Sevenoaks

Tandridge

Tunbridge Wells

Mid Sussex

Wealden

Rother

Lewes

Hastings

Eastbourne

Wealden District Council Local Plan

PART 4: POLICY ASSESSMENTS

Regulation 19

Wealden District Council

September 2026 | jam consult ltd

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CONTENTS

POLICY ASSESSMENTS

Spatial Strategy	1
Climate Change	3
Design	5
Economy & Employment	6
Historic Environment	7
Housing	8
Infrastructure	10
Natural Environment	12
Town Centres	14

POLICY ASSESSMENTS

LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

Spatial Strategy: Policies SS1-SS10
Climate Change: Policies CC1-CC8
Design: Policies DE1-DE4
Economy & Employment: Policies EC1-EC8
Historic Environment: Policies HE1-HE6
Housing: Policies HO1-HO19
Infrastructure: Policies INF1-INF8
Natural Environment: Policies NE1-NE14
Town Centres: Policies TC1-TC4

POLICY ASSESSMENTS: SPATIAL STRATEGY

SUMMARY OF POLICY ASSESSMENTS: Spatial Strategy

Policy	Subject	Sustainability Objectives																			
		SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water Resources	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste & Materials	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Transport & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Inclusion	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
SS1	Spatial Strategy for Wealden																				
SS2	Provision of Homes																				
SS3	Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs																				
SS4	Retail Provision & Town Centres																				
SS5	Provision of Employment Floorspace																				
SS6	Strategic Employment Allocations																				
SS7	Comprehensive Development & Housing Delivery																				
SS8	Responding to Climate Change																				
SS9	Health & Wellbeing																				
SS10	Green Infrastructure																				

POLICY ASSESSMENTS: SPATIAL STRATEGY

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: Spatial Strategy	
Positive Impacts	**Policy SS1** provides a Spatial Strategy for the District to support the necessary delivery of housing, employment and infrastructure in the most sustainable locations, providing opportunities for public transport and active travel, whilst protecting the District's natural and historic environment. **Policy SS2** sets out the requirement for the provision of new homes to be delivered between April 2026 and March 2042, which is to be directed to the most sustainable settlements. **Policy SS3** sets out the requirement for the provision of pitches and plots for Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople's needs to ensure provision for their needs **Policy SS4** identifies the provision of new floorspace in the town centres to support the vitality and viability of the town and local centres which is likely to improve access to essential services and facilities, and could have positive impacts for social deprivation, economic growth and jobs as well as providing opportunities for skills and training. **Policy SS5** supports the provision of employment floorspace through the allocation of sites, delivery of strategic employment commitments, retention and upgrading of exisiting sites and premises, support for economic development in rural areas and provision of office space in district, service and local centre, which will have a postive impact for the local economy and prosperity of the District. **Policy SS6** restricts development at strategic employment sites to use classes E(g), B2 and B8 and once developed will be safeguarded, which will have postiive impacts for the economy and jobs. **Policy SS7** is shown to have major positive effects for housing and the economy and minor positive effects for the majority of the other sustainability objectives to ensure development proposals contribute to comprehenisve and co-ordinated development. **Policy SS8** sets out how all development proposals are expected to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Council is committed to tackling the causes and impacts of climate change, as well as delivering a reduction in the District's carbon footprint and seeking to become a net zero carbon District by 2044 at the latest. **Policy SS9** is shown to have a positive effect on Health & Wellbeing, which is strengthened by the need for all major development to undertake an HIA screening or HIA. **Policy SS10** has been informed by the Council's Green Infrastructure Study 2017. The creation and enhancement of green infrastructure is likely to have multiple positive benefits.
Negative Impacts	Minor negative impacts are identified for policies SS2 and SS6 in relation to climate change mitigation and waste and materials, but these could be reduced by the application of other specific local plan policies and advances in technology over the life of the Plan.
Uncertain Impacts	Uncertain impacts are identified where the policies make no reference to sustainability objectives outside the policy subject area but are likely to be addressed through other specific policies which address these topics.
Duration / Reversibility	The majority of impacts will have a major positive impact for the duration of the plan. Some impacts are minor positive in the short and medium term as they are unlikely to be delivered until later in the Plan period.
Mitigation Measures	The Local Plan policies provide further specific mitigation measures on individual issues. Policy SS9 specifically requires all major development to undertake an HIA screening or HIA. The HIA recommendations should be incorporated into the proposal and submission documentation and these must demonstrate how any harmful impacts on health and wellbeing have been mitigated and how positive impacts have been maximised. An HIA report appropriate to the stage of the proposal will be required for full, outline and reserved matters applications as agreed with the Council.
Cumulative Effects	The cumulative impact is positive as the Spatial Strategy sets out a defined framework for the delivery of sustainable and high-quality development, which meets the needs of the District's communities for homes and jobs, whilst balancing the impact of growth on the natural environment, protected landscapes and the countryside. The Strategy provides for the comprehensive delivery of new development and homes. Minor negative impacts are likely for climate change mitigation and waste and materials, as all development will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and waste, which could still have a negative impact after mitigation.
Evidence	The policies have been informed by an extensive list of evidence. The relevant evidence for each of the supporting policies is listed in the relevant sections below.

POLICY ASSESSMENTS: CLIMATE CHANGE

SUMMARY OF POLICY ASSESSMENTS: Climate Change

		Sustainability Objectives																				
		SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water Resources	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste & Materials	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Transport & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Inclusion	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
Policy	**Subject**																					
CC1	Net Zero Development Standards – New Build	■	■					■			■				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CC2	Reducing Energy Consumption in Existing Buildings	■	■			■		■				■			■	■	■	■	■		■	
CC3	Sustainable Design and Construction	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CC4	Carbon Sequestration	■	■			■		■	■	■	■					■						
CC5	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	■	■			■		■		■	■	■			■	■	■		■	■	■	■
CC6	Water Efficiency	■	■		■	■			■	■	■				■	■	■		■	■	■	■
CC7	Managing Flood Risk		■	■	■	■			■	■	■				■	■	■		■	■	■	
CC8	Sustainable Drainage / Pevensey Levels		■	■	■	■			■	■	■					■	■					

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: Climate Change

Positive Impacts	All the policies are likely to have a positive or major positive impact upon the majority of sustainability objectives. The policies will ensure that development contributes to national and local efforts to reduce emissions, which will have additional benefits for human health and the quality of life for occupants, providing cost savings through energy consumption reductions, and address issues such as fuel poverty and social equality. The policy is likely to diversify the economy, boost the local economy, encourage investment/innovation and create employment opportunities in the green technology sector, encouraging new skills and training opportunities. **Policy CC1** requires all development to meet the latest Future Homes and Building Standards and deliver development which will be as energy efficient as possible, follow the energy hierarchy including the assessment of embodied carbon, and be 'net zero carbon ready'. **Policy CC2** will ensure existing buildings can be retrofitted to reduce energy consumption, to make them liveable and fit for the future and help to achieve national and local net zero targets. The policy relates to the energy efficiency of existing buildings where applications are made for change of use, retrofit, conversions, and extensions. **Policy CC3** provides a holistic route to achieving net zero development and sustainable development, giving clarity to developers and applicants on what they are required to achieve through their schemes. A 'life cycle' approach to development is encouraged, which capitalises on passive design, using the location, orientation, design and fabric of a building to maximise the passive energy that can be gained and minimise the risk of overheating. Natural approaches such as the incorporation of green infrastructure are encouraged, to provide cost-effective measures that can provide additional benefits alongside climate adaptation and mitigation. **Policy CC4** encourages carbon sequestration, the removal, capture, or storage of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The policy seeks to protect existing carbon stores and encourage nature-based solutions for carbon sequestration, with significant net gain in nature-based carbon sequestration expected through habitat retention, protection, enhancement and/or creation. **Policy CC5** supports renewable and low-carbon energy schemes across the District to tackle the cause and effects of climate change, including pollution, and help the District achieve the national and local net zero targets. **Policy CC6** requires development to be as efficient as possible in its water usage, to minimise impacts on the District's water resources. All new residential development must be designed and constructed to achieve a minimum water consumption standard of 110 litres per person per day. **Policy CC7** ensures development does not place itself, or put others, at increased risk of flooding and actively seeks to improve flood risk where possible. Issues of green and blue infrastructure, biodiversity, landscape character, housing, local economy, including town and village centres and other site specific constraints should also be considered in the decision-making process. **Policy CC8** requires SuDS to be introduced for all development according to the drainage hierarchy, which will protect the Pevensey Levels hydrological catchment area and have additional positive impacts for the issues of green and blue infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity.

POLICY ASSESSMENTS: CLIMATE CHANGE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: Climate Change	
Negative Impacts	None
Uncertain Impacts	In seeking to achieve sustainable design and construction in developments to address climate change adaptation and mitigation, the use of innovative designs and materials could impact on the local vernacular, although development will need to comply with the Plan's design and heritage policies. Water use also contributes to CO_2 emissions as the treatment of water requires energy, therefore, an indirect effect is expected for climate change mitigation although the extent of the impact is uncertain.
Duration / Reversibility	The impacts are likely to change over time as legislation evolves and technology develops, including changes in market signals, which should make low carbon solutions less expensive to achieve.
Mitigation Measures	• Development will be expected to meet building performance standards using the energy hierarchy in the design, construction, and operational phases. • Development must utilise the landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption and maximise energy efficiency measures. • Residential development should seek to achieve a 4 Star rating under the Home Quality Mark scheme and non-residential development a BREEAM minimum 'Excellent' rating, and where possible an 'Outstanding' rating. Active House and Passivhaus accreditation schemes can also be utilised to achieve and demonstrate a developments or building's sustainable design and construction credentials. • Proposals for the refurbishment of 10 dwellings or more are expected to meet BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment Excellent. Applicants are encouraged to use the six principles of best practice within LETI's Climate Emergency Retrofit guidance. • Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) will be required for properties when constructed, sold or let and all private rented properties should achieve an EPC of E or better in accordance with regulations. • Development should take a 'life cycle' approach, which encompasses location, design, materials, construction management and the life and long-term stewardship of developments, including demolition of existing buildings. • Proposals containing an identified carbon store must consider the potential impacts of the development on the carbon store and seek to maximise opportunities to enhance its sequestration function. • Applicants are encouraged to refer to Natural England's 'Carbon Storage and Sequestration by Habitat 2021 (NERR094) at the earliest stages in the planning process to ensure their scheme maximises opportunities to support existing carbon sinks as well as provide additional carbon sequestration through nature-based solutions where possible. • Development proposals for renewable and low-carbon energy generation, including associated infrastructure, must avoid significant adverse impacts on the local landscape character including: the High Weald National Landscape; the setting of the South Downs National Park; biodiversity; residential amenity of existing and future occupiers of nearby property, including noise, shadow flicker, vibration and visual impacts; agricultural land use and activity; and heritage assets. • Development proposals, including the retrofit / refurbishment of existing buildings must demonstrate that water reuse, recycling and rainwater harvesting measures have been incorporated wherever possible to reduce demand on mains water supply as part of an integrated approach to water management. • Proposals must apply a sequential flood risk-based approach to the location of development, including within the site and taking account of the flood risk vulnerability classifications, to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding and the exception test where the application of sequential test is not possible. Flood mitigation must be implemented in accordance with the Council's SFRA, the NPPF and PPG. Developers must ensure that mitigation does not increase flood risk elsewhere and that floodplain compensation is provided where necessary. • Development proposals which could affect drainage on or around the site must incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) designed and implemented in accordance with the latest local, regional and national guidance and, where relevant, demonstrate that surface water management will not adversely affect the integrity of the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar site where the development proposal falls within the Pevensey Levels Hydrological Catchment (PLHC). • SuDS should be integrated as a fundamental part of site design and sufficient space should be provided within the site layout. The systems should be multi-functional to ensure flood risk reduction; water quality improvement; biodiversity enhancement; and green/blue infrastructure. For phased developments, a strategic drainage approach should be provided across all phases. • The implementation of specific Local Plan policies in relation to Climate Change, Design, Biodiversity, Green & Blue Infrastructure, Landscape Character, and Health, Well-being and Quality of Life will also help mitigate impacts.
Cumulative Effects	The impact is likely to be positive as the policies will ensure that new developments in Wealden are as energy efficient as possible, follow the energy hierarchy and are 'net zero carbon ready', ensuring that development contributes positively to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change across the District and the reduction of carbon emissions. The policies will improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings including refurbishments and ensure the highest standards of sustainable design and construction in Wealden, improving the overall environmental performance of new developments and minimising their contribution to climate change effects over their lifetime. Development will need to protect existing carbon sinks and take opportunities to provide nature-based solutions that can assist adaptation and mitigation through carbon offsetting, carbon storage/sequestration and adaptation to climate change risks. Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy-generating and distribution networks, including heat networks are supported but will need to consider potential negative cumulative impacts on issues such as ecology, landscape, visual impact and heritage assets and provide appropriate mitigation as identified in the relevant policies. Developments are to be as efficient in their water usage as possible whilst reducing vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change and the projected increases in population, including drought and the impacts on the District's water resources. Development should be directed to areas at the lowest risk of flooding, whilst ensuring flood risk is not increased elsewhere, including increasing flood risk downstream as a result of cumulative development.
Evidence	The policies have been informed by the Climate Act (2008); National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure EN-3 (2025); National Planning Policy (NPPF) and PPG; National Design Guide; WDC's Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Study 2024; WDC Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2025; WDC Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2026); and Wealden's Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs) (2025 and 2026).

POLICY ASSESSMENTS: DESIGN

SUMMARY OF POLICY ASSESSMENTS: Design		Sustainability Objectives																				
		SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water Resources	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste & Materials	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Transport & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Inclusion	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
Policy	**Subject**																					
DE1	Achieving well-designed and high-quality places																					
DE2	Masterplans and Design Codes																					
DE3	Spaces for people, nature and public realm																					
DE4	Shop Fronts and Advertisements																					

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: Design	
Positive Impacts	• All the policies are likely to have a positive or major positive impact upon the majority of sustainability objectives. • The policies set design criteria to ensure high standards of design in all new developments, whether it is an extension or alteration to an existing building, change of use of existing buildings, or new housing or business development. All development should relate sympathetically to the local landscape and retain existing important historic features and mitigate against any detrimental harm. • Development proposals will be supported where they deliver compact forms of development that prioritise safe and sustainable travel choices including delivering inclusive walkable neighbourhoods providing good and safe accessibility for all. Development should provide a strong, attractive and positive identity contributing to health and well-being, inclusion and cohesion by ensuring that new developments integrate well, both physically and visually, with the existing built form and existing communities. • Larger development will be expected to use masterplans, design codes and design & access statements to provide accessible, socially inclusive and integrated solutions with a suitable mix of uses that meet the housing, employment, service and facility needs of the local community to support daily life. • The policies are likely to result in beautiful/attractive, functional, safe and inclusive spaces and places, whilst respecting the local character and natural heritage alongside contributing positively to user experience, sustainability and a sense of place.
Negative Impacts	**None**
Uncertain Impacts	**None**
Duration / Reversibility	The impacts are not likely to change in the short, medium or long term and the policy will become effective on adoption.
Mitigation Measures	• Development will be expected to be designed to last, including a consideration of management and maintenance of both private and public spaces. • Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how a high quality design has been achieved and how national and local design guidance has been considered. • Applications will be expected to demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community on design issues, as required by the NPPF and where appropriate, in accordance with the Council's own adopted Statement of Community Involvement to demonstrate that the views of the local community have been sought and taken into account in the formulation of development proposals. • The Council will expect applicants to use design requirements as set out in the Local Plan and the national and local design guidance. Design & Access Statements are required to accompany certain applications for planning permission and applications for listed building consent. • The implementation of specific Local Plan policies in relation to Climate Change; Landscape Character; Biodiversity, Geodiversity & Nature Recovery; Sustainable Design & Construction; and Health, Wellbeing and Quality of life, could also mitigate impacts.
Cumulative Effects	Impacts are likely to be positive as the policies will ensure that all development contributes positively to the high quality design of spaces and places, the natural environment and economic vitality in the District through early, proactive and effective engagement with the community on design issues, where appropriate. The policies will ensure larger developments use design guides, codes and masterplans to provide a more detailed framework for creating high quality, sustainable and locally distinctive places, which will deliver high quality environments in which residents can live and work and provide benefits for communities. The cumulative impact of advertisements and associated illumination on townscape, landscape, visual amenity and heritage significance will be taken into account when determining applications.
Evidence	The policies have been informed by the National Design Guide, Wealden Design Guide (2026), Wealden Characterisation Study, High Weald Housing Design Guide (2019) and other sources of local design guidance, including design policies, design guides and codes provided within or as part of 'made' (adopted) Neighbourhood Plans.

POLICY ASSESSMENTS: ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT

SUMMARY OF POLICY ASSESSMENTS: Economy & Employment

		Sustainability Objectives																			
		SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water Resources	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste & Materials	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Transport & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Inclusion	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
Policy	**Subject**																				
EC1	Sustainable Economic Prosperity and Investment	++	++	0	0	+	0	++	+	+	+	+	++	++	+	+	+	++	++	++	++
EC2	Existing Strategic Employment Sites	+	0	0	0	++	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	++	+	++
EC3	Retention & Loss of Non-Strategic Emp. Sites, Premises & Floorspace	+	0	0	0	++	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	++	++	+
EC4	Rural Economy	+	++	0	0	++	0	++	0	0	++	++	0	++	0	+	+	+	++	+	+
EC5	Equestrian Development	0	0	+	+	+	+	++	0	0	++	+	0	+	0	++	+	0	++	0	+
EC6	Tourism Facilities and Attractions	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	++	+	0	++	0	+	+	0	++	+	+
EC7	Visitor Accommodation	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	+	++	++	0	++	0	+	+	+	++	++	+
EC8	Retention of Sites in Economic/Tourism Use & Commercial Com. Facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	++	++	+

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: Economy & Employment

Positive Impacts	• All the policies are likely to have a positive or major positive impact upon the majority of sustainability objectives. • The policies support economic development proposals, address identified local skills shortages and support local employment, skills and education, which should have a positive impact for the District. • The policies seek to reduce carbon emissions of businesses operating in Wealden's economy, maintain a resilient and growing business base by attracting and promoting inward investment, facilitating the provision of jobs to help support the existing and future workforce with their skills and education and key supporting infrastructure including rolling out full fibre and 5G infrastructure. • Exisiting strategic employment sites and employment sites, premises and floorspace in use Classes E(g), B2 and B8 are protected against loss to non-employment sites. • Development should be well-designed and suitable for a range of unit sizes which are flexible in terms of operation and use, whilst safeguarding the District's unique built and natural heritage. • The growth of the rural economy should be supported whilst also ensuring that development is appropriate in relation to its location, scale and design. • Development should deliver tourism facilities and visitor accommodation which will enhance the attractiveness of the District and contribute to Wealden remaining a high-quality destination to stay and visit • Prosperity in all forms is supported through the retention of existing businesses within the District and the further expansion of floorspace needed to support business growth.
Negative Impacts	**None**
Uncertain Impacts	**None**
Duration / Reversibility	The impacts are not likely to change in the short, medium or long term as the policy will become effective on adoption of the Plan.
Mitigation Measures	• The Council will consider the use of either planning obligations or planning conditions to secure additional infrastructure to support proposals or to ensure necessary protection of the environment. • Where relevant, the Council will also use planning obligations to secure support for local employment, skills and education or to deal with any increases in recreational pressure on the Ashdown Forest SPA from residential development. • Exisiting strategic employment sites are safeguarded for employment within use classes E(g), B2 and B8. Any loss will need to be justified with robust evidence. Proposals for 'main town centre use', including offices, will need be safeguarded and need to comply with Policy TC2 Sequential and Local Impact Test. • The loss of tourism facilities and attractions to alternative uses will not be supported unless it is demonstrated that the business is no longer viable and has no reasonable prospect of continuing. • The implementation of specific Local Plan policies in relation to Climate Change, Design, Natural Environment, Infrastructure and Economy will also help to mitigate impacts.
Cumulative Effects	Impacts are likely to be positive as the policies aim to attract and promote inward investment, facilitate higher value employment development, help to support the existing and future workforce with their skills and education, enable effective partnership working to secure key supporting infrastructure, maintain the District's town centres and visitor offer, support the growth of the District's rural economy, and support existing businesses to become Net Zero.
Evidence	The policies have been informed by the NPPF; Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (2026); Wealden Visitor Accommodation Study (2023); and WDC Local Plan Viability Assessment & CIL Review (2026).

POLICY ASSESSMENTS: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

SUMMARY OF POLICY ASSESSMENTS: Historic Environment		Sustainability Objectives																			
		SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water Resources	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste & Materials	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Transport & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Inclusion	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
Policy	**Subject**																				
HE1	Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment																				
HE2	Conservation Areas																				
HE3	Enabling Development																				
HE4	Historic Parks and Gardens																				
HE5	Archaeology																				
HE6	Climate Change and the Historic Environment																				
HE7	Change of use or Loss of Heritage Assets																				

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: Historic Environment	
Positive Impacts	• All the policies are likely to have a positive or major positive impact upon the majority of sustainability objectives. • The policies will ensure proposals conserve, protect and enhance the significance, diversity, local character and distinctiveness of the historic environment, including heritage assets, settings and landscapes, through the positive management of development and the management of change, for its future conservation and enjoyment, contributing to good design and sustainable development. • Conserving and/or enhancing the special character of the Historic environment could protect a mix of building types and uses, spaces and places local people use as homes, and/or shape the environment where local people live, and this is expected to have positive effect for housing and quality of life and place. • The policies include criteria that could affect the historic environment, which applicants must demonstrate have been addressed, to satisfy the Council that the significance of Wealden's historic environment, including heritage assets and their settings and landscapes are protected and not diminished for future generations. • Proposals intended to improve the energy efficiency, climate resilience or carbon perofrmance of heritage assets will be supported where they are informed by a propoer understanding of the asset's significance and construction; and avoid or minise harm to the historic fabric.
Negative Impacts	**None**
Uncertain Impacts	**None**
Duration / Reversibility	The impacts are not likely to change in the short, medium or long term as the policy will become effective on adoption.
Mitigation Measures	• Any potential impacts on the historic environment need to be considered early in the design process to ensure that they can be minimised or avoided. • Any archaeological research and investigation that is necessary needs to be carried out at an early stage in the design process, including any investigative work on above ground archaeology such as buildings. • Any development affecting a heritage asset (both designated and non-designated) and/or its setting must demonstrate sufficient understanding of its significance through the provision of a Heritage Statement in accordance with current Historic England good practice guidance. • Applicants will have to demonstrate that they have investigated all alternative ways of securing the asset, including sources of public and private investment before submitting a proposal for an enabling development. Benefits will be secured using a S106 agreement. • Proposals in relation to energy efficiency and carbon resilience must demonstrate that less harmful alternatives have been considered and adopt a whole building approach. • The change of use of heritage assets will be supported where there is clear justification & evidence to support the change and potential impacts on the fabric and significance of the building. The loss of heritage assets will need to accord with national policy and provide justification for such a loss. • The implementation of specific Local Plan policies in relation to Climate Change, Design, Natural Environment, Town Centres and Economy could help mitigate other impacts.
Cumulative Effects	Impacts are likely to be positive as the policies will ensure development proposals affecting the historic environment are managed positively and continuously for the multiple benefit of the existing population and visitors, whilst protecting and conserving the historic environment for future generations to enjoy. The cumulative impact of incremental small-scale change on the significance of heritage assets as well as historic public realm and other non-designated heritage assets can have as great an effect as a larger scale change and will need to be considered early in the design process.
Evidence	The policies have been informed by the NPPF; The East Sussex Historic Environment Record (ESHER); WDC Heritage Strategy (2026); Conservation Area Character Appraisals and other sources of information including the Historic England Advice and relevant guidance.

POLICY ASSESSMENTS: HOUSING

SUMMARY OF POLICY ASSESSMENTS: Housing

Policy No.	Subject	SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water Resources	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste & Materials	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Transport & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Inclusion	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
		Sustainability Objectives																			
HO1	Housing Type and Mix																				
HO2	Density																				
HO3	Brownfield Land																				
HO4	Small and Medium Sized Housing Sites																				
HO5	Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding																				
HO6	HMOs and Subdivision of Existing Dwellings																				
HO7	Rural Exception Sites to meet Local Housing Need																				
HO8	Affordable Housing																				
HO9	Gypsy, Traveller Travelling Showpeople Site Criteria																				
HO10	Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople - Safeguarding Sites																				
HO11	Specialist Housing for Older and Vulnerable People																				
HO12	Residential Accessibility Standards																				
HO13	Internal Residential Space Standards for New Dwellings																				
HO14	Rural Workers Accommodation																				
HO15	Conversion of Rural Buildings to Residential Uses																				
HO16	Park Homes and Residential Caravan Sites																				
HO17	Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside																				
HO18	Extensions/Alts. to Existing Dwellings, Outbuildings & Annexes																				
HO19	Extensions to Residential Gardens																				

POLICY ASSESSMENTS: HOUSING

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: Housing	
Positive Impacts	• The majority of the policies are likely to have a positive or major positive impact upon the sustainability objectives. • The policies are expected to meet the specific needs of the local area, creating mixed and inclusive communities within the District and allow for some flexibility regarding housing mix where it can be proven that special circumstances apply to ensure that the financial viability of schemes is not compromised. • New residential development, including affordable housing, will be expected to provide for an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures that responds to identified housing needs and contributes to the creation of balanced and sustainable communities. • New housing developments must make the most effective use of land, including brownfield land, and seek to optimise the use of land and the potential of a site. Density will be expected to be higher where accessibility to transport and services is higher, which is likely to reduce the need to travel by the car and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the development of greenfield land. • On-site affordable housing, will be expected to be provided at a level of 35% of the total number of dwellings. Proposals with a higher affordable housing contribution will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will only be supported where mixed and balanced communities would be delivered with sufficient infrastructure. The Council expects a tenure mix of 55% social rent, 25% affordable rent and 20% through other affordable routes to home ownership. Where First Homes are provided, a discount of at least 30% will be expected to ensure that the cost is genuinely affordable for first time buyers within Wealden.
Negative Impacts	• The provision of rural exception sites will have a minor negative impact upon the efficient use of land by developing greenfield land.
Uncertain Impacts	• There is uncertainty regarding the impact upon the capacity of infrastructure and its ability to accommodate such increases in density. • The policies should prevent the loss of green and blue infrastructure but will not necessarily increase the quality or connectivity to green and blue infrastructure or enable biodiversity net gain. • The delivery of new development on brownfield land within development boundaries of settlements could lead to more growth either within or around flood zones as most of the District's sustainable settlements are at risk of some or all forms of flooding, including fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding. • The provision of new housing is considered to have an uncertain impact upon environmental factors but the impacts should be mitigated by other Local Policies.
Duration / Reversibility	Some of the effects are likely to be minor positive in the short term, increasing to a major positive as the policy is implemented during the plan period and therefore major positive overall.
Mitigation Measures	• For both market and affordable homes, the housing mix of new developments should have regard to the Council's latest evidence base and will be considered against the criteria set out in the policies. • An alternative housing mix may be accepted where robust evidence demonstrates a justification to respond to up-to-date housing needs or site-specific circumstances. • Density will be expected to be higher where accessibility to transport and services is higher. Reduced densities will only be supported where exceptional site-specific constraints can be demonstrated and where it can be clearly shown that the proposed development would continue to make effective and efficient use of land. • Affordable housing should be designed to be visually indistinguishable and integrated throughout the development. Where robust viability evidence demonstrates that policy-compliant provision would make the development unviable, the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing will be sought, giving priority to adjusting tenure mix before reducing the overall provision. • A design code, prepared by the developer and agreed with the District Council, will need to be followed for each self-build/ custom house build plot and individual plot passports will also be required. • GTTSP sites will be determined against the policy criteria, including: need; relationship to sustainability settlement and services; scale; flood risk; vehicular and pedestrian access; water and waste facilities; and design. Authorised permanent GTTSP sites will be safeguarded for their existing use, proposals resulting in the loss, redevelopment or change of use must be supported by robust evidence. • The loss of existing older persons' accommodation and specialist housing will not be supported unless it is demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction that the criteria set out in the policy have been met. • All new dwellings will be required to meet the appropriate accessibility standards and Nationally Described Space Standrards. • Other mitigation measures to ensure suitable design and layout and to minimise impacts on established character and the environment of the surrounding area will be addressed through the specific Local Plan policies including Climate Change, Landscape Character, Design, Natural Environment and Historic Environment
Cumulative Effects	The cumulative effect is likely to be largely positive in delivering an appropriate mix and type of development in the District, meeting the identified need whilst ensuring the necessary safeguards are in place to address the established character and density of the area, viability, site specific constraints and local housing needs. The policies support the development of brownfield land in sustainable locations in order to reduce the requirement for the development of greenfield land. Whilst there is likely to be a combined positive impact of increasing density across the District by increasing the potential for sustainable travel and access to services and reducing the requirement for the development of greenfield land, the impact upon infrastructure is uncertain and will need to be carefully considered in the decision making process. The uncertain and negative impacts are likely to be offset by the proposed mitigation measures and benefits of providing for the housing needs of the District.
Evidence	The policies have been informed by the NPPF; WDC Urban Capacity and Density Study (2024); WDC Local Housing Needs Assessment (2026); Gypsy, Traveller and Traveller Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA) (2026); WDC Local Plan Viability Assessment (2026); and WDC 'No Stone Unturned' Study 2026.

POLICY ASSESSMENTS: INFRASTRUCTURE

SUMMARY OF POLICY ASSESSMENTS: Infrastructure

Policy No.	Subject	SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water Resources	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste & Materials	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Transport & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Inclusion	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
		Sustainability Objectives																			
INF1	Infrastructure provision, delivery and funding	?	?	++	++	0	++	+	+	0	+	+	++	++	++	++	+	+	++	++	++
INF2	Sustainable transport and active travel	++	0	0	0	0	0	++	+	0	+	+	0	++	++	++	++	+	++	++	+
INF3	Parking Provision	+	+	+	0	0	0	?	0	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	0
INF4	Utilities	+	++	++	++	0	0	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	+	0
INF5	Safeguarding Infrastructure	+	+	0	++	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	++	?	0	0	0	?	+	0
INF6	Digital and Communication Infrastructure	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	+	++	+	++	+	+	+	++	++	+
INF7	Local services and Community Facilities	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	+	+	0	++	0	++	++	++	++	++	++
INF8	Open space, sports and recreation provision	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	++	++	+	+	0	++	++	++	++	++	+	+	+
INF9	King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIIECP)	0	+	0	0	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	0	++	0	+	+	0	+	0	0

POLICY ASSESSMENTS: INFRASTRUCTURE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: Infrastructure	
Positive Impacts	• The majority of the policies are likely to have a positive or major positive impact upon the sustainability objectives. • New development is required to consider the capacity of existing infrastructure and whether new or improved infrastructure will be needed to support development, which is expected to highlight any shortfalls and deficiencies as a result of new development and identify what provision may be necessary for mitigation. • Development must demonstrate that adequate utilities infrastructure is available, or can be provided, to meet the needs of the proposal without prejudicing existing or future utility provision. • The provision of infrastructure facilities such as those relating to healthcare, flood risk, surface water drainage, water supply and wastewater treatment, digital infrastructure, sustainable transport and education are to be considered at the outset of the planning process, to ensure that there is or will be sufficient infrastructure capacity to support and meet all necessary infrastructure requirements arising from a development proposal. • Development that supports renewable energy infrastructure, low-carbon utility networks and water resource infrastructure required to support growth and climate resilience will be supported in principle. • Sustainability, patterns of movement, active travel, parking facilities and public transport connectivity are to be integral to the design of a scheme • Residential development of 10 or more dwellings will be required to contribute to the provision or enhancement of sports provision (in addition to open space and recreation provision) where justified by the latest playing pitch, indoor sports and sports facility evidence. • Development proposals should protect and, where appropriate, enhance the King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIIECP) and take opportunities to facilitate realignment closer to the coastline where this would improve public access and remain consistent with environmental objectives. • The delivery of relevant infrastructure to support growth across the District is to be secured either through direct provision or financial contributions (CIL and / or S106). Contributions towards infrastructure maintenance will also be secured where relevant.
Negative Impacts	**None**
Uncertain Impacts	• Whilst consideration of the capacity of existing and new infrastructure is required, the need to consider renewable/low carbon energy or future changes in energy supply or infrastructure provision to address climate change is not specifically addressed, although is dealt with in the Climate Change policies. • The importance of the need to move to sustainable modes of transport to address climate change is recognised, however, ESCC guidance on parking (2024) shall be the starting point for decisions and the policy requires 'an appropriate level' of provision for all users, although the specific requirements are not given and may be subject to change. • Safeguarding land to deliver infrastructure in the latter part of the Plan period could limit the housing and employment growth in the short term but enhance opportunities in the long term.
Duration / Reversibility	The impacts are not likely to change in the short, medium or long term for the majority of the policies as the policies will become effective on adoption of the Plan.
Mitigation Measures	• Early engagement with infrastructure providers is expected. Planning permission will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that there is, or will be, sufficient infrastructure capacity to support and meet all necessary infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal. • Where development is phased, infrastructure delivery must be aligned with the agreed phasing of development. Where this is the case, the Council will use planning conditions or planning obligations to secure the phasing arrangement to ensure that infrastructure is delivered at the right phase/time. • Strategic transport impacts have been assessed through the East Sussex Countywide Transport Model and the Wealden Local Plan Shared Transport Evidence Base, which identify impacts and proportionate mitigation measures to support the Local Plan strategy in alignment with the objectives of East Sussex LTP4 and the Transport Strategy for the South East (2025). A Transport Assessment, Transport Statement and Sustainable Travel Plan will need to be provided, relevant to the scale and nature of the development, in line with East Sussex County Council guidance and Active Travel England's deisgn assistance tools. • Telecommunications infrastructure proposals must demonstrate that the proposed location is necessary, having regard to opportunities for mast sharing and the use of existing buildings and structures. • Land is safeguarded for the delivery of an extension to the Arlington Reservoir and the restatement of Lewes to Uckfield, Eridge to Tunbridge Wells and Willingdon Chord railway lines as defined on the Policies Map. Development will also not be permitted where it would prejudice the delivery of any offline improvements to the A27 between Lewes and Polegate. • New open space, sports and recreation provision must be safe, inclusive, accessible, well-connected, appropriately lit, multifunctional and designed to support health, nature recovery, climate resilience and long-term maintenance. • The implementation of specific Local Plan policies in relation to Climate Change, Design, Natural Environment and Economy could also mitigate impacts.
Cumulative Effects	Impacts are likely to be positive as the policies will ensure new development supports and contributes toward infrastructure facilities, whilst ensuring that the infrastructure is delivered and is operational prior to, or alongside the development it is required to serve. The policies will enable the delivery of safe, accessible, inclusive, and sustainable transport options for both existing and new development across the District by ensuring that opportunities for improved access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure are implemented alongside necessary highways mitigation, active travel provision and improved public transport. Transport evidence must assess cumulative impacts with relevant Local Plan allocations and committed development.
Evidence	The policies have been informed by the Local Transport Plan 2024-50 (known as LTP4 and East Sussex County Council Standards/Guidance; East Sussex County Council School Organisation Plan 2025 to 2029; East Sussex Rail Strategy 2025-2050; East Sussex Freight Strategy 2025-2050; the East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP); the East Sussex Public Health and Planning MoU, August 2022; WDC's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2026); WDC's Local Plan Viability Assessment (2026); and WDC Transport Modelling 2026.

POLICY ASSESSMENTS: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

SUMMARY OF POLICY ASSESSMENTS: Natural Environment

Policy No.	Subject	SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water Resources	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste & Materials	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Transport & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Inclusion	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
		Sustainability Objectives																			
NE1	Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery																				
NE2	Biodiversity Net Gain																				
NE3	Woodland, trees and hedgerows																				
NE4	Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees																				
NE5	Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC																				
NE6	Landscape character																				
NE7	The High Weald National Landscape																				
NE8	Setting of the South Downs National Park																				
NE9	Agricultural Land																				
NE10	Light pollution and dark skies																				
NE11	Noise Pollution																				
NE12	Air Quality																				
NE13	Water Environment and Water Infrastructure																				
NE14	Contaminated Land and Land Stability																				

POLICY ASSESSMENTS: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: Natural Environment	
Positive Impacts	• The majority of the policies are likely to have a positive or major positive impact upon the sustainability objectives. • Appropriate weight is to be given to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the hierarchy of international, national, regional and local sites, priority habitats, priority species and irreplaceable habitats; and to conserve, restore and enhance the District's biodiversity resource. Qualifying development proposals will be required to deliver a minimum overall BNG of 20% above the ecological baseline. • The policies seek to protect designated sites of biological and geological conservation importance from any adverse effects of development, including the integrity of Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), High Weald National Landscape (HWNL) and South Downs National Park (SDNP) • Development proposals will be expected to protect, conserve, restore and enhance the District's biodiversity resource by ensuring it is given appropriate weight and is considered early in the design process. • Development proposals must be supported by a BNG Plan and supporting information to demonstrate how BNG will be achieved. Indirect and adverse effects on habitats and species including those relating to recreation, lighting, disturbance, water quality, pollution or invasive species should be minimised. • The delivery of additional ecological and biodiversity features and support for biodiversity enhancement through scheme design should be maximised. • The Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land in the District (Grades 1-3a) will be protected from development, where appropriate. • Proposals must clearly demonstrate that opportunities to reduce light, noise and air pollution have been taken, including the protection of the SDNP International Dark Sky Reserve (IDSR). • Proposals must demonstrate that there is adequate existing water supply infrastructure (foul and surface drainage as well as drinking water provision) to serve the development over its lifetime. • All new developments will be required to adopt a landscape-led approach from the outset to their design and layout to ensure that any potential adverse effects on the landscape from the development proposal are avoided before consideration is given to any mitigation.
Negative Impacts	**None**
Uncertain Impacts	• The need to protect the High Weald National Landscape and South Downs National Park and BMV agricultural land may restrict housing and other development in the District. • The protection of BMV agricultural land from development, will ensure the provision of other important ecosystem services such as a storage for water, however, runoff from agricultural land may worsen the issue of nutrient pollution, affecting the quality of water resources
Duration / Reversibility	The impacts are likely to be the same in the short, medium and long term as they will be implemented on adoption of the policy.
Mitigation Measures	• The policies identify the need to follow the mitigation hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensation. Where compensatory measures are required, these should be provided on-site, however where it is not possible, offsite compensation will be required. • Avoidance and Mitigation measures are necessary to ensure that the conservation objectives for the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC are met. Avoidance and mitigation for recreational development is required for a 400m to 7km zone around Ashdown Forest SPA as confirmed by the visitor surveys in 2008, 2016, 2021 and 2026 undertaken by the Council in partnership with other Local Authorities. Planning permission will be refused where significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided. Residential development will not be permitted on sites where the curtilage of a property falls within 400m from the SPA. • Proposals for a net increase in residential development between 400m and 7km from Ashdown Forest SPA will be required to contribute to mitigation through the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to the minimum level of 8ha per 1,000 net increase in population or the provision of a financial contribution to a strategic SANG and a financial contribution to the Ashdown Forest Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Strategy. SANG will be supported where they meet Natural England SANGs Guidelines. • Residential development located adjacent or close to the SPA 7km zone boundary will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and may require mitigation for the SPA. A site specific HRA will be required at the application stage for sites on or close to the boundary. New development likely to result in increased traffic will need to be assessed through a site-specific Habitats Regulations Assessment to consider any air quality impacts and to prevent adverse effects on the integrity of the Ashdown Forest SAC. • Planning applications should be supported by relevant environmental information, including protected species and habitat records from the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre, which is informed by appropriate and up-to-date ecological data/surveys and air quality assessments • When granting planning permission for any proposals that include BNG, the Council will impose planning conditions or seek planning obligations or Conservation Covenants that secure appropriate management and monitoring regimes to deliver BNG for at least 30 years after the completion of works. • Any ecological surveys should be undertaken by suitably qualified professionals and in line with best practice / guidance and Government standing advice. Scheme design should be informed by an Ecological Constraints and Opportunities Map. • Where the impact on the HWNL is considered to be significant, a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) will be required. All proposals for development in, or adjacent to, the National Landscape should be accompanied by a LVIA and assessment of all relevant National Landscape Management Plan objectives. Development within the National Landscape is expected to be limited in scale and extent and in accordance with the NPPF and HWNL Management Plan. • Development which contributes to the setting of the SDNP should conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Park in line with SDNP Local Plan and Management Plan. • Trees lost through development, will be replaced by an appropriate number of suitable trees on-site, in terms of species and size, which replaces or exceeds the loss. • In the absence of site surveys and detailed assessments, a minimum buffer of 25m will be assumed from the edge of ancient woodland, to allow for the presence of veteran trees and the fall height of mature trees. • Development which results in the loss of BMV agricultural land will need to be justified and assess the impact on the wider farming resource, natural capital, and ecosystem services. • Development affecting the water environment will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that any risks to groundwater, surface water bodies, wetlands, designated sites and other sensitive aquatic environments have been avoided or appropriately mitigated. • Where contaminated land is identified, an Options Appraisal and Remediation Strategy must be submitted and agreed to demonstrate that the land is to be made safe for its intended purpose. • Regard to the objectives identified for the East Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2026 (LNRS) should be made, and a contribution towards those objectives sought wherever possible. • The implementation of other Local Plan policies, including Climate Change, Design, Landscape Character, Health, Well-being and Quality of Life and Green Infrastructure will provide further mitigation.
Cumulative Effects	The cumulative effect is likely to be positive in conserving, restoring and enhancing the District's biodiversity resource and landscape and townscape character, which contribute to nature recovery and biodiversity improvements, whilst ensuring that the mitigation hierarchy is followed and that developments meaningfully contribute to nature recovery within the District and, where possible the wider area, working with neighbouring authorities to ensure a coherent and connected natural environment. The policies will prevent adverse effects from development on the integrity of the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC and setting of the High Weald National Landscape and South Downs National Park, as well as the wider environment. Any new development which is likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, will need to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects.
Evidence	The policies have been informed by the NPPF, NERC Act (2006), Environment Act (2021), Natural England & Forestry Commission Guidance, East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment, East Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2026 (LNRS), South Downs Landscape Assessment, WDC Habitat Regulations Assessment 2026, WDC BNG Study 2026 and WDC Landscape Character Assessment 2026.

POLICY ASSESSMENTS: TOWN CENTRES

SUMMARY OF POLICY ASSESSMENTS: Town Centres

Policy No.	Subject	SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water Resources	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste & Materials	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Transport & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Inclusion	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
		Sustainability Objectives																			
TC1	District, Service & Local Centre Hierarchy & 'Town Centre' First	++				++		+			+	+		++	+	+	++	+	++	++	++
TC2	Sequential and Local Impact Test	+				+		+			+	+		+		+	+	+	++	++	
TC3	Primary Shopping Areas	++				+		+			+	+		++	+	+	++		++	++	++
TC4	Garden Centres	+						+						+		+			++	++	

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: Town Centres

Positive Impacts	• The majority of the policies are likely to have a positive or major positive impact upon the sustainability objectives. • Proposals for 'main town centre uses' are directed to defined centres situated in the District's most accessible and sustainable areas, and are likely to minimise or reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to climate change mitigation. • Development proposals are to support the creation of a safe, attractive, accessible and high-quality environment, taking into account the identity of centres, their heritage and connections with other towns, attractions and accommodation, including opportunities to improve sustainable travel connectivity within the centres and adjoining areas where possible. • Proposals for 'main town centre uses' should maintain or enhance the overall mix and diverse offer of uses, and a range of uses to support local communities and the quality of life of local people, without the over concentration of any one use. • Proposals should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as the format and scale of the development, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are explored first before out-of-town locations are considered. • The concentration of a mix of uses on brownfield land is encouraged, reducing the loss of greenfield land and the amount of derelict, underused and vacant land, to promote the re-use of buildings and safeguard undeveloped land and soils. • Criteria to determine the extension or expansion of gardens centres outside development boundaries must be met, in order to protect the District's defined centres. • The policies support the development and enhancement of the evening and night-time economy, the provision of jobs, and the retention of active ground floor frontages and floorspace, where they support the long-term vitality and viability of the District's defined centres.
Negative Impacts	**None**
Uncertain Impacts	**None**
Duration / Reversibility	The impacts are not likely to change in the short, medium or long term and the policy will become effective on adoption
Mitigation Measures	• Development proposals for main town centre uses will be expected to take a 'town centre first' approach and be located within district, service and local centres, as defined on the Policies Map, unless the proposal complies with the sequential test. • Temporary 'meanwhile' uses to occupy vacant units are to be permitted where they support the vitality and viability of designated centres and do not compromise the future redevelopment of the unit/site. • Proposals over 350 sqm for retail and over 2,5000 sqm for leisure proposals must undertake an impact assessment to demonstrate that they will not have a significant adverse impact on the District's defined centres, either on their own or cumulatively in consideration of other commitments in the area. • Uses that are likely to detract from the overall shopping function and have closed or inactive frontages will be resisted in the Primary Shopping Area, as this will detract from the overall shopping function. • The change of use of existing ground floor premises, that is defined as a 'main town centre use' to residential, will not be supported within a defined centre. • Where necessary, planning conditions and/or legal agreements should be applied to any new planning permission outside of defined centres, including defining the nature and extent of the proposed use to ensure no future adverse impacts on existing defined centres. • All extensions to existing garden centres that are proposed to have retail floorspace above 350 square metres gross will be subject to the Local Impact Test. • The implementation of specific Local Plan policies such as Historic & Cultural Heritage, Landscape Character and Health, Well-being and Quality of life will also mitigate impacts.
Cumulative Effects	Impacts are likely to be positive as the policies will ensure that proposals for main town centre uses within the district, service and local centres, as defined on the Policies Map, are of an appropriate scale to the centre, whilst reflecting their function and position within the defined town centre hierarchy and respecting both the natural and built environment.
Evidence	The policies have been informed by the NPPF; WDC's Wealden Town Centre Study (2026); WDC Employment and Economic Study (2026); and WDC Local Plan Viability Assessment (2026).

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