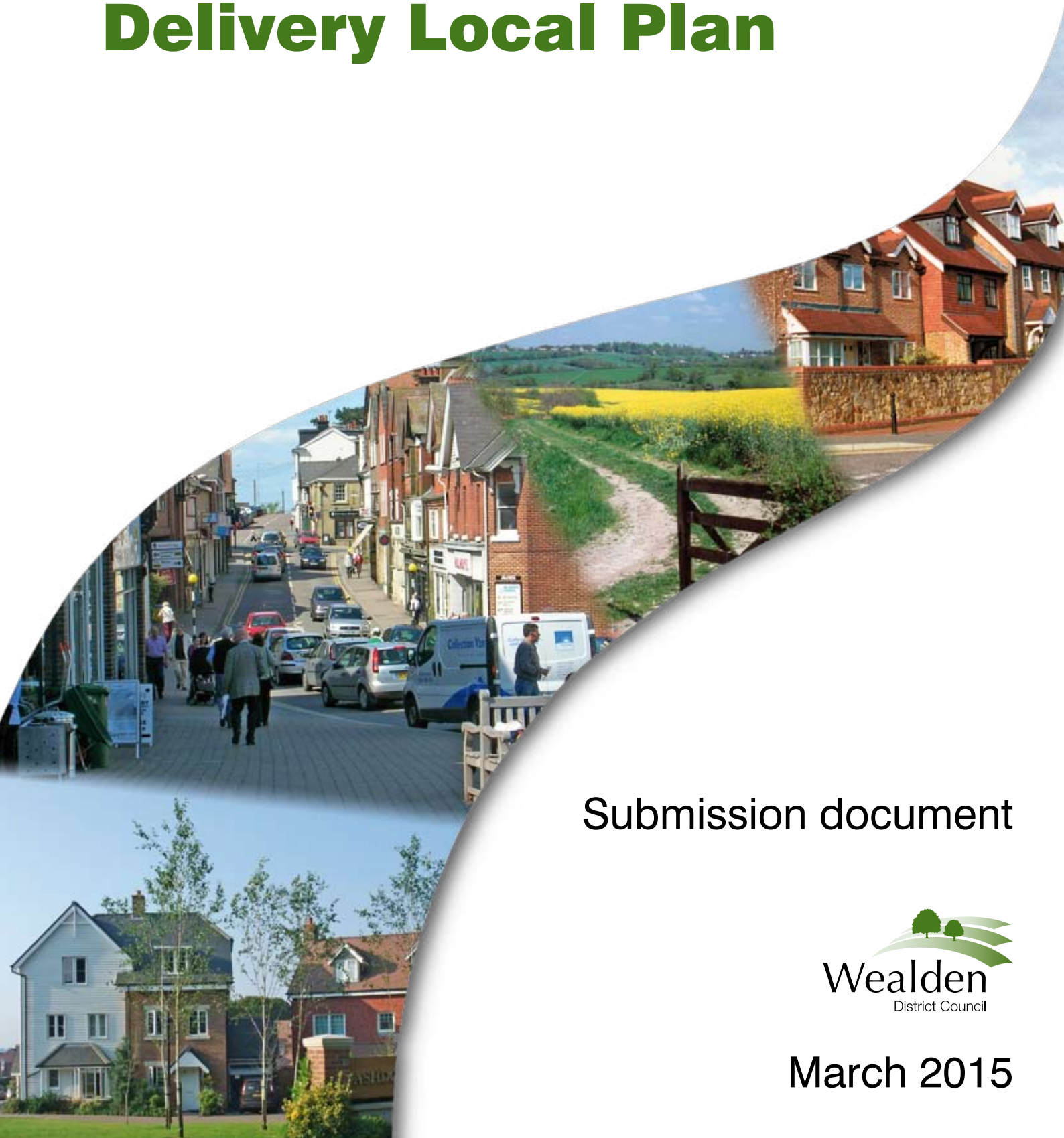
## Wealden District Council Local Plan

# Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan



Submission document

Wealden District Council

March 2015

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You may also visit the offices Monday to Friday, to view other Local Plan documents.

A copy of the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan and associated documents can be downloaded from the Planning Policy pages of the Wealden website, www.wealden.gov.uk/planningpolicy or scan the QR code below with your smart phone.

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

NAPM RECYCLED 75% APPROVED

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# Contents

# 1 Introduction

**1.1** This document is the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan, which reviews the Wealden District (Incorporating the South Downs National Park) Core Strategy Local Plan Policy WCS8 concerning affordable housing. This Local Plan is limited to affordable housing provision and the adopted Core Strategy Policy WCS8 concerning affordable housing, and does not affect any other Core Strategy policy.

**1.2** The Policy within this document relates to the area of Wealden District which does not include the South Downs National Park. The adopted Core Strategy Policy WCS8 relating to Affordable Housing will therefore remain relevant for the part of the South Downs National Park which is within Wealden District, until it is superseded by a relevant Local Plan produced by the South Downs National Park Authority. Any reference to District in this Plan means Wealden District excluding the area within the South Downs National Park.

**1.3** This document is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal Report, which includes an assessment of reasonable alternatives. In addition this document refers to, and is supported by, a number of background documents, that have been used to inform the Local Plan. These documents may be found on the Council's website www.wealden.gov.uk and include:

- The Core Strategy Local Plan, Adopted February 2013
- The Strategic Sites Local Plan (Submission Version), March 2014
- Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule , March 2015
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan, March 2015
- Updated Community Infrastructure Levy viability evidence base, August 2014
- Core Strategy Background Paper 2: Managing the Delivery of Housing, August 2011
- Strategic Sites Background Paper: Housing, March 2014
- Wealden Housing Viability Assessment, 2009
- Wealden Housing Needs Assessment, 2010
- Equalities Impact Assessment

# 1 Introduction

## 2 Affordable Housing Policy

**2.1** Similar to other areas of the South East, Wealden District is an area of relatively high housing demand and high levels of owner occupation. Although there are quite marked variations in house prices between different parts of the District, there is a general consequence that many first time buyers, key workers and lower income households find it difficult to gain a foothold in the local housing market.

**2.2** In 2009, the Council commissioned a housing needs survey concerning the nature and extent of our local housing need. This has confirmed an annual affordable housing need of 812[(1)]. Even when re-lets and alternative mechanisms of meeting housing need are taken into account, this figure is substantial and highlights the importance of delivering the maximum number of affordable dwellings from new housing growth that will take place within the District.

**2.3** We have also commissioned specialist research which has looked at the viability of housing provision, including affordable housing, within Wealden District. This has demonstrated that there is potential for new market housing developments to provide an element of affordable housing. That evidence also confirmed that there is a potential for smaller housing sites and sites within more affluent areas to support a higher proportion of affordable housing. In this respect, sites allocated in subsequent Local Plans will have potential to consider alternative provision of affordable housing depending on location, size, density, site conditions and infrastructure requirements.

**2.4** The Government announced a change in policy and guidance in relation to affordable housing thresholds in November 2014. This guidance states that affordable housing contributions, under Section 106, should not be sought from developments of 10 units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floorspace of no more than 1000sqm. However, for designated rural areas authorities may choose to implement a lower threshold of 5-units or less where affordable housing contributions should not be sought. Evidence shows that within Wealden District designated rural areas can sustain a lower threshold for the provision of affordable housing.

**2.5** Section 157(1) of the Housing Act 1985 defines designated rural areas and includes National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and an area designated by order of the Secretary of State as a rural area. The rural designated area under Section 157(1) of the Housing Act 1985 is extremely narrow and apart from the AONB does not include rural areas within Wealden District, however there are other orders relating to affordable housing which designate rural areas within Wealden District including The Housing (Right to Acquire or Enfranchise) (Designated Areas in the South East) Order 1997 and The Housing (Right to Enfranchise) (Designated Protected Areas) (England) Order 2009. On this basis, and for the purposes of this Plan, rural designated areas include land which falls within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as well as the Parishes of Arlington, Berwick, Buxted, Chalvington with Ripe, Chiddingly, Danehill, East Hoathly, Fletching, Framfield, Frant, Hadlow Down, Hartfield, Hellingly, Herstmonceux, Hooe, Horam, Isfield, Laughton, Little Horsted, Long Man, Maresfield, Mayfield, Newick, Ninfield,

1 Affordable housing need does not directly translate to the amount of new affordable housing required

Pevensey, Rotherfield, Selmeston, Wadhurst, Warbleton, Wartling, Westham, Withyam and specific areas identified on maps referred to in the Orders in the Parishes of Forest Row, Hailsham, Heathfield and Waldron, Polegate and Willingdon and Jevington.

**2.6** In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Council is seeking through the provision, distribution and design of affordable homes to create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. Of importance is the need to ensure that within any scheme that the affordable homes are integrated and not segregated from the market homes, in order to promote inclusive and mixed communities. This will be an important factor in the overall design of the development on site.

**2.7** The Council has identified that the provision of affordable housing is a high priority policy objective. However, it is recognised that site and market conditions can vary both between sites and in certain circumstances, particularly where abnormal costs or other circumstances apply, it is possible that there may be viability issues on specific sites. Where it can be proven that affordable housing cannot be achieved, due to economic viability, we are required to be flexible in terms of meeting stated targets. In such exceptional circumstances, it will be the responsibility of the developer to provide substantial and verifiable evidence to demonstrate that the requirements of Policy AFH1 cannot be met. This will need to be tested by means of a rigorous site specific economic viability assessment based on an "open book" approach and used to determine a revised appropriate level of provision.

### Local Plan Objective

To help meet affordable housing needs of the District by securing and delivering a significant proportion of affordable housing from developments with market housing, whilst ensuring the overall viability of the development is not prejudiced and that a mix of tenure is provided that meets the needs of the local area and create balanced communities.

## AFH1 Affordable Housing

New housing developments, including affordable housing, will be expected to provide for a mix of dwelling size, type and tenure that meet the identified housing needs of the local area. New housing developments must make the most effective use of the land, taking into account the character of the local area.

Affordable housing is required at a level of 35% of the number of dwellings on development sites in areas defined on the Proposals Map as Affordable Housing Policy Area [(2)] of 11 dwellings (net) or more, and with a combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000 sqm. Affordable housing is required in all other areas of the District at a level of 35% of the number of dwellings on development sites of 6 dwellings (net) or more.

Where sites are allocated in a Local Plan, above nationally determined thresholds, that document may specify a different, and potentially higher, housing target having regard to the findings of the associated viability assessment and any site specific considerations.

Affordable housing provision should incorporate a mix of tenures. The presumption is for development sites of 49 dwellings (net) or less that around 80% of the total number of affordable homes provided will be for social rented accommodation with the remainder being for intermediate accommodation. For development sites of 50 dwellings (net) or more around 40% of the total number of affordable homes provided will be for social rented accommodation, 40% will be affordable rent and 20% intermediate accommodation.

Where it can be proven that affordable housing requirement cannot be achieved, due to economic viability, there will be flexibility in meeting stated targets. In such exceptional circumstances, the tenure of affordable housing should be examined prior to the proportion of affordable housing. It will be the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate that the requirements of the policy cannot be met. The closest alternative target that can be achieved will be sought taking into account viability and need.

The affordable housing will be distributed within the site to ensure it is integrated and indistinguishable within the new development and surrounds. It will also be comparable in design terms with the market housing on site.

Affordable housing should be delivered on site. However, for developments between 6 and 10-units in designated rural areas (all areas within the District excluding the areas defined on the Proposals Map as Affordable Housing Policy Area) planning obligations will be sought in the form of cash payments which are commuted until after completion of units.

**2.8** Advice on the detailed operation of this policy including the definition and nature of local housing needs to be met, the integration of affordable homes, and the mechanisms for delivery of affordable housing will be set out in a supplementary planning document.

2 The Affordable Housing Policy Area is derived from Section 157(1) of the Housing Act 1985 and The Housing (Right to Acquire or Enfranchise) (Designated Areas in the South East) Order 1997 and The Housing (Right to Enfranchise) (Designated Protected Areas) (England) Order 2009

## 3 Superseded Policies

**3.1** Adopted Core Strategy Local Plan Policy WCS8, and associated text in paragraphs 7.10 to 7.14 is superseded for Wealden District, excluding the part of Wealden District within the South Downs National Park.

# 3 Superseded Policies

## 4 Monitoring

**4.1** A key element of the Local Plan is the delivery of the Policy and Objective. A robust monitoring and implementation framework is required to ensure that envisaged outcomes are achieved. The Council has produced a Monitoring and Implementation Framework for the adopted Core Strategy. The review of the Core Strategy Policy WCS8 requires an update of the Monitoring and Implementation Framework with regards to affordable housing provision. This is also linked to the Sustainability Appraisal Objective 1 [3], which also requires a monitoring framework. The monitoring will be incorporated into the Annual Monitoring Report, and will identify if the policy is working, and if not why not.

**Table 1 Monitoring Framework**

| Name | Description | Target |
|---|---|---|
| Strategic Affordable Housing target | Affordable housing completions as a percentage of all completions | 35% |
| Affordable housing target | Number of developments in the rural designated area with a net gain of 6 or more dwellings, achieving 35% affordable housing; or<br><br>Number of developments in the Affordable Housing Policy Area with a net gain of 11 dwellings or more, and a combined gross floorspace of more than 1000 sqm achieving 35% affordable housing. | 75% |
| Tenure | Proportion of tenure as a percentage of all completions | No target |

**4.2** Action will be required if targets are not achieved. The action requirements for the affordable housing targets are identified in Table 2.

**Table 2 Monitoring Actions**

| Issue | Action |
|---|---|
| Affordable housing completions as a percentage of all completions is less than 35% | Review data if target is consistently not met over two year consecutive period to find issues and seek to resolve. If not able to be resolved/ explained then review policy. |
| Number of developments in the rural designated area with a net gain of 6 | Review policy if target is not met consistently over two year consecutive period. |

3 Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

| Issue | Action |
|---|---|
| or more dwellings, achieving 35% affordable housing | |
| Number of developments in the Affordable Housing Policy Area with a net gain of 11 dwellings or more, and a combined gross floorspace of more than 1000 sqm achieving 35% affordable housing | Review policy if target is not met consistently over two year consecutive period. |

## 5 Glossary

**Affordable Housing** – Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should:

- meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices; and
- include provisions for the home to be retained for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for any subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

**Affordable Housing Policy Area** - excludes High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as well as the Parishes of Arlington, Berwick, Buxted, Chalvington with Ripe, Chiddingly, Danehill, East Hoathly, Fletching, Framfield, Frant, Hadlow Down, Hartfield, Hellingly, Herstmonceux, Hooe, Horam, Isfield, Laughton, Little Horsted, Long Man, Maresfield, Mayfield, Newick, Ninfield, Pevensey, Rotherfield, Selmeston, Wadhurst, Warbleton, Wartling, Westham, Withyam and specific areas identified on the Proposals Maps in the Parishes of Forest Row, Hailsham, Heathfield and Waldron, Polegate and Willingdon and Jevington[(4)].

**Social rented housing** - Owned by Local Authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the Local Authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

**Affordable rented housing** - Let by Local Authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

**Intermediate affordable housing** - Homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing. The definition does not necessarily exclude homes provided by private sector bodies or provided without grant funding. Where such homes meet the definition above, they may be considered, for planning purposes, as affordable housing. Those homes that do not meet the definition, for example, 'low cost market' housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

(Source: National Planning Policy Framework)

4 Specific areas identified on the Proposals Maps in the Parishes of Forest Row, Hailsham, Heathfield and Waldron, Polegate and Willingdon and Jevington are taken from maps referred to in The Housing (Right to Acquire or Enfranchise) (Designated Areas in the South East) Order 1997 and The Housing (Right to Enfranchise) (Designated Protected Areas) (England) Order 2009

**Background Paper** - A document providing more detailed information, regarding the subject area.

**Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule -** Identifies a levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money can be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the Council, local community and neighbourhoods require. The amount of charge is dependent upon viability of development sites. Provision of affordable housing affects the viability of development sites and therefore has a direct impact upon the charge that can be levied.

**Core Strategy Local Plan**- The Core Strategy Local Plan was adopted in February 2013. It sets out the overall vision for Wealden and how the places within it should develop, strategic objectives based on the key issues to be addressed, a delivery strategy to achieve these objectives, and a monitoring and implementation framework.

**Designated Rural Areas -** Designated areas includes land which falls within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as well as the Parishes of Arlington, Berwick, Buxted, Chalvington with Ripe, Chiddingly, Danehill, East Hoathly, Fletching, Framfield, Frant, Hadlow Down, Hartfield, Hellingly, Herstmonceux, Hooe, Horam, Isfield, Laughton, Little Horsted, Long Man, Maresfield, Mayfield, Newick, Ninfield, Pevensey, Rotherfield, Selmeston, Wadhurst, Warbleton, Wartling, Westham, Withyam and specific areas excluded from the Proposals Maps in the Parishes of Forest Row, Hailsham, Heathfield and Waldron, Polegate and Willingdon and Jevington[(5)].

**Development Plan** - As set out in section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, an areas development plan consists of Development Plan Documents contained within the Local Plan. The documents set out policies for the use and development of land. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless there are good reasons not to.

**Development Plan Documents (DPDs)** – Statutory planning documents, produced by the planning authority, that form part of the Local Plan. They contain spatial planning policies and strategies that will guide development in conjunction national policy. The documents include the Core Strategy, Site Allocations Document and, where needed, Area Action Plans. There will also be an adopted Proposals Map which illustrates the spatial extent of policies. The documents are subject to rigorous procedures and an independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate.

**Development Site -** The land identified as necessary to provide for development, which may include infrastructure incidental to the development. For the purposes of the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan development will include the provision of dwellings, but may also include a mix of other types of development as defined under Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.

5 Specific areas excluded from the Proposals Maps in the Parishes of Forest Row, Hailsham, Heathfield and Waldron, Polegate and Willingdon and Jevington are taken from maps referred to in The Housing (Right to Acquire or Enfranchise) (Designated Areas in the South East) Order 1997 and The Housing (Right to Enfranchise) (Designated Protected Areas) (England) Order 2009

**Hectares -** A unit of measurement for an area. Usually used for site areas.

**Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)** – A formal document setting out what physical, social and green infrastructure is required to support and enable the development proposed in the Local Plan.

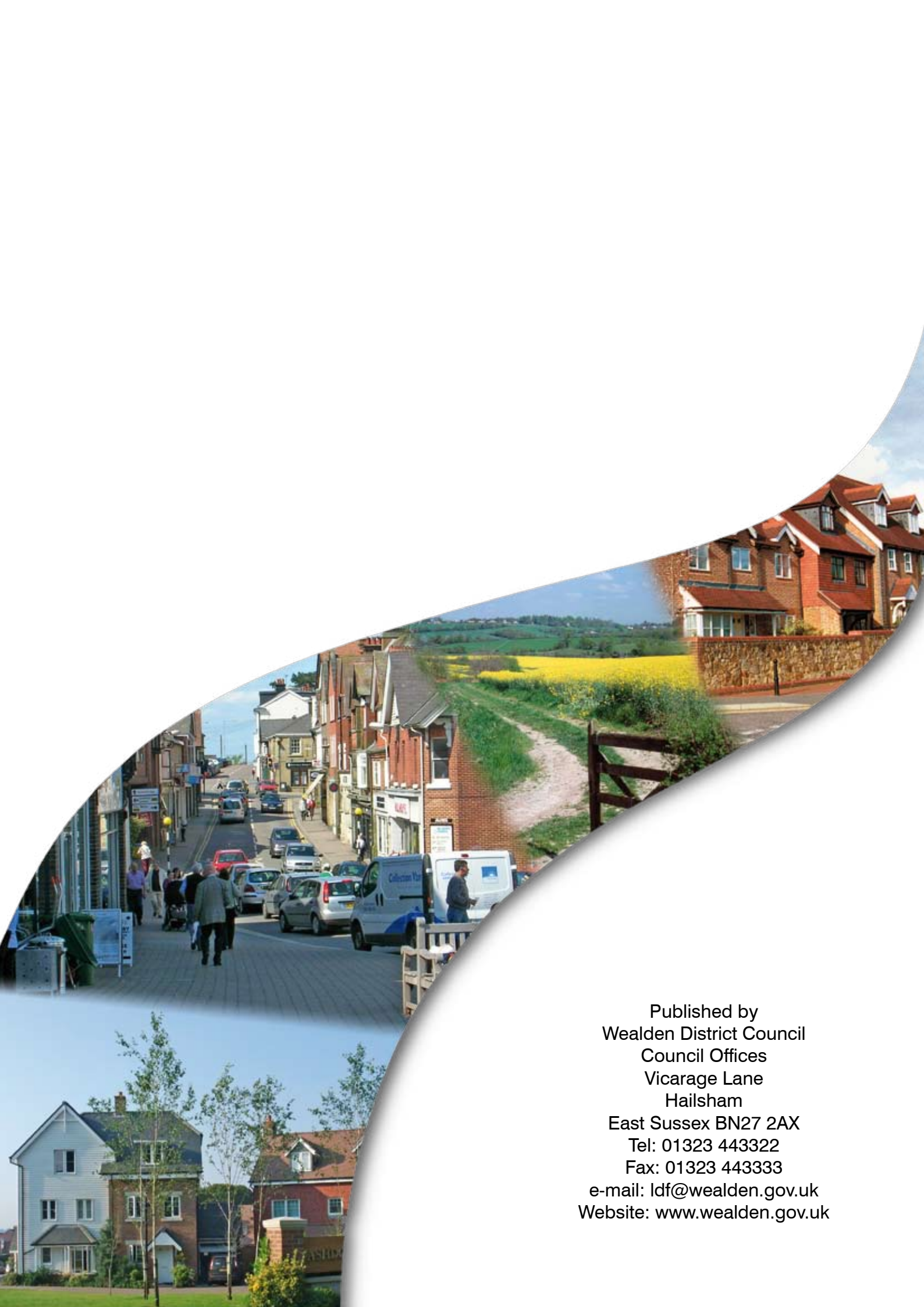
**Local Plan (LP)** – The collective name given to all policies and documents that will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the local authority area. These include the Development Plan Documents.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** – The National Planning Policy Framework published in 2012 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable Councils can produce their own distinctive Local and Neighbourhood Development Plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

**Sustainability Appraisal Report**– A report which incorporates requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. The Report identifies scope and objectives of the Local Plan and assesses reasonable alternatives to the Plan against agreed Sustainability Appraisal Objectives.

**Sustainability Appraisal Objectives** - Objectives agreed by the Council, in consultation with prescribed bodies, contained within Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

# 5 Glossary



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