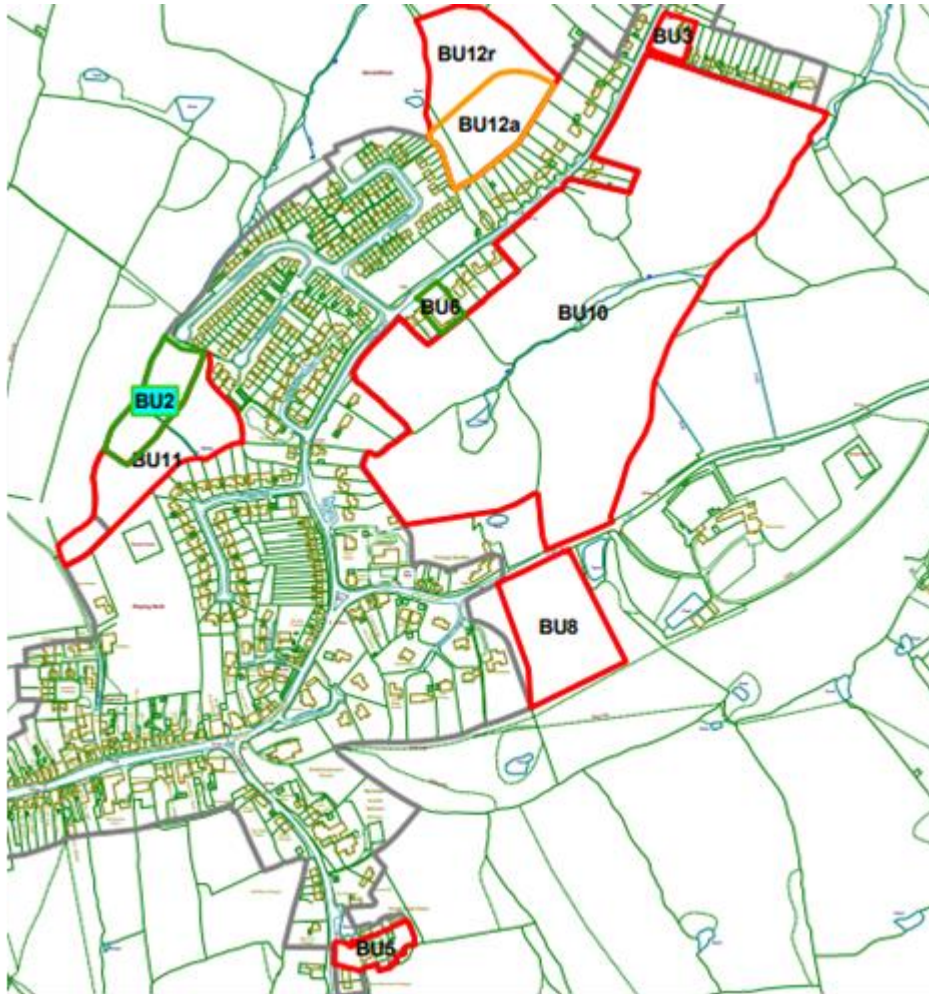


Oppose the housing

Exploding the myths about the Burwash housing allocation

- 1 **The Burwash housing allocation is a target only** It has been claimed that Burwash Parish has to have 52 houses by law. This misstates the situation. Keeping inflation below 2½% is a government target. Full employment is another government target. If targets are not met there is no breach of the law.
- 2 Housing targets are rarely met either locally or nationally.
- 3 **How does government encourage councils to achieve their allocations?** There is a carrot and a stick approach. The carrot is that councils receive money for new houses built. It is called the CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy). The stick is that when a council is in housing deficit (which means the area has not reached its required target), the planning procedure is tilted towards development. Crucially all planning rules remain in place.
- 4 **What is the housing allocation?** Rother District Council has currently set 52 houses as the required housing allocation for Burwash.
- 5 **How was the number fixed for Burwash?** In 2013, Rother planners conducted the SHLAA (Strategic Land Housing Availability Assessment) exercise and identified sites that could be suitable for development in Burwash village in the period to 2028. The requirement to have such a plan was laid down in the government's National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
- 6 The sites were colour coded: 'Green' and 'Amber'. Sites were considered to have a reasonable prospect of being suitable for development within 10 years and Red sites were unsuitable for development. An 'amber site' is one that 'requires more detailed investigations of the key factors and clarification of key matters', see SHLAA 2013 Review Part 1 para 7.42. All such sites would need to be further tested through a statutory Neighbourhood Development Plan, full public consultation and in the alternative the planning application process. That meant the sites would be subject to all national and local statutory and policy requirements.
- 7 The sites at and near The Glebe are shown in map below. The Glebe field is BU8.



- 8 The only green or amber sites identified in Burwash were:
 - a) Strand Meadow (Watercress Field) BU2 for 17 units (outline planning had already been approved for 17 housing units),
 - b) Old Laundry Site BU6 for ‘6 possible housing units’,
 - c) Shrub Wood BU12a for ‘up to 30 housing units’
- 9 All other sites were rejected by Rother as not being suitable for development, including BU8 (The Glebe field).
- 10 From this exercise, 50 housing units were allocated for Burwash, see page 48 of Rother’s Core Strategy and the SHLAA Review Part 1 page 7. This was later increased to 52. Burwash Common and Burwash Weald were separately assessed and the allocation was set at 0 units for both areas.
- 11 Since 2013:
 - a) The Old Laundry site eventually produced only 4 not 6 housing units. None of these 4 housing units counted towards the total, because there must be 6 units on one site/ 0.2 hectares for the units to count.
 - b) Shrub Wood (BU12a/BU12r) There was an application by Denton Homes for 42 (net 40) housing units which was refused by Rother Planning Committee in October 2018.

The developer appealed the decision but later withdrew the appeal with the following comment:

'Protected Landscape Policy

Since the determination of the original application and the lodging of the appeal, our research has shown that appeals involving landscape are increasingly being dismissed. This has not been helped by the continuation of the ambiguity in guidance for protected landscape in the revised NPPF'.

- c) Strand Meadow (BU2) . Outline permission was already in place for 17 housing units when the SHLAA was drawn up and in 2018 the developer, Park Lanes Group, applied to increase this to 30 housing units of which 40% would be affordable. When the application was submitted for full planning permission, the developer withdrawn all the affordable houses as it claimed he had discovered that the land would be more expensive to build on and would not be viable because it would not make the set down 20% return on gross build value. Detailed planning permission was refused by Rother's Planning Committee in January 2019 and in July 2019, the developer's appeal to the Planning Inspectorate was dismissed.
12. So the two key sites of Shrub Wood and Strand Meadow on which the housing number target for Burwash was based had been put to the test as set out in the SHLAA process. Neither was be found suitable for housing by either the planning committee or the planning Inspector. Neither were they supported by the community or by the authors of the draft Neighbourhood Plan.
 13. **The reason why there are no sites in Burwash.** The main problem is that Burwash is a ridge-top development where it is not possible to build on the north or south sides. As the main road runs east-west there is nowhere for the housing to go.
 14. **Rother's position** On many occasions the planning officers have said they do not know any possible sites for housing in Burwash and have rejected all sites (except Watercress Field and Shrub Wood meadow as already stated). There are sites for housing like the Oakleys site, the Higher Nature site and the Ashwood site but they are not in Burwash village so are unacceptable to planning officers at Rother. Rother has been unable to justify this contradiction.
 15. **Conclusions** It is wholly unrealistic for Rother to continue with a housing figure that is based on sites which have failed to win support from the community or the planning Inspector or the planning committee of Rother District Council.
 16. The fact that there are no suitable sites for housing in Burwash cannot be a reason to build housing at The Glebe field which has so many reasons making it unsuitable for development. If that were to happen every other landowner could say my field was more suitable than the field at The Glebe and ask for the right to develop. The Glebe field is one of the most beautiful in the parish and has the most known heritage features of any field. The footpath that runs along the side of the field is extensively used and enjoyed. There are also significant road safety and pedestrian safety problems. The damage to the AONB would be great. The site is outside the development boundary and contrary to the claims would be ribbon development. The housing would be far more visible than the architect states. The impact on the neighbours would be very significant.

Robert Banks