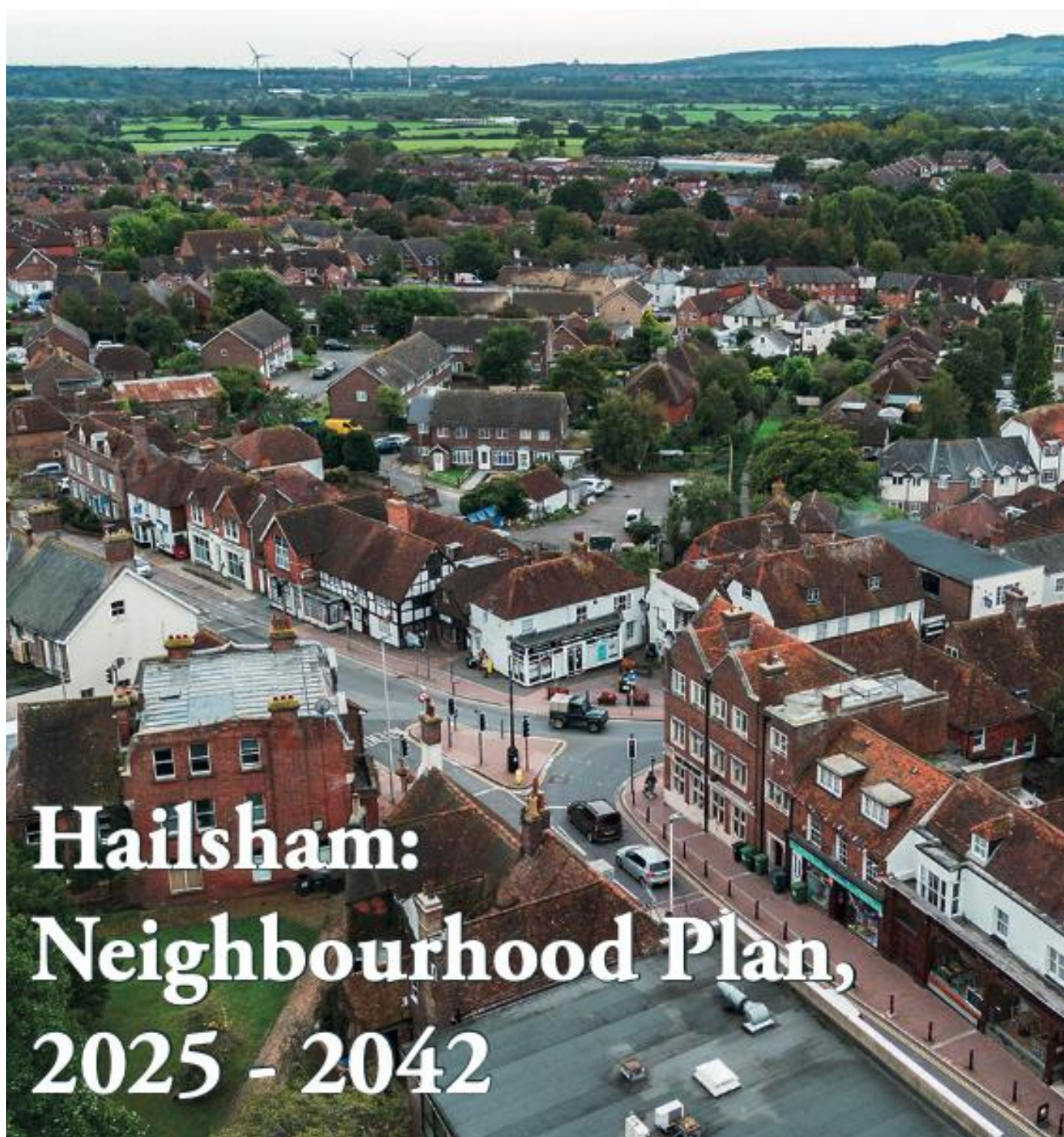




Hailsham: Neighbourhood Plan, 2025 - 2042

Prepared by Troy Planning + Design

Executive Summary

March 2026



Hailsham
TOWN COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

Work on the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan commenced in 2016 and was adopted in 2021. It has now been fully reviewed and updated, covering the period 2025 - 2042.

The reason for updating the Neighbourhood Plan is due to the ongoing growth and expansion of Hailsham. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to influence this, drawing on community feedback and concerns about the future of the town.

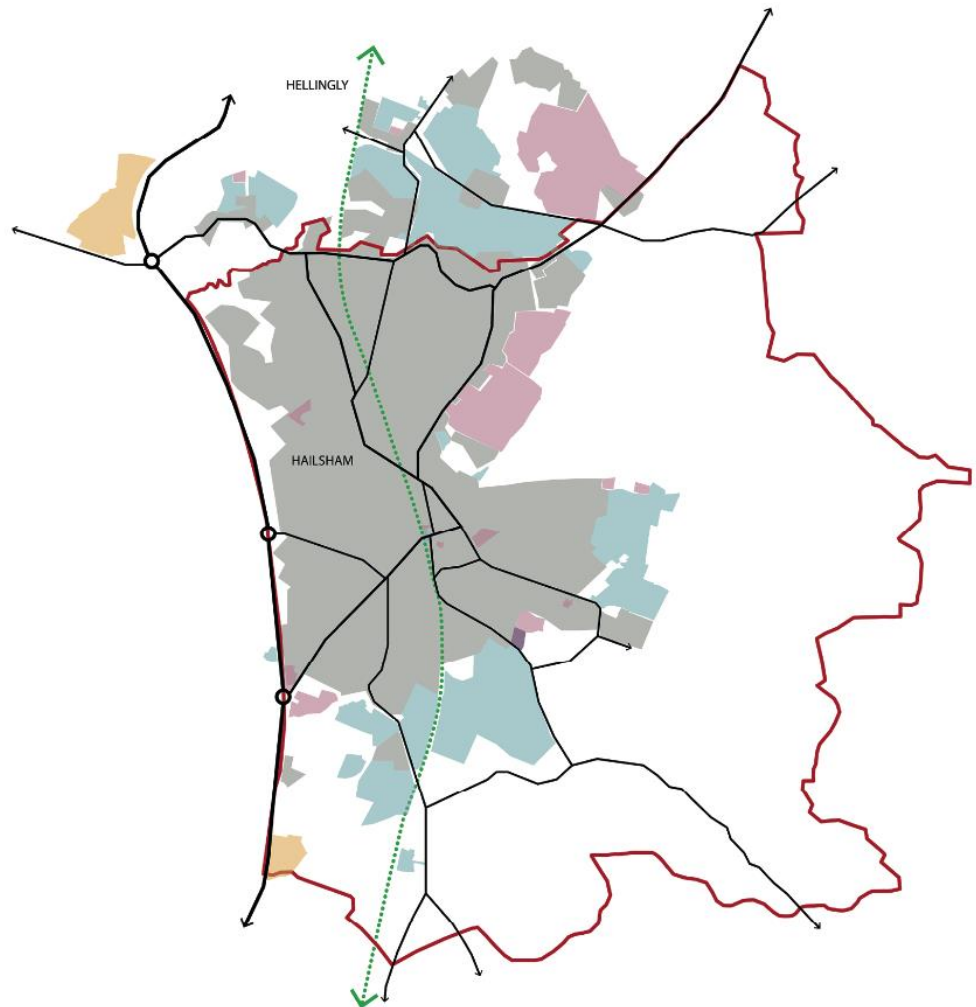
This is the Executive Summary of the Neighbourhood Plan. The full document is available on the Hailsham Town Council website.

The Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole of Hailsham and includes land use and development policies that will be used to inform and determine planning applications in the area. It also includes wider projects and aspirations for change.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Hailsham Town Council and informed by extensive consultation exercises with local residents, businesses, organisations and statutory consultees.



Above: The Neighbourhood Plan includes aspirations for improvements in the town centre. This artists' illustration shows potential for part pedestrianisation of the High Street, including public realm works, street greening and new places to sit and relax. The High Street would be open to traffic outside of business hours. This is an idea that the Town Council will be looking to develop and consider further as a project.



Above: Map showing areas of growth in Hailsham which are either being built out, have planning permission, or are allocated for development in the emerging Wealden Local Plan (as based on the draft emerging Local Plan as of 2024, but which is subject to change). The Neighbourhood Plan is seeking to ensure that areas of growth are well-designed and integrated with the town, and support delivery of new and improved infrastructure.

THE PLAN

The Neighbourhood Plan sits in the context of the Local Plan prepared by Wealden District Council. This establishes the overall scale and direction of growth that needs to be accommodated in Hailsham, and allocates sites for development. It is anticipated that the new Local Plan will be subject to examination and adopted in 2027. Areas of proposed growth in Hailsham are illustrated in the Plan on this page.

The Neighbourhood Plan sits below the Local Plan and needs to align with it. It does not establish proposals for growth and development, but does seek to influence that, particularly in terms of the design of development, provision of community facilities and ability to move around town. The focus of the Neighbourhood Plan is on influencing change at the 'local level', reflecting community-led ideas for the area. Ideas are grouped into key topic areas, as presented in the objectives, and form the basis for land-use planning policies.

The Plan also includes wider aspirations and improvements, including new and improved infrastructure. They are projects towards which applicants and other funding partners might contribute.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be used alongside the Local Plan to inform and determine planning applications in Hailsham.

VISION

The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are framed by an overarching vision and set of objectives. The vision is:

“In 2042, Hailsham is a vibrant, attractive and sustainable town that harmoniously blends its rich heritage with modern amenities. Our community thrives on strong local connections, supported by robust infrastructure that ensures seamless mobility and access to essential services.

Hailsham is renowned for its green spaces and commitment to sustainability, with abundant parks, community food growing opportunities and eco-friendly initiatives that enhance our environment and quality of life. Our town centre is a bustling hub of independent shops, cafés, and cultural venues, offering a diverse and engaging experience for residents and visitors alike.

We prioritise the well-being of our community by providing comprehensive healthcare facilities, excellent educational institutions, and a variety of recreational opportunities. Our transport systems are efficient and well-maintained, ensuring easy access to all parts of the town, for all of our residents and visitors. A range of housing choice and opportunity has been provided, meeting the diverse needs of the population.

Hailsham is a place where people of all ages feel safe, supported, and connected. We celebrate our unique character and work together to create a future that is inclusive, prosperous, and resilient.”

OBJECTIVES

Five overarching objectives are established in the Plan. These help structure the policies within it. They are:



Objective 1: Community

To promote delivery of a range of community facilities and services that cater for all, including new healthcare, meeting the needs of residents and supporting community cohesion and social inclusion.

Objective 2: Town Centre

To enhance the quality, attractiveness and overall experience of the town centre, making this a pedestrian friendly environment that offers a range of services and activities throughout the day.

Objective 3: Housing and Design

To promote well-designed new homes that provide a mix of housing types and tenures to meet local needs, which are well-integrated within the fabric of the town, and deliver high standards of sustainability and energy efficiency.

Objective 4: Movement

To enhance access for all, making it safer and easier for people of all ages to get around Hailsham, supporting sustainable, active and healthy travel choices.

Objective 5: Green Infrastructure

To strengthen the quality of the green infrastructure network across Hailsham, enhancing wildlife and biodiversity, and providing accessible areas of natural and amenity green space close to home.

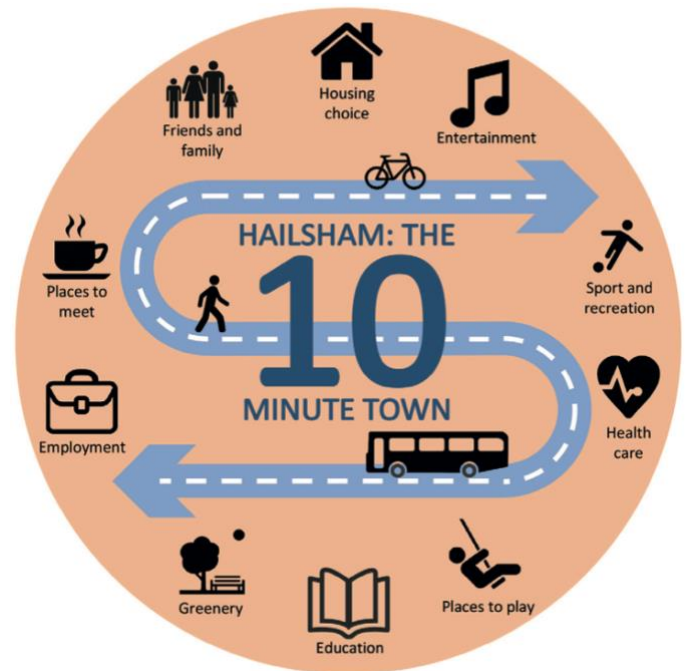
OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

A compact, complete place

As with the first Neighbourhood Plan, the review supports the idea of the 'ten-minute town', where uses and facilities that support day-to-day life are available in Hailsham and are within safe and easy access of the home for residents of all ages and abilities to benefit from.

High quality design

The Plan promotes well-designed development which reflects local character and distinctiveness. It is accompanied by a Design Guidelines document which illustrates what is meant by good design in Hailsham and which applicants for development are expected to respond to.



Above: The 'ten-minute town' can also be described as a 'compact, complete, connected and climate-friendly community'. Responses to consultation indicated that this concept remains relevant and that it should continue to inform an approach to sustainable development in Hailsham.

Safe access for all

The Plan supports improved walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure, providing real, attractive transport choices for all, promoting active and healthy lifestyles, safe and convenient access for the young and old alike.



Above: Safe walking and cycling routes for all ages in the Hailsham Country Park



Above: Graphic showing the benefits of a 'great place' and which helps frame policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. Image sourced and adapted from the PPS Group

The community said:

"The scale and quantum of development that has and continues to take place around Hailsham is placing pressure on local services and facilities..."

There is a need for new and improved facilities and, ideally, facilities required as a result of development should be put in place during the first stages of that development."

POLICIES FOR OBJECTIVE 1: COMMUNITY

HaCF1: Healthcare

Supports the development of a new, accessible medical centre with a range of health services, including provision of a temporary facility in the short-term until a permanent facility is delivered.

HaCF2: Education and Early Years

Encourages the expansion of primary schools and Early Years facilities, especially where accessible by foot and supporting safe routes to school.

HaCF3: Community halls, centres & hubs

Supports new or improved community spaces that are flexible, inclusive, accessible, and integrated with sustainable transport options.



Above: The Western Road Recreation Ground is a highly valued community facility in the centre of Hailsham.

HaCF4: Allotments and food growing

Requires major residential developments to provide growing spaces like allotments or community gardens, accessible by foot and aligned with national standards.

HaCF5: Sports facilities & playing pitches

Encourages development of new or improved sports facilities, including shared use of school grounds, with attention to accessibility, lighting, and environmental impact.

HaCF6: Play and amenity space

Requires inclusive, well-integrated green and play spaces in new developments, designed for all ages and linked to wider green infrastructure.

HaCF7: Burial space

Supports new burial grounds, including natural burial sites, that are environmentally sensitive and located near existing facilities.

HaCF7: Community infrastructure delivery

Encourages early delivery of community facilities in major developments and recommends production of community use agreements to ensure shared access to these.

The community said:

"The quality and experience of the town centre should be improved, including the public realm, provision of new areas of greenery and a more diverse range of shops and services, including arts and culture."

POLICIES FOR OBJECTIVE 2: THE TOWN CENTRE

HaTC1: Town centre uses

Promotes a diverse mix of retail, leisure, cultural, and residential uses in the town centre, with support for temporary use of vacant space.

HaTC2: Town centre design principles

Sets design standards for new development such that it responds sensitively to the setting and historic character of the town centre, and creates attractive and welcoming spaces that people feel safe and are happy to spend time in.

HaTC3: Safety by design

Requires development to incorporate design principles that reduce crime, such as avoiding blank walls, left over spaces, hidden spots and dark routes.

HaTC4: Shopfront design & signage

Encourages provision of high-quality shopfronts and signage that enhance the town centre's visual appeal and heritage.

HaTC5: Public realm, gateways & wayfinding

Supports improvements to public spaces, twittens and town centre gateways, including new green infrastructure and wayfinding.



Above: Policies in the Plan seek to reinforce local character and identity whilst also supporting efforts that make the town centre a more diverse and vibrant place with an improved visitor offer.

HaTC6: Public art

Encourages provision of public art installations that enhance the vibrancy of the town centre, support legibility and draw upon the identity of Hailsham.

HaTC7: Roofscape

Promotes the use of rooftops for green infrastructure, renewable energy, and community uses where these minimise visual and environmental impacts.

HaTC8: Town centre car parking

Supports rationalisation of surface parking with multi-storey solutions in appropriate places, and where these are well integrated with active uses and green infrastructure.

The community said:

"Where new housing development does take place, it should be well-designed, well-integrated within the existing built form, and provide a mix of homes that respond to local needs."

POLICIES FOR OBJECTIVE 3: HOUSING, DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN

HaHD1: Housing Design and character

Requires new residential development to reflect the Hailsham Design Guide & Code, ensuring integration with existing areas, use of local materials, and creation of attractive, well-defined streets and spaces.

HaHD2: Well-integrated residential development

Promotes layouts that connect with existing communities, avoid car-dominated designs, and include accessible community facilities and green infrastructure.

HaHD3: Sustainable design & construction

Encourages energy-efficient, climate-resilient buildings that make use of renewable energy and which incorporate efficient use of water.

HaHD4: Housing mix

Supports a diverse mix of housing types, including affordable, adaptable and age-friendly homes, with flexible layouts for multi-generational living and home working.

HaHD5: Self & custom build homes

Encourages provision of self and custom build plots within larger developments, with clear design parameters and utility connections, to help diversify housing options.



Above: A Design Guidelines document sits alongside the Neighbourhood Plan. This identifies the key qualities of the built and natural environment in Hailsham that should influence the design of new development.

HaHD6: Street types, design & hierarchy

Requires new developments to include a hierarchy of well-connected, walkable streets that prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, and discourage through-traffic.

HaHF7: Parking in new residential development

Promotes well-integrated, unobtrusive parking solutions that support walkable neighbourhoods, discourage pavement parking, and include landscaping and sustainable drainage.

The community said:

"The growth of the town has resulted in additional traffic and increasing congestion, particularly in the town centre, and the quality of roads, footpaths and cycle routes is generally poor... improved transport choices for all are required, including improved public transport, walking and cycling options.

The opportunity should also be taken to make better use of the Cuckoo Trail."

POLICIES FOR OBJECTIVE 4: MOVEMENT

HaM1: Active & healthy travel

Supports infrastructure for walking, wheeling, and cycling, including safe, inclusive routes and secure cycle parking, aligned with national design standards.

HaM2: The Cuckoo Trail

Encourages improvements to the Cuckoo Trail, including better access, surface upgrades and integration with surrounding development.

HaM3: Public transport

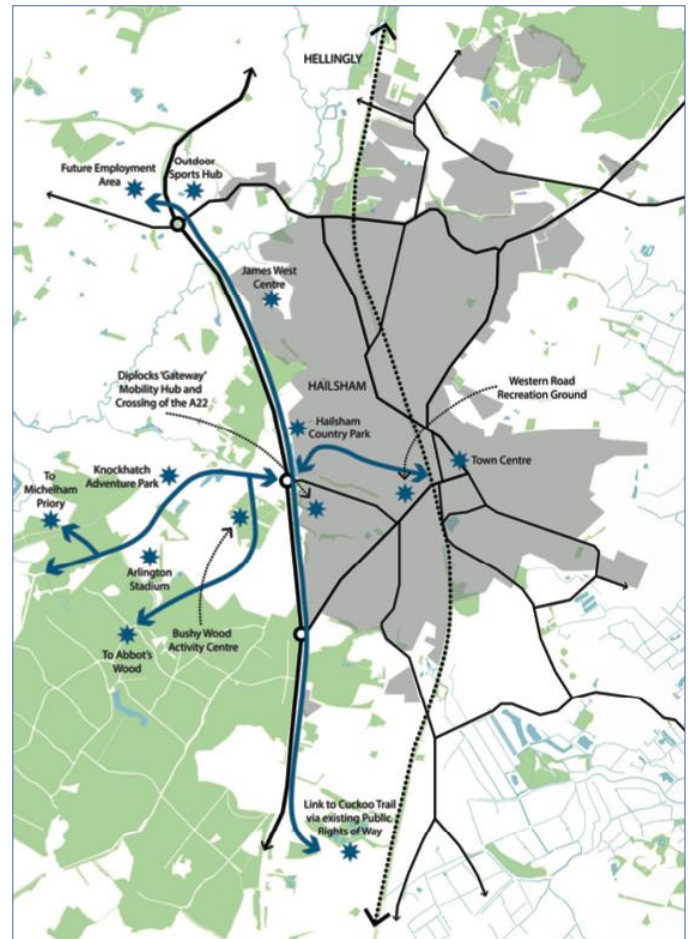
Requires major developments to be within walking distance of frequent bus services or to provide new routes, with high-quality shelters and real-time information.

HaM4: Community mobility hubs

Supports the creation of mobility hubs combining transport options with community services, making it easier for people to access different transport choices.

HaM5: Electric vehicles

Promotes well-designed EV charging infrastructure that avoids pedestrian obstruction and allows for future upgrades (to charging speeds) and expansion of services.



Above: The Neighbourhood Plan supports the provision of a new walking and cycling route across and along the A22, opening up safe access by foot and bike to various leisure and recreation facilities.

The community said:

"The town should be a cleaner, safer, greener place, including new street tree planting and improved areas of play."

Better use should be made of previously developed land and existing green spaces preserved, protecting the environment, areas of wildlife value and the floodplain."

POLICIES FOR OBJECTIVE 5: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

HaGI1: Biodiversity

Prioritises on-site delivery of biodiversity net gains and integration with green corridors and wildlife-friendly features.

HaGI2: Access to green & blue infrastructure

Encourages development to improve access to natural spaces via well-designed, all-weather walking and cycling routes.

HaGI3: Diversifying and improving existing amenity green space

Supports the diversification of green amenity spaces in the public realm to include play areas, gardens, and improved walking routes.

HaGI4: The Pevensey Levels

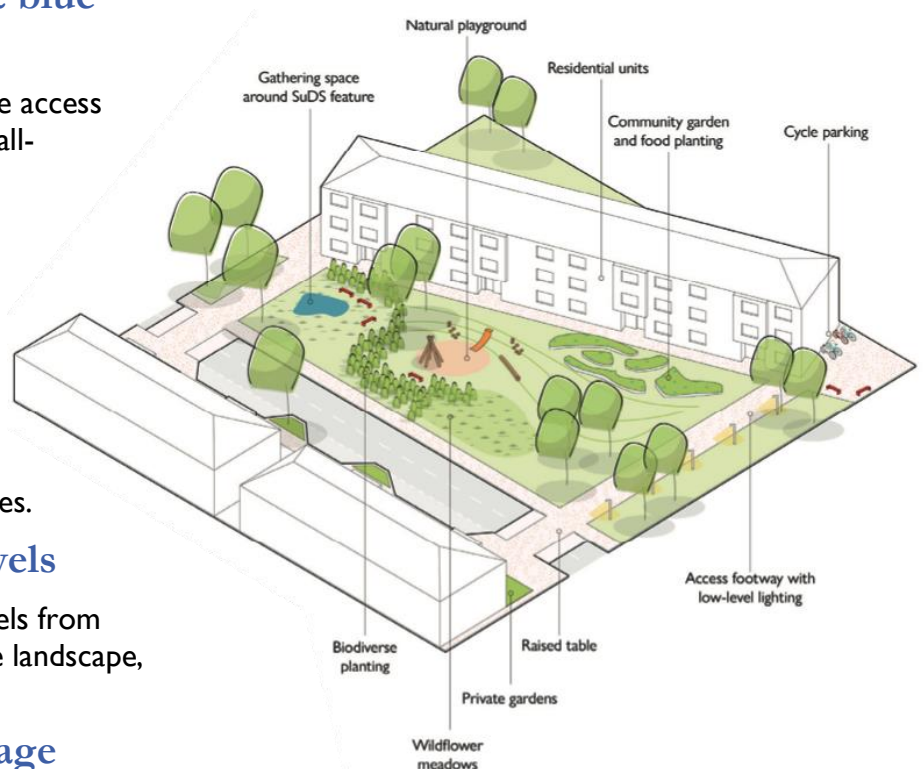
Protects the sensitive Pevensey Levels from development impacts, enhancing the landscape, biodiversity and wetland areas.

HaGI5: Sustainable drainage

Requires developments to manage surface water flood risk through sustainable drainage systems, integrated with new green infrastructure.

HaGI6: Paving of front gardens

Seeks to regulate the paving over of front gardens to retain permeable surfaces, maintain greenery and prevent increased flood risk from surface run off.



Above: Example illustration showing how opportunities for local food growing may be integrated into existing amenity green spaces alongside other green space types.

PROJECTS

The Neighbourhood Plan covers more than just traditional planning matters as it presents the community's vision for the area. Items that the community are seeking, but that cannot be delivered through planning policy are included in the Neighbourhood Plan as projects.

Projects could potentially be delivered by or with partner organisations and service providers, and make use of the neighbourhood portion of the Community Infrastructure levy payable by developers.

The projects identified in the Neighbourhood Plan are summarised over the following pages.

PAS-01: Transforming existing residential streets into green streets

Enabling residents to come together to identify opportunities for redesigning their streets to incorporate green infrastructure.

TCM-01: Town centre concept masterplan

Production of a concept masterplan guiding the scale, form and location of future change and development in the town centre.

TCM-02: Place-branding strategy

This would strengthen local identity and support the town centre by promoting its distinctive qualities and providing a coherent basis for marketing, signage and wayfinding, enhancing the attractiveness of the town to visitors and businesses.

SHS-01: Shopfront improvements

Exploring opportunities, in partnership with shop and landowners, to repair, improve and maintain shopfronts (including when vacant), and to reinstate traditional features.

PRG-01: Town centre public realm improvements

Exploring the potential for part-pedestrianisation of the High Street and wider public realm improvements, including introduction of street greening.

DC-01: Architectural variety & innovation

Encouraging the use of architectural competitions on development sites, introducing variety and interest to new development.

DR-01: Design Review

Supporting the use of independent design review at the planning application stage to inform proposals and help deliver higher standards of design in new development.

MHT-01: Crossing the A22

Investigate opportunities for a new pedestrian and cycle crossing of the A22, potentially making use of the existing tunnel near the Hailsham Country Park.

MHT-02: The 'Hailsham Country Line'

Creating an all-weather walking and cycling route on predominantly Town Council owned land alongside the A22 that provides connections with the network of leisure and recreation facilities across Hailsham.

PT-01: Bus service improvements

Working with transport partners to improve bus service frequency, reliability, coverage and accessibility in Hailsham, enhancing stops, facilities and real-time information, supporting greener shelters, and enabling community-based transport to serve areas and users currently poorly served by bus routes.



Above: Artists' illustration showing the potential for a visitor and mobility hub at the 'entrance' to the Cuckoo Trail at the South Road Car Park, with new artwork, wayfinding and linked walking and cycling routes

SGI-01: Street greening

Introducing green infrastructure into existing streets and spaces, involving the retrofitting and remodelling of streets and junctions as appropriate to help deliver a connected network of green infrastructure.

PL-01: Interpretation boards

Installing sensitively designed interpretation boards along public rights of way through the Pevensey Levels to explain the area's ecological significance, promote responsible access, and enhance understanding of its sensitive wildlife habitats.

FG-01: Reinstating front gardens

Supporting an approach to 'depaving' which encourages homeowners to reinstate front gardens and or replace areas of hardstanding with porous material.



Above: Artists' illustration showing the potential for reopening and using existing tunnels under the A22 in the vicinity of the Hailsham Country Park, improving access to leisure and recreation facilities to the west of Hailsham, as aspired to as part of Project MHT-01.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Hailsham Design Guidelines ('The HDG') sits alongside the Neighbourhood Plan and is referenced in policies within it. The intention of the HDG is to support the achievement of high-quality design and placemaking in new development. Applicants and decision makers are expected to have regard to the HDG.

The HDG does not seek to repeat existing good practice design guidance and principles and standards which are set out elsewhere, but rather how these can be applied in Hailsham. It has a focus on key areas of change in Hailsham, including the town centre and residential growth.

The HDG is framed by a 'design vision' for Hailsham, as set out below:

“By 2042, Hailsham will have evolved into a beautiful, walkable and socially connected ‘ten-minute town’, where people of all ages and abilities can easily reach the places that shape daily life. Guided by its historic character, landscape setting and the Cuckoo Trail as a defining green spine, the town will be distinguished by a richer, more coherent urban fabric: a revitalised town centre with active frontages, high quality public spaces and an attractive High Street. Sensitive integration of heritage assets, improvements to shopfronts, and climate responsive design will ensure new development enhances the town’s identity.

Residential neighbourhoods across Hailsham will be well-integrated, greener and more varied, with development that respects and extends the town’s characteristic pattern of permeable streets, generous planting, and a familiar palette of locally distinctive materials. Streets will feel safe and human-scaled, balancing movement with place, and designed around pedestrians, cyclists and public transport rather than through-traffic. A connected network of green spaces will support biodiversity, health and social cohesion. High-quality design will create interest and variety across neighbourhoods, with homes that are adaptable, energy efficient and resilient to changing environmental conditions.

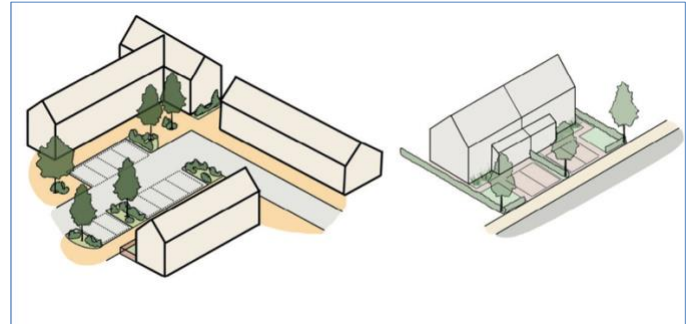
Hailsham in 2042 will be a climate resilient and forward-looking town, where sustainable drainage, greener streets, low carbon buildings and well-designed public spaces form part of daily life. The town centre will host a more diverse mix of uses ensuring activity throughout the day and evening. New investment and incremental change will have strengthened local pride, brought new opportunities to live and work locally, and fostered a stronger sense of belonging. Through consistent application of the Design Guidelines, future growth will feel like a natural, high-quality continuation of Hailsham’s long story, rooted in the local context while confident about the future”.

The HDG highlights the qualities of the built and natural environment which characterise Hailsham. It uses these to present guidance that illustrates what good design means in the context of Hailsham and how applicants for development should respond to this.

It covers aspects raised as important through the consultation process and which indicated a strong preference for improving the overall appearance of the town centre and quality of the street environment, that green space and parking must be well integrated within the design of new development, and that new development should help strengthen the sense of place and character, as reflected in the scale of development, materials used, the quality of the public realm and landscaping.



Above: The HDG illustrates how the use of landscape, a locally derived palette of materials, roofscape and building form can be combined to create interest, variety and local character in new development.



Above: The HDG illustrates different ways in which car parking can be sensitively integrated into areas of residential development



Above: The HDG illustrates a good practice approach to creating well-integrated edge of settlement development, supporting sustainable travel, the provision of community infrastructure and usable green space.



Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan, 2025 - 2042

Review and update of the 'Made' Plan

Executive Summary, March 2026



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