore included within the strategic gap. (The contrary position does not however apply. There are many sites within the gaps from which it is not possible to see from settlement to settlement due for example to topography, tree belts etc which still serve the objectives of the gaps).

3.3 In defining the extent of the Strategic Gaps it was recognised that coalescence is a process and not an end state. Hence whilst development of a particular site may not in itself result in the coalescence of settlements it may contribute to their coalescence. This is a vitally important consideration because precedents could easily be set for development which eventually lead to coalescence. This is one of the points which is emphasised in paragraph 7.21 of the Structure Plan (see 3.1 above).

3.4 It is important to note that the planning policy for development in the countryside generally (WSSP 1998 C1) and that for strategic gaps (WSSP 1998 C5) have differing aims and objectives. A proposal for development within a strategic gap will, by definition, lie outside a built up area and will therefore be tested against policy C1 and then against policy C5. Just because an application site may lie in countryside outside a strategic gap does **not** mean that it is reserved for future development. Proposals will still need to meet the tests of policy C1.

4.0 **Burgess Hill and Hurstpierpoint / Keymer / Hassocks (Map A)**

4.1 The gap consists of the area of attractive, generally open countryside between the southern built up limits of Burgess Hill and land to the north of the villages of Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks and Keymer. Much of the gap is prominent in views from the South Downs and is therefore particularly sensitive.

- 4.2 There are a number of north-south transport routes through the countryside linking the settlements. These include Cuckfield Road to the west (Burgess Hill- Hurstpierpoint), College Lane/Malthouse Lane (Burgess Hill- Hurst Wickham), A273 London Road (Burgess Hill- Hassocks), the London to Brighton railway line and Keymer Road/Ockley Lane (Burgess Hill- Keymer) to the east. There is also a network of public rights of way. The gap is therefore very accessible to the public offering numerous vantage points.
- 4.3 The western side boundary of the gap is defined by the Cuckfield Road from its junction with Pomper Lane to the built up boundary of Hurstpierpoint. The north-western boundary extends from the junction of Cuckfield Road/Pomper Lane and joins Jane Murray Way at its junction with Malthouse Lane. It then follows the built up limits of Burgess Hill until Keymer Road to the east, which marks the start of the eastern gap boundary.
- 4.4 Jane Murray Way provides a clear break between urban and rural landscapes. A major feature of the western side of the gap, to the south of this highway, is the impressive Hurstpierpoint College with its ancillary buildings and sports grounds. Otherwise this is an essentially rural area consisting of undulating fields bounded by hedgerows, some tree belts together with scattered residential and agricultural buildings.
- 4.5 To the south of the college is an area of agricultural land between Hurstpierpoint and Hurst Wickham. A belt of mature trees along the northern edge of Hurstpierpoint prevents any significant views into the village from the north and helps provide a soft edge. Distant views northwards, including of Burgess Hill are available from the fields adjacent to the tree line. These fields are visible from the north and meet the criteria for inclusion within the gap.
- 4.6 The gap boundary is contiguous with the northern built up area boundary of Hurstpierpoint with one exception. The area of land around the new development to the rear of St. George's House, is excluded from the gap. The gap boundary then follows the built up area boundary of Hurst Wickham, a distinct hamlet, which is almost separate from the main village of Hurstpierpoint itself. Whilst Hurst Wickham is a linear development, extending into the countryside, development in the triangular area of land immediately to the west would lead to the loss of a number of important trees and vegetation, thereby opening up views to the north. Development would also lead to the loss of an important open view, resulting in the loss of amenity and local identity for residents. The area therefore meets the criteria for inclusion within the gap.
- 4.7 The gap boundary follows the rear of the gardens to the east of Hurst Wickham; to the north of the curtilage of the dwellings fronting Wickham Hill and Hurst Road, Hurstpierpoint; and to the west of the dwellings facing London Road, Hassocks.
- 4.8 To the south of Belmont, there is a relatively well treed area where intervisibility between Burgess Hill and Hurstpierpoint is not possible. However, land to the north of Hassocks Road rises up towards the curtilages of dwellings facing the road. Consequently, there is clear intervisibility within large areas of this gap between Hurstpierpoint and Burgess Hill. This is particularly noticeable from a wide area around Ham Farm. Both settlements can also be clearly seen from the area in the vicinity of the footpath which passes east-west through Friars Oak Golf Course.
- 4.9 While not all of the gap area affords intervisibility between settlements, open views of settlements are possible from a large proportion of it and it is important to include this area between Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks within the strategic gap.
- 4.10 The boundary continues to the east along a public footpath, on the opposite side of London Road, following the built up area of Hassocks. It crosses the railway line and runs to the rear of the curtilage of the dwellings in Grand Avenue and Mackie Avenue, before continuing along the built up area boundary of Keymer until it reaches the County boundary with East Sussex (Lewes District).

4.11 It then turns northwards and follows the County Boundary to the north so as to join the southern boundary of the built-up area for Burgess Hill where it runs to the south of dwellings fronting Folders Lane. The land to the east side of Ockley Lane is included within the gap as development within this area would seriously harm the sense of passing from one settlement to another along this road; this is particularly the case as one approaches Keymer.

5.0 Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill (Map B)

5.1 This gap covers the area of countryside between Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill. These are two of the larger settlements within the District and it is particularly important therefore to protect their separate identities. The Haywards Heath Local Plan allocates a significant area of land to the south west of the town for new development together with a relief road. This development, which has planning permission but is not yet built, extends development within the gap. It is important that no further incursions are made.

5.2 There are three main north-south transport links between the towns. These are at Isaac's Lane, which forms the western gap boundary, the London-Brighton railway line which divides the gap on a north-south axis, and Rocky Lane/Valebridge Road. These routes allow good views through the gap and contribute to the clear sense of having left one settlement and entered the other.

5.3 The gap has an essential rural quality characterised by irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows, significant areas of woodland and scattered farm and residential buildings. Whilst not specially designated for its quality, the landscape is attractive in its own right and is important to the settings of the settlements. Land immediately north of Burgess Hill, to the west of the railway line, is designated as a local nature reserve (Bedelands Farm), with a West Sussex Site of Nature Conservation Importance at Big Wood and Valebridge Pond.

5.4 There is no settlement-settlement intervisibility due to extensive woodland belts and the topography of the landscape. There are however positions within the gap from which it is possible to view both settlements together. At Brooklands Farm for example, which is sited on rising land, commanding views over Burgess Hill to the south are possible together with views of the south east side of Haywards Heath and Stockwell Court, a block of flats in the town centre.

5.5 The western boundary of the gap follows Isaac's Lane, the proposed link to the relief road, and the new estate road to the edge of the built-up area. From here the boundary follows the northern limits of phase 1 of the south west sector joining the relief road just to the west. The boundary follows the line of the relief road, thereafter the boundary is contiguous with the southern built up area boundary for Haywards Heath with one exception. Rookery Farm is excluded from the gap as it does not meet the criteria for strategic gap designation.

5.6 To the eastern side of the gap, a significant amount of land between the settlements which would otherwise be included within the gap, is located within the county of East Sussex (Lewes District). The eastern boundary is therefore somewhat artificial as a result. It follows the county boundary and Valebridge Road to join with the northern built up limits of Burgess Hill.

5.7 The southern boundary of the gap generally follows the built up area boundary, with the exception of a small area of open land between the football ground and Freeks Lane, joining up with the western boundary at Isaac's Lane.

5.8 Land to the eastern side of Burgess Hill, in the vicinity of World's End, whilst designated as a strategic gap in the adopted Burgess Hill Local Plan 1992, does not contribute to preventing coalescence with Haywards Heath. It is therefore excluded from the gap.

6.0 Haywards Heath and Cuckfield (Map C)

6.1 At its closest point, in the vicinity of Hatchgate Lane, the gap between the built up areas of Haywards Heath and Cuckfield is just some 0.5km. To the south along the A272 (Butlers Green/Tylers Green) the gap, whilst wider, is fragmented with lengths of frontage

development to both sides of the road. The gap is therefore sensitive to new development and is viewed by a significant number of people travelling along the busy A272. There is therefore no divergence between the built up boundary and the strategic gap boundary at these points.

- 6.2 The widest part of the gap, in the countryside around Horsgate Farm, to the south of Hanlye Lane is of a completely different character. It has an open rural quality, essentially free from motor traffic and widely visible particularly from the eastern side of Cuckfield and the higher land to the north around Hanlye Lane which demarcates the northern boundary to the gap. The gap is criss-crossed by a network of public rights of way making it widely accessible on foot.
- 6.3 The eastern gap boundary follows the built up boundary of Haywards Heath with the exception of a very small area of land between Nos. 101 and 103 Penland Road which makes no contribution to the objectives of gap policy. Similarly the western gap boundary generally follows the built up area boundary of Cuckfield with two exceptions. Firstly the area around the new primary school at Glebe Road is excluded from the gap and secondly the small field and car park to the east of the Baptist Chapel at Polestub Lane is excluded from the gap as the area is enclosed by development on three sides with the fourth side defined by mature trees. It does not contribute to gap objectives and is therefore excluded.
- 6.4 To the south of the A272 the situation is complicated by the permitted, but as yet unbuilt, residential development and relief road to the south of Bolnore Road. The southern gap boundary follows Bolnore Road until it meets Reading Wood which is included within the Strategic gap. From here it follows the edge of the proposed development to the proposed new section of estate road and thence to the roundabout south west of Bolnore House, along the A273 Isaac's Lane, crossing this and then continuing around the southern side of woodland at Chownes Mead. It then returns to the built up area of Cuckfield via Copyhold Lane, Tylers Green and Broad Street. The gap is important to the settings of both settlements and should be kept free from development to protect their separate identities.

7.0 Haywards Heath/Lindfield and Scaynes Hill (Map D)

- 7.1 A major feature of the gap between Haywards Heath/Lindfield and Scaynes Hill is the A272 (Lewes Road) primary traffic route. This links the settlements at their narrowest point and divides the gap along an east-west axis. When travelling through the gap in either direction whether by car or on foot there is a strong sense of leaving one settlement and arriving at the next. This asset is important to protect. Whilst not subject of any special landscape designation, such as an AONB (the High Weald AONB starts just north of Great Walstead School) the land within the gap has a strong rural landscape quality.
- 7.2 Land to the north of the A272 is characterised by attractive open countryside having undulating fields bounded by hedgerows and tree belts. A network of public rights of way crosses the land. Other important physical features which characterise this part of the gap include the small hamlet of Walstead, which straddles Scamps Hill, and a significant area of woodland known as Costells Wood, which borders the western built up limits of Scaynes Hill.
- 7.3 Along the southern side of the A272, in the vicinity of Colwell Lane, there is frontage development with undulating fields and woodland behind. These latter areas are essentially free from development apart from scattered farm buildings such as at Eastland Farm, close to Scaynes Hill. There is no intervisibility between settlements possible due to the topography of the area, particularly its undulating nature and wooded areas such as Costells Wood.
- 7.4 The gap's southern boundary follows Ham Lane to the east, various field boundaries and the county boundary with East Sussex (Lewes District) until it joins with the built up area boundary at Colwell Lane to the west.
- 7.5 The western gap boundary is generally contiguous with the built up area boundary of Haywards Heath/Lindfield. The only exception is a small area of land at the north-west corner where part of a local nature reserve is excluded as it does not contribute materially to the objectives of strategic gap policy. It follows a short section of the A272 at Colwell Lane, Lyoth Lane, Gravelye Lane and a tributary of the river Ouse to the south east of Noah's Ark Lane.

There is a clear change in character from the urban to a rural landscape at the gap boundary and land within the gap here provides an important and attractive rural setting to Haywards Heath/Lindfield.

- 7.6 Land to the north of Scamps Hill is included within the gap despite the recommendation of the Inspector following the inquiry into the Haywards Heath Local Plan in 1993. It is considered that this area of land, which lies between the settlements, does contribute to the primary objective of strategic gap policy.
- 7.7 The eastern boundary to the gap is contiguous with the built-up area of Scaynes Hill. It is drawn around the housing developments at Costells Edge, St. Augustines Close/Roseleigh Gardens, Lewes Road and Ham Lane. The buildings and some land at Ham Lane Farm, whilst outside the built up area, are excluded from the gap as they do not contribute to the objectives of gap policy. Land west of the boundary would accord with the objectives of strategic gap policy and is for that reason included within the gap.
- 7.8 The north eastern side boundary follows a public footpath through Costells Wood, along field boundaries and a further footpath at Little Walstead Farm.

8.0 East Grinstead and Crawley (Map E)

- 8.1 This gap includes the area of land bordered to the west by the substantial town of Crawley and to the east by East Grinstead. The area is essentially rural in character although it does contain some areas of more intensive built development. The villages of Copthorne, Crawley Down and Turners Hill each have a built up area boundary defined in the Local Plan and whilst physically sited between the two main settlements, they are excluded from the gap for purposes of planning policy. The gaps between these villages and the larger settlements are however vital components of the wider gap.
- 8.2 The gap is widely accessible and visible to the public both by vehicular transport and on foot/bike through a network of roads and other Public Rights of Way. Important routes include, amongst others, the Worth Way public bridleway and national cycle route which links Crawley and East Grinstead following the line of a dismantled railway and the A 264 and B 2110. The settlements each have their own strong individual identity which Strategic Gap policy seeks to protect. The accessibility of the gap helps to foster this sense of place in the eyes of the general public through its contribution to the clear sense of having left one settlement and entered the next and the perception of the existence of the gap generally.
- 8.3 The northern boundary of the gap excludes the curtilages of the houses, and tennis club, on the Crawley Down Road in an easterly direction. It then generally follows the administrative boundary with Surrey County Council (Tandridge District) until it reaches Copthorne. Copthorne is excluded from the gap for the reasons explained above.
- 8.4 The western gap boundary is formed by the M23 motorway until it meets the B2036, Balcombe Road, as it passes through Worth Forest. This area of land, to the south of Majors Hill, is included within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in recognition of its special landscape quality. It is the only part of this gap so designated. The southern boundary follows Paddockhurst Road which lies on a ridge providing extensive views over the undulating countryside to the south and some views over woodland to Crawley and Gatwick airport to the north west. The boundary continues east of Turners Hill along East Street and Turners Hill Road until it meets the built up area boundary for East Grinstead.
- 8.5 In addition to the three villages mentioned above there is inevitably development between settlements. These small areas of low density development which do not have designated built up area boundaries and are therefore located within the gap. To the north of Crawley Down for example there is low density residential development in woodland settings at Cuttinglye Wood and Furnace Wood. To the east of Turners Hill there is a substantial mobile home park at Home Wood, with a small relatively modern development at Newlands Park east of Copthorne. There is also some commercial development such as the Rowfant Business Park at the former brickworks to the south west of Crawley Down, with a site occupied by Colas adjacent. Both these sites are located adjacent to substantial areas of

woodland. There are also small pockets of commercial development adjacent to the motorway at Wakehams Green garden centre and the hotel, offices and fitness centre at Crabett Park.

- 8.6 However, these developments, due to their relatively small areas or the extent to which they are dominated by integral and surrounding woodland, do not override the dominantly rural character of the gap which is created by large areas of woodland such as at Worth Forest, Rowfant and Copthorne Common. The rural aspect is also enhanced by the open fields, woodland belts and associated agricultural buildings in the gap generally but particularly between East Grinstead and Crawley Down around Imberhorne Farm and Tilkhurst Farm, and Home Farm to the west of Crawley Down.

9.0 Pease Pottage and Crawley (Map F)

- 9.1 This gap covers the part of the narrow tract of land between the village of Pease Pottage and Crawley which falls within Mid Sussex District. The northern part of the gap, which consists predominantly of woodland, lies within the Borough of Crawley. It is characterised essentially by open land mainly used for recreational purposes including a golf course and driving range. To the west there is a small woodland area with some built development associated with the golf club and offices within the former meteorological station. To the east there is limited residential development fronting Brighton Road with a field and woodland to the west. There are no public highways or other public rights of way through the land, a large proportion of which is designated High Weald AONB.

- 9.2 This is a particularly narrow and development sensitive gap having a depth ranging from just some 100m to 500m. It is important to protect the gap from further development to maintain the separate identity of Pease Pottage. For this reason the southern gap boundary is contiguous with the built up boundary of Pease Pottage. This southern boundary of the gap is extended slightly westwards to the boundary with Horsham District, so as to include the area of land around Horsham corner.

- 9.3 The western limit to the gap follows the administrative boundary of Mid Sussex-Horsham northwards until it meets the Mid Sussex -Crawley boundary which forms the northern limit to the gap. The area north of the district boundary within Crawley Borough is designated as Strategic Gap, similarly the land to the west of the district boundary within Horsham District is designated as Strategic Gap. The eastern boundary includes the part of Brighton Road within Mid-Sussex and the open land to the western side of the motorway. This latter area is included within the gap as it meets the objectives of strategic gap policy.

10.0 East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood (Map G)

- 10.1 This gap covers the area of countryside between the south eastern side of East Grinstead and the western side of Ashurst Wood. It is characterised by attractive undulating fields bounded by hedgerows with areas of woodland. The landscape is of particularly high quality hence the majority of the gap is designated as lying within the High Weald AONB. The gap contains a number of substantial buildings, such as Herontye and Brockhurst, which contribute to its character. A network of public rights of way cross the gap, including Forest Way which follows the line of a dismantled railway. These paths provide good public access providing widespread views thereby adding to the public awareness of the gap.

- 10.2 A major feature of the gap is the busy A22 (Lewes Road) which forms part of the strategic County highway network and links the settlements. This runs along a ridge dividing the gap on a south east-north west axis. There is a ribbon of residential development projecting from the town towards Ashurst Wood, along the northern side of Lewes Road. This is bounded to the north by a public footpath with fields at Worsted Farm beyond. There is a similar area of development along both sides of Lewes Road projecting from Ashurst Wood towards East Grinstead. Whilst predominantly residential in character it includes the significant office development at Wealden House. Both of these areas of development are excluded from the built up areas of their respective settlements and designated as Countryside Areas of Development Restraint. Due however to the extent of development so close to the settlement

boundaries these areas do not contribute to the objectives of Strategic Gap policy and are therefore excluded from the gap.

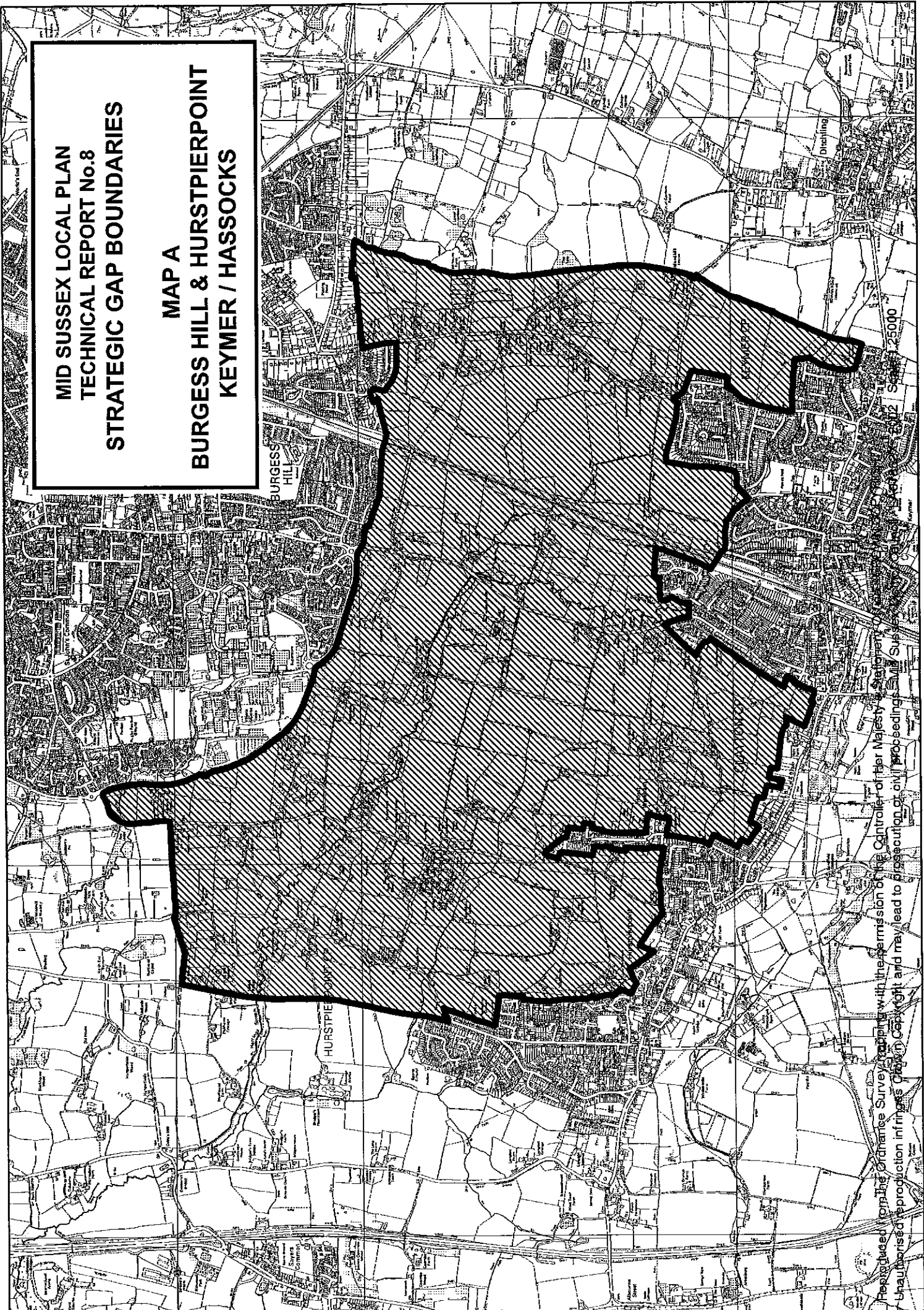
- 10.3 The area of land along the Lewes Road between these developments, in the vicinity of Truscotts Manor, is, with the exception of land at The Spinney, the 'last field' before the settlements coalesce. The protection of this area from development is therefore of paramount importance.
- 10.4 The gap is very narrow in parts having a width ranging from just some 250m along Lewes Road, some 1km along its SW boundary, to some 1.8km along its NE boundary. As such the south west boundary has been drawn coincidental with the built up area of East Grinstead with the exception of the ribbon of development along Lewes Road referred to above.
- 10.5 The southern boundary is formed by the stream known as Luxfords Brook, which flows between Harwoods Lane to the west and the sewage works. The boundary follows a short section of Luxfords Lane and then a public footpath across fields to the south of Wealden House. Fine views towards East Grinstead are possible from this area with St.Swithun's church being particularly prominent. The boundary envelops the ribbon of development along Lewes Road to the north west of Ashurst Wood mentioned above. It thereafter follows the defined built up area of the village until it reaches the County boundary with East Sussex (Wealden District) at Maypole Road.
- 10.6 The eastern boundary follows the County boundary northwards across fields to the west of Stoke Brunswick school, a public bridleway through Pitlands Wood/Fowl Wood west of Shovelstrode Farm, a public footpath west of Pitlands Wood and a stream which joins the western boundary of the gap adjacent to the residential development at The Dell.

This Technical Report was originally approved by Development and Transport Committee on 5th April 2000 as a background paper to the Mid Sussex Local Plan. Various amendments agreed at Development and Transport Committee on 1st May 2001 have been incorporated into this updated Technical Report.

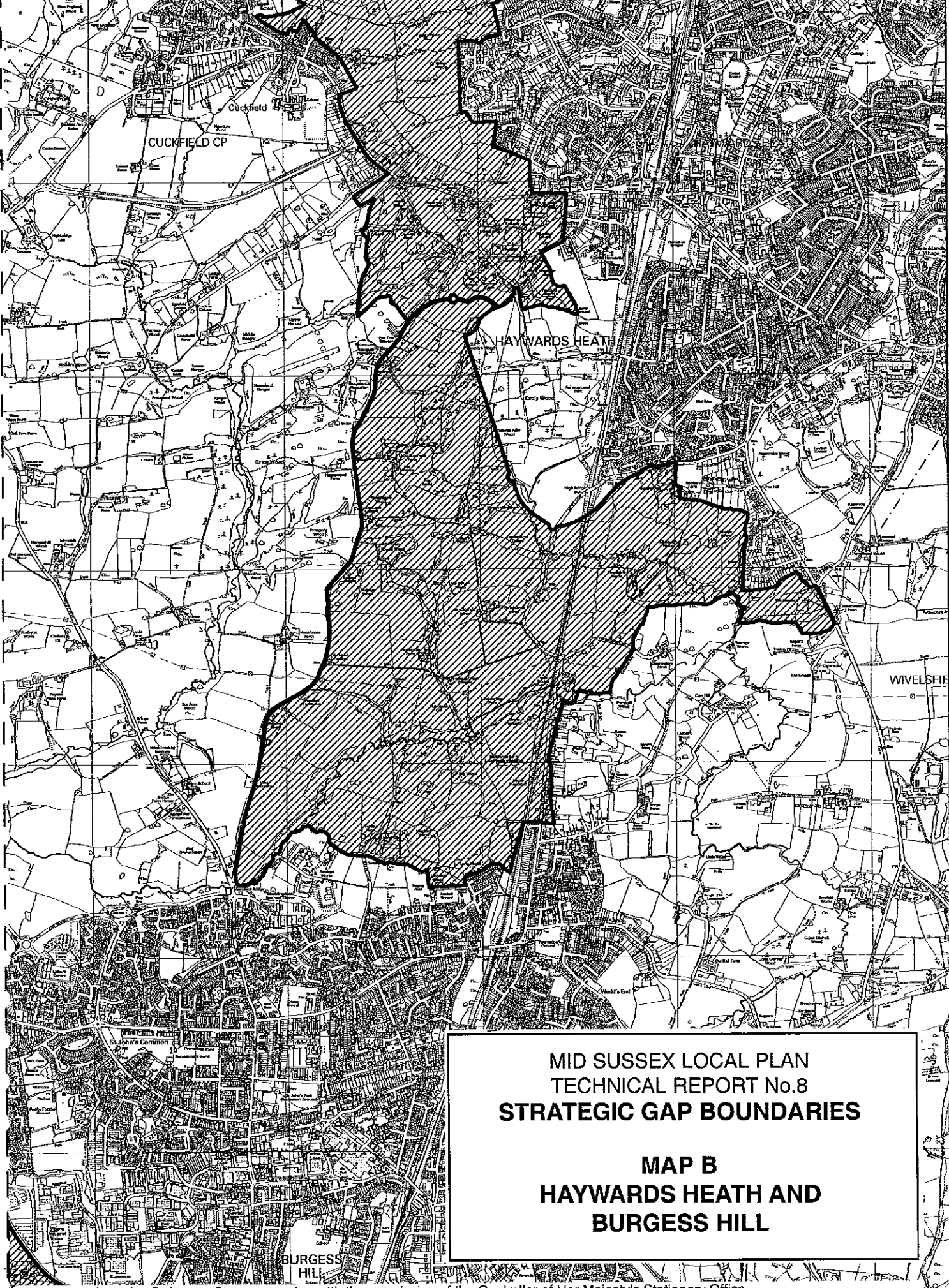
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MAP A

**BURGESS HILL & HURSTPIERPOINT
KEYMER / HASSOCKS**



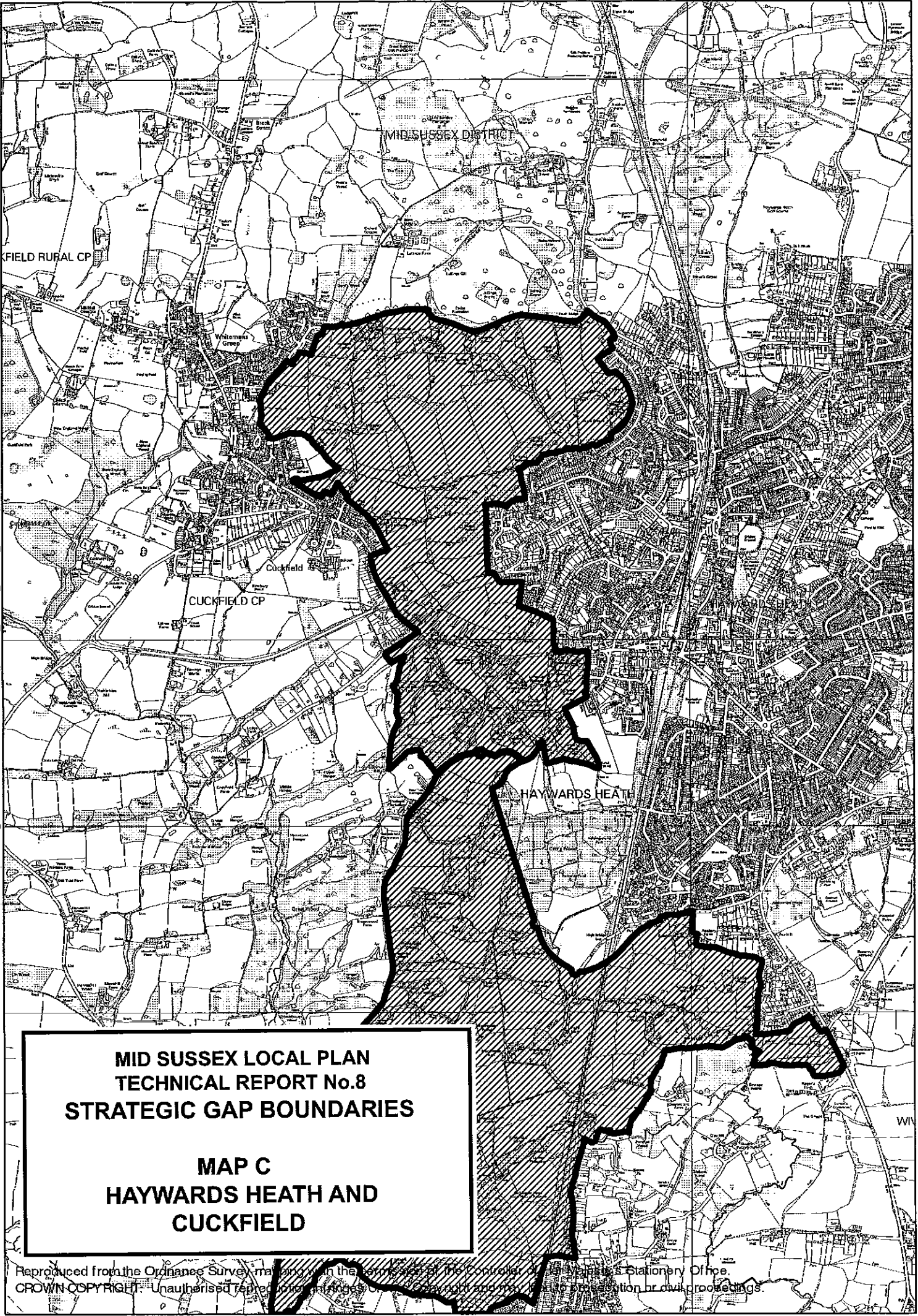
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MAP B
HAYWARDS HEATH AND
BURGESS HILL

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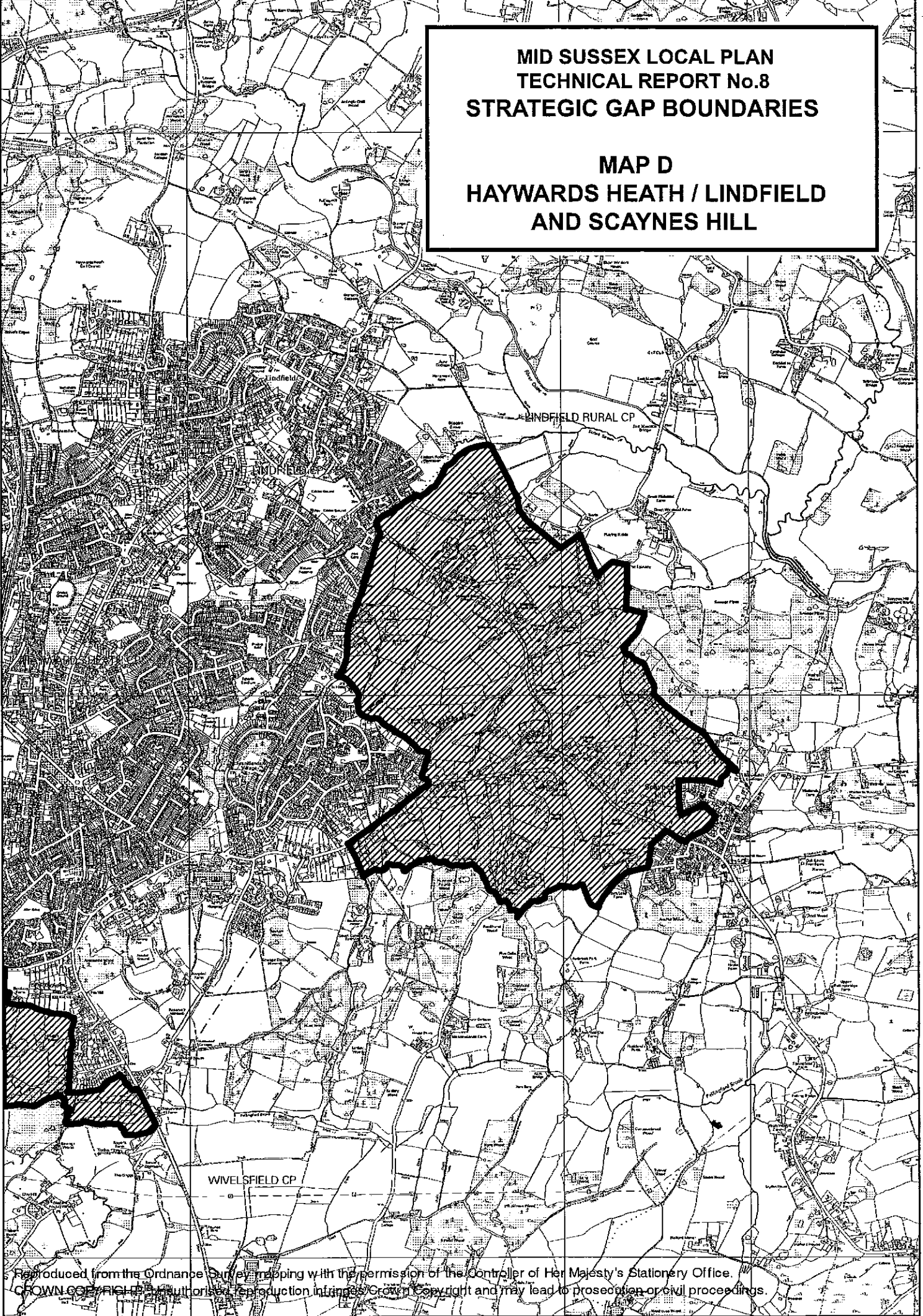


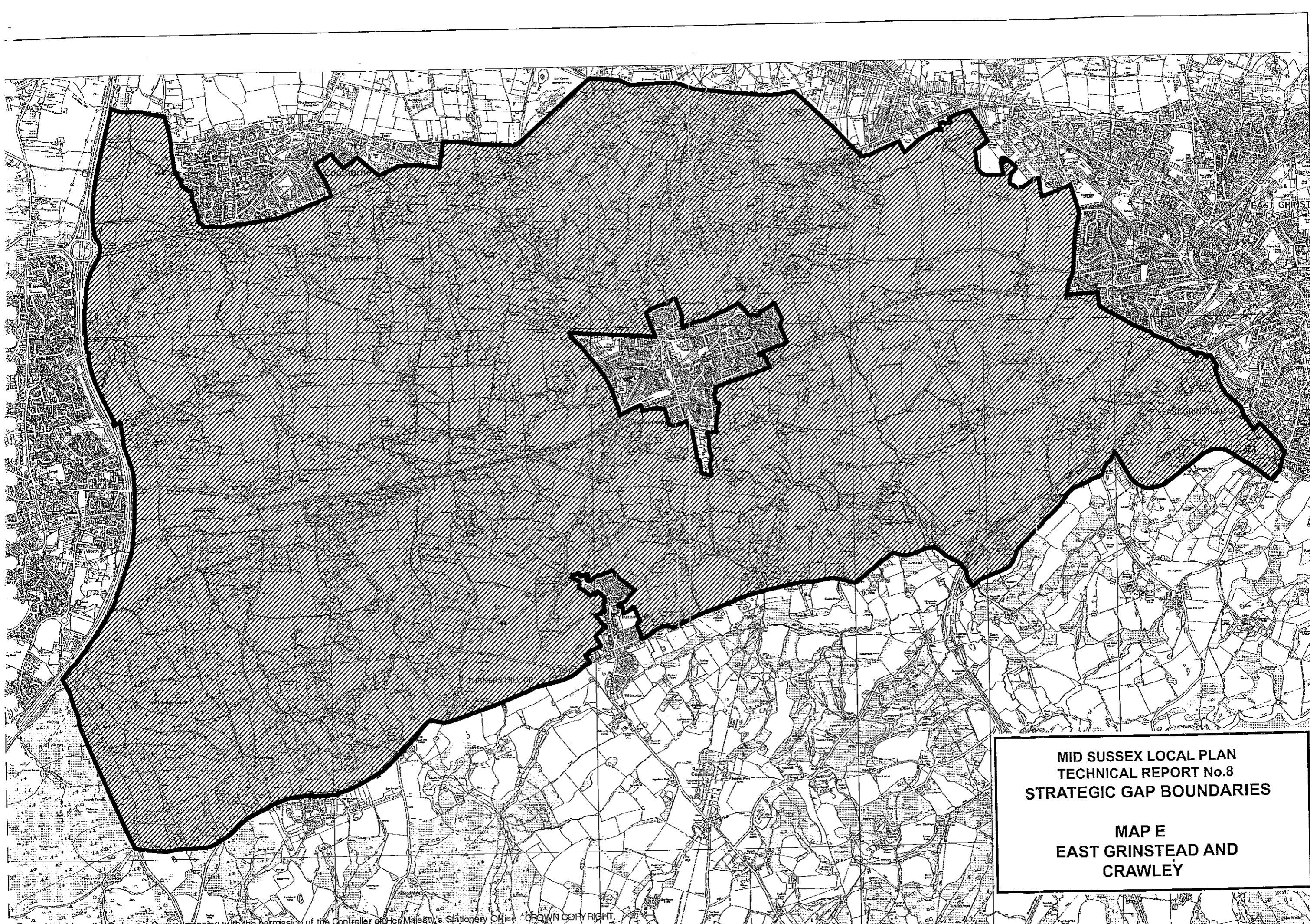
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**MAP C
HAYWARDS HEATH AND
CUCKFIELD**

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**MAP D
HAYWARDS HEATH / LINDFIELD
AND SCAYNES HILL**

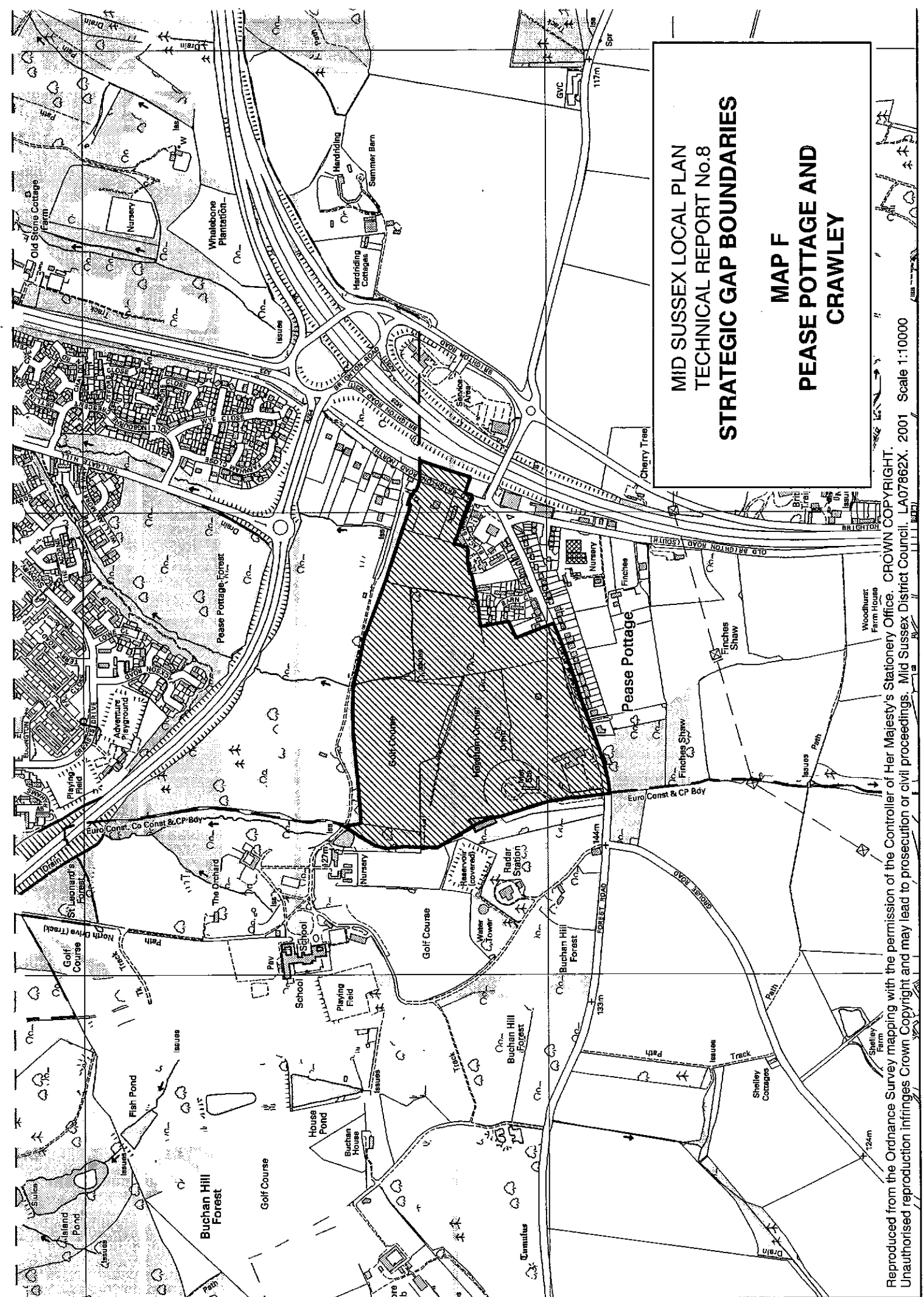




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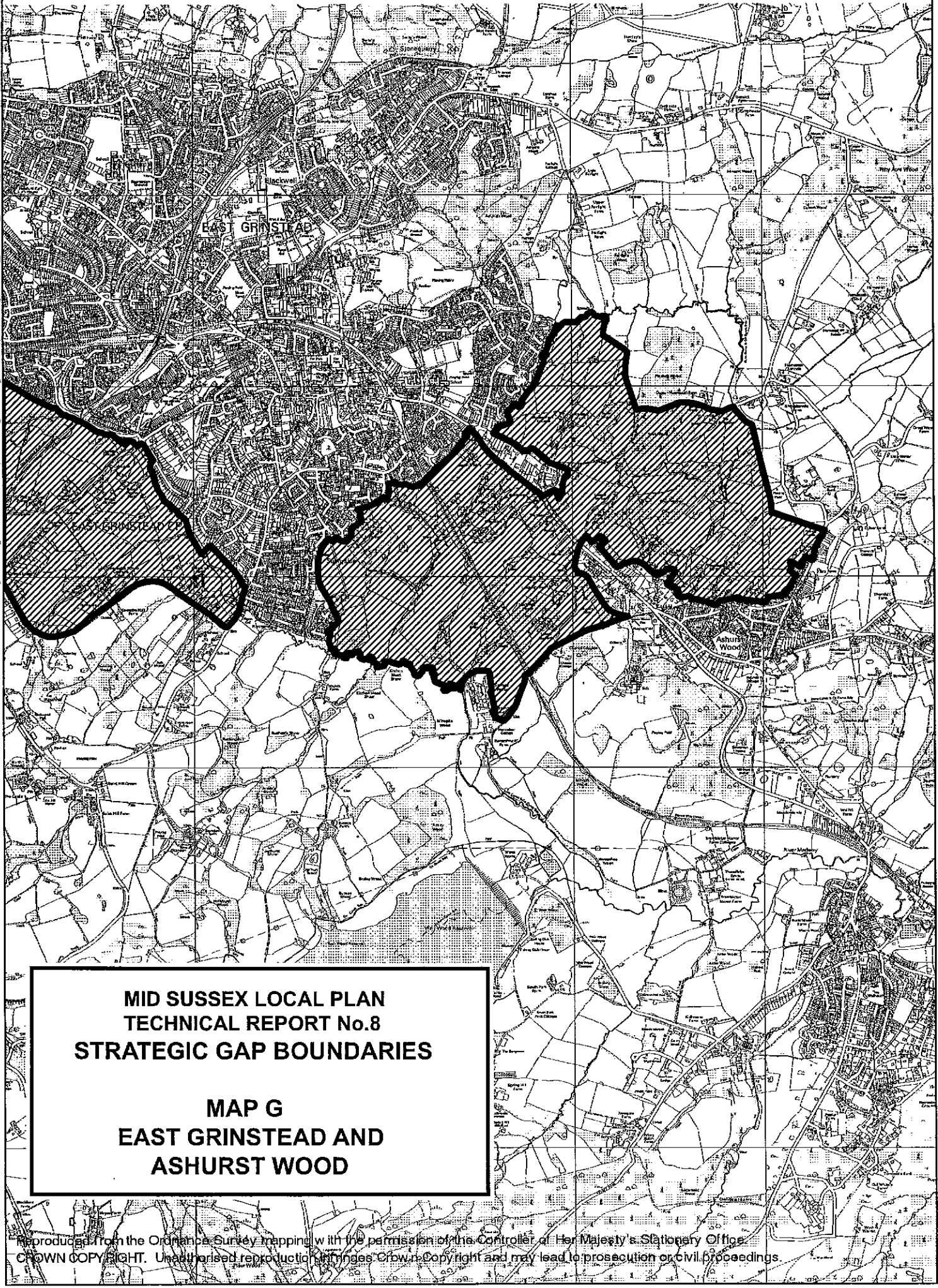
**MAP E
EAST GRINSTEAD AND
CRAWLEY**

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MID SUSSEX LOCAL PLAN
TECHNICAL REPORT No.8
STRATEGIC GAP BOUNDARIES
MAP F
PEASE POTPAGE AND
CRAWLEY

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**MID SUSSEX LOCAL PLAN
TECHNICAL REPORT No.8
STRATEGIC GAP BOUNDARIES**

**MAP G
EAST GRINSTEAD AND
ASHURST WOOD**

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WEST SUSSEX STRUCTURE PLAN, 1998

(not formally adopted)

This Plan has been subject to the necessary statutory procedures and public consultation and has been approved by the County Council.

However, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions has directed the County Council not to adopt the Plan unless Policy H1 is modified or the direction is otherwise withdrawn.

Therefore, the 1993 Structure Plan remains the approved Structure Plan for West Sussex until this Plan - with or without further modification - is formally adopted. In the meantime this Plan is a material consideration in planning decisions in West Sussex.

Further copies of the Plan may be obtained from the County Planning Department, telephone 01243 777610.

John Kilford
County Planning Officer
County Hall
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 1RL

February 1998



(4) Strategic gaps

7.18

C5 (a) Within the policy framework set by policy C1, strategic gaps will be maintained and protected between

Emsworth and Chichester,
Chichester and Lavant,
Chichester and Bognor Regis,
West Wittering and East Wittering,
Bracklesham Bay and Selsey,
Selsey and Pagham,
Middleton-on-Sea and Littlehampton,
Arundel and Littlehampton,
East Preston and Ferring,
Ferring and Worthing,
Worthing and Sompting/Lancing,
Lancing and Shoreham,
Burgess Hill and Hurstpierpoint/Keymer/Hassocks,
Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath,
Haywards Heath and Cuckfield,
Haywards Heath/Lindfield and Scaynes Hill,
Crawley and East Grinstead,
Crawley and Gatwick Airport/Horley,
Crawley and Pease Pottage,
East Grinstead and Ashurstwood,
Horsham and Crawley, and
Horsham and Southwater.

(b) The precise boundaries of strategic gaps will be defined in Local Plans, with the objectives of preventing coalescence and retaining the separate identity and amenity of settlements and protecting the undeveloped coastline. Land between the settlements listed but not within the strategic gaps will be subject to policy C1. Only land which it is necessary to keep generally free from development in order to secure the objectives of strategic gaps on a long term basis should be included within them and therefore, in determining the boundaries, account will be taken of the development requirements of this Structure Plan.

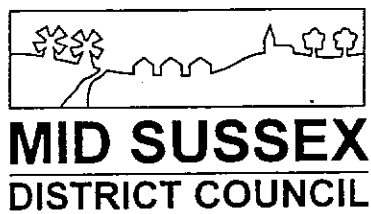
(c) Planning applications for development within a strategic gap will be subject to the most rigorous examination because of the possible impact of the proposed development on the gap. Development will be permitted only if:

(i) it is demonstrated to be necessary to meet the requirements of, or is consistent with, other policies of the Development Plan; and

(ii) it would not compromise individually or cumulatively the objectives and fundamental integrity of the strategic gap.

(d) Opportunities will be sought to conserve and improve the landscape and amenity of the strategic gaps to enhance their value as open countryside. Extensive development for recreational purposes may be permitted where such development will improve the landscape and wildlife habitats and will not involve substantial buildings or large areas of hardstanding.

- 7.19 The settings of towns and villages are as important as the buildings and spaces which comprise their urban environment, and, if the individual character of a place is to be retained, its setting must be given close attention. A clear visual break seen when passing from place to place gives a recognisable structure to a group of settlements, establishing in travellers' minds that they are arriving somewhere else. Very importantly, it helps to maintain the "sense of place" for residents of (and visitors to) the communities on either side. Past decisions about which land should be released for development have usually sought to prevent the coalescence of existing built up areas: this must continue.
- 7.20 The list in the policy includes those gaps which are of clear strategic significance. Additional gaps of more local importance are defined in some Local Plans.
- 7.21 Strategic gap boundaries should be defined in Local Plans to identify the land which contributes to the gap's objectives, and to omit other land (which is still to be treated as open countryside and not, unless so indicated in the Local Plan, to be regarded as a reserve for future development). Regard should be had to the danger of cumulative erosion of the gap. The gap boundary should as far as possible follow some recognisable physical feature: lengths of it may be identical to the built up area boundary if it is evident that all land outside that boundary contributes to the objectives of the policy. Regard should also be had to the development requirements of this Structure Plan, although other options for accommodating the required development which do not infringe the strategic gap or other constraints should be preferred. If necessary, the County Council and the District Councils will draw up further advice to guide the implementation of this policy and to assist its defence at Local Plan Inquiries.
- 7.22 Once the gap boundary has been defined, all development proposed within the gap - even small scale development - should not be allowed unless it is shown to be necessary and would not compromise the objectives of the strategic gap policy. In essence, only development which may become necessary once all other options have been exhausted but would not compromise the fundamental integrity of a gap should be allowed within that strategic gap. If any proposed development fails to meet this prerequisite, then neither the possibility that visual impact will be limited nor the intention that a proposed development will be low density and well landscaped will make it consistent with the objects of policy C5. The point is that a strategic gap should be more than just a visual break if the separate identities of settlements are to be retained: ideally there should be an absence of urban activity. Development which means that people will live or work or create road traffic movement will inevitably reduce the perception of the gap. Of course, if the development is proved to be necessary, everything possible should be done to make it harmonise with the landscape.
- 7.23 The fact that some gaps are wider than others has no significance in principle for the way that policy C5 should be put into practice: the aim is to prevent all of them dwindling to the breadth of the last field. However, it will be necessary to address in Local Plans the special characteristics of particular gaps. Some, for example,



MID SUSSEX LOCAL PLAN REVISED DEPOSIT DRAFT

AUGUST 2001

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C1 Outside built-up area boundaries, as detailed on the Proposals and Inset Maps, the remainder of the plan area is classified as a Countryside Area of Development Restraint where the countryside will be protected for its own sake. Proposals for development in the countryside, particularly that which would extend the built-up area boundaries beyond those shown will be firmly resisted and restricted to:

- (a) proposals reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture or forestry;
- (b) ~~in appropriate cases, proposals for new small-scale uses in rural buildings~~ of a scale consistent with the building's location;
- (c) in appropriate cases, proposals for the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;
- (d) in appropriate cases, proposals for quiet informal recreation and/or tourism related developments;
- (e) proposals for facilities which are essential to meet the needs of local communities, and which cannot be accommodated satisfactorily within the built-up areas;
- (f) proposals for which a specific policy reference is made elsewhere in this Plan; and
- (g) proposals which significantly contribute to a sense of local identity and regional diversity.

RD 03.04

3.23 One of the key functions of built-up area boundaries around settlements, as defined on the Proposals Map and its insets, is to protect the adjoining countryside from unnecessary development. All proposals for development in the countryside will therefore be considered against the above policy. In certain locations, however, additional policies of protection are required. These are set out below.

Areas with Special Qualities

3.24 Those areas of countryside which have special qualities are the Strategic and Local Gaps, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land and Areas of Ecological Importance. Importance for Nature Conservation.

RD 03/05

Strategic Gaps

3.25 The setting of towns and villages are as important as the buildings and spaces within them to their overall character. A clear visual break between settlements gives them a recognisable structure. If development was to occur in such areas it could lead to the coalescence of settlements and the loss of their individual identity and amenity. Retaining these gaps is, therefore, an important objective of both Local and Structure Plan policy.

- 3.26 Policy C5 of the West Sussex Structure Plan 1998 (Not Formally Adopted) lists those gaps which are strategically important in the County. In this District seven such gaps have been identified. It is for the Local Plan, however, to define the precise boundaries.
- 3.27 The Secretary of State has previously made it clear that the purpose of strategic gaps is to prevent coalescence of settlements and to retain their separate identity and amenity and that, in order to achieve these objectives, their boundaries need not necessarily coincide with the boundaries of the built-up areas. A thorough review of every gap has been undertaken in preparing this plan. A Technical Report has been prepared which identifies the detailed assessment criteria and boundaries. The areas included within the strategic gaps are those which the Local Planning Authority considers should be generally kept free from development in the long term in order to secure the objectives of strategic gaps. Intervening villages which have built-up area boundaries are excluded from the strategic gaps, but the gaps between these villages themselves are vital components of the overall strategic gap. Hamlets or groups of buildings, where such boundaries have not been defined will be considered as part of the countryside within the gap.
- 3.28 Development proposals within the strategic gaps will be subject to the most rigorous examination because of the possible impact of such development on the objectives of strategic gaps. Strict control will be applied to ensure that the openness of the strategic gaps will not be compromised by the cumulative impact of such developments. Where possible the Local Planning Authority will seek opportunities to conserve and enhance the landscape and amenity of the strategic gaps.

C2 The Local Planning Authority will safeguard the strategic gaps between:
Strategic gaps have been defined and will be safeguarded between:

RD 03.06

- Burgess Hill and Hurstpierpoint/Keymer/Hassocks;
- Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath;
- Haywards Heath and Cuckfield;
- Haywards Heath/Lindfield and Scaynes Hill;
- Crawley and East Grinstead;
- Crawley and Pease Pottage; and
- East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood

as defined on the Proposals Map and its Insets, with the objectives of preventing coalescence and retaining the separate identity and amenity of settlements.

RD 03.07

Development will not be permitted in these within the strategic gap areas unless:

RD 03.08

- (a) it is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture, or some other use which has to be located in the countryside;
- (b) it makes a valuable contribution to the landscape and amenity of the gap and enhances its value as open countryside; and
- (c) it would not compromise individually or cumulatively the objectives and fundamental integrity of the gap.

