



1. Introduction

This paper presents a 'health check' of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan that was made in following referendum in May 2021. A review and update of the Neighbourhood Plan is considered necessary, responding to the emergence of a new District Local Plan and the implications of that for Hailsham.

This paper thus considers whether, in light of the emerging Local Plan, policies within it remain relevant and up-to-date, or whether changes are required.

It has also reviewed the outcomes of planning applications submitted since the Neighbourhood Plan was made to consider how policies have been used and what this might mean for the review.

The process for updating a Neighbourhood Plan is set out in Planning Practice Guidance and which supports implementation of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This indicates that there are three types of updates that can be made to Neighbourhood Plans:

- Minor, non-material, modifications can be made. These will not require an examination or referendum. However, changes under this approach are restricted to very minor updates, including for example, those which correct factual errors such as the title of a document referred to.
- Where changes are to be made to a policy, but which do not change the overall thrust of that policy, then examination will be required but a referendum may not be needed. This could involve the production of a design code that helps supplement an existing policy.
- Where new policies are to be prepared and which change the nature of the Plan, then these will require both an Examination and Referendum. An example of such a change might be the allocation of new sites within the Neighbourhood Plan.

It is likely that whatever changes are undertaken, Examination of the updated Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan will most probably be required. This should be discussed with the District Council at the outset as this will help inform the degree to the Neighbourhood Plan is changed as a result of the review.

2. Policy Context

2.1 National guidance

The Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan was ‘made’ following a successful referendum in May 2021. However, work on the Neighbourhood Plan significantly predates this: consultation on the pre-submission ‘Regulation 14’ version of the Neighbourhood Plan was undertaken in late 2017 / early 2018, followed by submission to Wealden for the purposes of Examination shortly afterwards. However, before the examination process commenced changes to the way in which development plans are assessed were introduced via an EU Court judgement which necessitated production of an Appropriate Assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan under the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). Following this the Neighbourhood Plan was resubmitted for examination with the Examiner’s report issued in March 2020. Subsequent to the making of modifications in line with the Examiner’s Report the referendum was then delayed until May 2021 due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. So although it is the new Local Plan that is triggering this review of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan, it is now relatively dated in any event and a review is timely.

Work on the Neighbourhood Plan was set in the context of the first version of the NPPF published in 2012, since when there have been various updates, with the most recent version published in December 2023. This version gives far greater emphasis to the importance of design and the use of design codes to help shape higher quality development outcomes. There is also a strengthening of aspects around climate change and biodiversity, driven by wider legislation and Government initiatives. These include, for example, the requirement for developers to deliver biodiversity netgains (as stipulated through provisions in the Environment Act). Changes have also been made to Building Regulations, in terms of sustainable construction standards and provision of electric vehicle charging points, and further changes are anticipated through introduction of the Future Buildings Standard, moving towards low carbon development.

In addition to the NPPF the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act was granted Royal Assent in October 2023. Provisions in this will begin to come into effect during the lifetime of the revised Neighbourhood Plan and are likely to include the introduction of a suite of Development Management policies that will apply nationally, meaning these do not need repeating in Local and Neighbourhood Plans. This will help free up Local and Neighbourhood Plans to focus on more locally specific issues and opportunities.

2.2 Local Plan

Work on the made Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan was undertaken in parallel with a new Local Plan that was being prepared by Wealden District Council at the time. That was however withdrawn from Examination in February 2020. This left the Wealden Core Strategy from 2013 and saved development management policies from 1998 as comprising the most up-to-date statement of policy for the District. The Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan stepped into this policy vacuum by creating up-to-date policies for

Hailsham as well as including some policies of a more general nature that would otherwise have been found in a Local Plan.

The Wealden Local Plan is now being reviewed again and, at the time of writing, consultation on a 'Regulation 18' version of this is underway. The District Council anticipates that the next round of consultation will take place in Spring 2025 prior to the Local Plan being submitted for examination. Adoption is then timetabled as taking place in Spring 2026.

The review and update of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan will therefore run in parallel to the Local Plan. For a Neighbourhood Plan to be made it needs to demonstrate that it satisfies the Basic Conditions, which includes general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan.

The Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan is being reviewed now such that it reflects the policy direction in the emerging Local Plan and remains up-to-date. This is good practice: Planning Practice Guidance notes that a Neighbourhood Plan can be prepared before or at the same time as a Local Plan, and that when this happens, the evidence underpinning the Local Plan can be used to support the Neighbourhood Plan. It also states that the local authority should support this process.

2.3 Key points from the emerging Local Plan

The emerging Local Plan and implications of this for Hailsham are discussed at length in the representations to the Regulation 18 consultation run by Wealden District Council. Particular points of relevance for the review of the Neighbourhood Plan are:

- The Local Plan covers the period to 2040. This should be reflected in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The Local Plan supports the '20-minute Neighbourhood' concept set out in guidance published by the Town and Country Planning Association. This guide includes a case study of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan and its use of the 'ten-minute town' concept to frame ideas and policies. Both concepts envisage a compact, walkable and inclusive place with provision of services and facilities in easy reach of the home that support day-to-day life and activity. This supports retention of the 'ten-minute town' concept in the Neighbourhood Plan but also provides scope to develop this further as the Local Plan is relatively light on details of how the concept should be implemented.
- Hailsham is categorised as a 'Type 1 settlement', placing it at the top of the settlement hierarchy in the District. It is thus identified as a place for significant growth, continuing the pattern established in the adopted Core Strategy and withdrawn Local Plan. However, growth in Hailsham cannot be considered in isolation as the Local Plan also allocates significant land for development in Hellingly: this effectively forms part of the town of Hailsham and where people will travel on a regular basis for services and facilities. In total, the Local Plan envisages delivery of almost 4,200 homes in the combined Hailsham and Hellingly area over the Plan period: some of these represent existing

commitments and others new growth allocations, but there is also an extensive allowance for unidentified 'windfall' development sites. To help deliver this the Local Plan supports the redevelopment of previously used land within settlement boundaries and where density is appropriate to context. The Neighbourhood Plan could look to influence this by establishing principles for the design of infill sites as well as establishing an appropriate mix of homes that would be supported on these, including the potential for smaller homes as well as homes suitable for an ageing population which are understood to be needed locally but where the Local Plan is relatively quiet on.

- The Local Plan also allocates significant land for new employment growth, including that outside Hailsham but along the A22 corridor, and thus where the impact of transport movements need to be considered. Support is also expressed for the redevelopment and intensification of existing employment areas. The Neighbourhood Plan could look to strengthen this, identifying key interventions that are required in the existing employment areas which need improving to meet local needs, including environmental improvements.
- Furthermore, the Local Plan supports development and change in the town centre, supporting and sustaining services and facilities. However, the evidence underpinning the Local Plan assumes that the town centre regeneration project (Hailsham Aspires) will deliver change. That project is no longer progressing, raising questions as to how change and improvement can be facilitated in the town centre.
- The Local Plan is comprehensive and has a strong focus on climate change and the natural environment, yet is very light on detail. It does not provide any information on how the growth allocations should come forward, the mix and use of development that will be supported, and how this will be successfully integrated with the existing built form and surrounding landscape. This represents a major opportunity for the Neighbourhood Plan and which could potentially have a focus on the specific design qualities and characteristics of Hailsham that should be reflected in new development. This could expand upon the existing Character Area Assessment and develop this into a Hailsham-wide Design Code that will inform planning applications and decisions. This could address key features such as the interface between existing and new development, the transition between the built and natural environment, principles for infill development and locations for supporting infrastructure, including active travel and green infrastructure networks.
- The Neighbourhood Plan could also take the opportunity to scope out a concept masterplan for the Town Centre and explore opportunities for short and medium term change that could facilitate longer term growth.

3. Review of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

3.1 Introduction

The made Neighbourhood Plan contains 27 policies which are presented across three 'scales': those that relate to the Plan area as a whole, those that are focused on growth areas around Hailsham, and those that have a focus on the town centre.

The policies are framed around and seek to respond to the concept of Hailsham as a 'ten-minute town'. This, and the wider vision for Hailsham, is neatly summarised in the mini-guide to the Neighbourhood Plan (December 2020) as:

The Neighbourhood Plan embodies the principles of sustainable development and seeks to enhance quality of life for all.

We aspire to Hailsham becoming a truly 'great place'. At the heart of every successful place is good accessibility for all, a thriving town centre, provision of a wide range of services, good proximity to these, and high quality, well-designed buildings and public spaces.

The vision for Hailsham is that it will become a 'ten-minute' town, where people of all ages and abilities can easily access the services and facilities they need for day-to-day life, including schools, healthcare, shops, leisure and cultural activities. We aspire to Hailsham becoming more socially inclusive and cohesive, with a range of housing choices and employment opportunities catering for all.

New development should be well- integrated with existing communities, provide supporting infrastructure, make walking and cycling a safe and attractive proposition, and protect important open spaces, habitats and areas of biodiversity.

The concept of the '10-minute town' has captured interest elsewhere and is presented as a case study example in the guide to '20-minute neighbourhoods' published by the Town and Country Planning Association. This guide was produced in a response to challenges to the way we plan and think about towns and cities resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic but also ways in which people can 'live better locally', responding to wider aims and objectives associated with social inclusion, climate change, health and wellbeing. As a means of structuring the Neighbourhood Plan and thinking about how it changes and develops over time the concept thus remains highly relevant. Indeed, reference to the TCPA guidance is embedded in the emerging Wealden Local Plan, albeit that the Regulation 18 consultation version doesn't take it forward into specific actions. This provides scope for the Neighbourhood Plan to do just that, and making the revised Neighbourhood Plan more specifically responsive to opportunities in Hailsham.

Commentary on the policies and implications for the review are presented in this section. They are set in the context of the emerging Local Plan and most recent national guidance (including the latest iteration of the NPPF).

3.2 Commentary on ‘made’ policies

Policy HAIL HRA1: Habitat Regulations

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL HRA1 states that all development proposals must allow a full Habitat Regulations Assessment. In addition, the policy aims to protect the Pevensey Levels Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar site by establishing the need for sufficient capacity at the relevant Water Waste Treatment Works or alternative foul water drainage solutions.	<p>This policy was specifically inserted into the Neighbourhood Plan in response to the EU Court Judgement in respect of Appropriate Assessment and impacts on designated sites. It is unlikely that this policy will need carrying forward into the updated Neighbourhood Plan as the Local Plan (which the Neighbourhood Plan will need to be in conformity with) will be subject to assessments required under the Habitats Regulations and will establish appropriate mitigations.</p> <p><i>Summary: Retention of this policy is unlikely to be necessary. It can be removed from the Neighbourhood Plan.</i></p>

Policy HAIL D1: High Quality Design

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL D1 encourages development to be well designed. Development should follow a design-led approach, regard the local context, optimise capacities, consider adaptability and create high quality places.	<p>Many of the elements outlined in Policy HAIL D1 are included within Policy DE1 of the emerging Local Plan. There is no need to duplicate this. However, the Local Plan stops short of outlining what is understood by local character and how good design should respond to this. The opportunity for the Neighbourhood Plan is thus to develop this, identifying and explaining local qualities and distinctiveness, and how this should inform good design in Hailsham that is reflective of the local character. This could be achieved through production of a Hailsham-wide Design Code that illustrates the key qualities and how development should respond to. Key messages from this can then be embedded in an updated design policy included in the review of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan. The Design Code could help develop aspects of the existing policy to provide further guidance on these, such as how biodiversity for example might be successfully integrated within a development scheme (which will be particularly important given the requirement for delivery of biodiversity net gain by applicants).</p>

Policy aim	Commentary
	<i>Summary: Retain policy but to update it to include key principles and requirements illustrated in a Hailsham-wide Design Code that makes application of design policy more specific to the area.</i>

Policy HAIL D2: Small scale residential development and householder extensions

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL D2 explains that small-scale development and redevelopment within the built-up area are welcomed if they meet a list of criteria that ensures a high design standard.	<p>As above, Policy DE1 in the emerging Local Plan sets out an approach to achieving high quality design but does not relate this to specific sites to opportunities, not explain what the important features of the local context are that need responding to. Policy HAIL D2 remains relevant, particularly in respect of smaller windfall and infill opportunity sites that are likely to come forward over the life of the Plan (with the Local Plan including a component of windfall in its overall housing supply calculations). The opportunity could be taken to update Policy HAIL D2 by supplementing it with a Design Code that includes a section on small sites and infill site opportunities, establishing important design considerations based around typical development opportunities that come forward in Hailsham.</p> <p><i>Summary: Retain policy but update it to cross-refer to a Hailsham-wide Design Code that illustrates key design principles for small and infill sites.</i></p>

Policy HAIL D3: Innovation and Variety

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL D3 encourages bespoke design solutions that reinterpret local design cues while respecting the surrounding context for development proposals.	<p>Policy DE1 of the emerging Local Plan includes, at clause 1, support for innovative and contemporary design that responds to local character. There is no need to repeat this in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, if a Design Code is prepared alongside the Neighbourhood Plan, this could help illustrate how innovative development might sit comfortably within the existing context.</p> <p><i>Summary: Policy could be removed with a Design Code used to illustrate key design principles that should be considered and help inform innovative, but acceptable, design.</i></p>

Policy HAIL D4: Design for self and custom build homes

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL D4 encourages the preparation of site masterplans and plot passports at the outline planning application stage if the proposal contains 10 or more dwellings to be build.	<p>The emerging Local Plan expresses support for self and custom build homes and requires production of design codes and plot passports to be prepared, as per the made Neighbourhood Plan policy. It also goes further than the Neighbourhood Plan policy in terms of the proportion of plots to be made available for self and custom build on larger sites, and marketing periods for individual plots. This policy will eventually supersede the Neighbourhood Plan and can thus be removed through the review. Reference could be made to the components that should be included in a plot passport through production of a Design Code for Hailsham.</p> <p><i>Summary: Policy to be removed as it is superseded by emerging Local Plan. Information on what comprises a plot passport and how it should be framed could be included in a Hailsham-wide Design Code.</i></p>

Policy HAIL D5: Residential Car Parking Design

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL D5 explains that during the design of new residential parking, the quality of the street environment should be considered, and the visual impact should be minimised.	<p>Policy INF3 of the emerging Local Plan cross-refers to parking standards established by ESCC and that parking should be designed as appropriate to the street and scheme in question. This is not dissimilar to the Neighbourhood Plan policy which also points to the same ESCC guidance. As such, there will be no need for the review of the Neighbourhood Plan to duplicate the Local Plan policy. However, the Neighbourhood Plan does seek to provide more information on the design of parking such that it is used in the right way and without causing obstruction to the street or undermining the quality of the street environment. This could be retained in the Neighbourhood Plan but developed further, with illustrated guidance (in a Hailsham-wide Design Code) showing different solutions to parking provision. This should help inform proposals for major development around Hailsham as well as smaller scale schemes and infill opportunities, but could potentially also be expanded to cover the</p>

Policy aim	Commentary
	<p>town-centre and other development types as appropriate.</p> <p>Summary: Refine policy to focus on the design aspects of parking provision, drawing out key principles from a Hailsham wide-Design Code (Note: this may be subject to any further guidance published by ESCC or which might be included in as a more 'strategic' item within a Wealden-wide Design Code).</p>

Policy HAIL AT1: Active travel

Policy aim	Commentary
<p>Policy HAIL AT1 encourages applications for major greenfield residential and commercial development to demonstrate how active travel is supported in the proposed design.</p>	<p>Tis policy is similar in form to Policy INF2 of the emerging Local Plan and will not need repeating in the review of the Local Plan. However, the focus of the policy could change slightly to make it more locally specific to Hailsham, by referring to the opportunities for walking and wheeling presented in the ESCC Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and, through a Hailsham-wide Design Code, illustrate how walking and wheeling might be incorporated in new development as well as being retrofitted into the existing street network. This could be illustrated by way of a set of street typologies. Where identified routes run through or are close to a development allocation or opportunity area as indicated on the Local Plan policies map the Neighbourhood Plan could make clear which routes need connecting to and extending as appropriate.</p> <p>To help encourage a mode-shift to active travel and counter-act congestion issues associated with vehicles seeking to avoid the A22 the review of the Neighbourhood Plan could also potentially consider how wider schemes such as 'filtered permeability', school streets and 'low traffic neighbourhoods' might be taken forward and developed in Hailsham</p> <p>Summary: Retain a focus on active travel in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan but link this more closely to schemes identified in the LCWIP and, through a Design Code, illustrate how this might be achieved. Potentially consider</p>

	<i>identification of wider traffic schemes (possibly as projects rather than policies).</i>
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Policy HAIL AT2: The Cuckoo Trail

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL AT2 states that proposals that enhance the quality of the Cuckoo Trail through the inclusion of new pedestrian and cyclist links, creation of new active fronts, provision of unobtrusive lighting and enhancement of the environmental quality will be supported.	<p>This remains a locally specific policy. The Cuckoo Trail is referenced in supporting text in the emerging Local Plan as an important part of the cycling network in the District although there are no specific policy references to it. Since the Neighbourhood Plan was made a 'user research' report of the Cuckoo Trail has been published and has informed the Cuckoo Trail Strategy produced by Wealden DC. This sets out a number of improvements to the Trail which should be undertaken in a sensitive way. The findings of this could be used to inform an updated version of the policy which also links in with potential route improvement suggested through the LCWIP published by ESCC.</p> <p><i>Summary: Retain and expand this policy, drawing on recent reports to include a set of more specific actions and opportunities that would be supported.</i></p>

Policy HAIL AT3: Public transport

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL AT3 explains that planning proposals that improve public transport connections and associated facilities will be supported. Major development proposals are expected to provide solutions for the integration of public transport and ensure sufficient space provision to avoid conflict between different modes of transport.	<p>This policy remains aligned with the NPPF as well as aspirations set out in the emerging ESCC Local Transport Plan. However, similar wording to this is included in Policy INF2 (Active and Sustainable Travel) of the emerging Local Plan. It will not be necessary to repeat this. The importance of good public transport remains though, particularly in respect of delivering improved services to Polegate and Eastbourne. This is highlighted as an aspiration in the made Neighbourhood Plan and should remain in the revised Neighbourhood Plan until such time as it is delivered. Through the review this policy could be refocused to address two aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provision of design guidance on how bus services and facilities can be sensitively integrated in new development areas, forming part a Design Code for Hailsham

Policy aim	Commentary
	<p>(and potentially included in a street-typology section).</p> <p>2. Explore how the concept of ‘mobility hubs’, as suggested in the ESCC Local Transport Plan, can be designed and delivered in Hailsham, connecting public transport with other micro mobility options (e.g.: cycle and scooter). These hubs could comprise a kit of parts that also includes community uses, such as parcel delivery points, toilets and community kiosk etc</p> <p><i>Summary: Refocus the policy around design aspects for bus routing and principles associated with the design and delivery of a network of mobility hubs across Hailsham.</i></p>

Policy HAIL GS1: Natural and amenity green space

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL GS1 supports proposals that protect, enhance and create new natural green spaces for wildlife habitats as well as good quality outdoor space for gardening, enhancement of public space and reconnection to the surrounding landscape.	<p>Policy SS10 of the emerging Local Plan set out an approach to the protection and delivery of new Green Infrastructure, which is supplemented by Policy INF8 in respect of space standards and design criteria. These do not need repeating in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Local Plan cross refers to the Green Infrastructure Strategy prepared for the District in 2017 and that proposals which help deliver this will be supported. This study is now dated. Through the review of the Neighbourhood Plan the opportunity could be taken to identify possible gaps in the green infrastructure network and locations for improvements.</p> <p><i>Summary: Reframe the policy around the identification of specific opportunities for delivering improvements to the Green Infrastructure network across Hailsham.</i></p>

Policy HAIL GS2: Open space with major development areas

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL GS2 requires all new major developments to provide natural and amenity open space where	The requirement for delivery of green space in line with established standards is set out in Policy INF8 of the emerging Local Plan and does not need repeating in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy aim	Commentary
appropriate, following WDC Open space standards.	<p>Policy INF8 also includes design principles for provision of green space.</p> <p>Summary: Policy to be removed as it is superseded by emerging Local Plan.</p>

Policy HAIL GS3: Pevensey Levels

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL GS3 requires all applications near the Pevensey Levels to ensure that no harmful impact is caused. Additionally large-scale residential developments will have to provide natural green spaces on the development edge to protect biodiversity and the ecology.	<p>This policy remains locally specific and of relevance to Hailsham given the proposed allocations for development in the emerging Local Plan. Various policies in the emerging Local Plan refer to biodiversity and water management but the Neighbourhood Plan policy helpfully brings these into one place in respect of development adjacent to the Pevensey Levels.</p> <p>Summary: Retain policy.</p>

Policy HAIL EMP1: Providing for a mix of employment opportunities

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL EMP1 encourages the provision of diverse local employment opportunities.	<p>Policy SS5 of the emerging Local Plan supports provision of new employment floorspace, including the retention, intensification and diversification of existing employment areas. This is expanded upon in Policies EC1 – EC3 of the emerging Local Plan, albeit that the detail on what should come forward is relatively limited. It is not necessary to retain this policy in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan, unless there is a specific employment need that is not being met, or a specific challenge within employment areas that needs addressing (e.g.: poor access etc). In terms of design, the Design Code could illustrate ways in which employment areas might be redeveloped or intensified to help provide attractive new working environments, although this may not necessarily be a key focus for the Plan. In terms of references in the current policy to supporting employment activities in the town centre this could be retained but amalgamated within town centre policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Summary: It may not be necessary to retain this. Design guidance, in a Design Code, could be</p>

Policy aim	Commentary
	<i>established, to support well-designed employment areas, and references to town centre employment could be moved to that section of the Neighbourhood Plan.</i>

Policy HAIL CF1: Community facilities

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL CF1 supports the provision of additional community facilities including education, healthcare, childcare facilities and community halls. The facilities are required to be accessible and, if possible, flexible in their design.	<p>Policy INF7 of the emerging Local Plan effectively supersedes this policy in the Neighbourhood Plan. It is not necessary to repeat this in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, and in response to the '20-minute Neighbourhood' / 'ten-minute town' concept, the network of existing facilities and access to these could be mapped spatially to help understand any gaps in provision and thus where new facilities should be directed or access improvements sought. It is understood there is a need for provision of new healthcare facilities in Hailsham but this is not appropriately reflected in the Local Plan (and supporting evidence base). In the absence of this, support could be expressed in the Neighbourhood Plan for alternative models of delivery (e.g.: 'pop-ups', mobile healthcare units etc) until such time as permanent facilities can be provided</p> <p><i>Summary: Policy to be reframed around the location of new facilities and access to these. Support to be expressed for alternative models of delivery.</i></p>

Policy HAIL TOU1: Tourism

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL TOU1 states that developments for tourist attractions and facilities will be favoured if they are designed sustainably and in line with the local character and landscape.	<p>This Neighbourhood Plan policy is superseded by Policy EC6 and EC7 of the emerging Local Plan.</p> <p><i>Summary: Policy to be removed as it is superseded by emerging Local Plan.</i></p>

Policy HAIL AQ1: Charging points for electric vehicles

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL AQ1 encourages the inclusion of charging stations for electric vehicles and additional charging infrastructure in the development of new public parking facilities and housing developments.	<p>Part S of the Building Regulations now require new development to provide charging points for electric vehicles. It is not necessary to repeat this in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, there will be a continued need for provision of charging infrastructure in publicly accessible locations and the policy could be more specifically focused on this and the need for these to be sensitively located and designed to avoid visual intrusion and physical obstruction.</p> <p><i>Summary: Retain policy but revise to focus on the design of charging points in public places. The policy could also suggest locations for provision of charging points.</i></p>

Policy HAIL AQ2: Sustainable design and construction

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL AQ2 encourages new development to be designed in a sustainable and resource efficient manner following BREEAM, LEED or preferably Passivhaus standards. It is encouraged to consider waste, recycling and storage areas as well as the flood risk and opportunities for on-site renewable energy production for new developments.	<p>The Written Ministerial Statement of December 2023 makes clear that the Government does not expect sustainability and energy efficiency standards to be set at the local or neighbourhood level. The Government will be introducing new energy efficiency standards through the Future Buildings Standard to be introduced in 2025. Despite this, Policy CC1 – CC3 in the emerging Local Plan provide extensive criteria in respect of new building standards and which go into far greater detail than the made Neighbourhood Plan. It will not therefore be necessary to carry this forward in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan makes reference to flooding and flood resilience. This is also addressed in the emerging Local Plan (Policy CC7) and changes are being made at the national level (in the Water Management Act) which will mandate the delivery of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). Whilst it is not necessary to include this requirement in the Neighbourhood Plan the concern about localised flooding remains. The review could instead include design guidance on SuDS, indicating how and where they should be incorporated into new development and existing streets.</p>

Policy aim	Commentary
	<i>Summary: Reframe policy around design principles (which could be prepared through a Hailsham-wide Design Code and by reference to guidance published by ESCC as lead local flood authority) for the integration of SuDS in new development and through the retrofitting of existing streets and spaces.</i>

Policy HAIL AQ3: High energy efficient buildings

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL AQ3 states that development proposals that fulfil Passivhaus standards or have an emission rate of zero or below will be encouraged and considered favourably subject to other policies.	Commentary as per HAIL AQ2 applies. <i>Summary: Policy to be removed as it is superseded by emerging Local Plan and national guidance.</i>

Policy HAIL AQ4: Renewables

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL AQ4 explains that applications for renewable energy schemes will be supported in appropriate locations and when they do not have a negative impact on landscape and townscape character, biodiversity, amenities or other assets.	This policy is effectively superseded by Policy CC5 of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. Unless there is a specific local scheme or project in mind that the community wishes to promote the policy can be removed. <i>Summary: Policy to be removed as it is superseded by emerging Local Plan.</i>

Policy HAIL SD1: Development frameworks

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL SD1 states that major developments consisting of 50 dwellings and more are encouraged to provide a Development Framework prior to submitting a planning application. The Development Framework should cover topics like usage, character, public transport	This policy is effectively superseded by Policy DE2 of the emerging Local Plan and will not need repeating in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan does though refer to key components that need including in a site masterplan or design framework, including, for example, the movement network and green infrastructure plan. The Neighbourhood Plan could identify and establish important infrastructure networks under

Policy aim	Commentary
infrastructure, green infrastructure and a phasing plan for development and implementation.	<p>other policies (see, for example, HAIL AT1 and HAIL GS1) and direct applicants to these instead.</p> <p><i>Policy to be removed as it is superseded by emerging Local Plan. Develop information on movement and green infrastructure networks under other policies and direct applicants to these.</i></p>

Policy HAIL SD2: Design and placemaking principles

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL SD2 states that development proposals of 10 or more units are encouraged to prepare a Building for Life 12 assessment (or later equivalent) as well as consider recommendations made in the Hailsham Character Area Assessment.	<p>The principles in this policy are reflected in the emerging Local Plan in Policy DE1. Whilst still relevant and important, it is not necessary for the review of the Neighbourhood Plan to duplicate the Local Plan. However, and linked to comments on Policy HAIL D1, this could be developed such that it becomes more Hailsham specific through production of a Design Code that illustrates how development should respond to key principles in the context of Hailsham.</p> <p><i>Summary: Integrate this policy with revisions to Policy HAIL D1 and which is supported by a Hailsham-wide Design Code that illustrates key principles to be followed in new development.</i></p>

Policy HAIL SD3: Design codes and quality

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL SD3 explains that the Council welcomes the production of Design Codes for major developments prior to the approval of any reserved matters or grant of detailed planning permission.	<p>The requirement in this policy is effectively superseded by Policy DE2 of the emerging Local Plan and does not need repeating in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p><i>Summary: Policy to be removed as it is superseded by emerging Local Plan.</i></p>

Policy HAIL TC1: Hailsham town centre

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL TC1 states that development within the town centre should contribute to its vitality and viability and enhance the town centre as a	<p>The uses and mix of these outlined in the policy is effectively superseded by Policy TC1 of the emerging Local Plan. However, the Local Plan does explain how change and development might be taken forward in Hailsham. Through the review of</p>

Policy aim	Commentary
destination for shopping. Good practice design principles should be considered, and mixed-use schemes are encouraged.	<p>the Neighbourhood Plan this policy could be reframed, based around a concept masterplan that sets out key structuring principles for change, including development opportunities and public realm improvements.</p> <p><i>Summary: Reframe policy around a concept masterplan illustrating potential for change in the town centre.</i></p>

Policy HAIL TC2: Town centre design principles

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL TC2 explains that new buildings need to reflect best practice design principles and should respond positively to the character and qualities of the town centre.	<p>This policy remains relevant and appropriate, providing more specific guidance than set out in policies contained within the emerging Local Plan. The policy should be retained and potentially developed further, supported by additional illustrations as appropriate to help communicate the principles and how these relate to a concept masterplan for the town centre (see Policy TC1 above).</p> <p><i>Summary: retain policy and potentially strengthen with additional illustrations to help communicate the principles.</i></p>

Policy HAIL TC4: Town centre car parking

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL TC4 states that new development in the town centre should not reduce the amount of public parking opportunities. Development proposals are encouraged to incorporate opportunities for multi-level parking where appropriate and allowed for by topography, and ensure that the quality of the street environment is kept or improved.	<p>Similar to commentary in respect of Policy HAIL D5 above, Policy INF3 of the emerging Local Plan establishes standards and principles in respect of car parking that apply in residential and non-residential areas across Wealden. The Neighbourhood Plan policy however goes further than this and establishes specific principles in respect of parking in the town centre. These remain relevant and could be linked to productions of a concept masterplan that illustrates how and where parking could be sensitively accommodated / rationalised in the town centre.</p> <p><i>Summary: Retain policy but consider strengthening this through supporting illustrative material to help</i></p>

Policy aim	Commentary
	<i>communicate how parking might be successfully integrated in the town centre.</i>

Note to table: The Neighbourhood Plan policy references skip from HAIL TC2 to TC4. There is no TC3. Policy references will need updating as part of any review.

Policy HAIL TC5: Shopfronts

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL TC5 says that design proposals for new and improved shopfronts are welcome if they are in line with the local architecture and the character of the town centre.	<p>This policy is effectively superseded by Policy DE4 of the emerging Local Plan. There is no need to duplicate it in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan includes a project around a 'Hailsham specific' shopfront and branding strategy. Further consideration could be given to this, including presentation / illustration of ideas to be taken forward, including any locations where interventions might be targeted.</p> <p><i>Summary: Policy to be removed as it is superseded by emerging Local Plan. However, consider developing ideas around a shopfront and branding strategy.</i></p>

Policy HAIL TC6: Streets and spaces in the town centre

Policy aim	Commentary
Policy HAIL TC6 states that applications that contribute to the enhancement of movement networks for all modes of transport are welcomed. Proposals for interventions in public space should support a lively and accessible town centre and ensure that they do not cause obstruction.	<p>This policy is, in part, superseded by principles and criteria set out in a combination of policies in the emerging Local Plan, including Policy DE3, INF2 and TC1. It is not necessary to repeat this in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, it is appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan to identify key opportunities for change and improvement. These could be combined with the production of a concept masterplan for the centre (see Policy HAIL TC1) and interventions separately listed in a project towards which funding from partner organisations (e.g.: ESCC) might be directed.</p> <p><i>Summary: Integrate ideas within a town centre concept masterplan as part of the review of HAIL TC1, identifying specific schemes and opportunities for investment.</i></p>

4. Planning Applications

Following the ‘making’ of the Neighbourhood Plan it became part of the development plan for Wealden and should be used in shaping and determining planning applications submitted in the Plan area.

This section reviews planning applications submitted and decisions taken since the Neighbourhood Plan was made to determine how the policies are being used.

The Wealden Planning Register contains records of numerous planning applications having been determined or submitted since the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan was made. Many of these relate to small extensions and alterations to existing properties as well as applications for tree felling, signage and fascia details, or amendments to conditions. For the purposes of this paper these applications have been filtered out, allowing for a focus on those that comprise ‘new’ development (e.g.: new homes) in Hailsham since the Plan was made. These are tabulated in the appendix, with commentary on each presented in the following sections.

4.1 **Peppers, Amberstone, Hailsham, BN27 1PQ (Refs.: WD/2023/2165/FR and WD/2021/2276/F)**

The site has been subject to two planning applications since the Neighbourhood Plan was made. Both applications refer to the erection of a new building as a disability centre for dementia care on the site. Planning Permission for the first application was granted in 2022 (Refs.: WD/2021/2276/F) and a Part Retrospective Planning Permission due to changes in the appearance and the access arrangement was granted in 2024. No reference to the Neighbourhood Plan is made in either of the Decision Statements.

4.2 **Land off Mill Road - Phase 1 & 2, Hailsham (Refs.: WD/2023/2446/MRM, WD/2023/2445/MRM, WD/2023/0999/MRM and WD/2022/1449/MRM)**

These four Reserved Matters Applications are linked to Outline Planning Permission (Refs.: WD/2017/2956/MAO) for the construction of up to 220 dwellings plus supporting uses. This was determined after the Neighbourhood Plan was made (in October 2021) but had been submitted and subject to negotiation for several years prior to this. The Officers Report states that most of the site was identified for housing development in the then emerging Wealden Local Plan of 2019.

The first two Reserved Matters applications relate to drainage: the first was refused but the second subsequently approved. The third and fourth applications relate to matters associated with the appearance, landscape, layout, and scale for the first phase of development. Both applications were withdrawn for reasons unknown.

No reference to the Neighbourhood Plan is made at any stage of the application and decision process.

4.3 Lynton, Amberstone, Hailsham, BN27 1PE (Refs.: WD/2023/2246/F and WD/2021/2021/RM (related to Refs.: WD/2019/0077/O))

An Outline Planning Permission for (Refs.: WD/2019/0077/O) the erection of three new dwellings on land adjacent to an existing house, including the widening of the existing vehicle access on the site, was granted in April 2020 before the Neighbourhood Plan was made.

However, the subsequent Reserved Matters Application (Refs.: WD/2021/2021/RM) was refused due to insufficient space for vehicle manoeuvring, private outdoor amenities and bin storage in the proposed layout. As reasons for refusal the Officers Report refers to the Neighbourhood Plan and in particular Policy HAIL D1 (High Quality Design) and HAIL D2 (Small scale residential development and householder extensions).

A second Reserved Matters Application (Refs.: WD/2023/2246/F) was also refused. The Officers Report states that while the new proposed layout for 5 dwellings (4 linked detached and 1 detached dwellings) would add to the much-needed housing supply, it does not achieve a well-designed place and could harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area as the dwellings are positioned too close together, landscaping opportunities are limited, and space proposed for vehicular manoeuvring and bin storage is deemed insufficient. In support of this the Officers Report cites Policies HAIL D1 (High Quality Design) and HAIL D2 (Small scale residential development and householder extensions) of the Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, and in response to consultation on the application, Hailsham Town Council also drew attention to Policies HAIL SD2 (Design and placemaking principles) and HAIL AQ1 (Charging points for electric vehicles) of the Neighbourhood Plan, stating that the application did not comply with these.

4.4 Land west of Station Road, Hailsham (Refs.: WD/2023/2305/CD and WD/2022/1450/MAO (related to Refs.: WD/2020/2509/MAO))

The site has been subject to two proposals for Outline Planning Permission. The first application (Refs.: WD/2020/2509/MAO) was refused in February 2020 against the Officers recommendation, prior to the Neighbourhood Plan being made. The Officer argued that the proposed development would greatly benefit the supply of land for housing supply and that there are no adverse impacts that would outweigh that. However, the main reasons for objection, brought forward by the Planning Committee, were that the site lies outside of the designated development boundary and that insufficient evidence had been provided in respect of how impacts on the highway network will be mitigated.

The second application (Refs.: WD/2022/1450/MAO) was made in October 2022. However, the application was withdrawn. The reason for withdrawal are unknown.

In September 2024 an application to Discharge the details required by schedule 5, paragraph 1 (self-build plots) of the S106 Agreement attached to the Outline Planning Application Refs.: WD/2020/2509/MAO was refused. The Decision Notice states that

details can only be discharged once Reserved Matters for the site are granted and an acceptable layout has been secured.

4.5 Land to the West of Ersham Road, Summerhill, Hailsham (Refs.: WD/2023/1924/MRM and WD/2021/2678/MRM (related to Refs.: WD/2019/2692/MAO))

An Outline Planning Permission (Refs.: WD/2019/2692/MAO) for the erection of up to 241 residential dwellings was granted in April 2021. The Officers Report supports the approval of the proposed development as it would contribute significantly towards the supply of land for housing which outweighs its setting in the countryside.

A Reserved Matters Application (Refs.: WD/2021/2678/MRM) relating to appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale was made in January 2023. This was withdrawn with a subsequent Reserve Matters Application being submitted (Refs.: WD/2023/1924/MRM) and approved in January 2024.

No reference to the Neighbourhood Plan is made at any stage of the application and decision process for the site.

4.6 Sturton Place Community Health Service Centre, Station Road, Hailsham, BN27 2AU (Refs.: WD/2023/2020/MRM, WD/2023/0858/F and WD/2021/1971/MAO)

An outline planning permission (Refs.: WD/2021/1971/MAO) for (a) the conversion of the former Drill Hall to form five residential flats and (b) demolition of the remaining buildings and replacement with 29 new build residential flats was granted in July 2023. Located within the Hailsham development boundary, the scheme is referred to in the Officers Report as representing ‘windfall’ and contributing to the five-year supply of land for housing.

The Officers Report refers to an objection from Hailsham Town Council, stating that the application could cause harm to the Cuckoo Trail and thus does not conform with the Neighbourhood Plan. The comments made by the Town Council also suggest that a walking and cycling link should be provided in the site which would help deliver the aspirations for the “Ten Minute Town” set out in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, and despite policies in the Neighbourhood Plan seeking to ensure that all streets, public spaces and routes are designed with safety and security in mind, through provision of active frontages and direct routes for example, the Officer’s response states that no pedestrian or cycle access should be encouraged based on the secure by design grounds.

Two further planning permissions have been granted for the site, the first in respect of demolition of the existing building on site, and the second in respect of landscaping. In determining these the Officers Report refers to the Neighbourhood Plan in terms of listing site constraints and policies, noting that the site is located outside of the ‘Hailsham Town Centre and Primary Shopping Area’. However, and beyond listing relevant policies, no reference is made to how the application conforms to these.

4.7 Cuckoo Fields & Ersham Park, Land south of Hailsham, Hailsham, BN27 3PN (Refs.: WD/2023/1978/NMA, WD/2021/2265/MRM and WD/2021/1485/MRM (related to Refs.: WD/2018/0475/MAO))

Outline Planning Permission (Refs.: WD/2018/0475/MAO) for the erection of up to 400 dwellings was granted in March 2020, prior to the making of the Neighbourhood Plan. In support of the approval, Officers Report states that since the Council could only demonstrate housing supply for 3.67 years and thus the development would make an important contribution to the delivery of new homes.

A subsequent Reserved Matters Application (Refs.: WD/2021/1485/MRM) for the erection of up to 128 dwellings in Phase 1 was approved in April 2022. The Reserved Matters Application (Refs.: WD/2021/2265/MRM) for Phase 2 (272 dwellings) was approved in July 2023. Lastly, an application for a Non-Material Amendment regarding the drainage plans for planning application Refs.: WD/2021/2265/MRM was refused in November 2023 with the argument that the proposed changes to the wording would substitute the drainage plans with ones that have not yet been approved.

Relevant Neighbourhood Plan Policies are listed in the Officer Reports for the planning applications, but no further reference is made to these.

4.8 Land adjacent to Cuckoo Trail, Cuckoo Fields, Station Road, Hailsham, BN27 3PN (WD/2023/1979/NMA and WD/2022/1505/MRM (related to WD/2019/1864/MAO))

An Outline Planning Permission (Refs.: WD/2019/1864/MAO) for the erection of up to 100 residential dwellings was granted in October 2020, prior to the making of the Neighbourhood Plan. While the site was located outside of the settlement boundary at the time of the application it was argued in the Officers Report that adjacent sites with similar characteristics had already been allocated and that it would form a continuation of that. In addition, it was considered that the site would contribute to the housing land supply to meet local housing needs.

Following this, a Reserved Matters Application (Refs.: WD/2022/1505/MRM) regarding appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale, was approved in June 2023. Relevant Policies from the Neighbourhood Plan were listed in the Officer Report, but no further reference made to these.

In addition, an Application for Non-Material Amendment (Refs.: WD/2023/1979/NMA) to update drainage plan drawings was issued and consequently refused since the proposed changes to the wording would substitute the drainage plans with ones that have not yet been approved.

4.9 Railway Crossing Cottage, Ersham Road, Hailsham, BN27 2RG (WD/2023/1240/F, WD/2022/3116/F and WD/2021/1480/F)

Three planning applications for housing development on the site have been submitted and determined since August 2021. While the first application (Refs.: WD/2021/1480/F)

was withdrawn, the two following applications were refused as they do not conform with current planning policies, including those set out in the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan.

In February 2023 an application for four detached dwellings together with an access road (Refs.: WD/2022/3116/F) was refused as development did not respond to the character of the area. The Officers Report refers to policies HAIL D1 (High Quality Design), HAIL D2 (Small scale residential development and householder extensions) and HAIL D5 (Residential Car Parking Design) of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan and concludes that the density, scale and height of the proposed housing and frontage layout conflicts with these policies.

Following the first refusal, a second application (Refs.: WD/2023/1240/F) was submitted, this time for the erection of three detached dwellings with an access road. This was refused in August 2023. The Officers Report notes that Hailsham Town Council objected to the proposal on the basis that it would represent over development of the site, referring to Policy HAIL D1 of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Officer states that the proposed development would integrate with the evolving neighbourhood as it strikes an appropriate balance between efficient use of land and the quantum, and the scale and design respond to the pattern of development at this location. Ultimately, planning permission was refused as it was considered that the negative impact of the proposed development would outweigh the small contribution the scheme would make to housing supply.

4.10 Land adj. to 154, Station Road, Hailsham, BN27 2SB (Refs.: WD/2023/0699/O)

An Outline Planning Permission for the erection of up to nine dwellings including access and the change of use of land to residential was granted in July 2023. The reasons for approving the application included the contribution the scheme would make to meeting the housing land supply and that the benefits of this outweigh any adverse impacts from development. Policy AQ1 (Charging points for electric vehicles) of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan is mentioned in the Officers Report in relation to the provision of electric vehicle charging. The report states that approved charging points should be installed prior to first occupation or substantial completion of the dwellings in the interest of air quality and climate change.

4.11 84a London Road, Hailsham, BN27 3AH (Refs.: WD/2023/0523/F and WD/2022/2690/F)

Two planning applications for this site have been submitted since the Neighbourhood Plan was made.

The first application (Refs.: WD/2022/2690/F) proposed the demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of the site to provide a convenience retail unit. This was withdrawn in December 2022 without any reasons being given.

The second application (Refs.: WD/2023/0523/F), for a similar scheme, was refused in July 2023. The Officer agrees that the principle of the development would have a

positive impact on Hailsham. To support this argument Policy HAIL EMP1 (Providing for a mix of employment opportunities) is cited. However, it is also noted that the proposal lacked sensitivity to the visual context and residential character of the area. The Officers Report states that the proposed development would result in over development on the site. To support this argument, Policy HAIL D1 (High Quality Design) of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan is referenced by the Officer.

4.12 Land at Fieldgate, off The Belfry, Hailsham, BN27 3EW (Refs.: WD/2022/2873/O)

The Planning Application for this site, for the erection of four detached dwellings and creation of access, was refused in December 2022. Reasons for refusal are that the proposal would result in over development, have a negative impact on protected trees and would result in a substandard point of access.

The Officers Report refers to Policies HAIL D1 (High Quality Design) and HAIL D2 (Small scale residential development and householder extensions) of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan, supporting the point that the proposed design does not respond to local character and that it would have a harmful effect on its appearance. It is stated that the harm to the environmental objective and the neighbouring dwellings outweighs the contribution of four additional dwellings to the district's housing supply. Additionally, Policy HAIL D5 (Residential Car Parking Design) is referenced in terms of the proposed layout, access, and circulation.

4.13 Land west and South of Poplar Cottage, Amberstone, Hailsham BN27 1PQ (Refs.: WD/2022/2388/MRM (related to Refs.: WD/2020/1690/MAO))

The site has been subject to two planning applications. An Outline Planning Permission for a residential development of up to 45 dwellings including vehicular access and pedestrian links, garage, and outside parking, as well as public open space and landscaping (Refs.: WD/2020/1690/MAO) was granted in July 2021 right after the Neighbourhood Plan was made. It is noted that the benefits of housing development on the site outweigh the impacts. Given the timeframes involved, the application material and Officers Report do not reference the Neighbourhood Plan.

Subsequent to this a Reserved Matters Application (Refs.: WD/2022/2388/MRM), for appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale, was approved in February 2024. In determining this the Officers Report makes reference to Policy HAIL D1 (High Quality Design) of the Neighbourhood Plan, noting the importance of materials used such that the appearance of the scheme reflects local character. Policy HAIL D5 (Residential Car Parking Design) is also referenced in relation to the design and construction of car parking spaces and areas for vehicular movement on the site.

4.14 Land to the rear of 72 High Street, Hailsham, BN27 1AU (Refs.: WD/2022/0005/F)

A Planning Application for the redevelopment of this site, including demolition of a single detached bungalow and brick garages and the erection of 4 one-bedroom flats

with parking and associated landscaping, was refused in March 2023. The Officers Report states that the proposed development would have limited public benefit and would cause the loss of heritage assets and loss of legibility in a highly sensitive location. In addition, the Officers Report states that the scale, form, and design of the proposed development would not contribute positively to the setting of the site in the Hailsham Conservation Area. The Officers Report cites Policies HAIL D1 (High Quality Design) and HAIL D2 (Small scale residential development and householder extensions) of the Neighbourhood Plan in support of the reasons for refusal.

4.15 Coldthorn Barn, Coldthorn Lane, Hailsham, BN27 3PJ (Refs.: WD/2022/1668/MAO and WD/2022/1976/F)

Two unrelated applications for the site were brought forward and subsequently withdrawn in August 2023. The first application (Refs.: WD/2022/1668/MAO) proposed a subdivision of an existing dwelling into two separate residential units as well as the erection of up to 32 dwellings including a new access and other associated infrastructure. The second application (Refs.: WD/2022/1976/F) proposed the erection of three dwellings as well as a new access and other associated infrastructure. Reasons for withdrawal were not given.

4.16 9 Upper Horsebridge, Hailsham, BN27 3BD (Refs.: WD/2021/3044/F)

Planning permission for demolition of a detached bungalow with garages and erection of 4 dwellings with associated parking and facilities was refused in June 2022. In the Officer Reports it is argued that the proposed development would not add to the overall quality of the area as it would reduce the privacy of the neighbouring properties and have a negative impact on the street scene. Thus, the demonstrable harm of the proposed development would outweigh the small contribution to the housing supply.

In addition, the Officers Report states that proposed layout would provide insufficient parking and vehicle turning space and would cause increased congestion and reduced highway safety. In support of the reasons for refusal the Officers Report cites Policies HAIL D1 (High Quality Design), HAIL D2 (Small scale residential development and householder extensions), and HAIL AT 1 (Active Travel) of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan.

4.17 Land adjacent to Romney, Squab Lane, Magham Down, Hailsham, BN27 1PP (Refs.: WD/2022/0234/F)

A Planning Application for the erection of 4 2-bedroom detached bungalows and 1 3-bedroom detached chalet bungalow, with associated access, parking, and landscaping was refused in June 2022. Reasons for refusal include the site being located outside of a defined settlement boundary. The Officer Reports report also stated that the proposals would result in a high density, over development of the site, and would result in a negative impact on the rural character of the surrounding area. Thus, the negative impact of the proposal outweighs the contribution to housing land supply. In support of this, Policy HAIL D1 (High Quality Design) of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan is cited.

4.18 The Cattle Market, Market Street, Hailsham, BN27 2AG (Refs.: WD/2021/1998/MAJ)

A Planning Application for the redevelopment of the site for 62 extra care apartments with associated facilities, and 17 extra care bungalows with ancillary car parking and landscaping was submitted and subsequently withdrawn. No explanation for the withdrawal is given.

4.19 Implications

There have been several planning applications for housing development in Hailsham since and before the Neighbourhood Plan was made. Many larger development sites received outline planning permission prior to the Neighbourhood Plan being 'made' and consequently the Neighbourhood Plan is not referenced in the applications. These sites include Land off Mill Road (220 dwellings, Land to the West of Ersham Road (241 dwellings), Cuckoo Fields & Ersham Park (400 dwellings) and Land adjacent to Cuckoo Trail (100 dwellings). They make a significant contribution to the delivery of new homes in Hailsham and across Wealden as a whole. Subsequent reserved matter applications for these schemes often make little to no reference to the Neighbourhood Plan Policies. In addition, several planning applications for smaller housing schemes were made. Other key points that can be observed are:

- References to the Neighbourhood Plan are fairly limited with the most used Policies being related to design and parking. These Policies are HAIL D1 (High Quality Design), HAIL D2 (Small scale residential development and householder extensions), and HAIL D5 (Residential Car Parking Design). Additional Policies of importance were Policy AQ1 (Charging points for electric vehicles) and HAIL AT 1 (Active Travel).
- Many applicants have sought to demonstrate that Wealden Council cannot demonstrate that it has a five-year supply of land for new housing development as an argument in favour of their proposed development scheme. While many of these sites were approved these were generally larger in scale, with smaller schemes being rejected as the contribution to the housing supply was not considered to outweigh adverse impacts, over development of the site resulting in a loss of character and poor design, with Policy HAIL D1 (High Quality Design) of the Neighbourhood Plan being cited.
- The limited use of Neighbourhood Plan policies is perhaps reflected in the type of application that has come forward (all mainly residential schemes except for a proposed convenience retail unit at 84a London Road (Refs.: WD/2023/0523/F) and a new building as a disability centre for dementia care at Peppers, Amberstone (WD/2023/2165/FR)). Thus, policies in relation to the town centre and other uses have not been triggered: this does not mean that these policies do not remain relevant.

These observations imply that, based on schemes that have come forward since the Neighbourhood Plan has been made, housing development and related design focused

policies are the most relevant for Hailsham. The Neighbourhood Plan could potentially be streamlined to elaborate on these topics in more detail, being supplemented by a Hailsham specific Design Code to help illustrate appropriate design responses to local character. This could strengthen the Neighbourhood Plan as a policy document and bring it to the forefront when it comes to submitting and reviewing planning applications.

5. Summary

5.1 Focus of the revised Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan was made in May 2021 although policies within it effectively date back to 2017 / 2018. In the seven years that have followed national policy has evolved and changed, with the latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in December 2023. Provisions of the Environment Act in respect of biodiversity netgain have now come into force, there have been changes to the Use Classes Order and Permitted Development Rights, and Building Regulations have changed and continue to do so. Furthermore, the Wealden Local Plan is subject to review, with consultation on an emerging Local Plan (regulation 18 stage) taking place at the time of writing. It is anticipated that this will be subject to Examination next year (2025), with adoption following in 2026. The changes outlined above all need reflecting in a review of the Neighbourhood Plan.

A review of policies in the made Neighbourhood Plan indicates that these should be updated and the opportunity taken to make them more 'Hailsham-specific'. In the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan when the Neighbourhood Plan was first made many of the policies in it are those which would otherwise be included in a Local Plan. The very nature of plan-making means that new policies will supersede those that have gone before. This is very much the position in Hailsham, with a combination of national level policy and guidance, and emerging policies in the review of the Wealden Local Plan, superseding the Neighbourhood Plan. In some cases, the Neighbourhood Plan policies are now effectively a restatement of higher level policy. For the Neighbourhood Plan to remain relevant policies within it should be developed further, as appropriate, to help draw out key opportunities and challenges for Hailsham.

The Neighbourhood Plan is framed around the concept of the 'ten-minute town'. This concept is reflected in the emerging Local Plan which refers to the '20-minute neighbourhood' guidance published by the TCPA. It remains relevant and a helpful starting point and structuring element for the review of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The mini-guide to the Neighbourhood Plan summarises the focus of the policies in the Plan as being:

- Establishment of design criteria that promote the highest quality of development in and around Hailsham.
- Requirement for infrastructure, including community facilities, open space and transport, to be provided as part of new development.
- To make it easier, more attractive and convenient for all people of all areas to be able to move around.
- Enhancing the public realm in the town centre, supported by a wider mix of activities, including new shops, restaurants and community activities making for a lively and welcoming place.

- Enhancing and protecting the quality of public open space in Hailsham, and access to these, for the enjoyment of all.
- Setting priorities for spending any funds received from new development on local projects.

This focus could remain in the revised Neighbourhood Plan, albeit that the policies and projects that flow from them are more specific in nature and application to Hailsham. In particular, the revised Neighbourhood Plan could have more of a design and spatial focus, with the preparation of a Design Code expanding on the Character Assessment previously undertaken and building on the success of existing design policies and their use by Wealden in determining planning applications. The Design Code, along with spatial-based policies, could establish:

- Design principles for small infill and windfall sites in and around Hailsham, showing different approaches for different contexts (e.g.: a town centre development opportunity in contrast to redevelopment of a garage court in a residential area)
- Design principles for the interface between the existing built form and areas of new development, as well as how growth on the edge of Hailsham should be designed with sensitivity to the surrounding landscape.
- Design principles for the successful integration of parking and active travel infrastructure within the street network, as well as important routes that could help create a safe and well-connected cycle network across Hailsham.
- Locations and principles for street greening, pocket parks and similar in the existing built-form, where these can provide biodiversity netgain as well as increasing access to green space for existing residents.
- Design principles that show how sustainable drainage systems, including raingardens, should be integrated into new and existing areas of development, minimising pressure on the drainage system whilst also mitigating flood risk and providing biodiversity value.
- A concept strategy for the town centre, expanding on and illustrating ideas expressed in the text in the current Neighbourhood Plan. With the outcomes of the Aspires project in mind, the concept could be prepared in such a way that allows for small-scale and incremental change over time, reducing dependence on a 'master developer' but ensuring that what does come forward contribute to the whole.

Production of a design code for Hailsham would help identify the key qualities and characteristics of the area that should be reflected in new development. Policies HAIL D1 and D2 cover design matters and are those most frequently cited in planning application decisions. They could be developed further, illustrating key principles to be responded to in new development, making clear what the design expectations are for development in Hailsham.

5.2 Next steps

The commentary suggests that the review of the Neighbourhood Plan will be such that examination is required. It will be for the Examiner to determine whether the changes warrant a referendum. In either event it will be important to demonstrate that the review has been subject to community engagement and involvement. A key first step in the process will be to launch a consultation that explains why a review is necessary, what has happened or changed since the Plan was first made, and what the likely focus of the revised Plan might be. Responses should be sought to this which might help ratify the direction of the Plan and potentially suggest other areas of interest that should be considered.

Alongside this the review would benefit from the undertaking of a spatial analysis exercise that maps various features, including the green infrastructure network, growth areas, key services, facilities and the movement network. This will help identify town-wide opportunities for intervention, e.g.: locations where new green infrastructure is needed, or where improvements to the movement network are required.

Furthermore, and if agreed, the content of a Hailsham-wide Design Code should be scope out and analysis undertaken to inform guidance within this. Emerging findings and ideas from this, as well as from the spatial analysis, could then form the basis of a second round of consultation, prior to policies being updated and new policies drafted.

Appendix

Table of planning applications reviewed as part of the Healthcheck

Application Reference	Site Address	Proposal	Decision
WD/2023/2165/FR	Peppers, Amberstone, Hailsham, BN27 1PQ	Part retrospective application for erection of a new building as a disability centre for dementia care.	Approval
WD/2023/2446/MRM (related to WD/2017/2956/MAO)	Land off Mill Road - Phase 2, Hailsham	Reserved Matters application for the erection 171 homes pursuant to outline planning application for 220 homes.	Withdrawn
WD/2023/2445/MRM (related to WD/2017/2956/MAO)	Land off Mill Road - Phase 1, Hailsham	Reserved Matters application for the erection of 49 pursuant to outline planning application for 220 homes.	Withdrawn
WD/2023/2246/F	Land off Amberstone (to rear of the Laurels and Lynton), Hailsham, BN27 1PE	Application for the erection of 5 houses.	Refusal
WD/2023/2305/CD (related to WD/2020/2509/MAO)	Land west of Station Road, Hailsham	Discharge of Details application pursuant to outline planning permission for the erection of 200 homes and new access road.	Refusal
WD/2023/1924/MRM (related to WD/2019/2692/MAO)	Land to the West of Ersham Road, Summerhill, Hailsham	Reserved Matters application for appearance, layout and scale pursuant to outline planning permission of 241 homes.	Approval
WD/2023/2020/MRM (related to WD/2021/1971/MAO)	Sturton Place Community Health Service Centre, Station	Reserved Matters for landscaping pursuant to outline planning permission for the	Approval

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Application Reference	Site Address	Proposal	Decision
	Road, Hailsham, BN27 2AU	conversion of former drill hall to form 5 flats and demolition of remaining buildings and replacement with 29 new homes.	
WD/2023/1978/NMA (related to WD/2021/2265/MRM and WD/2018/0475/MAO)	Cuckoo Fields, Land south of Hailsham, Hailsham, BN27 3PN	Application for a non-material amendment to reserved matters pursuant to outline planning permission for the erection of 400 homes.	Refusal
WD/2023/1979/NMA (related to WD/2022/1505/MRM and WD/2019/1864/MAO)	Land adjacent to Cuckoo Trail, Cuckoo Fields, Station Road, Hailsham, BN27 3PN	Application for a non-material amendment to reserved matters pursuant to outline planning permission for the erection of 100 homes.	Refusal
WD/2023/0999/MRM (related to WD/2017/2956/MAO)	Land off Mill Road, Hailsham	Reserved Matters for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to outline planning permission for the erection of 220 homes.	Approval
WD/2023/1240/F	Railway Crossing Cottage, Ersham Road, Hailsham, BN27 2RG	Planning application for the erection of 3 homes with access road.	Refusal
WD/2023/0858/F (related to WD/2021/1971/MAO)	Sturton Place Community Health Service Centre, Station Road, Hailsham, BN27 2AU	Application for Demolition of existing building extension to the former drill hall in relation to outline planning permission for conversion of former drill hall to form 5 flats and demolition of remaining buildings and replacement with 29 new homes.	Approval

Application Reference	Site Address	Proposal	Decision
WD/2023/0699/O	Land adj. to 154, Station Road, Hailsham, BN27 2SB	Application for the erection 9 homes and new access.	Approval
WD/2023/0523/F	84a London Road, Hailsham, BN27 3AH	Application for demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of site to provide a convenience retail unit.	Refusal
WD/2022/2873/O	Land at Fieldgate, off The Belfry, Hailsham, BN27 3EW	Application for the erection of 4 homes and new access.	Refusal
WD/2022/3116/F	Railway Crossing Cottage, Ersham Road, Hailsham, BN27 2RG	Application for the erection of 4 homes with new access road.	Refusal
WD/2022/2690/F	84a London Road, Hailsham, BN27 3AH	Application for demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of site to provide a convenience retail unit.	Withdrawn
WD/2022/2388/MRM (related to WD/2020/1690/MAO)	Land west and South of Poplar Cottage, Amberstone, Hailsham BN27 1PQ	Reserved Matters application for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to outline planning permission for erection of 45 homes.	Approval
WD/2022/1449/MRM (related to WD/2017/2956/MAO)	Land off Mill Road, Hailsham	Reserved matters application for public open space, landscaping and sustainable drainage system (suds) and vehicular access point pursuant to outline planning permission for erection 220 homes.	Refusal
WD/2022/0005/F	Land to the rear of 72 High Street,	Application for redevelopment including	Refusal

Application Reference	Site Address	Proposal	Decision
	Hailsham, BN27 1AU	demolition a bungalow and garages and the erection of 4 flats.	
WD/2022/1668/MAO	Coldthorn Barn, Coldthorn Lane, Hailsham, BN27 3PJ	Application for subdivision of existing dwelling into two separate residential units and erection of up to 32 homes with new access.	Withdrawn
WD/2022/1976/F	Coldthorn Barn, Coldthorn Lane, Hailsham, BN27 3PJ	Application for the erection of 3 homes with new access.	Withdrawn
WD/2022/1505/MRM (related to WD/2019/1864/MAO)	Land Adjacent to Cuckoo Trail, Cuckoo Fields, Station Road, Hailsham	Reserved matters application for appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale pursuant to outline planning permission for the erection of 100 homes.	Approval
WD/2022/1450/MAO	Land West of Station Road, Hailsham	Outline Planning Application for the erection of 200 homes and new access road.	Withdrawn
WD/2021/3044/F	9 Upper Horsebridge, Hailsham, BN27 3BD	Application for the demolition of a bungalow and garages and erection of four homes.	Refusal
WD/2022/0234/F	Land adjacent to Romney, Squab Lane, Magham Down, Hailsham, BN27 1PP	Application for the erection of 5 homes.	Refusal
WD/2021/1998/MAJ	The Cattle Market, Market Street, Hailsham, BN27 2AG	Application for redevelopment of the site comprising building to provide 62 extra care apartments and 17 extra care homes.	Withdrawn

Application Reference	Site Address	Proposal	Decision
WD/2021/2678/MRM (related to WD/2019/2692/MAO)	Land to the West of Ersham Road, Summerhill, Hailsham	Reserved Matters application for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale, and associated car parking and infrastructure pursuant to outline planning permission for erection for 241 homes.	Withdrawn
WD/2021/2276/F	Peppers House, Amberstone, Hailsham, BN27 1PQ	Application for erection of a new building as a disability centre for dementia care.	Approval
WD/2021/2265/MRM (related to WD/2018/0475/MAO)	Cuckoo Fields and Ersham Park, Land South of Hailsham, BN27 3PN	Reserved matters application for the erection of 272 homes in phase 2 pursuant to outline planning permission for erection of 400 homes.	Approval
WD/2021/1971/MAO	Land at Sturton Place, Station Road, Hailsham, BN27 2AU	Outline planning application for conversion of former drill hall to form 5 flats and demolition of remaining buildings and replacement with 29 new homes.	Approval
WD/2021/2021/RM (related to WD/2019/0077/O)	Lynton, Amberstone, Hailsham, BN27 1PE	Reserved matters application for the erection of 5 homes pursuant to outline planning permission for erection of 3 homes and new access.	Refusal
WD/2021/1480/F	Railway Crossing Cottage, Ersham Road, Hailsham, BN27 2RG	Application for the erection 5 homes.	Withdrawn

Application Reference	Site Address	Proposal	Decision
WD/2021/1485/MRM (related to WD/2018/0475/MAO)	Cuckoo Fields and Ersham Park, Land South of Hailsham, Hailsham, BN27 3PN	Reserved Matters application for the erection of 128 homes pursuant to outline planning permission for the erection of 400 homes.	Approval

