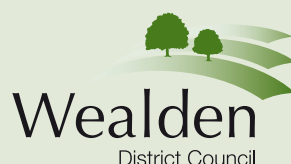


Wealden District (Incorporating Part of the South Downs National Park)

Local Development Framework

Background Paper 7: Summary of Town Masterplanning Documents

Core Strategy
Submission
Document



August 2011

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If you, or somebody you know, would like the information contained in this document in large print, Braille, tape/CD or in another language please contact Wealden District Council on 01323 443322 or info@wealden.gov.uk



1	Background	1
2	Introduction	3
	Context	3
	What is a masterplan?	3
	Components of a successful masterplan	4
	The format and current status of the Wealden Town Masterplans	4
3	Crowborough Town Centre Visioning Document	5
	The aim of the approach	5
	Who is involved?	5
	The plan process	5
	Summary of key messages so far	6
	The vision for Crowborough:	6
	Strategic aims for Crowborough:	6
	Next steps	8
4	Hailsham and Hellingly masterplan	9
	The aim of the approach	9
	Who is involved?	9
	The plan process	9
	Summary of key messages	9
	Next steps	12
5	Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council - Vision for the Future	13
	The aim of the approach	13
	Who is involved?	13
	The plan process	13
	Summary of key messages	13
6	Polegate Town Masterplan	15
	The aim of the approach	15
	Who is involved?	15
	The plan process	15
	Summary of key messages	15
	Next steps	17
7	Uckfield Town Centre Masterplan	19
	Introduction	19
	The aim of the approach	19
	Who is involved?	19
	The plan process	19
	Summary of key issues, challenges and needs	20
	Next steps	21

Contents

1 Background

1.1 The Council has prepared a series of background papers to accompany the Core Strategy. The papers cover a range of issues and provide technical and detailed information, derived from a number of our specialist studies, which informs the content of the Core Strategy.

These background Papers are:

BP1: Development of the Core Strategy

BP2: Managing the delivery of housing

BP3: The economy and the provision of jobs

BP4: Provision for Gypsies and Travellers

BP5: Biodiversity

BP6: Green Infrastructure

BP7: Summary of town masterplanning documents

BP8: Summary of Core Strategy consultation and participation

BP9: Assessment of the Core Strategy under the Habitat Regulations

BP 10: Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy

BP 11: Infrastructure Delivery Plan

BP 12: Equalities Impact Assessment

BP 13: Implementation and Monitoring Framework

1.2 This Background Paper, entitled 'Summary of Town Masterplanning Documents', provides an up to date summary guide to the visioning and masterplan work that has been undertaken by each of Wealden's Town Councils including Crowborough, Hailsham and Hellingly, Heathfield and Waldron, Polegate and Uckfield.

1 Background

2 Introduction

2.1 With the support and encouragement of Wealden District Council, the Town and Parish Councils of Crowborough, Hailsham and Hellingly, Heathfield and Waldron, Polegate and Uckfield have been developing local visions and plans for their areas. The aim of this work has been to identify local priorities and development ideas, and to provide evidence of these for supporting preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

2.2 This Background Paper provides a summary guide to the visioning and masterplan work to date, and contains links to documents prepared by the various visioning / masterplanning groups.

Context

2.3 Over the past five years the planning system has been substantially reformed to embed community responsive policy-making and deliver sustainable development. The aim of this new spatial planning approach is to deliver positive social, economic and environmental outcomes, through working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders and agencies that help to shape local areas and deliver local services.

2.4 The Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' described the role of local authorities as 'place shapers' and strengthens the notion that through strategic leadership, communities can be brought together to build a vision of how to address and respond to challenges facing a locality, in a coordinated way. This can be done through partnership, by developing a joint vision and supporting and working with other bodies. The aim is to give local people and communities more influence and power to improve their lives and shape the places where they live.

2.5 As part of this approach Wealden's Town and Parish Councils have been preparing visions and plans for their area. Their purpose is to involve stakeholders and the community in helping build consensus about the future needs of an area and identify priorities for action. These bodies are well placed to represent local views and identity, and Wealden District Council is keen to support and embrace the views of local communities in its plan making within the Local Development Framework.

What is a masterplan?

2.6 A masterplan can take a variety of forms depending on the context in which a plan is to be used and what is wanted to be achieved. However, in general terms a masterplan is a process that seeks to establish principles of how a place may change over a period of time, physically, economically and socially.

2.7 The benefit of producing a masterplan is that it gives local people a share in the decisions as to what their town should look like and to help guide its future development. It provides an opportunity for the community to set out a vision of what is important to it, how new development can best be fitted in, the design and quality standards it should meet, how to preserve valued local features and to map out the facilities and services that the community need and want to safeguard for the future.

Components of a successful masterplan

2.8 Government Guidance⁽¹⁾ highlights that for a masterplan to be successful it should be:

- Visionary – it should raise aspirations and provide a vehicle for consensus building and implementation;
- Deliverable – taking into account likely implementation and delivery routes;
- Fully integrated into land use planning system, while allowing new uses and market opportunities to exploit the development potential of a site or area;
- Flexible – providing the base for negotiation and dispute resolution;
- The result of a participatory process, providing all the stakeholders with the means of expressing their needs and priorities;
- Equally applicable to rethinking the role, function and form of existing neighbourhoods as to creating new neighbourhoods; and
- Able to address multifaceted factors that can make an area more attractive, popular and successful.

The format and current status of the Wealden Town Masterplans

2.9 Each town visioning group is at a different stage in the preparation of its plan for its area, and the format of the various documents varies between towns. This was inevitable given that each area is unique, that its governance arrangements for preparing plans differed between towns, and that each has a range of different challenges and issues to face.

2.10 The following sections provide a brief summary of the current progress on each of the town masterplans, a summary of how the local community was involved, and a summary of the key priorities, challenges and needs that have been identified so far. In each case links are provided to the full documents.

1 Communities and Local Government (September 2008) Devising and delivering masterplanning at neighbourhood level - some lessons from the New Deal for Communities Programme

3 Crowborough Town Centre Visioning Document

The aim of the approach

3.1 Crowborough visioning group began work in April 2008. Its aim was to produce, through partnership working and community involvement, ideas and proposals to help guide the revitalisation and redevelopment of the town over the next 20 years.

Who is involved?

3.2 Crowborough Town Council has created a visioning group to aid in the production of its plan. The visioning group is made up of a number of representatives from Crowborough Town Council, East Sussex County Council, Wealden District Council, the Crowborough Partnership (a local business network) and a number of other organisations and community groups.

The plan process

3.3 The first stage of Crowborough Town Council's masterplanning and visioning process began in the summer of 2005 where consultation began through door-to-door questionnaires, on-line surveys and a number of workshops with groups such as young people and the elderly. The consultation process led to the identification of a number of key issues facing Crowborough. The issues were addressed in Crowborough's Healthcheck and Action Plan Report. That report highlighted the need for a clear set of definitive aims and ambitions for the town.

3.4 In 2008, Crowborough Town Council began refining the findings of their Healthcheck. An informal drop in session was held on 12th November 2008 which gave residents the chance to have their say about the future of the town and provided an opportunity for the community to find out about the visioning group's draft proposals for a visioning document.

3.5 The working group produced a Crowborough Visioning Document as the first stage in the process. This followed several local public consultation events. These have included:

- A 'Town Centre Visioning' open day on 17th January 2009. The purpose of the event was to gain the community's views regarding Crowborough's future and to help develop a vision for the area over the next 20 years. The event was open to residents, local businesses and community groups; and
- Two Stakeholder workshops held on the 2nd and 21st April 2009. These workshops were run by an independent consultancy firm (Dialogue). The aim of the workshops was to build on the feedback received at the public events and to explore key areas in more detail and offer ideas on a range of topics.

3.6 In addition to the above, a visioning questionnaire was made publicly available and responses invited. This provided an opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the visioning work and the Draft Crowborough Town Centre Visioning Document.

3.7 In November 2009, the Crowborough visioning group agreed the aims, themes, timings and areas that merited further research. As a result Crowborough Town Council published 'Top of the Weald - A vision for Crowborough 2010 - 2030. It hopes that the main thrust of their document can be supported and given maximum weight through incorporation of ideas into the more legislatively defined LDF process.

3.8 You may access the Crowborough Town Centre Visioning Document via the Crowborough Town Council website www.crowboroughtc.co.uk.

Summary of key messages so far

3.9 The latest visioning document builds on its draft version and outlines eight strategic aims, describes ways in which the key vision can be achieved and identifies short term (1 - 4 years) and medium to long term (5 - 20 years) priorities. Work is continuing to further these aims. The vision for Crowborough and eight key aims and associated priorities are described below.

The vision for Crowborough:

3.10 By 2030 Crowborough will be...'A vibrant, attractive and inviting town with a strong community spirit at its heart. A town in touch with its past, looking to the future and protective of its outstanding heritage and natural surroundings'.

Strategic aims for Crowborough:

Aim 1 - A thriving and dynamic town centre serving the needs of the community and appealing to visitors

3.11 In the short term, the priorities are to pedestrianise the High Street to reduce traffic congestion and to give the town centre a 'makeover' to create a safe, clean and attractive environment.

3.12 In the medium and long term priorities include the regeneration of the High Street, an improved night time economy, a regular weekend market and the creation of a community focal point.

Aim 2 - A commitment to preserving and enhancing Crowborough's natural and built environment

3.13 In the short term Crowborough will prioritise the production of an inventory of existing green spaces in the town, increase the amount of green spaces and preserve existing greenspaces and assets. Also, the design principles as set out in the Wealden Design Guide will be supported.

3.14 In the medium term priorities include protecting and enhancing the natural environment and cultural heritage, reducing carbon emissions and promoting recycling to increase the sustainability of the town. The production of an active strategy to increase the amount of land available for recreational use is also a priority.

Aim 3 - A distinctive visitor destination with a wealth of accessible cultural treasures

3.15 In the short term Crowborough would like to achieve its aim by promoting and branding Crowborough as a tourist destination, updating its tourist information service and publications, enhancing the towns gateways and providing relevant signage and supporting new and existing festivals and events.

3.16 In the medium to long term priorities include the provision of a mix of new tourist accommodation and building on existing tourist attractions.

Aim 4 - A high quality, integrated transport network for the town

3.17 In the short term priorities include the creation of a traffic management plan to help with movement in and around the town, increased accessibility, directional signage and the promotion of public transport options to reduce car reliance.

3.18 In the medium to long term priorities include better public transport links and restructured timetables, the continuation of free car parking, an investigation into the provision of a new transport hub close to the town and an improving the area around Crowborough rail station.

Aim 5 - A confident and resilient business community working in partnership with the wider community

3.19 Short term priorities include supporting and attracting small businesses in the town, building on and expanding on the existing business network, investigating the potential to create a 'business centre and prioritising the creation of new employment opportunities for young people.

3.20 In the medium to long term, priorities include building on Crowborough's geographical position as a local service centre, increasing employment in tourism and ensuring that new development contributes to the creation of a sustainable community.

Aim 6 - A town that meaningfully engages with, and is supportive of the needs and aspirations of, its young people

3.21 In the short term Crowborough will prioritise safety for its young people, promote a new Youth Council and improve facilities and activities for young people.

3.22 Long term priorities include seeking fundraising for the creation of a new youth club and encourage new leisure and recreation development.

Aim 7 - Delivering high quality and affordable housing

3.23 Crowborough would like a greater level of affordable housing to help families and young people stay in the town. To achieve this, short term priorities include gaining an understanding of local housing need, enforcing design standards, the provision of new housing sites in appropriate locations, early engagement between the Town Council and potential developers and exploring affordable housing 'exception sites'.

3.24 The long term aim priority is to achieve a level of affordable housing consistent with the sustainability of the town.

Aim 8 - A new focal point for the town at Pine Grove

3.25 The short term priorities for the above aim include the production of a masterplan for the Pine Grove site, an assessment of the potential for social and business enterprises and the creation of a new community centre.

3.26 Long term priorities include the implementation of design standards at Pine Grove including access to the town and public transport, landscaped open spaces and the potential for affordable housing on the site to be explored.

Next steps

3.27 Work on the project is continuing and in the future critical areas of the vision will be identified and agreed. It is anticipated that a master plan for the town will be prepared over the next few years following public consultation.

4 Hailsham and Hellingly masterplan

The aim of the approach

4.1 In 2008 Hailsham Town Council and Hellingly Parish Council began work on a joint masterplan covering their Town and Parish. The purpose of the exercise is to provide a document that can inform and supplement the Wealden District Council Local Development Framework.

Who is involved?

4.2 Hailsham and Hellingly Councils began work on their masterplan after consulting residents within the Town and Parish about how best to go about the task. A masterplan steering group was created to oversee the preparation of the plan, comprising councillors from Hailsham Town Council, Hellingly Parish Council and Wealden District Council. Five working groups were also established with the purpose of looking at different aspects of the town's infrastructure including education and training, healthcare, leisure and recreation, economy, roads and transport, water and drainage.

The plan process

4.3 The first stage in the production of the masterplan involved gathering views and opinions from the steering group and five working groups, and producing a Draft Hailsham and Hellingly Masterplan. This was produced in May 2008.

4.4 The draft Masterplan provided an overview of the current position of Hailsham and Hellingly, the spatial vision, and a detailed synopsis of the issues, challenges and requirements of the area for the future. These were presented under specific topic headings.

4.5 Following publication of the draft, public exhibitions were held locally on the 20th and 21st June 2008. These sought views on the draft masterplan and attendees were given the opportunity to comment by filling in a questionnaire. The responses were then fed back into the masterplan process, and following which the final version of the Hailsham and Hellingly Masterplan was published in January 2009, having been formally adopted by both Councils.

4.6 The final version of the Masterplan is available on the Hailsham Town Council website www.hailsham-tc.gov.uk.

Summary of key messages

4.7 The key issues, challenges and opportunities outlined within the Hailsham and Hellingly Masterplan are summarised below.

Roads

4.8 Concern that the local road system cannot accept more traffic created by the continued development of significant numbers of houses and industry. The plan

recommends that it is important that an in-depth study is undertaken to look at the road capacity prior to planning permission being given for any further expansion of the town. In addition, the creation of relief roads should also be considered.

Transport

4.9 It is suggested that a circular bus route is required within Hailsham and the surrounding areas to link the residential parts of the town to the employment and retail centres. This would then allow better access to the town's facilities and countryside, and for a greater number of people. In addition, the current public transport service should be more integrated so that different transport modes can interlink. For example, to and between buses and trains at Polegate.

4.10 Hailsham would like a rail link to be investigated in the future or alternatively an option for a monorail to link Hailsham and Polegate. This would further improve accessibility to and from Hailsham.

4.11 Although Hailsham is relatively flat, the study notes that very few people cycle. On this basis, more and better cycle ways should be created to encourage more sustainable transport movement. Similarly, there is also a need to create footpaths in the more peripheral parts of the town where there are gaps in the cycleway network. It is suggested that developer contributions could be used for this purpose.

Water, sewerage & drainage

4.12 A review should be undertaken to assess drainage and sewer capacity of both of Hailsham's sewage treatment works (North and South treatment works) prior to any further development being permitted in the area.

Retail

4.13 The plan describes a long-term vision for Hailsham as a retail centre. This includes supporting Hailsham as a 'niche' town for destination shopping and experiences and retaining its retail focus. It suggests identifying new types of retail 'destination shopping', and supporting a limited pedestrian priority within the High Street. Overall there should be local control over parking, and improvements to the visual appearance of shops and the whole shopping experience.

4.14 The plan outlines a number of ways in which Hailsham as a town could meet its vision. These include:

- Re-development of the shopping centres in the town centre;
- Identifying areas in the town centre that would be suitable for retail development to provide additional shopping space;
- Increasing the amount of housing, offices, and leisure facilities;
- Improving the quantity of retailers within the main shopping centre and the quality of retail facilities;
- Increasing the likelihood of investment in new retail facilities;

- Requiring a high standard of design for town centre development;
- Encouraging a mix and diverse range of uses in the town centre;
- Encouraging small scale convenience shops within or on the edge of existing neighbourhood centres;
- Preserving the Hailsham Market as a commercial market.

Employment Land

4.15 Provided that the allocated sites are retained as employment land, the plan considers that there is sufficient employment land available and that any future growth should be concentrated on the presently unoccupied sites, and thereafter at Hackhurst Lane some little distance north of the town on the A22. Should there be a requirement for additional business land, then a well located site with good access should be identified to attract the necessary investment and business development.

Housing

4.16 The plan identifies that constraints, particularly regarding key infrastructure, currently exist to the further provision of housing within the town. However, should these constraints be overcome and should Hailsham be allocated future housing growth, it is believed that the most sustainable housing site options would be land east of Battle Road (first priority) and land at North Hailsham (second choice / priority).

4.17 Additional housing development in the town could result in substantial developer contributions that could be used to improve local infrastructure.

Healthcare

4.18 The plan proposes a review of health requirements for the area. Should this identify additional demand for health services, then the plan proposes the development of a Diagnostic Treatment Centre with GP surgeries running alongside it to help support the growing population of the town. Developer contributions could be involved in the delivery of such a facility.

Education & Training Skills

4.19 The plan outlines that more primary and secondary school spaces are currently required within the Hailsham area. Should future housing development be located in the area, additional spaces will be needed. The preferred option to meet any additional need for class-room space is to improve and expand the existing schools. However, should this not be possible, the location of sites for education purposes should be assessed based on the location of any new housing developments and to reflect those significant permissions already granted but not yet completed.

4.20 There is a need for more locally based vocational and skills training.

Leisure, recreation & the arts

4.21 In relation to sport and leisure, the plan would like to see the development of more and better facilities. This would include the provision of sports pitches and associated facilities, the possible expansion of the leisure centre to include different uses, and a cycle and running area (fitness trail) into a green network. Consideration should also be given to finding a site for a football stadium.

4.22 The plan identifies that there are not enough parks within Hailsham and proposes a park within any significant development east of Battle Road, with a new civic centre located within the park, together with the provision of a suitable performance venue and other public facilities.

Next steps

4.23 Hailsham and Hellingly intend to update their masterplan as the Wealden Local Development Framework progresses. This will involve Hailsham and Hellingly undertaking further public consultation in order to gain the communities' views. It is hoped that the masterplan can be afforded greatest weight through seeking to incorporate its ideas and vision, as appropriate, within the Local Development Framework.

4.24 From May 2009 the community has been invited to take part in an on-line poll where participants can vote for their first priority to improve the town of Hailsham out of a set of eight options. These include town centre development, traffic and transport, and additional housing.

4.25 Full details of the poll are available via the Hailsham Town Council website⁽²⁾.

4.26 In addition to this, Hailsham also sent a questionnaire to each household within the town with their quarterly newsletter. The questionnaire seeks views in relation to shopping within the town and how it could be improved. The information will be used to inform the evolving Hailsham and Hellingly Masterplan. Questionnaires are also available from a number of shops located within the town.

5 Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council - Vision for the Future

The aim of the approach

5.1 Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council produced a **visioning document** for the future of their area in April 2008. The intention is to inform the preparation of plans under the Wealden District Council's LDF process.

Who is involved?

5.2 The visioning task was lead by Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council's Planning Committee.

The plan process

5.3 The process involved discussions within the Parish Council and various consultations with residents and businesses.

5.4 The visioning document outlines priority objectives for the area and elements of Heathfield and Waldron's vision which is *'to continue to live in a green, vibrant and safe community'*.

5.5 You may view a copy of Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council's visioning document at www.heathfield.net.

Summary of key messages

5.6 The key messages from Heathfield and Waldron's visioning document are summarised below:

Promotion of business

5.7 The continued promotion of business development including broadening the range of employment opportunities and ensuring that there is enough space for businesses to expand.

Central Weald position

5.8 To maintain the area's prominent and central position, to protect the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as far as possible and to keep Heathfield as an attractive and vibrant community.

Landmarks of Heathfield

5.9 With Heathfield having its own characteristic features it is important to preserve its historic character and identity. This would include preserving buildings and landscape features within the area.

Service centre

5.10 The retention of the town as a service centre. This would include the retention of emergency services, professional services (including health) and free parking in order to encourage economic sustainability for businesses, employees and residents, and to provide a service centre for the surrounding villages.

Community facilities

5.11 There is a need for an increased provision of leisure facilities, including a swimming pool and more allotments. Furthermore, the existing community facilities need to be adequately maintained.

Affordable housing

5.12 Additional affordable housing is required to keep young people in the area and to ensure a mixed and cohesive community. Alongside this, improved or expanded infrastructure is required, particularly health services, education, public transport and recreational facilities. Also, serious consideration should be given to issues such as energy resources, drainage and the road network.

Public space preservation

5.13 Continue support to the maintenance and enhancement of public areas such as the business hub of the High Street and the public open spaces. It is thought that this is particularly important as the route of the A267 through the town means the appearance and identity of Heathfield are highly visible.

Improved bus services

5.14 Public transport needs to be improved and enhanced to support more sustainable travel and to improve accessibility to and from other Wealden main towns and outlying satellite villages.

Traffic impact

5.15 Improved public transport and better roads would ease traffic pressures in and around Heathfield. Also, further traffic improvements can be made in the High Street by the active policing of illegal parking. This would reduce the often experienced traffic jam and would improve the town centre environment.

Cycle route extension

5.16 To benefit local businesses and increase the health and leisure facilities of the area, the National Cycle Network 21 should be extended to provide a route north from the Cuckoo Trail.

6 Polegate Town Masterplan

The aim of the approach

6.1 Polegate Town Council began work on its masterplan for the area early in 2008. The objective is to provide a strategic document to guide future development and to inform the production of Wealden District Council's LDF.

Who is involved?

6.2 The first stage in producing Polegate's Masterplan involved creating a Working Group to input ideas and evidence into the masterplanning process. The Masterplan Group was led by the Town Council and formed of residents who attended the 2008 Annual General Meeting.

The plan process

6.3 A number of issues were considered during the 2008 Annual General Meeting and at which residents were asked to discuss in groups matters relating to Polegate. This included discussing community infrastructure, economic performance and leisure and recreation. In addition, a number of spatial vision objectives were outlined.

6.4 Following the consultation exercise, the gathered information was used to produce Polegate's Town Masterplan which was made publicly available in July 2008. The masterplan has now been updated following a public Town Council meeting on 5th August 2010.

6.5 The latest updated Draft Report is available to view via the Polegate Town Council website at www.polegate-tc.co.uk.

Summary of key messages

6.6 Polegate's Masterplan outlines nine spatial vision objectives which are summarised below:

- Ensuring that the location of development is coordinated and meets Polegate's service and employment needs;
- Taking advantage of Polegate's transport infrastructure for the provision of employment and facilities;
- Improving and redeveloping the rail station and adjoining town centre land;
- Improving the environment and space available for buses, cyclists and pedestrians;
- Improving gaps in Polegate's housing stock with the provision of good quality houses and facilities;
- Identifying land suitable for the provision of a cemetery;
- Protecting Polegate's landscape setting;
- Providing new parks and open spaces; and
- Maintaining strategic gaps between Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne.

6.7 In addition to these vision objectives, the masterplan identifies a number of different challenges, needs and proposals for the future of Polegate. A summary of these is provided below.

Shopping and retail centre

6.8 Polegate would like to continue and improve its role as a service centre by attracting larger retail units to the area and by redeveloping / regenerating the High Street and railway station transport hub area. For this reason the siting of new housing development is seen to be critical to the prosperity of the town centre.

Employment land

6.9 There is support for a high quality business park and the siting of a new 'Public Service Village' within close proximity of the Town Centre in order to provide additional and local employment opportunities in the area.

Housing

6.10 Polegate Town Council support the suitable sites identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) with the proviso that Hindslands Fields, Eastbourne Road should only be considered for the provision of a new educational facility and not housing. Future development should only take place south of the A27 bypass and should include a good mix of dwellings and should be of appropriate design to fit in with the existing character of the area. Strategic gaps between Polegate, Hailsham and Eastbourne should be preserved and new infrastructure would be required to support any new housing. Using developer contributions, the Town Council are seeking to obtain land suitable for a cemetery.

Transport, Roads and parking

6.11 Improvements to the traffic system are required, especially in the High Street and at the Cophall roundabout on the A22. Polegate Town Council does not support proposed traffic calming measures along Station / Pevensey / Dittons Road, however, a reduction in speed limit would be welcomed.

6.12 A footbridge link is required between the north and south sides of the town together with better rail links between Polegate and Pevensey. The town supports the premise of re-opening the Hailsham railway line and also the Lewes to Uckfield railway line for the purpose of reducing road traffic. There is also an identified need for more car parking spaces in the town to alleviate resident parking problems caused by commuter parking and gaps in the bus service should be addressed. There is also support for the creation of an integrated transport hub of rail and bus services.

Healthcare

6.13 Polegate would like to see the continued presence of a Doctors surgery in the centre of the town.

Education, training and skills

6.14 Polegate would support the provision of a school, catering for children from nursery to 6th form age, should additional school places be required as a result of new housing development. The town would also like to see the further development of adult education in the area and the provision of a separate sports hall to enable dual community use outside of school hours.

Leisure and recreation

6.15 The plan would like to see the further development and expansion of the town's leisure facilities. This would include the provision of more sports facilities, a youth / sports club and the extension and creation of cycle ways. The Town Council would also like to explore the potential at Brightling Road in relation to the improvement and development of the site for leisure and biodiversity purposes.

Clubs and Social

6.16 Polegate would support the provision of a new sports / youth hall and would like to replace the existing Community Centre which could incorporate additional community facilities.

Allotments

6.17 The Council is actively seeking additional land for allotments.

Water and sewerage

6.18 Should it be required, Polegate would like to see the provision of a new sewerage treatment plant to be in place prior to any new housing development.

The Elderly

6.19 There is a need for an affordable respite and convalescent care facility within Polegate.

Next steps

6.20 Whilst the aim of Polegate's Masterplan is to be used as a foundation for future proposals for the development of Polegate, the masterplan is seen as a working document and will be subject to reviews and amendments. Polegate Town Council aims to continue its consultation process to ensure that the masterplan is representative of the wider community.

6 Polegate Town Masterplan

7 Uckfield Town Centre Masterplan

Introduction

7.1 Uckfield was the first of Wealden's towns to begin work on a town masterplan. The initiative derived from the Town Councils "Uckfield design day", Wealden District Council's early work on the LDF and from the acknowledgment that there are specific spatial challenges inherent to Uckfield. These reflect the way in which parts of Uckfield have been developed in the past, and because the town may be expected to grow in the future. Local recognition was given to the masterplan process to help address challenges and to help manage future growth of the town in a coordinated way.

The aim of the approach

7.2 The aim of Uckfield's Town Masterplan is to develop a strategy for the town which will provide a framework for future decisions, and with the purpose of revitalising, regenerating and improving the area, thus creating a more sustainable community. It is intended to feed into the work on the LDF and to seek to incorporate these ideas within the more legislatively prescribed process of the LDF in order to provide greatest possible weight to the overall vision and objectives of the masterplan.

Who is involved?

7.3 As key landowners within the town, an Uckfield Town Centre Steering Group was set up made up of representatives from East Sussex County Council, Wealden District Council, Uckfield Town Council and the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (each a landowner in the town). The purpose of the group is to oversee the production of a masterplan through partnership working, with the aim of enhancing and improving the town.

The plan process

7.4 Work on the masterplan began in December 2006 when the Town Council produced a community questionnaire which was sent to every household in Uckfield. In addition, a "*Vision for Uckfield*" Design Day was held which was jointly organised and run with the Royal Institute of British Architects. The purpose of the design day was to gain people's views on how they would like to see Uckfield and the surrounding area develop, present the results of the community questionnaire, and explore Uckfield's potential for improvement.

7.5 Following this initial public consultation, Uckfield Town Council produced a proposal document for a town masterplan. The report outlined a vision, draft objectives and themes for the future of the town and identified a number of initiatives that would support the identified key proposals. The proposal report was agreed by the steering group and Town Council in August 2007.

7.6 Work on the plan has continued and more recently GVA Grimley (Planning Consultants) have been instructed by the Uckfield Town Centre Steering Group to further

develop a masterplan for Uckfield looking especially at design concepts to enhance the urban fabric and grain of the town. Further public consultation was undertaken to take the masterplan into its next stage. This was in the form of a further community questionnaire and open days which were held towards the end of 2008 and 2009. The purpose was to generate and investigate a number of proposed scenarios for the future development of the town.

7.7 In October 2009, a more detailed masterplan was finalised and approved by the Town Council. Should you wish to view the latest plan document or gain further information then you may do so via the Uckfield Town Centre website at www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk.

Summary of key issues, challenges and needs

7.8 The vision for the future of Uckfield town centre is that of a contemporary market town with an 'up-market' image known for its successful and varied shopping facilities and commercial opportunities, offering an attractive and welcoming environment, maintaining its own distinctive identity and acting as a hub for surrounding towns and villages.

7.9 The plan introduces a number of objectives and details how the objectives may be achieved. In summary the plan introduces a mixture of regeneration and new development to improve the town centre. This includes the following:

Active and Attractive Mixed - Use High Street

7.10 The revival of Uckfield's High Street is seen to be especially important. This will be achieved by enhancing and maintaining the High Street through a number of initiatives including redevelopment, investment in the public realm and a reduced impact of cars and parking.

New Civic Square and Development

7.11 This includes creating a new landmark, creating better linkages between the High Street and Luxford's Field, a new civic centre, additional buildings including replacement community buildings and public art.

Luxford's Field

7.12 Improvements to Luxford's Field including landscaping, the provision of trees and the relocation of the playground close to the Civic Centre.

Residential Neighbourhood

7.13 The plan promotes its town centre for residential use advocating a high quality and well designed neighbourhood including a mixture of housing types and associated car parking.

New and Expanded Retail on Bell Farm Road

7.14 Uckfield would like to see the regeneration of Bell Farm Road to include a range of retail types with parking and servicing and for an attractive and active street facade.

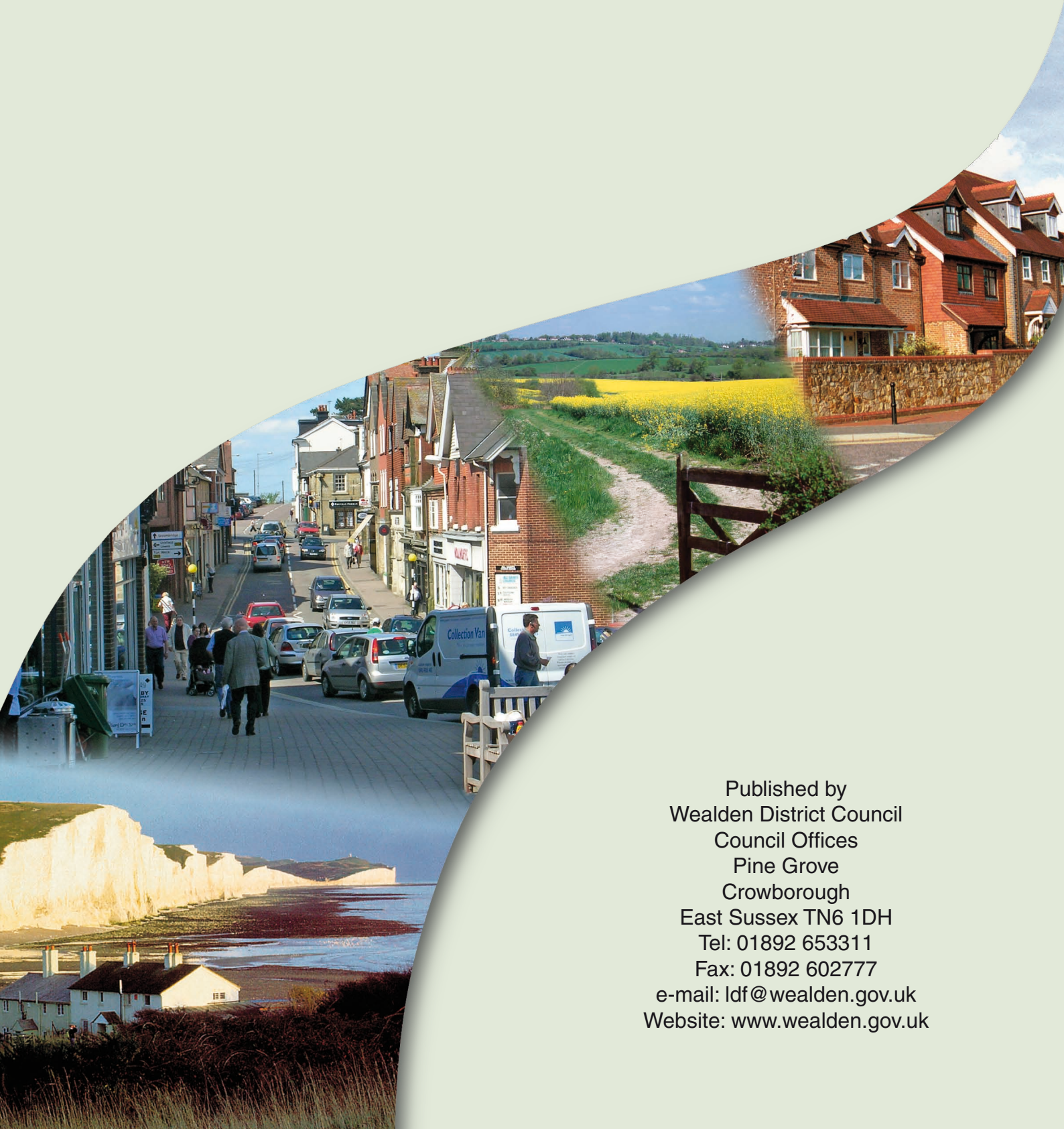
Employment, Leisure and Community

7.15 In relation to employment, a new office development located west of the expanded retail area would be supported. Uckfield would also like to see additional multi-use spaces for a range of recreation and sport uses and the redevelopment of the school.

Next steps

7.16 Following approval of this initial masterplan setting out a vision and design concept for the town, the partnership of the Town Council, East Sussex County Council, Wealden and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service has employed consultants to specifically test the viability and delivery of this with potential investors and developers. Currently this work is ongoing but is intended to provide a clear direction as to what may be able to be achieved towards the priorities set out in the masterplan itself. These include the provision of necessary infrastructure and a solution to the issue of traffic congestion within the town.

7 Uckfield Town Centre Masterplan



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