

Wealden Local Plan

Index of Saved Policies

Annex 3

Wealden Local Plan

INDEX OF SAVED POLICIES

General Development Principles

GD1	Development within development boundaries
GD2	Development within development boundaries

Environment

EN1	Sustainable Development
EN2	Development Pattern
EN5	Water Resources
EN6	Landscape Conservation of the High Weald AONB
EN7	Ashdown Forest
EN8	Low Weald
EN9	Sussex Downs AONB
EN11	Coastal Levels
EN12	Protection of trees and woodlands
EN13	Ancient semi-natural woodland
EN14	Landscaping within developments
EN15	Designated nature conservation sites
EN18	Protection of open areas within settlements
EN19	Development within Conservation Areas
EN27	Layout and Design of development
EN28	Design of development for people with disabilities
EN29	Light pollution

Development in the Countryside

DC2	Agricultural dwellings
DC3	Agricultural buildings
DC6	Conversion of rural buildings - general
DC7	Conversion of rural buildings - non-residential use
DC8	Conversion of rural buildings - residential use
DC9	Recreational development in the Sussex Downs AONB & Ashdown Forest
DC11	Golf driving ranges
DC12	Stables and loose boxes
DC13	Larger equestrian developments
DC14	Motor and gun sports
DC17	Housing development in the countryside
DC18	Replacement dwellings
DC19	Extensions to dwellings
DC20	Subdivision of large dwellings
DC22	Residential mobile homes

Housing

HG5	Dwelling mix within new development schemes
HG6	Crime prevention in new housing developments
HG7	Energy consideration in new housing developments
HG8	Retention of existing housing stock
HG9	Subdivision of large buildings in development boundaries
HG10	Extensions to dwellings in development boundaries
HG11	Special needs housing in development boundaries
HG12	Special needs housing outside development boundaries

Business

BS3	Town Business Areas
BS4	Business development within towns
BS5	Retention of existing businesses within towns
BS6	Village business areas
BS7	Retention of existing businesses within villages
BS8	Business development in village development boundaries
BS9	Expansion, redevelopment, intensification in existing business sites outside development boundaries
BS10	Business allocation: Maresfield Business Park
BS11	Business Class B1 use, with business areas
BS12	General industry, Class B2, in business areas
BS13	Warehousing, Class B8, in business areas
BS14	Alternative uses for business sites outside business area
BS15	Home working

Shopping

SH2	Main Shopping Areas
SH3	Service uses within main shopping areas
SH4	Amusement centres in main shopping areas
SH5	Business uses in main shopping areas
SH6	Residential uses in main shopping areas
SH11	Farm shops
SH12	Garden Centres

Transport

TR1	Environmental impact of new road proposals
TR2	Design of new road proposals
TR3	Traffic impact of new development
TR10	Heavy goods vehicles in rural areas
TR13	Footpaths and bridleways
TR16	Car Parking Standards
TR17	Safeguarding Uckfield/Lewes railway line
TR18	Safeguarding Polegate-Pevensey railway line
TR19	Safeguarding Eridge-Tunbridge Wells railway line

Tourism

TM1	Tourist attractions and facilities
TM2	Tourist attractions and facilities: Sussex Downs AONB & Ashdown Forest
TM3	Conversions to hostel accommodation for walkers and cyclists
TM4	Holiday villages and chalet parks
TM5	Static Caravan sites
TM6	Touring caravan and camping sites: Ashdown Forest
TM7	Touring caravan and camping sites: Sussex Downs AONB and coastal levels
TM8	Touring caravan and camping sites
TM9	Caravan Storage
TM10	Interpretive facilities

Leisure and Recreation

LR1	Provision of outdoor playing space
LR2	Protection of existing recreational open space
LR3	Children's play space in developments of 30+ dwellings
LR4	Artificial turf pitches
LR5	Informal amenity space in new residential developments
LR7	Indoor sports facilities
LR8	Community halls

Community Services

CS1	Provision of capital works and services
CS2	Drainage
CS3	Willingdon Levels drainage catchment area
CS4	Recycling enclosures: residential development
CS5	Recycling enclosures: commercial and community development

Crowborough

CR1	Business allocation north of Millbrook Business Area
CR2	Crowborough Warren housing policy area
CR4	Western Road Goods area
CR5	Secondary shopping area
CR6	Beacon Road and Park Road business areas: proposals for business use
CR7	Beacon Road and Park Road business areas: proposals for shops and services
CR8	Mead House site, Beacon Road
CR9	Jarvis Brook neighbourhood centre
CR10	Whitehill Road
CR11	Public open space allocation: Goldsmith recreation ground
CR12	Crowborough Ghyll and Palesgate landscape policy area

Hailsham

HA1	Housing Development in Hailsham
HA5	Business allocation land off Station Road / Old Swan Lane
HA6	New Shopping facilities outside main shopping areas

HA7	Commercial Uses outside main shopping area
HA8	Traffic calming and pedestrian priority measures
HA9	Junction improvement: South Road/Station Road/Western Road
HA11	New primary school: Ingrams Farm

Heathfield

HE1	Housing Development in Heathfield
HE2	Business Allocation: Land of Ghyll Road
HE3	Burwash Road Commercial Area

Polegate and Willingdon

PW1	Housing development in Polegate
PW5	Willingdon Levels recreation policy area

Uckfield

UC1	Housing development in Uckfield
UC2	Secondary shopping areas
UC3	Office/residential conversions between Framfield Road and New Place
UC5	Framfield Road
UC7	Public open space allocations: land south of Victoria Pleasure Ground and north of the Mount
UC8	Riverside Walk

Villages with Development Boundaries

VB5.2	Pound Green housing area, Buxted
VB7	Old Willingdon Road and Western Downlands housing policy area, Friston
VB8	Business allocation: NE of South Street Business area, East Hoathly
VB12.1	Park Road housing area, Forest Row
VB14	Florance Lane, Groombridge housing policy area
VB22.1	Lower Dicker traffic on A22
VB22.2	Business allocation: land adjacent Hackhurst Lane business area, Lower Dicker
VB23	Public open space allocation: Lower Horsebridge
VB24	Maresfield Park housing area, Maresfield
VB26	The Warren, Station Road, Knowle Park Road housing policy areas, Mayfield
VB31	Coast Road housing policy area
VB37	Mayfield Lane housing policy area

Hellingly Hospital

HH1	Hellingly Hospital
-----	--------------------

Introduction

1.1 The Wealden Local Plan has been prepared by Wealden District Council to guide development across the whole administrative District, as shown in Figure 1, into the next century.

1.2 In setting out policies and proposals for the development and use of land, the Plan looks to:-

- (1) bring local planning issues before the public;
- (2) develop the overall policy framework of the East Sussex County Structure Plan;
- (3) provide a detailed framework for the control of development in the District;
- (4) provide a basis for co-ordinating public and private development and for investment decisions.

1.3 Proposals for development will be subject to all the relevant policies in the Plan.

The Context for the Plan

1.4 The Plan has been prepared in the context of Government guidance, regional guidance, the 1991 East Sussex County Structure Plan and the Structure Plan Review, and public consultations during preparation of the Plan.

1.5 The preparation of a District-wide Local Plan is a requirement of the Planning and Compensation Act 1991. The Government has underlined the important role of the 'development plan' (Structure Plans and Local Plans) by requiring development control decisions to accord with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

The Plan Period

1.6 The Local Plan looks ahead ten years from its base date of April 1994 to the year 2004. This date is several years beyond the approved Structure Plan period to 2001. However the East Sussex County Council is reviewing its Structure Plan policies looking ahead to the year 2011. The matter is considered further in Chapter 2.

Format of the Plan

1.7 The Local Plan consists of a Written Statement and a Proposals Map.

Written Statement

1.8 The Written Statement (this document) includes the Council's policies and proposals together with a reasoned justification and explanation for their inclusion. The policies and proposals are distinguished by being in **bold type** and have a reference number.

Proposals Map

1.9 The Proposals Map illustrates each of the detailed policies and proposals in the Written Statement in a precise manner on an Ordnance Survey base. Sites are allocated for particular developments or land uses and areas are defined within which particular policies will apply for controlling development. The reference numbers are used to relate areas on the Map to the written policies and proposals.

1.10 The Proposals Map is at a scale of 1:50,000, and in order to show certain areas more clearly a number of Inset Maps have been prepared at a larger scale. Where Insets are used their boundaries are clearly shown on the Proposals Map.

1.11 The Proposals Map and the Inset Maps for Crowborough, East Dean and Friston, Forest Row, Hailsham, Heathfield, Old Heathfield and Cade Street, Maresfield, Mayfield, Nutley, Pevensey Bay, Polegate, Uckfield, Wadhurst and Willingdon are found in a pocket at the end of this document. All other Insets are bound within the document.

Existing Local Plans

1.12 The Wealden Local Plan supersedes the following Local Plans:

South Wealden Local Plan (adopted 1992)

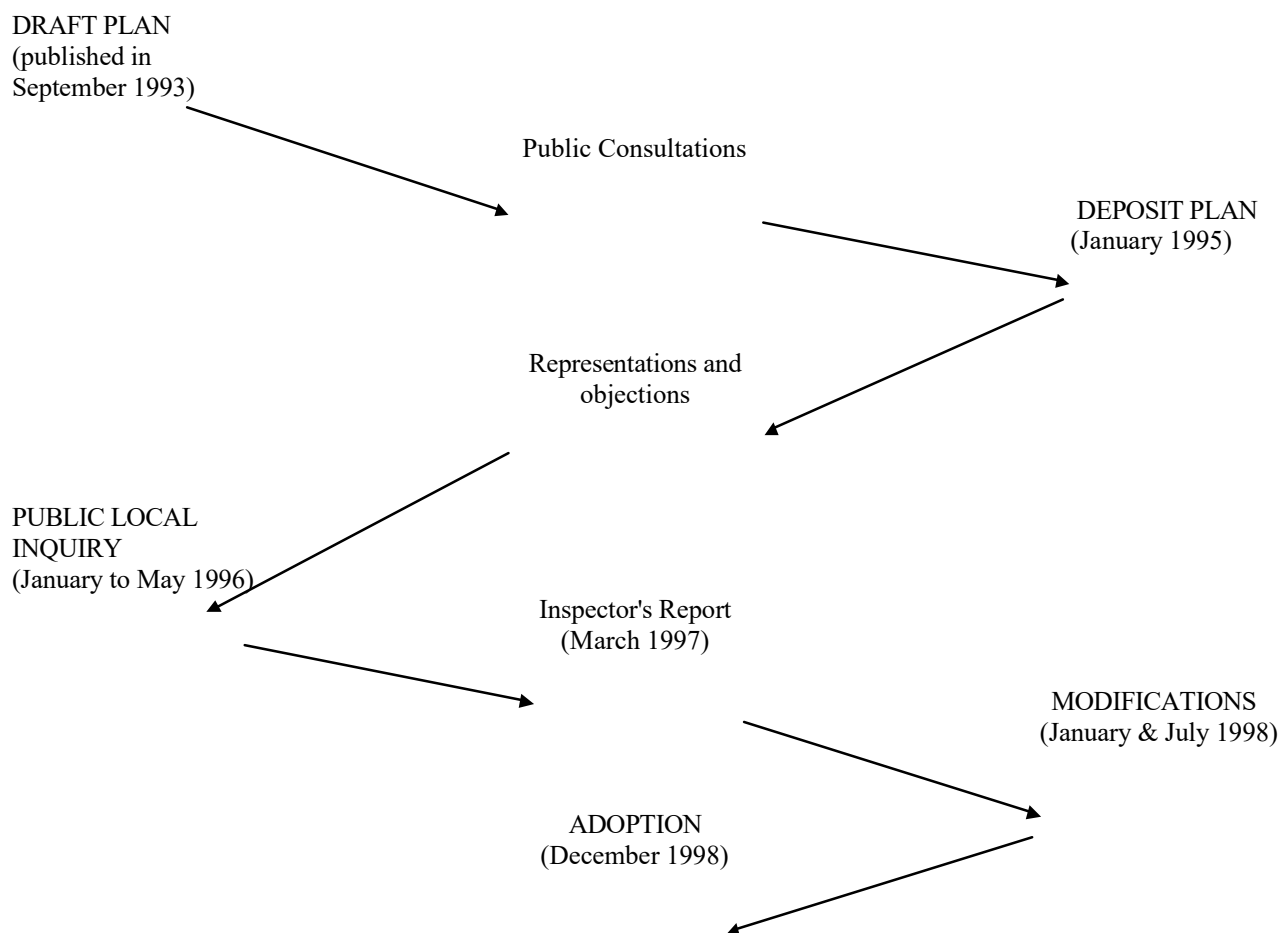
Uckfield Local Plan (adopted 1988)

Crowborough District Plan (adopted 1982)

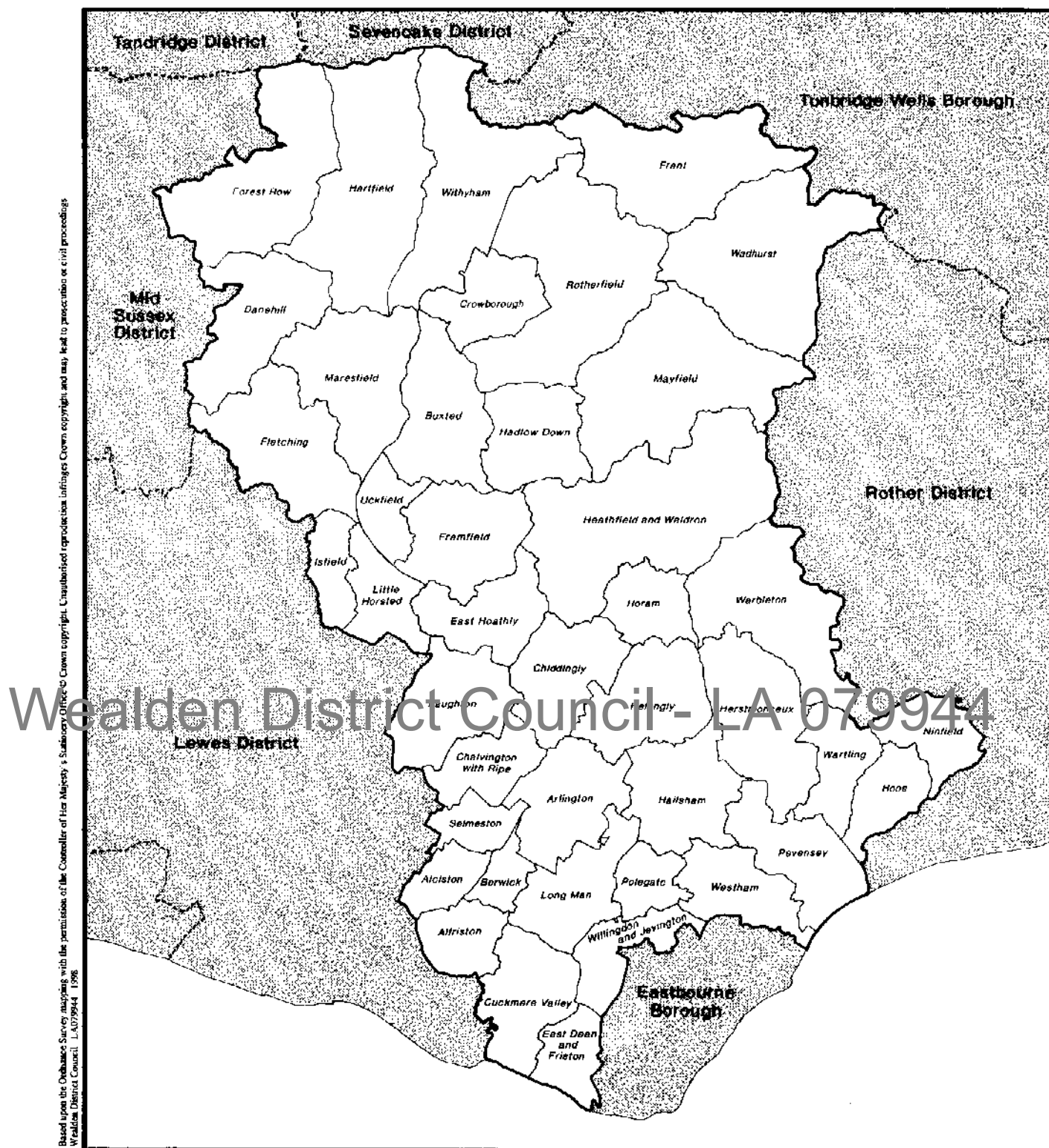
North Wealden Local Plan (deposit 1990).

1.13 The chart below illustrates the key stages of the preparation of the Plan.

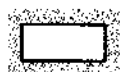
Stages of Preparation



Plan Area



KEY



Wealden Local Plan area and Parishes



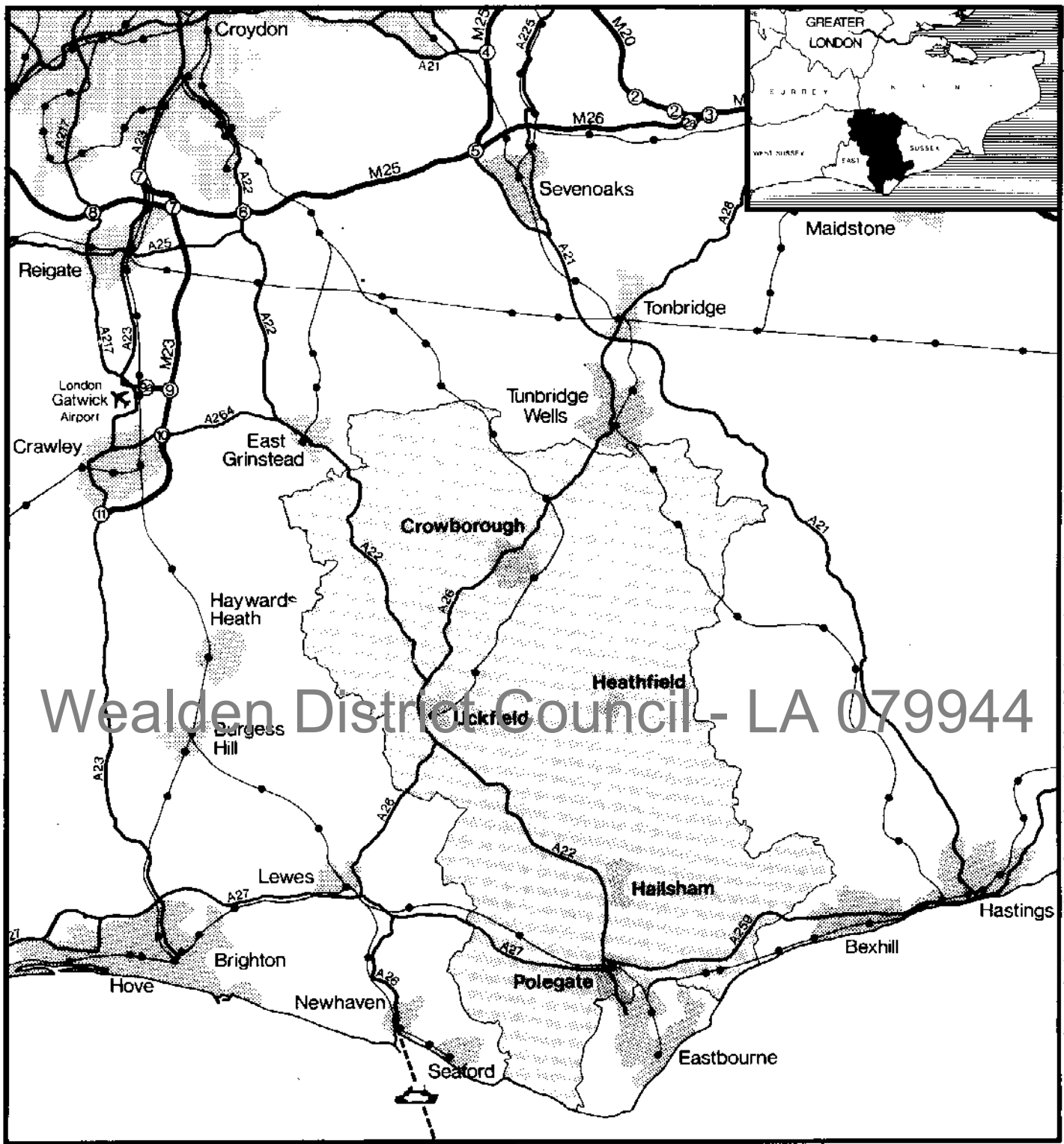
Figure 1

This plan is for illustrative purposes only, and does not form part of the Proposals Map.

0 5 10 kilometres

Not to scale

Location Plan

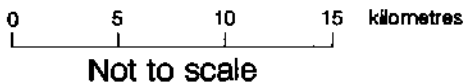


KEY
 Wealden District



Figure 2

This plan is for illustrative purposes only, and does not form part of the Proposals Map.



Strategy

Introduction

2.1 The Local Plan puts forward planning proposals and policies which seek to provide for a diverse range of environmental, economic and social interests. These can range, for example, from new industrial development in a town to help the local economy to the protection of habitat for wildlife in the countryside. The Plan's policies must strike a balance between these different and sometimes conflicting interests.

2.2 It is therefore important that the Plan puts forward a clear strategy with its main aims, objectives and targets. They will help to identify priorities and focus the Plan on the main land use issues concerning development. The aims and objectives are not part of the Plan's policies but form the basis for their preparation. The policies and proposals of the Plan seek to achieve its objectives.

2.3 The aims and objectives will also provide a basis for monitoring whether the Plan is achieving what it sets out to do. Monitoring and review will show whether policies need to be strengthened, maintained or changed. The key areas to be monitored are stated at the end of the relevant chapters.

2.4 This chapter looks at the issues, the strategy and its aims while the more specific objectives or targets are put forward in the respective topic, town and village chapters.

2.5 Before turning to the issues that the Plan addresses and the resultant strategy, it is appropriate to look briefly at the context set by national, regional and Structure Plan policies and consultations on the Plan.

Government Guidance

2.6 The Plan is being prepared in the context of Government guidance, principally through the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs). These provide national guidance on a wide range of matters including housing, industry and commerce, the rural economy, the countryside, wildlife, other environmental issues, sport and recreation, tourism and coastal planning. PPG12 provides the specific guidance on the format and content of Structure and Local Plans.

Regional Planning Guidance

2.7 Advice on regional planning is given to the Secretary of State for the Environment by the London

and South East Regional Planning Conference (SERPLAN). The Secretary of State endorses such guidance through the publication of Regional Planning Guidance.

2.8 The Department of the Environment published Regional Planning Guidance for the South East in March 1994. The guidance embodies three objectives: enhanced economic performance; sustainable development and environmental improvement; opportunity and choice. The guidance seeks to achieve an appropriate balance between these objectives.

2.9 It also emphasises the vital role of South East England in the development of the United Kingdom economy. It contains guidance reflecting the principles set out in the Environment White Paper 'This Common Inheritance' of September 1990 and 'Sustainable Development : the UK Strategy' published in January 1994. In particular, it develops the scope for coordinating land use and transport planning policies to meet environmental objectives and is concerned with protecting the quality of the environment both in urban and rural areas. It also continues the approach underpinning previous regional guidance on the balance for development between the west and the east of the region.

East Sussex County Structure Plan

2.10 Structure Plans are prepared by County Councils to provide an overall strategic framework for development within which Local Plans are prepared.

2.11 The East Sussex County Structure Plan 1991 was approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment in 1991. The current Structure Plan policies are for the period to 2001, but the County Council has embarked on a Review of the Plan looking ahead to 2011.

2.12 The Local Plan has been prepared so as to generally conform with the approved 1991 County Structure Plan and the Deposit Draft Replacement Structure Plan November 1996 for the period up to the year 2004.

1991 County Structure Plan

2.13 The approved Structure Plan recognises that the demand for housing from people wishing to move into East Sussex is greater than the County can accommodate within acceptable environmental limits. The strategy considers that the key factor in

determining future population levels and house building should be the availability of jobs.

2.14 The Structure Plan strategy is therefore one of striking a sustainable balance between the demands for housing, a reasonable expectation of the number of jobs and the protection of the environment. It looks to a package of measures to develop the County's economy and increase jobs, together with an amount of housebuilding equivalent to that experienced in the last fifteen years. More attention is paid to the housing and employment needs of local people.

2.15 The approach to transport aims to balance the requirements of transport users and the need for economic revitalisation with the protection and improvement of the environment. Improvements to strategic road and rail routes are sought together with measures in other areas to improve the environment.

2.16 The quality of the environment has long been recognised as a major asset of East Sussex which is worth protecting and enhancing for its own sake, as well as for its benefits as a leisure and tourism resource. An integral part of the strategy is a concern for the quality of the environment, both through conservation of the existing features and character and through the requirement for new development to respect these qualities and be of a high standard.

Deposit Draft Replacement Structure Plan 1996

2.17 The Deposit Draft Replacement Structure Plan continues the above mentioned strategy but looks ahead to the year 2011 with particular emphasis on an environmentally sustainable future and the improvement of the local economy.

2.18 In terms of housing provision, the Deposit Draft states that existing commitments across the County should meet the Regional Guidance figures up to the year 2006. Beyond that date the County Council considers further land will be required to meet the suggested guidance figures. The Council believes it can accommodate the proposed District housing provision required to the year 2006, some 6600 dwellings from 1991 to 2006. This is explained in Chapter 6.

2.19 However, the situation in housing and employment terms is less certain up to the year 2011. The County Council decided to hold an Examination in Public to hear objections and other representations that have been received on the policies and proposals in the Deposit Draft Replacement Structure Plan. This took place in Spring 1998, but it is unlikely that the Structure Plan will be finally approved before mid 1999. Consequently the Council has decided, in line

with Government advice, on a ten year plan period up to the year 2004 with a review of the Local Plan policies in the context of the new Structure Plan policies when they are finally approved.

Local Plan Consultations

2.20 During preparation of the Local Plan the Council has had careful regard to the representations it has received. The Draft Wealden Local Plan was published in September 1993 for public comment. Exhibitions and meetings were held in the area to help explain the Plan's policies and proposals. All the representations received, some 1200, were carefully considered and the Council made a number of changes which were incorporated into the Deposit Plan, published in January 1995. The objections and other representations on the policies and proposals in the Deposit Plan were carefully considered by the Council when further changes were made to the Plan prior to the Public Local Inquiry held from January to May 1996. Following the Inquiry and receipt of the Inspector's Report in March 1997, the Council published modifications to the Plan in January and July 1998 for further public comment.

THE PLAN'S STRATEGY

DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

2.21 The major issue for the Plan is the need to strike an appropriate balance between the demand for development for housing, employment, leisure and tourism with the conservation of the environmental quality and character of Wealden's countryside, towns and villages.

2.22 The quality of the natural and built environment that we enjoy should not be denied to future generations by allowing harmful development. The existing qualities should be sustained and enhanced where possible. Consideration must also be given to wider environmental concerns such as global warming, the consumption of non-renewable resources and energy conservation.

2.23 The Government's White Paper - 'This Common Inheritance' - looks to Local Planning Authorities to draw up plans taking environmental considerations comprehensively and consistently into account. At the same time, the development plans should make adequate provision for development and growth for homes, employment, and associated facilities such as schools and community facilities.

2.24 Conservation and development should not be seen as necessarily in conflict. Policies for land use should

weigh and reconcile priorities in the public interest. The development plan (Structure and Local Plans) has an essential role to play in achieving the appropriate balance by providing guidance and a framework for decisions rather than allowing arbitrary change.

AIM 1 *To strike an appropriate balance between the demand for development and the conservation of the environmental quality and character of the District.*

AIM 2 *To pursue sustainable development, having regard to the principles contained in Government guidance and the Council's own Environmental Strategies.*

QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

2.25 The conservation and enhancement of the built and natural environment in the District will form a key part of the Plan's strategy. The Council wish to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment in which people live, work and spend their leisure time as well as creating an accessible environment for all persons including those with disabilities and special access requirements. Caring for the environment relates not only to the physical environment including countryside, towns and villages, but also to nature conservation, energy conservation and pollution, which have become increasingly important issues in recent years.

2.26 The Council will seek to ensure that the effects on the environment of any proposed development are acceptable and, where appropriate, that new development contributes to environmental improvements.

2.27 With regard to the built environment, there has been understandable public concern over 'town cramming' and inappropriate development. It is recognised that there is a wide diversity of character in the towns and villages that should be conserved and enhanced. It is clearly important to ensure that new development respects and harmonises with this established character and is in sympathy with its surroundings. Equally, the open spaces and gaps which contribute to this character should be maintained.

2.28 Turning to the rural environment, the Council believes it is essential to continue to restrain development that is not justified in the countryside, seeking to protect its high quality character, much of which is nationally recognised as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Some small scale development will be justified in terms of agricultural diversification, the local economy, tourism and leisure activities as discussed later. However, any such development should be of an appropriate high standard

respecting the existing qualities of the rural environment.

2.29 Positive measures for landscape enhancement and management designed to improve the environmental quality and character should be sought, particularly with appropriate development proposals.

2.30 The District has a rich heritage of buildings listed as being of architectural or historic value, together with historic parks and areas of archaeological importance. It also has a number of important ecological areas. Assets such as these should be conserved and protected against harmful development.

AIM 3 *To maintain and enhance the quality of the environment, for all persons, seeking an appropriate high standard of development and positive measures for environmental improvements.*

AIM 4 *To place increased value on the need for new development to respect and harmonise with the character of existing development and the surrounding landscape.*

THE LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

2.31 Structure and Local Plan policies have sought to maintain the existing settlement pattern in the District by giving priority to locating development in the towns, generally restricting development in the rural areas, including the villages, and giving added protection to the designated areas of countryside significance and other vulnerable areas.

2.32 No fundamental reason can be seen to depart from the strategy of protecting the countryside from inappropriate development and maintaining the physical separation of countryside, towns and villages. The Plan will, through the use of 'development boundaries' as explained in Chapter 3, define where town and village policies end and countryside or rural policies apply.

2.33 The continuation of the settlement pattern will assist in the aim of energy conservation and the need to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases by minimising the amount of travel by car compared with a policy for a more dispersed or scattered form of development.

AIM 5 *To maintain the existing settlement pattern in the District, generally restricting development in the rural area.*

LOCAL ECONOMY

2.34 The Council is keen to promote a healthy local economy which in turn contributes to the general well-being of the District. However, important as this aim is, it must not be at the expense of the environmental quality of the District.

2.35 There is likely to be a growth in Wealden's workforce of some 4,000 persons by 2004. Land and premises are allocated and available for business purposes which should accommodate the anticipated growth and provide further local employment opportunities for existing residents.

2.36 However, the issue is more than one of numbers. It is acknowledged there is a need to provide a greater diversity of local job opportunities, particularly in high technology, and to reduce unemployment and commuting. Efforts will continue to be made to provide a range of opportunities from a prestige, high technology business park to equally important small workshops for embryonic firms, often through the conversion of rural buildings.

2.37 Employment development should be well related to centres of population to serve the urban and rural areas. Business development is concentrated in towns and this should continue. Efforts must be made to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centres. However, it is also important to serve the rural area through villages acting as local employment centres and the re-use of rural buildings in appropriate cases. The rural economy is considered later.

2.38 The Plan must also consider the differing employment needs within the District and the strong relationship with adjoining centres such as Tunbridge Wells and Eastbourne, in relation to existing commitments and in relation to Structure Plan policies and improving communications in the south.

2.39 Care must be taken in these efforts not to detract from the quality of the environment, which is a key attraction for those residing, working or looking to invest in the District. A balance must be struck between the employment needs of the area and the protection of the environment. To allow too much employment development would fuel the demand for further housing in the District, to the detriment of the natural and built environment.

AIM 6 *To encourage a prosperous local economy whilst recognising and maintaining the environmental qualities of the area.*

AIM 7 *To ensure an adequate supply of land and premises for business use and promote a range of job opportunities including 'high tech' industries.*

THE RURAL AREA

2.40 Wealden District is predominantly rural, with the small towns and villages providing the bulk of local employment and services for those residing in the District. Concern over the 'rural economy' relates to the changes in the agricultural climate, social changes and the general rise in unemployment in the early 1990's.

2.41 Whilst agriculture remains the dominant use of the countryside, the economy of the rural areas is becoming more diverse as less land and buildings are required for food production. Farmers and landowners, encouraged by Government, seek to diversify their operations to include new land uses and conversions of buildings to compensate for loss of income. If we wish the character and landscape quality of the attractive Wealden countryside to be maintained as we know it, other financial incentives such as the 'set aside scheme' will also be necessary for farmers.

2.42 New technology, communications and cleaner manufacturing processes have enabled a much wider range of businesses to locate in the countryside, primarily through the conversion of farm buildings. While this adds to local job opportunities, it is unlikely to help those leaving the land. The growth of leisure activities and tourism also impose more demands on the countryside and can provide alternative uses of land such as open farms or golf courses. Such demands can be difficult to balance with the main aim of protecting and enhancing the environmental quality of the Wealden landscape.

2.43 Increased personal mobility has enabled people to live in the countryside (including the villages) and to work in the towns. Equally, those living in towns are able to drive to new businesses in the countryside. The lack of 'affordable housing', public transport and other facilities compounds the view of a more affluent society living in the rural area. The Plan must look to policies to help the rural economy and to sustain and improve local employment opportunities and services.

AIM 8 *To assist the rural community through the promotion of new employment opportunities and the maintenance and improvement of local services in the rural areas.*

HOUSING

2.44 During the 1980's the Council had to make provision for a considerable increase in the supply of land for housing in order to meet the Structure Plan requirements as approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment. The land was allocated primarily in the towns and at Stone Cross. The total number of dwellings has been magnified by previously unidentified or 'windfall' sites coming forward. There

was, in April 1997, a commitment for some 1,640 dwellings in the District over the Plan period.

2.45 The Council has to maintain an adequate supply of housing land in accordance with the 1991 County Structure Plan requirement of some 8,500 dwellings in the period 1986 - 2001. In fact, the current high housing commitment together with housing completions since 1986 already meets and exceeds this figure to the extent that the emerging requirement in the 1996 Deposit Draft Replacement Structure Plan for some 6,600 dwellings up to 2006 should also be met. It is clear that, in numerical terms, no new major allocations of housing land are required in Wealden within the plan period.

2.46 However, it is recognised that the large housing commitment will need time to be assimilated into the towns and villages both in physical and social terms. Two key issues flow from this statement. Firstly, that the provision of services and community facilities keep pace with the new development - the Council will urge the appropriate authorities to achieve this goal. Secondly, new development should respect and harmonise with the character of the towns and villages and should not result in 'town cramming'.

2.47 The large housing commitment is not, in itself, helping those in real housing need, that is those persons on modest incomes who cannot compete in the private housing market. The provision of 'affordable housing' is also a key issue which the Council is addressing through the use of both housing and planning policy, although the granting of planning permission on 'exceptional sites' is most unlikely to meet all the true need.

AIM 9 *To ensure an adequate and available supply of housing land to meet Government and Structure Plan requirements.*

AIM 10 *To seek and encourage the provision of affordable housing for those in local housing need.*

MOVEMENT

2.48 This Plan is being prepared at a time when, along with increasing car ownership, there is greater public awareness of the environmental issues associated with road traffic, namely congestion, safety, pollution and landscape impact. Government guidance in PPG13 is also very clear that in preparing development plans, local authorities should aim to reduce the need to travel, especially by car.

2.49 Whilst supporting and encouraging planned highway improvements to reduce 'through traffic', help the economy and improve safety, the Council wish to see this increasingly supported by traffic management

measures, including 'traffic calming'. The latter can help create more pleasant and safer living environments by reducing traffic speed, giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists, and reducing pollution levels.

2.50 The Council supports the early implementation of the planned improvements to the A27/A259 South Coast trunk road which will cater for longer distance traffic and help the local economy. In addition, some improvements to the cross country A22 and A26 routes will be appropriate for safety and environmental reasons. The Council recognises the importance of road and rail transport to business.

2.51 Equally, the Council will support the maintenance and enhancement of public transport services, so vital for those without access to cars, particularly in the rural areas. There is increasing concern over the reduction in the Uckfield to London railway service, and the Council will continue to press for improvements such as the electrification of the line.

AIM 11 *To provide a strategy for transport seeking to reduce the need to travel especially by car, whilst encouraging a safe, efficient and environmentally conscious system for the movement of goods and people.*

AIM 12 *To place increased value on environmental considerations in transport planning.*

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

2.52 Considerable public concern has been expressed over the issue as to whether the provision of services and community facilities keeps pace with development. The issue was mentioned above under 'Housing', but it relates to all forms of development.

2.53 The Council will seek to maintain and improve the level and choice of shopping facilities in the District to meet the needs of all sections of the community. Particular attention will be paid to the town and village centres.

2.54 The Council is keen to ensure that all the infrastructure and community facilities required by any development will be provided as part of that development by the appropriate public or private agencies. Infrastructure includes services such as education and health as well as roads, water supply and sewers. Local Plans enable the providers of such services to programme their own investments with more certainty.

2.55 Community facilities include open spaces, playing areas and indoor facilities. The Council will continue its policy of requiring major new developments to

provide for an appropriate level of such facilities in association with that development.

AIM 13 *To ensure that all the works, services and community facilities required by development will be provided at the appropriate time.*

General Development Principles

Introduction

3.1 This Local Plan sets out detailed policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land, and consequently will guide most planning decisions. This chapter highlights basic principles for development which proposals should meet and describes the use of development boundaries as a policy tool.

DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA

3.2 In making decisions on planning applications, the Council will consider the proposed development against the relevant policies and proposals put forward in this Plan. Whilst specific policies and proposals on various developments and land uses are put forward in the relevant chapters, there are a number of common principles for development which it is considered development proposals must meet in order to be acceptable. These are derived from Government guidance (through Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Circulars), from precedent and best practice.

3.3 In this regard the general planning criteria against which development proposals will be considered are contained in the following policies:

- layout and design (Policy EN27)
- landscaping (Policy EN14)
- traffic, access and public transport (Policy TR3)
- car parking (Policy TR16)
- disabled access (Policy EN28)
- surface and foul water drainage (Policy CS2)

DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES

3.4 The Council has adopted the use of 'development boundaries' to make a clear distinction between town or village areas where certain forms of development may be appropriate and the rural area where, normally, the protection and enhancement of the countryside is of paramount importance. Structure Plan policies propose the definition of development boundaries for towns and villages where appropriate.

3.5 Development boundaries define the areas where, in principle, new development would be permitted subject to other proposals and policies in this Plan. New

development will generally be contained within the development boundaries.

3.6 Outside the development boundaries, the Council will resist development in accordance with the Plan's more restrictive countryside policies, seeking to conserve and enhance the rural environment, although certain forms of development may be allowed such as the re-use of rural buildings and land in the interests of the rural economy and low cost housing for local need. New housing, industrial or commercial development will not be allowed outside the development boundaries unless provided for through the specific policies of the Local Plan.

3.7 The Plan's policies therefore are expressed in the terms of either within or outside the development boundaries or Plan wide. References to the 'countryside' or the rural area in this Plan refer to the area outside the development boundaries, which will include the smaller settlements without such a boundary.

3.8 It is important to note that the development boundary is a policy line applying Structure and Local Plan policies to a specific area, thereby giving a sound basis for development control decisions. It does not attempt to define town or village limits in physical or social terms.

3.9 Development boundaries have full regard to the physical and landscape characteristics of the particular settlement. They are only drawn after a careful examination and consideration of such features on the ground. Development boundaries will often exclude existing development on the periphery of the town or village; this represents a clear statement of policy that normally no further development should be permitted in order to preserve the landscape and environmental quality of such fringe areas. It is in these areas that the gaps and open nature of development are often a major contributing feature to the overall rural character of the area.

GD1 Within the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, new development will be permitted provided that it is in accordance with the other policies and proposals in the Plan.

GD2 Outside the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, development will be resisted unless it is in accordance with specific policies in this Plan.

Environment

Introduction

4.1 The environmental qualities of the District, its unspoilt villages and coast, attractive countryside, rich architectural heritage and range of flora and fauna are all highly valued and enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. There is a considerable diversity of environments, ranging from the highly wooded High Weald to the rolling chalk hills of the Sussex Downs, both of which are formally designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and of national landscape importance. Traditional land use patterns and forms of built development add to the distinctiveness of local environments and provide a strong 'sense of place'.

4.2 The planning system is an important instrument for protecting and enhancing the environment in town and country, preserving the built and natural heritage and conserving the rural landscape. Local planning policies which seek to maintain the District's environmental qualities and protect them from inappropriate development are well established. This Chapter addresses how these policies should be carried forward.

4.3 In addition, the Plan must have regard to broader environmental concerns, such as global warming and the consumption of non-renewable resources. This recognises that development may have longer term implications on the wider environment as well as on its immediate physical environment. The Plan therefore seeks to provide a land use planning framework for 'sustainable development'. In fact, the Plan's policies have been evaluated to assess their contribution, or otherwise, to ensuring that future development is environmentally sustainable. This process is summarised below and in a separate 'Environment Appraisal' of the Plan.

STRATEGY

4.4 Care for the environment, both built and natural, lies at the heart of the Plan's strategy, as set out at Chapter 2. While it is necessary to make adequate provision for development and change, this is set firmly in the context of maintaining and enhancing the environmental qualities of the area and according with the principles of sustainability.

4.5 It is important to protect areas of high landscape quality, notably Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, together with other areas recognised for their important historic and nature conservation value. It is also necessary to accommodate change in rural as well as urban areas. The Plan aims to facilitate such change in

a manner that ensures that the existing valued qualities of the natural environment are respected and maintained.

4.6 A high quality of built environment is similarly important. Particular emphasis is placed on historic buildings and areas, as well as historic parks and other important open areas within and between settlements. An accordingly high quality of new development is expected. The character and amenity of existing development should always be respected and, where appropriate, enhanced. In accordance with the Plan's overall strategy, specific environmental objectives are defined; these are:-

(1) to promote appropriate forms of sustainable development taking account of the need for energy efficiency, pollution control and conserving finite resources;

(2) to conserve the important and distinctive landscape, historic, architectural and visual character and appearance of towns, villages and the countryside, including their flora and fauna;

(3) to maintain the development pattern and the character of settlements and their settings, including important open areas between and within them;

(4) to ensure that development and change do not detract from the valued environmental qualities of the locality;

(5) to encourage high quality in new development, in harmony with the environmental character of the area.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4.7 Sustainable development is that which provides for the needs of the future, including improvements to the quality of life, in a way which minimises damage to the global as well as local environment. It has regard to issues such as global warming and ozone depletion, the use of non-renewable resources and the production of pollutants and wastes, as well as change to the physical environment and wildlife habitats.

4.8 The 'Earth Summit' in 1992 agreed a strategy - AGENDA 21 - setting out how countries will work towards the protection of the local, national and global environment. In response, the Government has produced its own 'Sustainable Development: the UK Strategy (1994)' and local authorities are initiating Local Agenda 21 processes to achieve action through

partnership at the local level. The Council has already addressed and reviewed the impact of its services on the broader environment and has brought these together within a published 'Strategy for the Environment'.

4.9 The Government has identified the role local planning authorities can play in achieving more sustainable development in its White Paper: 'This Common Inheritance' and in a number of recent planning policy guidance notes. These look to local plans to promote land use patterns and transport facilities that are resource and energy efficient, in particular which reduce environmentally damaging traffic emissions, promote energy efficient building designs and waste minimisation and provide scope for greater use of renewable energy sources and recycling. Also, policies should not deny future generations the best of today's natural and built environment, including through the protection of important landscapes and habitats, water and air quality.

4.10 These various aspects of sustainability are considered separately below and in other chapters of the Plan. However, it is also appropriate to set down an overall policy which reflects the desire for sustainable development, defined as improving the quality of life within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems, since this is central to the Plan's strategy.

EN1 The Council will pursue sustainable development, having regard to the principles contained in Government guidance and its own Strategy for the Environment, in considering the location, layout and design of development, renewable energy and waste management proposals and in assessing the effects of proposals on the environment, including on water and air quality.

Development pattern and transportation

4.11 Sustainability considerations generally point towards encouraging a distribution of land uses that reduces the need to travel, especially by car, and hence reduces CO² emissions in particular. Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport provides advice as to how transport and land use planning should be integrated, with particular regard to reducing environmentally damaging traffic emissions. It proposes that more emphasis is placed on various means of managing the demand for transport and encouraging alternatives to the car. It recognises that more dispersed development tends to be less efficient in transport terms and that uses such as shopping and business should aim to be near public transport facilities.

4.12 Government guidance therefore promotes development within existing urban areas in locations

highly accessible to means other than the private car, commenting that this is especially important in respect of major generators of travel demand. This approach also emphasises supporting the community, shopping and employment roles of existing local centres in both urban and rural areas. In order to reduce commuting by car and encourage other means of transport, local housing and employment growth should be well related to each other. Also, an unnecessarily strict division of homes and workplaces may be inappropriate while home-working should be facilitated where it would not impact adversely on local amenities.

4.13 Locally, the established development strategy, continued in this Plan, generally accords with this sustainable approach. It seeks to concentrate new development in the towns, with some growth in certain villages and more restrictive policies elsewhere in the countryside. The substantial existing housing commitments in the District reflect this approach, and are considered to enable efficient access to goods and services without unnecessary increase in demand for transport and road space or a degradation of environmental quality. Therefore, any change to the pattern of future development implied by existing commitments would be inappropriate. Furthermore, no major new developments are proposed in the Plan which would significantly change this pattern.

4.14 Nonetheless, all large developments and those which generate large number of traffic movements should be located so as to reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of public transport and rail freighting facilities. It is recognised that within rural areas, development inevitably generates proportionally more car traffic than that in urban areas due to lesser public transport and poor accessibility to many facilities. However, set against this, development in villages may support valuable local services and otherwise help maintain viable communities.

EN2 The Council will seek to maintain the existing settlement pattern and ensure that major new developments generating significant travel movements are located efficiently in relation to existing development and to public transport.

4.15 The Plan's transport policies are contained principally in Chapter 9. These recognise that road improvements which are necessary for economic and quality of life reasons must be sensitive to their landscape and environmental impact; such considerations therefore receive policy attention. Moreover, the Plan is promotional in terms of improvements to the public transport system and to facilities for cyclists and pedestrians, with a number of specific policies and proposals.

Energy

4.16 The environmental implications of the generation and use of fuel for energy consumption are threefold. It involves the use of non-renewable resources, principally fossil fuels, the emission of greenhouse gases and other pollutants and has a physical impact on the landscape. Government stresses the need for plans to promote energy conservation, through encouraging energy efficient modes of travel and forms of building and to consider the potential for renewable energy sources. Accordingly, the Council encourages measures to minimise overall energy consumption in the consideration of the layout, design and construction of buildings.

4.17 The Government's planning policy approach to renewable energy, as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 22: Renewable Energy states that it wishes to stimulate the development and use of renewable energy resources wherever they have prospects of being economically viable and environmentally acceptable. Local authorities are also charged with taking account of local, regional and national requirements in terms of renewable energy exploitation, and must consider the contribution that their area can make in meeting those needs. However, the harnessing of some forms of renewable energy can have adverse local impacts, often of a landscape or ecological nature, by virtue of their locational requirements and physical form.

4.18 A Department of Transport and Industry led study has assessed the potential for renewable energy exploitation in the South-East. The most likely areas of potential relate to power from wood and crop residues, reflecting the high level of agricultural activity and woodland/forestry cover, solar power, although with small scale application, and wind power. In relation to wind power, while the area does not have the wind speeds of the west of the country, locally, winds are greatest on the high ground of the South Downs and the ridges of the High Weald. However, these areas are also environmentally most sensitive and development should not compromise their unique landscape character, as recognised by their national designation as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The stark landform of the Sussex Downs in the District would be especially vulnerable to the effect of wind farms. Consideration may be given to the possibility of siting off the coast.

EN3 The Council will support the development of renewable forms of energy, particularly those which reflect the existing land use pattern of the area, where it is demonstrated that there will be an acceptable impact on local amenities and environmental character.

Waste Management and Recycling

4.19 Waste Management is increasingly being regarded in sustainability terms. Government policy is to place more emphasis on, respectively, waste reduction, reuse and recovery, including recycling, as well as on generating energy from waste disposal, either by solid waste combustion or harnessing landfill gases. East Sussex County Council is the Waste Planning Authority and Waste Disposal Authority. The Environment Agency is the Waste Regulation Authority. The County Council has prepared the non-statutory East Sussex Waste Strategy jointly with Brighton and Hove Council, which provide the overall policies to enable the County Council to carry out its various responsibilities for dealing with waste, in partnership with others, and to prepare the more detailed plans for waste required by law.

4.20 The Waste Strategy proposes a more sustainable approach to waste management based upon a hierarchy of options in an integrated approach in which the order of preference will normally be reduction or minimisation of waste, reuse of products and materials, recovery of resources by recycling, composting and energy recovery, with disposal of remaining waste to landfill as a last resort. Borough and District Councils have sole responsibility for collecting the County's household waste and are responsible for the majority of household waste and recycling. In this Plan, the policy commitment to pursuing sustainable development in considering waste management proposals relates primarily to the District Council's own responsibilities for the provision of recycling facilities in line with its Recycling Plan. Waste management and disposal is discussed further in Chapter 12.

Pollution control

4.21 There is extensive pollution control legislation administered by a number of organisations including the District Council. PPG23 Planning and Pollution Control advises that local planning authorities should not duplicate controls which are the statutory function of these other bodies. However, it also advises that planning decisions should take account of potential pollution in considering land use proposals. To ensure effective environmental protection and co-ordination, pollution control authorities are consulted on relevant individual applications.

Water resources

4.22 Planning decisions should have regard to water resources in several ways. They need to consider the availability of supplies to meet development requirements, the impact of climatic change on water levels and, hence on the location of development, as well as the need to conserve valuable water resources and environments. The provision of any new strategic water resources should be compatible with

environmental policies and take account of the potential for water conservation measures.

4.23 There are general concerns about the long term effects of global warming on coastal defences and the associated risk of flood inundation into low-lying areas. Locally, part of the Coastal Levels inland of Pevensey Bay is identified by the Environment Agency as vulnerable to deep tidal flooding. There are proposals for enhanced sea defences, as discussed in the Pevensey Bay Chapter; until such works are carried out, it is prudent to restrict further development in areas at risk. Similar considerations apply to land close to eroding cliffs and to development that would prejudice river floodplains. Information on the extent of river floodplains and areas at risk of tidal flooding is provided by the Environment Agency.

EN4 New development will be resisted within areas at risk of deep tidal flooding, coastal erosion or within river floodplains.

4.24 Regard is given to overall water supply in Chapter 12. It is particularly important when considering new development to ensure that adequate water supplies are available and that such resources, whether in watercourses, aquifers or other water storage areas, are not likely to be unacceptably prejudiced. The Environment Agency's advice will be sought in appropriate circumstances.

EN5 New development will only be permitted where adequate water resources are available and where it would not present an unacceptable risk to such resources.

LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION

4.25 Landscape quality makes a particularly important contribution to the essentially rural character of the District. It derives, in part, from its geology, being based largely on the ancient anticline of the Weald. The High Weald is characterised by an intricate network of well-wooded ridges and valleys, giving way to the more open and gently undulating Low Weald. This, in turn, ends abruptly in the scarp slope of the imposing Sussex Downs, which culminate in the dramatic cliffs of the Seven Sisters and Beachy Head. To the east of Eastbourne, the flat, low-lying expanse of the Coastal Levels provides a further contrast of distinct landscape type.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

4.26 Both the High Weald and the Sussex Downs are designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty by the Countryside Commission. Their extent in Wealden is shown on the Proposals Map. Alongside National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty represent the finest countryside in England and Wales. The primary purpose of designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Area. Government guidance recognises that the siting of major development in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty would normally be inconsistent with the aims of designation, and that only proven national interest and lack of alternative sites can justify an exception. Account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and the economic and social needs of local communities. Provision is accordingly made for appropriate small scale development by the respective policies of the Plan. Unlike National Parks, promoting recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses. In order to secure this part of our landscape heritage, development should be carefully controlled.

4.27 As a statutory designation, it is not open to the Council to amend Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundaries, even though apparent anomalies, perhaps because of subsequent development, exist. The Countryside Commission has indicated that there is no early review of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundaries planned and incremental amendments are not favoured. However, these anomalies are taken into account in the exercise of development control.

Other Important Landscapes

4.28 Certain landscapes are acknowledged as valuable by non-statutory designations. The undeveloped coastal area between Beachy Head and Seaford Head is designated as 'Sussex Heritage Coast' for its scenic importance. Ashdown Forest has a special status, being the subject of a specific Act of Parliament to protect and manage its environmental character.

4.29 Woodland prevails over a significant area of the District. 'Ancient woodlands' which have existed since 1600, are identified by English Nature as being of particular ecological importance as well as historic landscape value. Agricultural land is the other dominant land use; indeed, the pattern and nature of farming has been and continues to be a major influence on the appearance and character of the countryside. Certain traditionally farmed areas which are of landscape, historic and wildlife value and are also sensitive to pressures of agricultural change have been designated Environmentally Sensitive Areas by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, including a large part of the Sussex Downs.

4.30 Generally, while Government guidance, notably Planning Policy Guidance Note 7, places less emphasis on the productive capacity of land, it still attaches considerable weight to safeguarding the best and most versatile land and, moreover, recognises that the countryside should be safeguarded for its own sake. The pattern of agriculture, together with woodland, is integral to this character. Hence, they should remain the dominant land uses in the countryside. Also of particular significance in the countryside are those areas which, through their relative remoteness from main urban centres and principal lines of communication, have remained relatively unspoilt and retain a traditional pattern of activities.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

4.31 As indicated earlier, there are considered to be four basic landscape types across the District - High Weald, Low Weald, Sussex Downs and Coastal Levels. These are illustrated on Figure 3. Their respective principal landscape characteristics are highlighted in turn below. They provide the background for general planning policies and management approaches for each area, as well as a context for the consideration of particular types of development. Policies for specific forms of development in the countryside are considered separately in Chapter 5. Development within settlements is considered in the respective town or village chapter.

4.32 It is considered that the fundamental identification of landscape characteristics should not seek to distinguish between urban and rural areas because of the continuity of landscape and the interaction between the two. It is acknowledged that variations exist within the principal landscape areas. This is most evident in respect of Ashdown Forest which because of its particular landscape characteristics creates a distinctive sub-area within the High Weald. Also, it is recognised that most landscape areas are not discrete. For example, the southern slopes of the High Weald display a gradual transition into the Low Weald.

HIGH WEALD

4.33 Wealden's High Weald covers 45,500 hectares, nearly one-third of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which was designated in 1983. It extends into four Counties, from Horsham in the west to the cliffs at Fairlight, east of Hastings.

4.34 The distinctive topography of the High Weald is formed from sands and sandstones intermingled with clays in the centre of the ancient Wealden anticline. This results in a hilly country of ridges and valleys. The major ridges run roughly east to west, and two main

'Forest Ridges' can be identified. These main ridges are deeply dissected by streams into a close network of smaller ridges and valleys, or ghylls, giving the relief a highly intricate appearance. Many of these valleys are steep-sided and bands of harder sandstone sometimes form weathered outcrops within them, as seen around Waldron and Groombridge for example.

4.35 The vegetation of the High Weald accentuates its physical character. It is still well wooded, with some large mixed and coniferous woodland areas on the hillsides, the steep valleys and ghylls often being thickly wooded. There are also countless small woods and copses, ridgeline and roadside tree belts and hedges, wooded banks and hedgerow trees. Occasional pines also stand out as distinctive features in ridge positions. These combine to give a heavily wooded appearance. Much of the woodland is remnants of the dense Wealden Forest that gave the area its name.

4.36 Notwithstanding its wooded appearance, higher vantage points reveal a close patchwork of small fields patterning the rolling ridges and valleys. Grassland is pre-eminent, but still with significant areas under arable production.

4.37 A number of landscape character areas have been identified, originally in the Statement of Intent, in the County Trees and Woodland Strategy, and most recently, through the comprehensive landscape

Landscape Character Areas

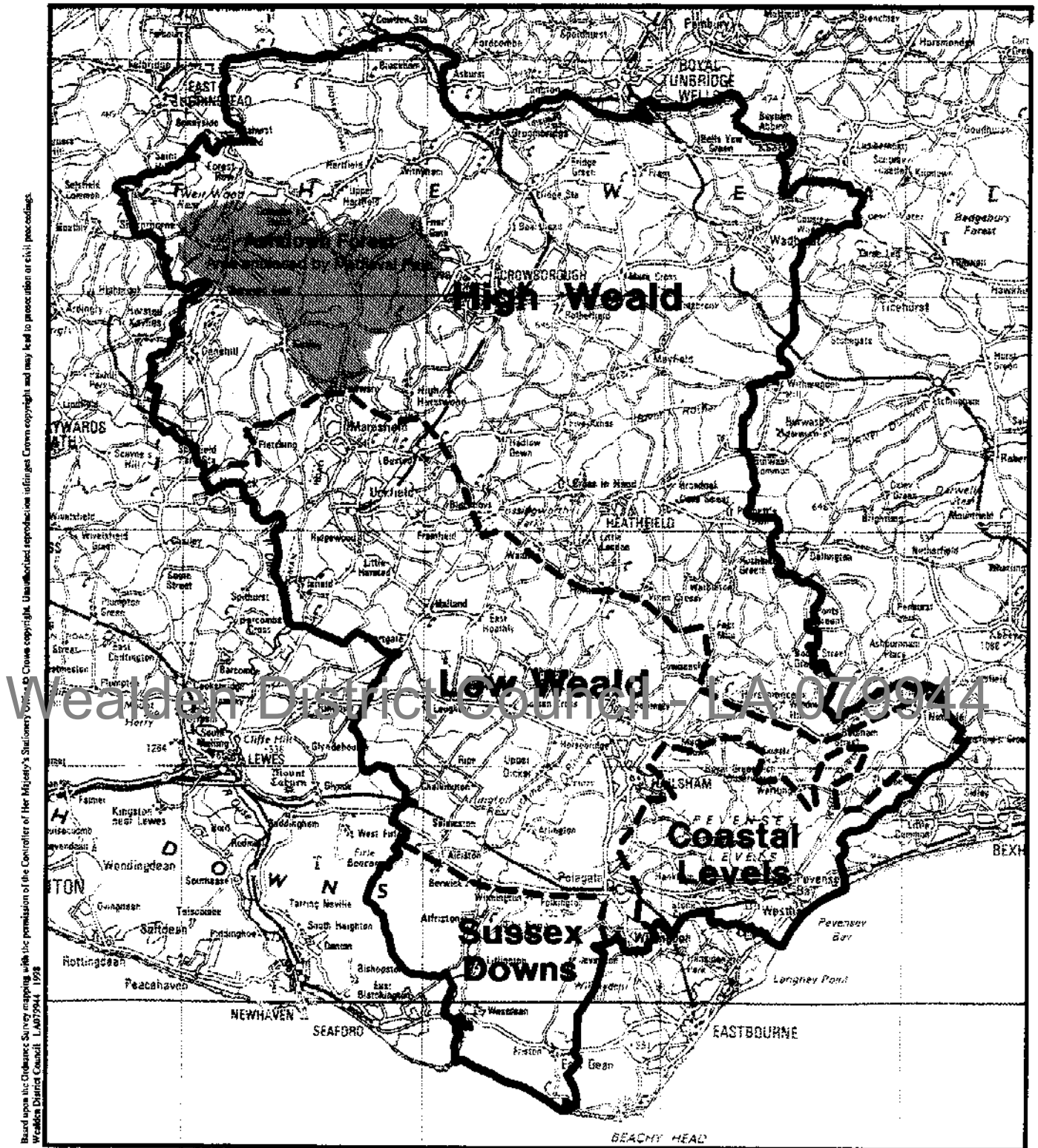


Figure 3

This plan is for illustrative purposes only, and does not form part of the Proposals Map.

0 5 10 kilometres
Not to scale

assessment entitled “The High Weald – Exploring the Landscape of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” (Countryside Commission 1994). This latest and most comprehensive assessment provides a particularly valuable supplement to the broad landscape information in this Plan and has been endorsed by this Council. The most distinctive of these sub-areas is the heathland landscape of the Ashdown Forest. Because of its particular history, and vegetation and overall sensitivity, this is given separate consideration below. Elsewhere, the Upper Rother Valley is much a broader and relatively more open valley than others, including the adjoining Dudwell Valley.

4.38 The pattern and appearance of built development is also distinctive. Settlements have typically developed on the ridges and other high ground. The main lines of communication also follow the ridgelines. Crowborough occupies a pronounced hilltop position, while Heathfield straddles the South Forest Ridge. The valleys are correspondingly far less developed. There are many attractive villages as well as country houses and farms with buildings traditionally of Wealden stone and brick; weatherboarding and tile-hanging are also prevalent.

4.39 The objectives and principles for the approach to the co-ordinated management of the High Weald landscape which were set out in the Statement of Intent (June 1988 revision) have been reviewed and elaborated upon in The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (September 1995). This is an advisory document produced by the High Weald Forum, of which this Council is a partner member. It primarily promotes an integrated and positive approach to landscape management based on a strategic view of the whole area.

4.40 In line with the purpose of designation, it is necessary and appropriate to conserve and enhance the natural beauty through both positive management measures and judicious control of development. Government policy and Structure Plan Policies, most notably S19, seek to particularly carefully control development and change in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This should relate to the location and scale, as well as layout and design of development.

EN6 Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as defined on the Proposals Map, will only be permitted if it conserves or enhances the natural beauty and character of the landscape. Particular care will be paid to the siting, scale, layout and design of development. In considering any proposals, particular regard will be had to:-

(1) the landscape characteristics of the sub-areas identified in the High Weald landscape assessment;

(2) the well-wooded appearance, especially Ancient Woodlands, together with other woods, tree belts and hedges;

(3) undeveloped steep valleys and ghylls;

(4) open heathland;

(5) undeveloped ridge positions and other visually exposed locations;

(6) areas of unspoilt or remote character;

(7) the traditional settlement pattern, building styles and materials;

(8) the High Weald Management Plan.

Ashdown Forest

4.41 Ashdown Forest incorporates the largest area of land in the South East of England which has never been under the plough. Much of the woodland was cleared for agriculture and to produce charcoal for the iron industry and kept open by grazing. There are a number of archaeological remains associated with earlier activities. Today the Forest is mainly open lowland heath covered with heather, bracken, gorse and grasses. Remnants of woodlands remain, consisting mainly of oak, beech and birch together with landmark clumps of scots pine. Tree cover is greater around the edges of the Forest and in the valleys and ghylls, with pine scattered over the heathland. The Forest's elevated position and broad open ridges afford outstanding views, notably towards the Sussex Downs. There are few buildings; scattered houses and lodges are located mainly around the edges.

4.42 In accordance with the County Structure Plan, local planning policies for Ashdown Forest apply to the whole area enclosed by the boundary of the Medieval Pale of 1372, but excluding land within the development boundaries of Fairwarp, Forest Row and Nutley. This area was once a royal hunting forest bounded by a bank and ditch, known as the Medieval Pale and covers 5,260 hectares. Approximately half of this area is now commonland managed by a Board of Conservators in accordance with the Ashdown Forest Act 1974, which renewed an earlier Act of 1885.

4.43 Freehold ownership of the area covered by the Act, amounting to some 2,500 hectares, has been acquired by a Trust set up by East Sussex County Council with contributions from Wealden District Council and others.

4.44 The Board of Conservators has a Management Plan for the area covered by the Ashdown Forest Act, which was last reviewed in 1993. The Council

supports this Plan. Also, as Local Planning Authority, the Council has an important role to play in the conservation of the Forest by the control of inappropriate development. Additional protection is afforded to the area managed by the Conservators and some private land within the Pale due to its international nature conservation value. It is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.C. Directive for the Conservation of Wild Birds, as well as being a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

4.45 The open nature, vegetation and history of the Forest, underlined by the special consideration afforded by its SPA and SSSI status within the High Weald, make most forms of development inappropriate. The Forest is a valuable recreation resource within the District, but its landscape and character are particularly susceptible to encroachment and erosion. The approach to recreational development on Ashdown Forest is set out in Chapter 5, while traffic management is considered in Chapter 9.

EN7 The Ashdown Forest is defined on the Proposals Map as the area enclosed by the Medieval Pale of 1372, excluding land within the development boundaries of Fairwarp, Forest Row and Nutley. Development will only be permitted if it conserves the landscape and historic character of this area. In considering any proposals, particular regard will be had to:-

- (1) extensive open heathland areas;**
- (2) wet flush grassland;**
- (3) remnants of Ancient Woodland, together with other landmark tree clumps;**
- (4) unspoilt and distant views;**
- (5) the Ashdown Forest Management Plan;**
- (6) the landscape characteristics of the Ashdown Forest area identified in the High Weald Landscape Assessment;**
- (7) the archaeological interest.**

LOW WEALD

4.46 The Low Weald essentially lies between the High Weald and the Sussex Downs. Its gently undulating topography is formed from the softer underlying Wealden clays. On the fringes of the High Weald, sandstones produce small ridges and occasional outcrops, while towards the Downs the topography is flatter. The landscape is accordingly more open than the High Weald. A few large woods, many small woods, hedgerow trees and field boundary hedges

punctuate a primarily agricultural landscape of traditionally mixed arable and pastoral farming.

4.47 Streams and ghylls flow south from the slopes of the High Weald feeding the River Cuckmere and the River Uck, the latter in turn flowing into the River Ouse. Uckfield to the north lies close to the High Weald, while Hailsham is on the edge of the Low Weald where it gives way to the Coastal Levels. Similar landscape characteristics exist within a belt extending eastwards between the Coastal Levels and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4.48 Whilst not covered by a national landscape designation, the Low Weald is nevertheless a very attractive countryside and contains a number of unspoilt villages, historic buildings including moated houses together with a preponderance of vernacular buildings. Away from the main towns and the A22 and A267, it is crossed by a lattice of narrow country lanes which has contributed to a general lack of intrusive or extensive development. Overall, the area retains a strong rural character. This character is evident in the many views across the Low Weald from the higher land to the north and south. The area beneath the scarp slopes of the Sussex Downs is particularly exposed and accordingly sensitive to change.

4.49 There has been considerable growth in recent years of the Low Weald towns in particular, as well as in certain other settlements and along the main road corridors. However, elsewhere the character of the countryside is largely unspoilt. It is almost universally attractive and worth retaining for its own sake. Accordingly, development should be expected to fully comply with the appropriate policies of the Plan.

EN8 Development within the Low Weald will only be permitted if it conserves the low rolling agricultural character of the landscape. In considering any proposal, particular regard will be had to:-

- (1) areas of unspoilt and remote countryside;**
- (2) the setting of settlements;**
- (3) areas on the fringe of adjacent statutorily designated landscapes;**
- (4) the retention of woods, boundary trees and hedges;**
- (5) attractive vernacular buildings and groups of buildings.**

SUSSEX DOWNS

4.50 The Sussex Downs comprise the length of the chalk downland through East and West Sussex

traversing the south-western coastal part of the District before terminating at Beachy Head near Eastbourne. They were designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1966. The area of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty extends into the margins of the adjacent Low Weald at the foot of the Downs, which act as a foil to the scarp slope.

4.51 The Downs are characterised by the bold rolling landform of the chalk hills. The striking north-facing scarp slope rises sharply from the Weald. Beyond this, more gentle slopes extend toward the sea, finishing in the dramatic cliffs of the Seven Sisters. The slopes contain a number of coombes and dry valleys that give the Downs their characteristic sculptured appearance.

4.52 The landscape primarily comprises large, hedgeless fields, mainly in arable use, resulting in an open stark appearance. The little remaining traditional Downland turf, which is of particular wildlife importance, is mostly on the scarp face. A return to grazing is being encouraged as part of the management regimes and incentives associated with the designation of much of the Sussex Downs as an Environmentally Sensitive Area. Indeed, small round dewponds for watering sheep are a traditional recurring feature. There are small areas of scrub and woodland, but the past woodland cover has been lost by clearance. The beech and coniferous plantation of Friston Forest is a significant exception to the general openness. Lullington Heath, a chalk heathland, is designated as a National Nature Reserve in recognition of its scarce habitat type.

4.53 Between Eastbourne and Seaford the Downs have been cut by the lower reaches of the River Cuckmere to form a broad alluvial valley. The massive meander close to its mouth at Cuckmere Haven is an outstanding natural feature. Inland, the valley contains many water meadows dissected by ditches. In contrast with the surrounding Downland, trees and tree groups are more in evidence along the valley sides and around settlements, although the area was badly affected by the 1987 gales.

4.54 Alfriston, situated on the bank of the River Cuckmere, functions as a local service and tourism centre while smaller, neighbouring Alciston is a 'spring-line' village. East Dean and the more elevated Friston are more residential in character. There is little built development on the Downs themselves. The vernacular flint walls of buildings and enclosures, with red brick dressings, are still very much in evidence, especially in the many smaller Downland villages and the historic cores of Alfriston and East Dean. Scattered agricultural buildings are also often of traditional construction, generally located in more sheltered situations. The Downs have a strong cultural heritage which is reflected in the numerous archaeological remains.

4.55 In recognition of the considerable sensitivity of the landform and landscape of the Sussex Downs, and the pressures upon them, the Sussex Downs Conservation Board was established in 1992. The Board comprises representatives of the local authorities together with interested organisations. Its objectives reflect those of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation. A Management Strategy was published following consultation in 1996 and has been endorsed by the District Council.

4.56 The Conservation Board commissioned "A Landscape Assessment of the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty" which was published in March 1995. This elaborates upon the various landscape types and highlights issues and priorities for landscape management. This has also been endorsed by the Council.

4.57 In line with the purpose of designation, it is necessary and appropriate to conserve and enhance the natural beauty through both positive management measures and judicious control of development. Government policy and Structure Plan Policies, most notably S19, seek to particularly carefully control development and change in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This should relate to the location and scale, as well as layout and design of development.

EN9 Development within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as defined on the Proposals Map, will only be permitted if it conserves or enhances the natural beauty and character of the landscape. Particular care will be paid to the siting, scale, layout and design of development. In considering any proposals, particular regard will be had to:-

- (1) the characteristic sculptured landform and appearance;**
- (2) the exposed scarp slope and adjacent foothills;**
- (3) the undeveloped coastline, especially the Heritage Coast;**
- (4) the Cuckmere Valley, especially Cuckmere Haven;**
- (5) traditional land uses and agricultural practices;**
- (6) the setting of important historic and natural features;**
- (7) well-managed public access;**

(8) the traditional forms, materials and detailing of buildings and enclosures, notably the use of flint in walls;

(9) other landscape qualities and characteristics identified in the Sussex Downs Landscape Assessment;

(10) the Management Strategy for the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4.58 The Council's approach to various development pressures, including recreation and tourism activities, other commercial and residential proposals in the villages as well as in the countryside of the Sussex Downs is set out in subsequent chapters.

Sussex Heritage Coast

4.59 The coastline of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty between Eastbourne and Seaford inland to the A259, which is essentially undeveloped and of outstanding scenic importance, has been designated 'Sussex Heritage Coast' by the Countryside Commission. The definition covers the downland in the District between the coast and the A259, and extends beyond to include Beachy Head to the east and Seaford Head to the west.

4.60 The objectives of designation, as set out in PPG20, which is non-statutory, are to conserve, protect and enhance the natural beauty of the coastline, including its important habitats and distinguishing built features, and to facilitate recreational use insofar as this is consistent with long term conservation. Regard should also be had to water quality and to the economic and social needs of local people. In that the Heritage Coast lies within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and, in part, is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, the objectives of those statutory designations apply with equal weight here.

4.61 Heritage Coast designation is regarded as providing a flexible management tool for balancing the requirements of conservation and access in the coastal zone. The Government has stated in its planning policy guidance on Coastal Planning (PPG20) that Local Plan policies for the Heritage Coast should relate to both their protection and enhancement, and that it will seldom be appropriate for new development to be located on the undeveloped coast.

4.62 This section of the Heritage Coast includes Birling Gap, which provides facilities for visitors including access to the beach, and the Seven Sisters Country Park covering 280 hectares on the east side of Cuckmere Haven. The Country Park provides public access for quiet enjoyment whilst also pursuing conservation and agriculture objectives. A range of visitor facilities are provided at Exceat. However, further commercialisation would be detrimental to the

essential natural charm of the locality. The conservation and study of the marine flora and fauna of the Heritage Coast is promoted by the establishment of the Seven Sisters Voluntary Marine Conservation Area.

EN10 Within the Sussex Heritage Coast, as defined on the Proposals Map, the Council will resist new development. It will support proposals, including management measures, which facilitate public access for the purposes of the quiet enjoyment of the area where such proposals are consistent with conservation, protection and enhancement of the natural beauty.

Any sea defence works must be consistent with the objectives of designation, in particular to conserve, protect and enhance the natural beauty of the coast.

COASTAL LEVELS

4.63 For the greater part, this is an extensive open area of former marshland, reclaimed in medieval times to facilitate grazing, which still retains a peculiarly untouched character. Today it is criss-crossed by an extensive network of well maintained 'drains' or ditches, which affords scope for arable farming, although it is still mostly permanent pasture. Where the Levels meet the coast, a low shingle bank has formed, behind which Pevensey Bay has grown up. Inland, the villages of Stone Cross, Westham and Pevensey have developed on a low, irregular east-west ridge which extends from Polegate through the Levels towards Pevensey Castle.

4.64 The Coastal Levels are not a single entity but a collection of several Levels. The Pevensey Levels, comprising several smaller Levels, extend to the north of these villages towards Herstmonceux and Hailsham to the west. The Levels to the south of the low ridge - Mountney Level, Langney Level and Willingdon Level - are similarly low-lying but somewhat less remote in character as development has encroached from adjacent higher ground, particularly by the eastward spread of Eastbourne.

4.65 Being essentially flat, with virtually no natural tree cover, the landscape is extremely visually exposed. The openness of the Levels provides the historic setting for the ridge villages and Pevensey Castle. Also, around the edges of the built-up area, they are important in maintaining the separation of those villages from Eastbourne, as well as an amenity and recreation resource for the urban area.

4.66 The Pevensey Levels is for the greater part designated as an Site of Special Scientific Interest. This area of some 3,500 hectares is particularly valuable as a habitat for migrating birds as well as for the flora and

fauna associated with the drainage ditches. Accordingly, the Government has proposed that the Pevensey Levels becomes a Wetland of International Importance under the provisions of the Ramsar Convention. Part of the area is also a National Nature Reserve. This is designated by English Nature, which is also promoting a scheme to encourage environmentally sensitive farming on the Levels.

4.67 Although the Coastal Levels does not benefit from any formal recognition of its landscape value, its openness and patchwork of fields created by the extensive system of drains is distinctive. Moreover, the traditional land uses, unspoilt and virtually undeveloped landscape and other historic associations are considered to constitute a remote, very rural character of particular beauty and charm. The County Structure Plan draws attention to the 'wetlands of the Pevensey Levels' in Policy CA/EN1 which sets out to conserve the landscape, natural resources, woodland and agriculture of the rural areas in determining development boundaries.

4.68 Development in the Coastal Levels needs, for the greater part, to be very carefully controlled because of the potentially substantial visual impact over a wide area. Built forms within the Levels themselves inevitably tend to be incongruous. Concern also exists about the use of the land for various recreation and leisure activities. This is most evident in the more remote areas. Also, many activities may impinge adversely on the nature conservation value of a large part of the area.

4.69 While those Levels adjoining the built-up areas do not have the same environmental qualities, allied to remoteness, that others possess, they are important in forming the setting of settlements and providing strategic gaps between them. This role is recognised by County Structure Plan Policy CA/EN2 in respect of the open undeveloped gaps between Eastbourne, Pevensey, Westham, Stone Cross, Pevensey Bay and Polegate.

EN11 The Council will seek to ensure that development proposals within the Coastal Levels conserve its generally open and exposed landscape character, with particular regard to:

- (1) the Pevensey Levels Site of Special Scientific Interest and candidate Wetland of International Importance.**
- (2) other remote areas;**
- (3) the setting of Pevensey Castle, the Pevensey and Westham Conservation Area and the ridge villages;**
- (4) promoting environmentally sensitive farming;**

(5) the traditional hydrology of the area.

4.70 In recognition of the landscape value of the Coastal Levels, it is proposed that a planning and management statement be prepared following consultation with local community interests. This should identify the principal landscape features and character of the Levels worth conserving, important views and other amenity considerations. Guidelines for the management of the area, including land use, will be provided consistent with the above general policy for the area.

4.71 As the Levels extend into adjacent Districts and are particularly important as part of the setting of Eastbourne, close liaison would be sought. It is envisaged that this could parallel a joint study with Eastbourne Borough Council into the strategic gap area between Eastbourne and the surrounding settlements of Polegate, Stone Cross, Westham, Pevensey and Pevensey Bay and also cover the land north of Eastbourne Park defined by Policy PW5 in Chapter 16. The Borough Council has suggested this, also recognising that some of the land lacks visual appeal. The study would examine how best to manage the area to retain its open countryside aspect. The prime objective would be that the land should remain as open countryside. A Catchment Management Plan for the Pevensey Levels is currently being prepared by the Environment Agency, and which will embrace a Water Level Management Plan. Due regard will be paid to these, where relevant, taking account of the consultations undertaken and any formal resolution by the Council.

TREES, WOODLAND AND LANDSCAPING

4.72 The Weald, particularly the High Weald, is a well-wooded landscape. Indeed, its trees and woodland cover are integral to its natural beauty and diversity. It is estimated that between 15% and 20% of Wealden's area is woodland. This includes 10,000 hectares of 'ancient woodland sites'. The overriding character of woodland is broadleaved; the dominant species are oak, birch, ash, hornbeam and sweet chestnut. There is also a significant amount of plantation forestry which is largely coniferous. The nature of tree cover in each landscape character area is discussed in the previous section. In view of their widespread landscape importance, as well as being the basis of a vital rural industry, it is considered essential to retain and enhance existing tree and woodland cover.

4.73 Woodland areas and tree groups often adjoin settlements and make a particular contribution to their setting, either screening or softening the visual impact of development from the countryside, as well as providing a natural backcloth which helps integrate the

built-up area within its countryside setting. It is considered important to ensure the retention of trees and woodland areas in such rural fringe locations.

4.74 Within built-up areas, semi-mature and mature trees can contribute significantly to the overall quality of the environment, providing a natural setting for buildings or views. Indeed, they help integrate development into the landscape. Treed areas can also provide wildlife havens and can afford privacy or screening. The retention of such landscape features is therefore normally sought. As expressed in Chapter 11 of the Plan, wooded areas also have a valuable role in terms of their recreational and amenity potential.

4.75 In order to protect trees and woodland areas that contribute significantly to the local environment and its enjoyment by the public, Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) may be served. More particularly, trees may be worthy of preservation for their intrinsic beauty or for their contribution to the landscape; or because they serve to screen future development or an existing eyesore. The value of trees may be enhanced by their scarcity, and the value of a group of trees or woodland may be collective only. For a reasonable degree of public benefit to accrue, trees should normally be visible from a public place. The effects of a TPO are to require permission to top, lop or fell trees so covered. There are presently approaching 1,000 TPOs in force throughout Wealden, some protecting specimen trees, other covering tree groups and woodland areas. Trees in Conservation Areas are similarly protected.

4.76 A Trees and Woodland Strategy for East Sussex was published by the Woodland Forum for East Sussex in 1990. The District Council is represented on this and has formally endorsed its principles and guidelines. This Strategy addresses the recent decline in both the quality and quantity of woodland resulting from natural disasters, most notably Dutch Elm Disease and the October 1987 storm, and from human pressures and neglect. Losses have occurred in characteristic small woodlands, shaws, shelter belts, hedgerow trees, historic parkland and other groupings, such as in ghylls and along ridgelines.

4.77 The variation in tree species and pattern of woodland across the County and within the District is recognised in the Strategy. By defining detailed landscape areas, guidance is provided on selecting trees that grow satisfactorily in the location and are appropriate to that area. It also highlights the manner in which trees are characteristically integrated into the local landscape. The application of the Strategy at the local level by the development of local Trees and Woodland Conservation and Management Plans is promoted.

4.78 It is appreciated that the conservation of a large proportion of woodland will depend upon its commercial value. Indeed, forestry activities are a traditional industry within the rural economy and may

develop further, particularly as land comes out of agricultural production. Hence, it is appropriate to encourage forestry/woodland enterprises and the use of traditional local timber products. Simple neglect is itself a cause of woodland decline; the Council supports schemes which promote positive woodland management and offer incentives to farmers and others to plant woodland trees as well as restore hedgerows. Participation in these, such as the Woodland Grant Scheme, is commended in principle. Woodland planting/management may also be secured as part of development proposals and be regarded within the scope of Policy EN14 below. A considerable contribution to countryside conservation is made by the voluntary sector, and the Council will continue, where appropriate, to support bodies such as The Woodland Trust, The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group.

EN12 The Council will seek to retain and enhance the contribution of trees and woodland areas to the landscape character of the District, including the amenity value of trees in built up areas. This will be promoted by:-

- (1) endorsement of the principles and guidelines contained in the Trees and Woodland Strategy for East Sussex;**
- (2) support for the preparation of local Trees and Woodland Conservation and Management Plans;**
- (3) encouragement for woodland management through participation in tree and hedgerow planting schemes by farmers, voluntary organisations and others, and where appropriate, as part of development proposals;**
- (4) making Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate to protect trees and woodland areas of significant amenity value;**
- (5) giving weight to proposals, including business proposals, that help to sustain and manage forestry and woodland areas when considering them against other policies of the Plan;**
- (6) resisting development proposals which would result in the loss of trees which make a valuable contribution to the character of the landscape, a settlement or its setting.**

Ancient Woodlands

4.79 There are a number of ancient semi-natural woods in the District where there has been continuous tree

cover since at least 1600. The location of these is identified by English Nature in its 1989 Ancient Woodland Inventory for East Sussex. Such woodland represents the closest approximation to natural broad-leaved forest to be found in Britain and is therefore the most ecologically valuable. A common feature of many such woods is a substantial natural element in their ground flora, underwood and canopy species. In order to maintain these areas, selective or group felling as part of normal woodland management may be appropriate, but clear or complete felling of a designated woodland would not be readily acceptable. Similarly, such woodlands should be protected against developments that would threaten to seriously damage their ecology. This accords with County Structure Plan Policies S12 and S27.

EN13 The Council will resist development proposals that involve the clear felling or otherwise prejudice the ecology of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands, as defined by English Nature.

Landscaping

4.80 The Council's desire to achieve high standards of design and appearance in new development extends to landscaping, both planting and hard surfacing. This recognises the role that landscaping can play in enhancing the appearance of new development. Therefore, landscaping aspects should properly be considered as an integral part of the formulation of a development proposal. Particular regard to landscaping proposals will be appropriate in relation to prominent sites, large scale developments, rural fringe locations and other areas of a sensitive landscape character. Also, landscaping may be used to reduce the apparent massing of large buildings, such as industrial developments, or to break up large urban spaces, such as car parks. In all such cases, a sufficient level of landscape design should accompany applications to enable the visual impact of the development as a whole to be assessed, and the submission of further details may be made the subject of planning conditions.

4.81 New housing developments can benefit considerably from effective landscaping, either around its edges, along thoroughfares or in amenity or other open areas, as well as within curtilages. It is vital that adequate allowance is made for trees to grow without pressure for frequent lopping. This applies to existing trees as well as new planting. It is also important to ensure that trees, including their root systems, are adequately protected during development.

4.82 Planting proposals should normally aim to incorporate existing site features, such as trees and hedges, and maximise the use of native species in order that new development can be sensitively integrated within the landscape. Regard should also be had to

potential nature conservation benefits, such as establishing 'wildlife corridors'. Careful consideration needs to be paid to practical aspects, including the relationship to underground services, proximity to buildings when fully grown and associated overshadowing and structural effects. Planting should be carried out as early as possible, before development commences where practicable, or otherwise in the first planting season thereafter. Proposals for the future management of landscaped areas may well be appropriate, and the Council would normally require replacement during the period while planting becomes established. This period will depend on the type and size of stock to be planted.

EN14 In appropriate cases, the Council will require landscaping, including surface treatments, to be carried out as part of development proposals. Where required, such schemes should:-

- (1) seek to retain existing trees, significant hedgerows and other valuable site features;**
- (2) normally comprise primarily native species;**
- (3) complement the scale and character of the proposed development and the locality;**
- (4) have regard to associated nature conservation benefits;**
- (5) be implemented at the earliest practicable opportunity and thereafter satisfactorily maintained during the early years.**

NATURE CONSERVATION

4.83 Government guidance in PPG9 : Nature Conservation emphasises its commitment to conserving the natural heritage, including the sound stewardship of wildlife through the protection of the habitat on which it depends. This commitment is expressed both in the principal legislation, notably the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as well as in European and other international obligations.

4.84 English Nature has a statutory function to designate and advise upon areas of biological and geological significance, and to help safeguard these areas from development and conflicting land uses. Sites of outstanding biological and geological importance are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Some SSSIs which are primarily used for nature conservation and are managed accordingly are designated as National Nature Reserves (NNRs). Sites of international importance may be designated

under the Ramsar Convention, relating to wetland areas, or under E.C. Birds or Habitats Directives.

4.85 Two areas within Wealden are of international nature conservation interest. Ashdown Forest SSSI is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EC Birds Directive, while Pevensey Levels SSSI is a proposed Ramsar Site. There are also two National Nature Reserves. These are at Lullington Heath and Pevensey Levels, as shown on the Proposals Map. There are twenty-nine SSSIs, of which by far the largest is Pevensey Levels SSSI covering 3,500 hectares. In addition, by declaring sites as Local Nature Reserves, local authorities are able to help to safeguard the areas from development which could be detrimental to their intrinsic biological or geological importance. There are five Local Nature Reserves at Arlington Reservoir, Weir Wood, Old Lodge - Nutley, Seven Sisters Country Park and West Park - Uckfield; all of these, except West Park, lie within SSSIs. There are also several other non-statutory nature reserves managed by bodies such as the Sussex Wildlife Trust. A Voluntary Marine Conservation Area has been designated along the Heritage Coast.

4.86 Protection to the designated areas is afforded through Structure Plan Policy S12, while Policy S17(c) and Policy S27(c) extend this to encompass other areas regarded as being 'of demonstrable wildlife importance'. This acknowledges that many valuable semi-natural areas which have not been given statutory designation may be defined as being important wildlife habitats and geological sites, or local 'Sites for Nature Conservation Importance' (SNCIs). Nearly 100 SNCIs have now been formally designated within the District, although it is not regarded as an exhaustive listing of important wildlife sites beyond those statutorily designated. The dossier of sites is held by the District Council.

4.87 East Sussex County Council has agreed the principle of preparing a Nature Conservation Strategy for East Sussex which, when progressed, will provide a broader framework for local planning and development control considerations of ecological factors, as well as for the establishment of Local Nature Reserves and for drawing up management agreements.

4.88 Protection should be afforded for both formal and informal designated sites, having regard to their international, national or local significance. In addition, PPG9 highlights the value of undesignated sites and features which provide wildlife corridors, links or stepping stones from one habitat to another. The Council will continue to give consideration to nature conservation in the exercise of its development control function. This includes the impact of proposals on important habitats such as woodland, heathland, water meadows, unimproved pasture, marshes, streams, ponds or parks. Proposals should aim to provide for their retention, restoration and future

management, as well as consider the potential for habitat creation.

EN15 The Council will seek to safeguard designated nature conservation sites by resisting development or land use changes which would be likely to adversely affect their nature conservation value.

The weight to be afforded to nature conservation interests will have regard to their status:-

(1) Within Ashdown Forest SSSI and Special Protection Area for Birds, and Pevensey Levels SSSI (proposed "Ramsar" site), development which would be likely to have an adverse effect on the nature conservation interest will not be permitted, unless otherwise in accordance with international obligations.

(2) Within SSSIs, including Lullington Heath NNR, as shown on the Proposals Map, development which would be likely to have an adverse effect on the nature conservation interest will not be permitted unless there is no reasonable alternative means of meeting the development need which also outweighs the nationally recognised nature conservation interest.

(3) Development which would be likely to have an adverse effect on a Local Trust Reserve or a Site of Nature Conservation Importance will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the need for development outweighs the identified nature conservation interest and that there are no reasonable alternative means of meeting that development need.

In all cases, every effort should be made to minimise any damage to the nature conservation interests. Where appropriate, conditions and/or planning obligations may be used to provide appropriate compensatory measures.

EN16 In the consideration of any development proposal, including its design and layout, the Council will have regard to the implications for nature conservation and wildlife habitats. Particular regard will be had to the need to safeguard the active residence of protected species, to the integrity and continuity of landscape features of major importance for wild flora and fauna, and to appropriate

opportunities for encouraging habitat protection, enhancement and management.

IMPORTANT COUNTRYSIDE GAPS

4.89 It has been a longstanding planning aim to contain the sprawl of the urban areas, to safeguard surrounding countryside from unnecessary encroachment and to prevent neighbouring settlements from merging. This broad principle is expressed in County Structure Plan Policy S12(b) which states that the location of development will be governed by, inter alia, preventing development which would reduce strategic and important gaps between settlements. Policy CA/EN2 applies this general policy locally, seeking to prevent coalescence of settlements, including between:-

- (1) Polegate and Hailsham;
- (2) Eastbourne, Pevensey, Westham, Stone Cross, Pevensey Bay and Polegate;
- (3) Hailsham and Hellingly;
- (4) Uckfield and Maresfield;
- (5) Forest Row and Ashurstwood.

4.90 The protection of these and other important gaps represents an additional constraint over and above normal countryside policies. Inclusion of land within a gap is based on its contribution to the separation between settlements. Therefore, they need not necessarily follow development boundaries, although for the areas under consideration they are found to coincide. It is proposed to subsequently define the lateral extent of identified countryside gaps through the publication of supplementary planning guidance following public consultation. However, in the interim, Policy EN17 will provide an adequate basis for determining whether individual proposals would impinge on a countryside gap.

4.91 In addition to the gaps identified above, there are certain other settlements in the District where the open countryside separating them is particularly vulnerable to development pressures that would tend to erode their separate identities and their rural settings. Whilst the Uckfield-Maresfield gap is specifically referred to in the County Structure Plan policy, the Council also attaches importance to preventing the coalescence of Uckfield with Five Ash Down, either by the development of open land or intensification of scattered and ribbon development.

4.92 The past expansion of Heathfield has lessened the break between it and the surrounding villages of Cross-in-Hand, Broad Oak, Cade Street, Old Heathfield and Maynards Green. These gaps are particularly sensitive, being visually exposed within the High Weald Area of

Outstanding Natural Beauty. Previous planning policy has acknowledged the significance of these areas and it is considered that specific protection from development should continue to be expressed.

4.93 Elsewhere, the gap between Rotherfield and Town Row was identified in the deposit North Wealden Local Plan as one where any intensification of existing scattered development would erode their separate identities as well as be intrusive in this sensitive Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty location.

4.94 Some agricultural development or conversion of farm buildings may be compatible with this policy and could therefore be approved. Where there is a conflict between this policy and policies in Chapter 5, it may be overcome by careful attention to siting and design. In considering whether the impact on the gap is acceptable, regard should be had to the benefit to agriculture or the rural economy.

EN17 Development will not be permitted which would reduce countryside gaps between the following settlements:-

- (1) Polegate and Hailsham;**
- (2) Eastbourne, Pevensey, Westham, Stone Cross, Pevensey Bay and Polegate;**
- (3) Hailsham and Hellingly;**
- (4) Uckfield, Maresfield and Five Ash Down;**
- (5) Forest Row and Ashurstwood;**
- (6) Heathfield and Cross-in-Hand, Broad Oak, Cade Street, Old Heathfield and Maynards Green;**
- (7) Rotherfield and Town Row.**

OPEN AREAS WITHIN SETTLEMENTS

4.95 Open, undeveloped areas within settlements often make an important contribution to their character and local amenities, as well as any functional value, such as for recreation. They may take the form of village greens, ponds, parks and gardens, playing fields, churchyards or small woodlands for example, as well as farmland and private gardens. Such areas can also provide refuges, including for wildlife. This role is emphasised where such areas are linked with each other and the surrounding countryside to form 'wildlife corridors'.

4.96 The value that such open spaces and gaps in development can have to local amenity and character is

reflected in national concern about town and village 'cramming'. Their retention and enhancement receives expression in County Structure Plan Policies S13(b) and S15(e), relating to towns and villages respectively. While the value of such areas in individual settlements is reflected where possible in the drawing of development boundaries (see Chapter 3), the fact that they are sometimes within the boundary does not diminish their importance.

EN18 The Council will resist the loss of open areas and undeveloped gaps within settlements which contribute to the character or amenities of the locality.

CONSERVATION AREAS

4.97 Conservation as an instrument of planning policy is concerned to maintain and improve the visual, architectural and historic quality of the environment and involves the sensitive management rather than the total prohibition of change. Comprehensive policies on conservation are vital in view of the number of attractive villages and historic buildings in the District and the relationship between the buildings and the natural environment that makes the area particularly distinctive.

4.98 Conservation Areas are designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which requires local planning authorities to determine which parts of their District are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

4.99 There are currently thirty three designated Conservation Areas in the District, as shown on the Proposals Map, covering the historic parts of the following towns and villages:

Alciston	Jevington
Alfriston	Litlington
Berwick	Maresfield
Cade Street	Mayfield
Chiddingly	Old Heathfield
Cousley Wood	Pevensy & Westham
Danehill	Ripe
East Dean	Rotherfield
East Hoathly	Rushlake Green

Fletching	Selmeston
Forest Row	Uckfield
Framfield	Wadhurst
Frant	Waldron
Hailsham	Westdean
Hartfield	Withyham
Hellingly	Willingdon, Church Street
	Wilmington

4.100 Each Conservation Area has its own particular character and important buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and other features that combine to create its special qualities that form the basis of designation. These are fully amplified in *Designation Reports* for most of the respective Areas which are available from the Planning Department.

4.101 The Council will continue to investigate further appropriate designations as resources permit. When new or extended conservation areas are considered there will be public consultation with Parish Councils, local businesses and local residents on their extent and principal features, and the Council will adopt the guidance set out in Part 4 of *Conservation Area Practice* published by English Heritage. This guidance has been used in the assessments already carried out.

4.102 The character and high visual quality of the Conservation Areas is an important factor in the attractiveness of the District, and it is intended therefore that the conservation of this character and quality will be a prime consideration of this Plan. This is consistent with the County Structure Plan which includes policies to ensure that development does not damage Conservation Areas and, where appropriate, provides for the conservation and enhancement of a building or the area (Policies S13, S15 and S27).

4.103 It is important that proposals for development in Conservation Areas contain appropriate details, with particular regard to layout, design, building materials and other features. Consequently, a full detailed application will normally be required.

4.104 Where the character or appearance of a Conservation Area is likely to be threatened, the Council may also consider bringing minor works to dwelling houses under control by making Directions under Article 4(2) of the General Permitted Development Order to withdraw certain permitted development rights. The Council will give publicity to all such Directions and will take into account representations received before deciding whether to confirm a Direction.

EN19 Within Conservation Areas, proposals which do not preserve or enhance their existing character, scale and visual amenity will be resisted. In particular:

(1) the Council will not normally grant outline planning permission for development in a Conservation Area. A full detailed application showing siting, design, external appearance, landscaping and means of access will normally be required;

(2) proposals to demolish a building or part of a building will be resisted unless it can be shown that it is wholly beyond repair, incapable of reasonable beneficial use, of inappropriate structure or design, or where its removal or replacement would enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Where development is envisaged demolition will only be permitted where there are approved detailed plans for new development;

(3) any proposals for development should respect the character of the existing buildings, important views and spaces and the historic settlement pattern in terms of scale, height, form, grouping and density, and should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area;

(4) in considering any proposals for development, the Council will require the use of building materials appropriate to the locality and sympathetic to those of nearby buildings. Walls, gates and fences should be of a kind traditionally used in the immediate locality;

(5) the Council will seek to retain, require the reinstatement and encourage the use of traditional features which contribute to the character and appearance of the area. In addition to buildings and groups of buildings, these features will include trees, hedges, walls, fences, gates, open spaces, ground surfaces, lamp posts and other appropriate street furniture;

(6) proposals that would generate traffic, car parking, noise or other activities which would adversely affect the character of the Conservation Area will be resisted;

(7) applications for advertisement consent will only be granted where the advertisement respects the character and appearance of the area and meets highway safety considerations;

(8) the felling or extensive lopping of trees will be resisted. Where consent is exceptionally given, replacement planting with the same species or others in keeping with the character of the area will be required.

4.105 Government guidance in the form of PPG15 states that the desirability of preserving or enhancing conservation areas should also be a material consideration in considering planning application which are outside of a conservation area, but would affect its setting or views into or out of the area. The Council would therefore give careful consideration to proposals adjacent to conservation areas in order to ensure that their character and appearance is respected.

EN20 Proposals for development outside a Conservation Area, but which affect its setting or views into or out of it, should respect its character and appearance.

4.106 In addition, the Council will bring forward schemes for enhancement of Conservation Areas, and will encourage Parish Councils and other appropriate bodies to prepare enhancement schemes for consideration. The availability of technical advice or assistance from the Council would be dependent upon other commitments.

BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

4.107 Buildings which the Secretary of State for the Environment, advised by English Heritage, considers to be of special architectural or historic interest are included on a list under the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. These statutorily 'listed' buildings represent the best of the nation's built heritage and are subject to specific safeguards and powers to ensure their proper preservation. Government advice on the conservation of listed buildings is contained in PPG15. The County Structure Plan Policies S13, S15 and S27 provide the development plan context for preserving and enhancing listed buildings and their settings.

4.108 The District has a rich heritage of some 2,400 listed buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Some 48 (2%) of listed buildings are classified as Grade I, being of exceptional interest. The majority of these are churches or other former ecclesiastical buildings, such as St Leonard's School, Mayfield, and Michelham Priory. Non-religious buildings include Herstmonceux Castle, Sheffield Park House and the Tithe Barn, Alcaston. Groombridge Place, a Grade I listed building set in Grade II* historic parkland, lies adjacent to the District boundary in

Tunbridge Wells Borough. A further 92 buildings in Wealden are regarded as being of more than special interest and are classified Grade II*.

4.109 These buildings should always be preserved and, where necessary, improved. Where such buildings are substantially unused or only partly used, it is important that their potential for rehabilitation and the accommodation of new uses is fully investigated before redevelopment is contemplated.

EN21 There is a general presumption in favour of the preservation of Listed Buildings, and proposals for their total or substantial demolition will not be permitted unless the Council is convinced that:-

(1) all reasonable efforts have been taken to sustain existing, or to find new, uses;

(2) preservation in charitable or community ownership is not possible or suitable;

(3) redevelopment would provide substantial community benefits which would decisively outweigh the loss.

4.110 In order to preserve the character of a listed building, careful attention needs to be given to the area around it as well as to the works involved in any alteration, including the proposed building materials, doors, fenestration and architectural features. It may be appropriate in exceptional cases to relax planning policies or to explore the possibility of relaxing Building Regulations to preserve the listed building.

4.111 Limited grant aid may be available, in accordance with the Council's Buildings Conservation Grant Scheme, for the repair and maintenance of listed buildings and other buildings, structures or features which have importance in a social, historical or landscape sense, and are not normally suitable for residential or commercial use.

EN22 In order to protect the character and appearance of buildings listed as being of special architectural or historic interest:

(1) proposals for any external or internal alteration, change of use, addition to a listed building, or display of signs and advertisements which would have an adverse effect on its character and appearance will be resisted;

(2) all building materials, doors, windows and other architectural features should respect the character and appearance of the listed building;

(3) proposals which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will be resisted;

(4) in very exceptional cases and where demonstrated to be necessary in order to secure the retention of a listed building, the Council may relax normal development control policies.

HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS

4.112 There are a number of parks and gardens in Wealden which are included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England, which is prepared by English Heritage. These are:-

Bayham Abbey, Frant (part)	(II)
Buckhurst Park, Withyham	(II)
Buxted Park, Buxted	(II)
Charleston Manor, Westdean	(II*)
Cotchford Farm, Hartfield	(II)
Eridge Park, Frant	(II*)
Groombridge Place (part)	(II*)
Hammerwood Park, Forest Row	(II)
Heathfield Park, Heathfield	(II)
Herstmonceux Castle, Herstmonceux	(II*)
The Hoo, Willingdon (part)	(II*)
Horsted Place, Little Horsted	(II)
Kidbrooke Park, Forest Row	(II)
Old Buckhurst, Withyham	(II)
Penns in the Rocks, Withyham	(II*)
Rotherfield Hall, Rotherfield	(II*)
Sheffield Park, Fletching	(I)
Wadhurst Castle, Wadhurst	(II)
Wych Cross Place, Maresfield	(II)

Details of these properties are given in the Register which is available for inspection at the Planning Department. Their extent is shown on the Proposals Map.

4.113 Whilst not a statutory designation, these parks and gardens are regarded as an essential part of the nation's heritage and should be recognised and

protected accordingly. In appropriate circumstances, this will include their restoration. This is consistent with Structure Plan Policies S17 and S27. The Council will seek specialist advice when dealing with proposals affecting registered parks and gardens, as advised in Circular 9/95.

EN23 Proposals which would adversely affect the site or setting of any registered Historic Park or Garden, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be resisted.

In considering any development proposals affecting a registered Historic Park or Garden, the Council will seek to encourage their conservation and restoration.

ARCHAEOLOGY

4.114 There are some 97 scheduled Ancient Monuments in the District, as well as many other sites of local archaeological interest. It is therefore considered appropriate to provide specific policy guidance. Information on Ancient Monuments is contained in the Sites and Monuments Record for East Sussex compiled by the County Archaeological Officer, who also advises on any proposal likely to affect an archaeological site. It is noted that in respect of scheduled Ancient Monuments, it is the Secretary of State, advised by English Heritage, who compiles the list and gives consent for works to monuments on it.

4.115 Government policy on archaeology is contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 'Archaeology and Planning' published in November 1990. It sets out the Secretary of State's policy on archaeological remains on land and how they should be preserved or recorded both in an urban setting and in the countryside.

4.116 PPG16 states that where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings are affected by proposed development, there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation in situ. Appropriate planning policies in development plans and their implementation through development control will be especially important. Local Plans should include policies for the protection, enhancement and preservation of sites of archaeological interest and their settings.

4.117 The County Structure Plan includes specific policies on archaeology which provide for the protection, investigation and preservation in situ or by record of archaeological sites and areas of interest (Policies S17 and S27). These policies are in line with PPG16 and provide the context for Local Plan policies. These are supplemented by the County Council's 'Strategy for Archaeology in East Sussex' which

elaborates on the importance of archaeology, its own role and that of the broader planning process in protecting the archaeological heritage.

EN24 There is a clear presumption against development proposals which would adversely affect scheduled Ancient Monuments and other sites of national archaeological importance and their settings.

EN25 In considering development proposals affecting archaeological sites or areas of interest, the Council will not normally grant planning permission in advance of an adequate examination and evaluation of the archaeological implications.

EN26 Where, exceptionally, permission is granted for development on sites of demonstrable archaeological importance, the applicant will normally be required to provide for the in situ preservation of valuable remains. On sites where the Council is satisfied that this preferred approach is not justified, proper provision should be made for the excavation and recording of archaeological remains prior to the development.

DESIGN

4.118 The Council is concerned to ensure that the attractive environment of its towns, villages and countryside, enjoyed by residents, workers and visitors alike, is maintained and enhanced. It, therefore, attaches great importance to good design in new development, whether within or outside the development boundaries. Developers are expected to aim for a high quality of design in all proposals and early consultation prior to the submission of planning applications is encouraged.

4.119 In the consideration of development proposals, regard will be had to the sensitivity of the design and use of materials in relation to both the immediate surroundings and the general locality. In particular, the scale of the proposals and the proportion of site coverage by buildings should be compatible with that of adjoining developments. The vernacular architecture of the District displays a range of styles and materials, from weatherboarding and tile hanging in the High Weald to the traditional flint and red brick dressings of the South Downs. The design and materials of buildings should normally reflect the local vernacular and promote local distinctiveness. Regard to prevailing building traditions will be an important consideration in historic areas. Policies relating to Conservation

Areas and Listed Buildings are set out elsewhere in this Chapter.

4.120 Development will not be permitted if it would result in the loss of privacy or have an otherwise detrimental effect on the amenities of nearby occupiers. Overlooking of ground floor living rooms or of private gardens will be a particularly important consideration where relevant. Proposals should also ensure the creation of an attractive environment for future occupants and give adequate attention to reducing the opportunities for crime having regard to the guidelines published by the police force in 'Secured by Design'.

EN27 Proposals for development will be permitted when the following layout and design criteria are met:-

(1) the scale, form, site coverage, density and design of the development and the use of materials and landscaping should respect the character of adjoining development and, where appropriate, promote local distinctiveness. The design, materials and landscaping should be of an appropriate high standard;

(2) the proposed development should not create an unacceptable adverse impact on the privacy and amenities of adjoining developments and the neighbourhood by reason of scale, height, form, noise and traffic movements;

(3) the proposed development should ensure a satisfactory environment for the future occupants, including adequate provision for daylight, sunlight, privacy, garden space and/or appropriately landscaped amenity areas;

(4) the proposed development should not constitute an unacceptable backland or 'tandem' form of development;

(5) regard has been paid to crime prevention measures whenever possible and appropriate.

Access for the Disabled

4.121 Within Wealden, around 12% of residents have a limiting long-term illness, health problem or handicap which limits their daily activities or the work they can do, including problems which are due to old age (1991 Census). As outlined in Chapter 2, the Council is committed to creating an accessible environment for all persons, including wheelchair users and people with other disabilities, the elderly, and people with children in pushchairs. The development of

land and buildings provides the opportunity to secure a more accessible environment for everyone.

4.122 When a new building is proposed, or when planning permission is required for the alteration or change of use of an existing building, developers should consider the needs of disabled people who might use the building. Indeed, the Council is required to bring to the attention of those applicants seeking permission for premises open to the public their statutory obligations under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. The Act requires developers to provide suitable means of access, parking and toilet facilities to meet the needs of people with disabilities in most buildings other than dwellings.

4.123 Under the Building Regulations, which enforce the 1970 Act, a developer will need to consider the needs of the disabled in designing corridors, doorways, lifts and toilet facilities, as well as the spaces around new buildings which will be open to the public. Provision for the disabled should include a level or ramped approach facilitating wheelchair access with dropped or ramped kerbs between pedestrian and vehicle areas, suitable car parking spaces, as well as appropriate signposting of disabled entrances. Regard should also be had to the layout, dimensions and construction of pedestrian areas, and positioning of any street furniture and lighting.

4.124 Comprehensive guidance on the design of buildings and the external environment is contained in the Sussex Coast and Countryside Access Guide produced by the Access Officers of the Borough and District Councils of East Sussex. In the case of alterations to, or change of use of, existing buildings to which the public will have access, the scope to undertake adaptations to provide for the disabled may be more limited by what is practicable and reasonable having regard to the characteristics of building and site. Particular care will be needed for proposals affecting Listed Buildings and other buildings of architectural or historic interest.

4.125 The policy set out below is intended to complement the requirements under the Building Regulations by seeking a co-ordinated approach to design at an early stage, both inside and outside a building. The Council has nominated an Access Officer who acts as a central point of contact for advice and guidance. A reference to the Council's objectives for provision of housing for the disabled is contained in Chapter 6. A policy for disabled provision in pedestrian environments is contained in Chapter 8. The Council's standards for the provision of car parking for the disabled are contained in Appendix 6.

EN28 Proposals for the development of land and buildings that are open to the public or used for employment and education purposes, including extensions, alterations and changes of

use of buildings where reasonable and practicable, should provide suitable access and facilities for people with disabilities.

Light Pollution

4.126 New development within areas which were previously unlit can contribute to 'sky glow' at night which is a form of light pollution. This is caused by the scattering or spillage of artificial light and can be particularly intrusive within a rural environment. Furthermore, it is wasteful of the Earth's finite energy resources and can lead to unnecessary emissions of greenhouse gases. In recent years a number of national initiatives have been launched, such as the 'Campaign for Dark Skies', which have sought to draw attention to the impact of light pollution within the environment and have called for measures for its reduction. The Council fully supports these initiatives, acknowledging the visual intrusion which can be caused in the countryside by the illumination from poorly designed lighting systems.

4.127 It is recognised that in some instances the lighting of buildings is necessary for night-time security or safety reasons. The lighting of certain outdoor recreational facilities, such as golf driving ranges, may also be appropriate when these facilities are used at night. However, in all cases the level and intensity of lighting should be appropriate to the locality and unnecessary light spillage should be minimised. The Council will expect downward directed light systems to be used in appropriate cases which can contribute to minimising light spillage and sky glow. While the lighting of major road junctions is required on safety grounds, they should be afforded sensitive treatment, especially where they involve a change in levels. The Council's policy regarding the environmental impact of overhead lighting within road improvements and new road schemes is contained in Chapter 9.

EN29 In considering development proposals which include external lighting, the Council will require:

- (1) light spillage to be minimised;**
- (2) the use of the minimum intensity of light necessary to be compatible with safety and security objectives.**

ADVERTISEMENTS

4.128 Advertisements and signs are generally regarded as essential to commercial and business activity. They may identify the name and nature of a business being

carried on at a property, promote products and services, announce events or simply give directions. By their nature, advertisements will be expected to be visible, to attract attention and convey information. However, they can, if insensitively designed or positioned, appear brash, over-dominant or incongruous. This may be to the detriment of the design of a building, the character of the built environment or the appearance of the countryside. They may also impact on highway safety. Such objections can be emphasised where there is a proliferation of advertisements.

4.129 Many signs need the 'express consent' of the Local Planning Authority, although some are either exempt or benefit from 'deemed consent' so long as certain conditions are met. The Department of the Environment's 'Outdoor Advertising and Signs - A Guide for Advertisers' provides a useful guide to the system of advert control, and is available from the Council's Planning Department. Control over advertisements can be exercised in the interests of 'amenity' or 'public safety'.

4.130 It is found that outdoor advertisements can, without close control, be particularly intrusive in certain settings. In the countryside, away from buildings, advertisements will generally appear conspicuous against an open, rural backcloth. The high environmental quality of the countryside, much of which is of national landscape value, emphasises the sensitivity of rural locations. The main road corridors through the countryside are particularly vulnerable to a proliferation of signs and advertisements out of keeping with their rural setting. Within many settlements there are areas of high environmental sensitivity, some of which are recognised by their designation as Conservation Areas.

4.131 Somewhat stricter controls already apply within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Conservation Areas, and a measure of additional control may be gained through designation of an 'Area of Special Control of Advertisements'. The Council believes that the enhanced protection afforded by such a status is warranted throughout the High Weald and Sussex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and elsewhere outside the development boundaries of Crowborough, Hailsham, Heathfield, Uckfield and Polegate/Willingdon and Pevensey Bay. It is also considered that in Hailsham and Uckfield Conservation Areas the scale and form of built development and the traditional approach to shop design may warrant tighter control and these areas will be the subject of further investigation. It is therefore the Council's intention, subject to further investigation as necessary, to seek approval from the Secretary of State for the Environment for the designation of these areas as an Area of Special Control of Advertisements. Before seeking approval, consultations will be held with Parish Councils, local businesses, and other interested parties.

4.132 In individual circumstances where an advertisement which is displayed with the benefit of 'deemed consent' is considered to cause substantial injury to the amenity of the locality or a danger to members of the public, the Local Planning Authority may serve a 'discontinuance notice' requiring its removal. The Council may exert judicious use of this power, having regard to the sensitivity of the location.

4.133 The form of acceptable advertisements will always depend on the consideration of individual merits. Consideration should be given to the choice of materials, colour, size and proportion, lettering and illumination as well as the location of advertisements. The subject matter of signage is beyond the scope of planning control. In rural, residential and other areas away from commercial areas, advertisements should generally be more restrained. Traditional materials, such as handpainted lettering, and designs may be more acceptable. Internally illuminated signs tend to appear garish in such locations, particularly where there is no background illumination, such as street lights. Occasionally, attractive signs may be spot-lit to pleasant effect on commercial premises such as public houses.

4.134 It is clearly advisable to have full regard to the signage requirements of a development at the outset. Outdoor advertisements added as an afterthought often appear incongruous and may be unacceptable. Early consideration of the scope, siting and design of advertisements associated with new developments, including conversions, is expected.

4.135 There is specific concern about the proliferation of roadside signs, particularly along main roads in the countryside. Specific reference is given to signs directed at attracting visitors to the area in Chapter 10. Within the highway, it is the County Council's policy, as Highway Authority, only to allow direction signs when needed on traffic grounds and not otherwise. The County Council will be urged to use its powers requiring removal of unauthorised signs on or adjacent to the highway.

4.136 It is acknowledged that more positive guidance on ways in which advertising can be satisfactorily and effectively incorporated into shopfronts, on commercial buildings, business premises and in other circumstances could help everyone involved in their display to ensure they contribute to the appearance and vitality of the environment. It is proposed that such guidance, which would also give greater expression of general policies and thereby ensure consistency, be prepared. This may also cover shopfronts themselves.

EN30 Advertisements and signs should not detract from the character of their surroundings or, where appropriate, the style, scale and proportion of the building, and should otherwise be acceptable in terms of amenity and public

safety. In this consideration, the Council will also have regard to the need to avoid an inappropriate proliferation of signs.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

4.137 Developments in telecommunications - that is, all forms of communication by electrical and optical wire, cable and radio signals - are moving apace. The Government has opened up the public communications market, technology is spreading and there is much wider use of telecommunication satellites and mobile radio systems. Satellite television dishes are discussed separately below.

4.138 Government guidelines are contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 8: Telecommunications. The main issue in relation to telecommunication development and apparatus is its visual impact, potentially from over a wide area. The legislation acknowledges the sensitivity of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Conservation Areas, where consultation with the Local Planning Authority regarding certain installations by code licence operators is required. In addition, in considering the sensitivity of particular locations to telecommunications development, regard should be had to the important landscape characteristics of the various areas of the District highlighted earlier.

4.139 In weighing the impact on environmental qualities with the need for reasonable provision, taking account of technical/operational requirements and avoiding radio interference, careful consideration will be given to minimising the proliferation of equipment. Mast sharing can assist in keeping such equipment to a minimum and applicants for large masts will be expected to demonstrate that they have explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing mast or other structure.

4.140 It is recognised that, on occasions, telecommunications development, notably masts, will have an appreciable visual impact. Therefore, it is considered reasonable to ensure that such apparatus is removed when no longer required for its approved use. This would be similar to a requirement upon "code system operators" under the Telecommunications Code. It is appropriate to complement this provision, particularly in relation to telecommunications development undertaken by other operators.

EN31 In considering proposals for telecommunications developments, the Council will seek to minimise the visual impact on the landscape and other amenities of the area, whilst acknowledging the need for the reasonable provision and operational requirements of such apparatus. It should be

demonstrated that there is no reasonable possibility of sharing existing facilities. Particular regard will be had to conserving the important landscape characteristics identified in the Plan in the consideration of the location, appearance and landscaping of any mast or associated equipment and buildings.

The Council will consider imposing a condition requiring the removal of masts and/or other apparatus when no longer needed for the approved use.

4.141 The proliferation of telecommunications equipment, including masts, wires, aerials, dishes and supporting structures, may be reduced by installing ducting and other services underground and in buildings. This is strongly favoured by the Council and will be encouraged at the outset of new development proposals. Existing overhead cables - electricity as well as telephone - can significantly detract from the character of the countryside, historic areas and buildings. In such circumstances the relevant operator will be encouraged to use undergrounding methods. The siting of other service equipment may appear similarly incongruous in such settings, as well as in open countryside, and should be sensitively sited and designed.

EN32 The Council will promote appropriate provision for telecommunications equipment to be accommodated underground and within buildings, including existing telephone cables (together with electricity cables) where these are intrusive in areas of landscape, historic or architectural value.

4.142 Satellite television dishes raise similar issues in meeting the needs of changing demands for telecommunication apparatus while preserving the appearance of buildings, particularly the character of individual buildings, and the wider environment of town and country. The size, form, design and colour of dishes can be incongruous, particularly when prominently sited. Accordingly, the relevant legislation requires such dishes to be sited as inconspicuously as possible. This will often mean a position away from front facing walls or roofs, especially in areas or on buildings of notable quality. A very useful summary of the relevant considerations and the circumstances in which planning permission is needed is given in a Department of the Environment booklet 'A Householder's Planning Guide for the Installation of Satellite Television Dishes', which is available from the Council's Planning Department.

EN33 Proposals for satellite television dishes will only be permitted where they have an acceptable and minimal impact on the appearance of the building to which it relates

and on the amenities of neighbouring properties. Regard will be had to siting, design and colour and, where appropriate, to the potential for shared dish systems.

Implementation

4.143 All the policies in the Environment Chapter will be implemented by the Council primarily through its development control function.

4.144 In addition, Policies EN5, EN7 and EN9 will be the responsibility of the Council, in part through discussions with the relevant Agency.

Monitoring

4.145 Monitoring the effectiveness of the Environmental policies is clearly more subjective than other policies which can be measured in numeric or more objective terms. The Council will, however, endeavour to monitor and assess the environmental implications of new development, both in physical terms on the natural and built environment and in terms of sustainable development.

Development in the Countryside

Introduction

5.1 The countryside is integral to the character of Wealden, yet it is subject to increasing pressure for change. This relates to both development pressures and those brought about by the need to reduce food surpluses within the European Union. These factors are interwoven, as Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reforms tend to reduce farm incomes and result in land coming out of agricultural production, with consequent pressures to find beneficial alternative uses for rural land and buildings.

5.2 At the same time there is a wider awareness and appreciation of the attractive traditional rural landscape character of the countryside and its associated nature conservation value. Both residents and visitors enjoy the countryside for informal recreation.

STRATEGY

5.3 Government policies for the countryside are contained principally in Planning Policy Guidance Note 7: The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development. This states that, as a guiding principle, development should both benefit economic activity and maintain or enhance the environment. It adds that the countryside should be safeguarded for its own sake and non-renewable and natural resources should be afforded protection. More specific policies to integrate these objectives should be determined by local planning authorities in ways which reflect the different types of countryside and the economic and social circumstances found in their areas.

5.4 As Aim 8 of the Plan shows, the Council is committed to helping the rural community through the promotion of new employment opportunities. This must be balanced, however, against the need to protect the landscape and wildlife importance of the District, as set out in other policies in the Plan. It is also essential to promote an efficient pattern of development to meet the Council's commitment to the objectives of sustainable development.

5.5 Although there is now less importance attached to retaining land in productive agricultural use, the Council recognises the need to sustain the agricultural industry, and will resist the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Moreover, there has been an increasing range of other commercial activities in the countryside which make valuable contributions to sustaining a healthy rural economy. Research has shown that many firms are setting up and thriving in

countryside locations. Indeed, many of these are now an established part of the rural scene, often utilising former farm buildings. In view of the need to improve the local economy, provision should continue to be made for appropriate diversification, with priority attached to employment generating uses.

5.6 For the purposes of the Plan, countryside policies apply to all areas outside the development boundaries defined in Chapter 3 and GD1 and GD2. Dealing with countryside recreation, the Plan places an emphasis on quiet enjoyment to reflect the high landscape quality and vulnerability of much of the countryside to development pressures. It is noted that, unlike National Parks, recreation is not an objective of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, although such activities may be acceptable provided that they are consistent with the primary landscape objectives. Housing in the countryside is generally resisted, although there are special needs which may be met, such as agriculture, forestry or affordable housing. Replacement dwellings may also be appropriate.

The particular objectives for the countryside are:-

- (1) to balance the needs of the rural economy with the protection of the District's landscape and wildlife;*
- (2) to assist the rural economy by providing for appropriate alternative uses of land and buildings;*
- (3) to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land;*
- (4) to encourage quiet informal recreational enjoyment of the countryside, and to provide a policy framework for organised recreation;*
- (5) to resist housing development unless it meets particular needs and requires a countryside location.*
- (6) to support national and local initiatives for sensitive countryside management, particularly in areas vulnerable to change and in relation to agricultural practices;*

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT

5.7 As set out in Chapter 3, the areas of towns and villages where new development is acceptable in principle are defined by 'development boundaries'. For the purposes of the Local Plan, countryside policies apply to all areas outside the development boundaries, including the fringes of some settlements, and covers

others where no development boundary is drawn. The Plan's approach to new development outside development boundaries is to prevent sporadic and unnecessary development and normally only permit that which is regarded as conserving the character of the countryside.

5.8 Agricultural development, including farm diversification, recreational and equestrian developments, as well as certain residential development in the countryside are considered below. Business activities are considered separately in Chapter 7, while shopping policies, including garden centres and farm shops, are in Chapter 8. Transport proposals, which may have particular environmental implications on the countryside are considered in Chapter 9. Tourism and recreation development are also addressed in Chapters 10 and 11 respectively.

AGRICULTURAL LAND AND DEVELOPMENT

5.9 The landscape of the countryside has been largely moulded by the nature and pattern of farming activity, which remains its principal land use. It follows that the future of the countryside is closely bound with the trends and policies affecting agriculture. Measures being taken to reduce overall production and thereby cut current food surpluses resulting from Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reforms are likely to continue to have a major influence on the agricultural economy and hence, on the significant number of jobs (3,000) in farming in the District.

5.10 Securing an economic future for the agricultural industry is primarily a matter for co-ordinated discussion between the Government, the European Union and the agencies involved. This should provide a long term agricultural policy rather than rely on short term land use solutions to the issue. Notwithstanding this, the Council appreciates that, locally, the generally poor soil and land drainage conditions make farms vulnerable to changes in agricultural support policies. This may be exacerbated by the small size of many farms. This threatens not only the viability of farming but, moreover, the integrity and attractiveness of the countryside itself.

5.11 Notwithstanding the reduced emphasis on agricultural production, it is Government policy that the countryside should be safeguarded for its own sake. In order to retain and enhance the role of agriculture as an integral part of Wealden's highly valued landscape character, it is particularly important to maintain a viable agricultural economy and to encourage greater integration of environmental objectives with agricultural support policies. This may be promoted in several ways. These include appropriate protection of agricultural land, resisting the damaging effects of

severance and fragmentation of holdings, accommodating new agricultural practices and looking at sensitive alternative uses for rural land and buildings.

Agricultural Land

5.12 It is estimated that there are some 1,320 farm holdings in the District, based on Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) statistics, covering some 51,440 hectares, or about 62% of the area of Wealden. Farming activity varies across the District according to differing soils, topography, drainage and tradition. In the High Weald, the small tree and hedge-lined fields, interspersed with woodland, are still mainly grazed, although dairying has declined in recent years. There are several, albeit small, vineyards on south-facing slopes. In the Low Weald, there is a greater proportion of arable farming, increasing southwards and onto the Downs, which is now also seeing something of a return to open grazing. Improved drainage within the Coastal Levels has brought about cereal growing, although much is still permanent grazing land due to the low-lying ground.

5.13 It is Government policy to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land, which is defined as Grades 1, 2 and 3a under the MAFF agricultural land classification. County Structure Plan Policy S12 aims to protect such land wherever possible. In view of the predominantly clay soils locally, with virtually no Grade 1 or 2 land, it is considered that within Wealden it is particularly important to protect Grade 3a agricultural land. Proposals for alternative uses of agricultural land will normally need to indicate the grade of land concerned, based on a survey carried out to MAFF criteria.

DC1 Land falling within Grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food agricultural land classification system will be protected from development, wherever possible.

5.14 Integration of agricultural practices with environmental objectives may be promoted in a number of ways. MAFF has designated much of the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as an 'Environmentally Sensitive Area' under the 1986 Agricultural Act. This encourages a reversion to traditional farming methods through incentive payments to farmers, in recognition of the sensitivity of its historic landscape to agricultural change. Within the Pevensy Levels SSSI, English Nature has introduced a Wildlife Enhancement Scheme which provides payments for managing land in a way sympathetic to wildlife. There are also generally available schemes of assistance towards environmental and wildlife conservation for farmers. These include Countryside Stewardship and the Farm Woodland Premium, as well as targeted initiatives by English Nature.

5.15 The Council will encourage the retention and enhancement of traditional agricultural landscapes and related features such as hedgerows, trees and woodland, ponds and ditches, principally through its support for appropriate environmental schemes.

Agricultural Dwellings

5.16 There is continuing pressure for new dwellings to meet the essential needs of enterprises that require a countryside location. Notwithstanding the generally poor prospects for the agricultural economy as a whole and the existing stock of agricultural workers dwellings, the principal interest is in new agricultural dwellings. However, there are also pressures for dwellings to serve the essential needs of other enterprises which need to be located in the countryside, and similar considerations as set out in the text below and in Policy DC2 will apply to such proposals in the same way that they apply to agricultural dwellings. While countryside policies generally presume against new housing outside development boundaries, agricultural dwellings may be accepted where circumstances require a farm worker to live at or in the immediate vicinity of the holding. The settlement pattern of the District should afford reasonable proximity of accommodation to farms within nearby towns and villages suitable for many farm workers.

5.17 Detailed scrutiny of residential proposals seeking an agricultural justification is necessary to avoid abuse and an unwarranted proliferation of development in the countryside. In cases where the local planning authority is particularly concerned about possible abuse, it may be helpful to investigate the history of the holding to establish the recent pattern of use of land and buildings and whether, for example, any dwellings or buildings suitable for conversion to dwellings have recently been sold separately from the farmland concerned. Such a sale would constitute evidence of lack of agricultural need.

5.18 Policy DC2 closely accords with Government advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 7 in which Annex I contains detailed advice. The Annex recommends “functional” and “financial” tests to ensure that proposals are genuine, that they are reasonably likely to materialise and are capable of being sustained for a reasonable period of time such as to justify the scale of the residential proposal.

5.19 A functional test will be necessary to demonstrate that it is essential for one or more full time workers to be readily available to meet the established needs of the enterprise at most times, day and night, such as to provide for the proper supervision of agricultural processes or livestock. It will not be sufficient that it is merely convenient or desirable to live on the holding. Security is not itself a sufficient justification.

5.20 In relation to demonstrating genuine need, it will also be necessary to apply a financial test to assess whether a farming enterprise is economically viable and planned on a sound financial basis. To this end, the enterprise should have been established for at least three years and has shown a profit for at least one of these years. The enterprise should be financially sound and clearly demonstrate that it is likely to remain so. The Council will draw upon independent professional advice when considering these proposals.

5.21 Where a genuine need is accepted, consideration should be given to the siting, size, form and access arrangements for a proposed dwelling such that it blends with the landscape setting and is also able to serve the functional requirement of the holding. A proposed dwelling should be the minimum required for the holding and should wherever possible be well integrated within an existing group of buildings. Planning Policy Guidance Note 7 advises that size should be commensurate with the established functional requirement of the holding. While each case will be considered accordingly, an individual dwelling would be expected to be no more than an average sized family house. Unduly large dwellings would be inappropriate in a rural setting. Also, it should be apparent that the long term availability for farm workers would not be unduly restricted by the future value of a property, and so the size of dwelling should be relative to the income the holding can sustain in the long term.

5.22 If a new dwelling is essential to support a new farming or other rural activity, whether on an established or newly – created unit, the accommodation should be of a temporary form, such as a caravan or mobile home for the first three years, after which the justification or otherwise for a permanent dwelling should normally be determinable.

5.23 It follows from the special treatment of dwellings essential for the needs of a rural enterprise that they should be kept available for such purposes. Hence, a condition restricting its use and, where appropriate, that of other dwellings on the holding will be appropriate. Occupancy conditions will enable a dwelling to be available for other rural enterprises even if the original enterprise no longer seeks to retain it. They will only be lifted where it can be demonstrated that there is unlikely to be a need for the accommodation for such purposes in the area within a reasonable period of time.

5.24 In appropriate circumstances, a planning obligation will be sought to tie the dwelling to the adjacent buildings or to the land forming the holding. Exceptionally, not all of the land forming the holding need be the subject of a planning obligation, provided sufficient is included to justify the dwelling.

5.25 Agricultural land within Wealden is generally of poor quality and divided into small land holdings. There has been a history of fragmentation of properties,

where land has been sold away from the original farmhouses. Fragmentation can have an adverse impact upon the valued character of the Wealden countryside, through the intensification of activities on the land, the erection of scattered buildings and the need for fencing to enclose the smaller parcels of land. The use of planning obligations in appropriate circumstances assists in preventing the harmful effects of continuing fragmentation. It is recognised that such planning obligations can place an additional constraint on the operation of rural businesses, such as the ability to raise loans and the time involved in completing the planning obligations. However, their use in appropriate circumstances is considered to be justified and accords with the advice given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 7.

DC2 Outside the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, new permanent dwellings will be permitted for those employed in agriculture or forestry, or exceptionally in another enterprise where a countryside location is necessary, where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that the following criteria are met:

- (1) there is a clearly established existing functional need;**
- (2) no other suitable accommodation is available on the unit or elsewhere in the location;**
- (3) the enterprise has been established for at least three years, has been profitable for at least one of them, is currently financially sound and has a clear prospect of remaining so;**
- (4) the dwelling is of a size commensurate with the established functional requirement. Dwellings which are unusually large in relation to the needs of the unit or unusually expensive to construct in relation to the income it can sustain in the long term will not be permitted;**
- (5) the dwelling is suitably located to meet the identified functional need of the enterprise, integrates well with existing buildings wherever possible, is not intrusive in the landscape, and its general design is appropriate to the character of the area.**

Where the functional requirement is proven but Criterion 3 is not met, a temporary permission will be granted for a caravan or mobile home, where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that the following criteria are met:-

- (i) Criteria (2) and (5) above;**

(ii) there is clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned;

(iii) there is clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis.

Occupancy conditions will be imposed on dwellings permitted in accordance with this policy and, where appropriate, on other dwellings within the holding. The removal of occupancy conditions will be resisted unless it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that there is unlikely to be any need for such dwellings in the area in the foreseeable future.

In appropriate circumstances, the Council will seek a planning obligation to tie a permanent dwelling to adjacent buildings or to the land forming the holding.

Agricultural Buildings and Other Farm Development

5.26 There will be a continuing need for a range of farm buildings and structures for storing machinery and foodstuffs, livestock, etc. This will reflect both changing agricultural practices and any restructuring of farm holdings; also, older traditional farm buildings may need replacing or are otherwise no longer suitable for efficient modern farm usage.

5.27 While larger developments have required planning permission, many of these buildings and associated works have for long been largely exempt from planning control, which has resulted in many essentially utilitarian structures becoming widespread in the countryside. They nonetheless can represent a harsh feature, particularly when prominent in the landscape. In particular, the scale and materials of the larger, modern portal framed buildings can be inharmonious with a sensitive landscape setting.

5.28 Legislation requires farmers to submit details of virtually all developments, including the construction of new farm buildings, significant extensions and alterations, farm roads, and certain excavations and waste depositing. On smaller holdings (less than 5 hectares), all buildings require consent. Also, approval is required for all poultry buildings in much of the District by virtue of an Article 4 Direction. The siting, design and external appearance of buildings are the main considerations, taking account of the impact on the landscape and on important historic, archaeological and nature conservation interests, as well as on the relationship with their surroundings, including rural and residential amenities. Account may also be taken of

the operational requirements of the farm, particularly in considering appropriate siting. The design of agricultural buildings is a particular concern, especially in areas of high landscape value, and it is appropriate that sympathetic external treatments are ensured. Development within the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty is likely to be sensitive in landscape terms and will warrant a high standard of appearance.

5.29 In circumstances where the Council is notified of a proposed development which is likely to have a significant impact on its surroundings, including because it would be unduly prominent in the landscape or would affect sites of recognised historic, archaeological or nature conservation interest, the formal submission of details would be expected. Particular regard will be paid to the detailed advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 7 Annex E in considering agricultural development proposals.

5.30 All farm buildings should be designed for modern, functional agricultural purposes, and be reasonably necessary for the purpose of agriculture on the holding. Criterion (5) of Policy DC3 gives guidance on the provision of buildings for storage, packing or processing of produce. It applies essentially to activities that could be regarded as freestanding, in particular to proposals for larger scale uses and those which are for the shared use of a number of holdings. In these circumstances it will first be necessary to demonstrate that the use could not be carried out within the business areas. However, it is not intended that this test should apply to small scale developments ancillary to the agricultural activities of a farm. In fact, the Council is supportive of initiatives to promote local produce in order to sustain and diversify the rural economy.

DC3 Proposals for new farm buildings, extensions and alterations, and other ancillary development will be permitted subject to the following criteria:

- (1) buildings are reasonably necessary for the purposes of the agricultural holding and are clearly designed for such use;**
- (2) development is integrated with existing structures, as far as practicable;**
- (3) the siting, design and external appearance of buildings and other structures is not intrusive within the landscape and does not detract from local amenities or interests of recognised historic, archaeological or nature conservation interest;**
- (4) particular care is taken to siting, design and appearance within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;**

(5) where buildings for storage, packing or processing are for the use of one holding or shared use of a number of holdings, it will first be necessary to demonstrate that the use could not be carried out within a business area.

DC4 Proposals for agricultural or forestry buildings, structures or operations within the scope of notification procedures will be considered having regard to the siting and design criteria at Policy DC3. The Council will require the formal submission of details for approval where such buildings, structures or operations are likely to have a significant impact on their surroundings.

5.31 In order to advise farmers and to assist in the operation of these policies, the Council will publish detailed guidelines setting out the circumstances in which details may be required and the relevant considerations in due course.

Agricultural Diversification

5.32 Measures being taken to reduce agricultural output by support and subsidies are resulting in land coming out of production as well as pressures for farmers to diversify their activities to protect incomes. As a consequence, there is likely to be pressure for alternative uses to be sought for both land and buildings. The Council believes that it is important to provide for appropriate agricultural diversification, both to assist the rural economy and to help maintain traditional, principally agricultural landscapes. This recognises the continuing stewardship of the countryside by the farming community and should also be seen in the context of the long term environmental and landscape objectives of the Plan.

5.33 Diversification can involve a re-orientation of the type of farming carried out, including the cultivation of “new” crops, taking advantage of assistance for environmentally sensitive farming, including woodland planting, the introduction of various forms of leisure or recreation elements or the conversion of agricultural buildings to alternative uses. The Council will encourage diversification proposals which are compatible with and, where appropriate, assist the maintenance of farming activities to ensure the long term agricultural management of the land. It is desirable that an integrated approach to development and land use is taken, such as via preparation of a “farm management plan”, when large sites or holdings are involved. Where a change of use is involved, preference will normally be given to proposals which assist the rural economy and provide local employment opportunities.

5.34 The nature and extent of diversification should respect the landscape qualities of the countryside and accord with the protection of its distinct character and appearance, as elaborated upon in Chapter 4. It should also take account of the Plan's sustainability strategy which seeks both to relate development to existing centres of population and to reduce reliance on the car for journeys to work. General infrastructural difficulties in servicing dispersed development should also be recognised. Development proposals should respect their rural setting, and may often be small-scale. Certain types of development, such as those which generate high traffic volumes or significant movements of heavy goods vehicles, may be inappropriate in this context.

5.35 In tandem with policies to protect the landscape character of the countryside and environmentally sensitive agricultural practices within it, the Council also believes that diversification proposals should support the retention of viable farm holdings and discourage the inappropriate fragmentation of land. The latter process can occur where land and farm buildings are separated or where small plots are acquired, often for keeping horses, small holdings etc. This can be particularly damaging within areas which retain a very traditional pattern of land uses. Planning obligations or the removal of permitted development rights may be sought where there is a particular concern in this respect.

5.36 The Council encourages the preparation of farm management plans to indicate clearly the implications of diversification proposals on the continued operation of the whole farm. These would be informal and complementary to a planning application. They may be used to support proposals and assist in weighing the environmental and economic issues, particularly where these are finely balanced. The plan may cover matters such as the implications for other land and buildings, possible demolition of unsightly buildings, landscape management, habitat improvement, public access, etc, as appropriate.

DC5 The Council will permit proposals for the alternative use of agriculture and other land and buildings which provide for the appropriate diversification of the rural economy and which do not adversely affect the character or appearance of the countryside or conflict with other policies of the Plan.

5.37 This policy will be applied in conjunction with those relating to the alternative uses of land and buildings for which specific consideration is given in the following sections. The impact of signage in the countryside is covered in the Advertisements section in Chapter 4.

CONVERSION OF FARM OR OTHER RURAL BUILDINGS

5.38 With landowners and farmers wishing to diversify their operations, there has been a marked increase in proposals for the conversion of farm and other rural buildings in the countryside to alternative uses, principally residential, office, workshop and tourism uses.

5.39 The conversion of existing buildings in the countryside for small businesses may help local employment and contribute to a healthy local economy. It is believed that this can be achieved within the overall objective of protecting the countryside from inappropriate and intrusive development. Such conversions will be primarily small scale developments for local employment, including small workshops and offices, recreation, tourism or institutional use. Priority will be given to such uses, particularly for local employment, over conversion to residential use. The latter may be acceptable in certain circumstances as an exception to the normal restrictive policies for housing development in the countryside. This is considered later at paragraph 5.49.

DC6 In considering proposals for the conversion of agricultural or other rural buildings in the countryside (outside the development boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map), the Council will give priority to small scale commercial uses over residential uses.

5.40 It should be recognised that not all buildings in the countryside are suitable for conversion or adaptation to new uses. Some existing rural buildings are often badly designed and sited and poorly constructed, having been erected before planning controls existed or by using agricultural permitted development rights. If converted to an alternative use, such buildings would be permanently retained as intrusive features in the landscape, in obvious conflict with policies seeking to conserve and enhance the rural environment. There are also many minor sheds and shelters in the countryside which, due to their lightweight construction, do not readily lend themselves to conversion and, once redundant, are best demolished.

5.41 Where existing farm buildings are converted to alternative uses, additional agricultural buildings may subsequently be constructed under permitted development rights. This could result in a gradual increase in sporadic development within the countryside to the detriment of the landscape. In such cases, the Council will seek to control the replacement of old farm buildings by new ones by attaching to the planning permission a condition withdrawing permitted development rights for new agricultural buildings in respect of the particular agricultural unit or holding.

5.42 Where buildings have been constructed under permitted development rights, but are not apparently to be used for agricultural purposes, the Council will investigate the history of the building, consider the owner or applicant's intention for the building and, where appropriate, will consider whether it is expedient to take enforcement action.

5.43 Planning consent will normally only be granted where modifications can be carried out without materially altering the character and appearance of the building. This may need to be demonstrated through the submission of a structural survey. All proposals for the conversion of farm buildings should be capable of complying with Building Regulations. In the case of the conversion of listed rural buildings, the relevant policy criteria must also be complied with.

5.44 In order to protect the character of the building and its setting, permission will not normally be granted for the extension of existing buildings or for their replacement by the erection of new buildings. Where appropriate, the right to make further extensions under the General Permitted Development Order 1995 will be removed by condition and/or legal agreement, and the planning permission would be subject to conditions restricting outside development and activities such as sheds, fencing, storage and other operations. Planning permission will only be granted for the change of use of any associated land if the Council is satisfied that this can be done without detriment to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Conversion for Non-Residential Uses

5.45 Favourable consideration will be given to proposals for developments to meet local employment, tourism or community needs within existing farm buildings in the countryside if the buildings are proved to be of sound construction, not intrusive, and in keeping with their surroundings, and if there would be no significant harmful environmental effects as a result of the development. Within the designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, particular attention will be given to ensuring that proposals conserve or enhance their natural beauty in accordance with Policies EN6 and EN9 of the Plan.

5.46 Where conversion to business use is proposed, the impact of any associated storage or parking requirements on the character and appearance of the immediate locality and the surrounding countryside will be taken into account. All applications will be expected to incorporate clearly defined limits of development, together with an indication of the use of all open areas.

5.47 The Council's intentions for development patterns and transportation are set out in EN2 in Chapter 4, and are aimed at ensuring a distribution of uses which reduces the need to travel. There are

concerns regarding the compatibility of Government policies for rural building business conversion with those for transport, but the local approach recognises the need to assist the rural and agricultural economy and to reduce long distance out-commuting. Nonetheless, proposals for conversion or new uses which could generate a significant number of jobs should be well related to towns or villages. The Council would also expect such proposals to be part of a farm diversification scheme with a management plan and bring an overall environmental improvement to the locality.

5.48 Farm management plans may also be helpful in indicating how various uses of land and buildings, particularly those associated with farm diversification, relate to each other. This may be particularly significant where potential conflicts between activities may arise, where there are other buildings in a complex that are, or are likely to become, redundant, or where there is a need for new buildings or a change of use of land. In such cases, a farm management plan would help enable a full and proper assessment of particular proposals. In some instances where a farm building conversion is proposed, it may also be appropriate to tie it to the land so as to discourage subsequent fragmentation where this would be likely to result in an erosion of landscape character.

DC7 Proposals for non-residential development (including workshops, offices, tourist accommodation and recreational use) through the conversion of agricultural or other rural buildings in the countryside (outside the development boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map) will be permitted where the building's form, bulk and general design are in keeping with its surroundings. In addition, all proposals should meet the following criteria:

(1) the building is of sound construction and capable of conversion without significant rebuilding, or extension. The Council may require this to be demonstrated through the submission of a structural survey;

(2) any proposed alterations to the building (e.g. fenestration, doors, internal subdivision) or to its associated operational area (e.g. parking, storage) would not harm its appearance as a rural building or adversely affect the rural setting of the building in the locality;

(3) the nature and intensity of the proposed use would be compatible with its rural location;

(4) the proposed use would not adversely affect the residential amenities of the

neighbourhood, particularly by reason of noise, disturbance and fumes;

(5) the proposed use would not create an unacceptable impact on the local road network and there is a satisfactory means of vehicular access and parking arrangements;

(6) proposals which would be likely to create a significant number of jobs should be well located in relation to towns and villages.

Conversion to Residential Use

5.49 Consent for the conversion of existing rural buildings to residential use may be granted as an exception to normal restrictive policies controlling new housing development in the countryside, provided that such buildings are in keeping with their surrounding. However, this exception to normal restraint policies will only be made where it can be demonstrated that every reasonable attempt has been made to secure suitable business re-use or where a residential conversion is a subordinate part of a scheme for business re-use.

5.50 In all cases, it will be necessary for the applicant to demonstrate that the proposal is achievable without damaging or substantially altering the existing character and appearance of the building or harming its countryside setting. The building itself should be of sound construction and capable of conversion without significant rebuilding, modification or extension. An important consideration will be whether the creation of a residential curtilage and associated paraphernalia (tended gardens, fences, clothes dryers etc) would have a harmful effect on the character of the surrounding countryside.

5.51 Where residential conversion is part of a scheme for the re-use of a building or complex of buildings for employment purposes, a condition will be imposed requiring the works necessary for the establishment of the enterprise to have been completed before the dwelling is occupied. In appropriate cases, the Council will seek to tie occupation of the dwelling to the operation of the business re-use, by means of a condition or a planning obligation, in order to prevent it being sold separately.

DC8 Proposals for the conversion of agricultural or other rural buildings in the countryside (outside the development boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map) to residential use will not be permitted unless either:-

(a) the applicant has made every reasonable attempt to secure suitable business re-use, and

the application is supported by a statement of the efforts which have been made; or

(b) residential conversion is a subordinate part of a scheme for business re-use.

In all cases, proposals should meet the following criteria:-

(1) the building's form, bulk and general design are in keeping with its surroundings;

(2) the building is of sound construction and capable of conversion without significant rebuilding, modification or extension. The Council will normally require this to be demonstrated through the submission of a structural survey;

(3) any proposed alterations to the building (e.g fenestration, doors, internal subdivision) would not harm its architectural integrity nor materially change its appearance as a rural building. In the case of listed buildings, Policy EN22 will apply;

(4) the proposed use and its associated activities, including garaging, would not detract from the rural setting of the building through the formation of a domestic curtilage. The curtilage should not be intrusive in the landscape. Where appropriate, conditions will be imposed to exclude permitted development rights to extend or alter the building and erect other ancillary buildings, fencing etc;

(5) the proposal would not create an unacceptable impact on the local road network and there is a satisfactory means of vehicular access and parking arrangements.

TEMPORARY USES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

5.52 Under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 1995, the occasional use of land is normally exempt from planning control. The frequency of use depends on the type of activity, being 14 days in any calendar year for markets (including boot fairs) and motor sports, and 28 days for clay pigeon shooting, 'war games' and other activities. Such permitted development rights do not apply within Sites of Special Scientific Interest. There is an increasing level of such temporary land uses, sometimes associated with farm diversification proposals, but often on a commercial basis involving

small plots of land, which fall outside the scope of normal planning control.

5.53 Where uses are more frequent than the relevant permitted limits and planning permission is required, the Council will consider proposals against its overall diversification policy and, where appropriate, specific policies for that particular use, such as motor and gun sports, which are put forward later. It is clear that even the periodic use of land for temporary uses can cause substantial nuisance to local residents, significantly detract from rural visual amenities or disturb important wildlife habitats.

5.54 This is reflected in the increasing public concern expressed about many of the above uses. The Council has made representations about bringing temporary uses into proper planning control, and the Government is currently reviewing the situation. In the current circumstances, the Council may properly seek to remove these 'permitted development' rights where substantial nuisances are created. A general background and approach to the use of such Article 4 Directions is set out in Chapter 4.

COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION

5.55 For all recreational development in the countryside, careful regard needs to be given to the likely impact on the environment, its landscape and rural amenities. This will relate to both the physical and visual change involved, including traffic generation. Special protection will be given to the Sussex Downs and the Ashdown Forest by only allowing recreational development in association with the quiet enjoyment of the countryside. This approach accords with Policy S18 of the County Structure Plan and recognises the particular vulnerability of these areas to visitor pressure, arising from their open and remote landscape characters.

DC9 Within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Ashdown Forest (defined as the area enclosed by the Medieval Pale of 1372) only recreational development which is in association with the quiet enjoyment of the area and conserves its landscape character will be permitted.

5.56 In view of their demand for countryside locations, specific consideration is given to golf courses, equestrian developments, motor and gun sports, clay pigeon shooting and air sports below.

Golf

5.57 Proposals for golf course developments in Wealden have risen markedly in recent years, with some 24 applications submitted since 1988, as well as

others for driving ranges. This is seen as a reflection of golf's growing popularity and profile, coupled with a generally recognised national deficiency in provision. It has also coincided with pressures for land coming out of agricultural production.

5.58 In response to increased pressures for golf-related developments across East Sussex, the County Council published 'Planning Guidance for Golf Course Development' in March 1991. These informal guidelines have been 'adopted' by the District Council, and strong regard is paid to them when considering golf proposals. It is now considered that in view of the number of golf course proposals and their potential environmental impacts, specific policy coverage should be incorporated in the Local Plan. This draws upon the substantial experience of dealing with recent proposals.

5.59 The Council has sought to reconcile the legitimate demands for golf development with the potential environmental and amenity objections in accordance with overall Structure Plan policies, the Local Plan's objectives for the countryside and recreation, taking due account of Government advice, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 - Sport and Recreation. It has recognised that golf courses can be an appropriate land use in the countryside, assisting rural economic diversification, but that they may also have detrimental effects on the structure and pattern of the countryside, its landscape, historic and nature conservation value and, indeed, overall rural character. Disturbance may also be caused to local residents, farm holdings as well as through intrusive effects of people, activity and traffic, including traffic generation on unsuitable roads.

5.60 There are now eleven golf courses in Wealden, with a further seven approved and one other scheme agreed in principle. In addition, course extensions are approved at two existing courses. This would result, if implemented, in up to fifteen 18 hole courses and six 9 hole courses. This would represent a considerable level and concentration of provision, well in excess of the standard for the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrew's 'unambitious' level of provision of one course per 25,000 population. This may be regarded as much a reflection of current interest in golf development as of the rural nature of the District, its proximity to larger urban areas and potential 'honey pot' impact of the East Sussex National Golf Club at Little Horsted. Therefore, it is considered that there is no overriding need to accommodate further golf course proposals. Other proposals would not be ruled out, but they should comply with the policies which seek to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the countryside and meet other more local considerations. The availability of water resources to service such developments will be a particularly important consideration and the Council will seek the advice of the Environment Agency, in accordance with Policy EN5, when assessing new proposals.

5.61 A golf course can be an alien feature in the countryside, since it can present a manicured appearance which is not characteristically rural. In addition, the level of activity can be far greater than is normal in the countryside. Policies for the main landscape areas of the District are set out in Chapter 4, and they will be the Council's starting point in judging the impact of golf course proposals. The same chapter also includes policies for the conservation of historic landscapes and nature conservation which will be taken into account.

5.62 It is evident that in all cases, the course siting, form, layout, groundworks, management regimes, clubhouses, other buildings and structures, parking areas and access arrangements will need careful attention to assess the impact on the overall character of the site and its setting, its topography, site features and public views. Applications should be in sufficient detail to enable proper assessment. They should indicate, as far as possible, the total extent of development envisaged, as approval does not imply that any future proposals would necessarily be favourably considered.

5.63 In particular, new buildings are normally resisted in the countryside, especially within the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and strategic gaps. Accordingly, proposals should seek to re-use existing buildings in accordance with Policy DC7. In countryside areas, the scale, massing, siting and design of all buildings should blend in with the landscape and local building character. Future extensions would be considered in the light of the relevant criteria of Policy DC19. Residential building must clearly be essential in accordance with Policy DC17. Parking areas need to be carefully sited, landscaped and surfaced to blend in the landscape.

5.64 The most appropriate locations for golf courses are generally accepted as being in urban fringes, especially where the landscape is degraded in some way or otherwise of poor quality. Policy PW5 identifies an area between Polegate and Eastbourne Park where a golf course development could represent a positive amenity in visual, environmental and nature conservation as well as recreation terms.

DC10 Within the countryside (outside the development boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map), proposals for golf courses and related development may be permitted where they have no adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. In addition, they should:-

(1) meet the requirements of policies elsewhere in the Plan for the protection of landscape, nature conservation, woodland, archaeology and the best and most versatile agricultural land;

(2) be readily accessible to urban areas;

(3) wherever possible use existing buildings;

(4) provide for the maintenance and where appropriate, enhancement of public access in the layout and design.

Proposals should be presented in sufficient detail, including topographical and landscape changes, to enable proper assessment.

Driving Ranges

5.65 Driving ranges represent a distinct form of golf-related development. They are often independent of golf courses, are more intensive in their level of usage and urban in character, involving specifically designed range of 'bays' for players, an extensive well fenced 'hit area', associated car parking and, normally, floodlighting.

5.66 An intrusive impact on the character and appearance of the countryside is therefore most likely. Areas of high landscape quality and of particularly unspoilt character would be especially vulnerable. There may also be considerable effects, through outlook, noise and disturbance, on residential amenities, as well as on traffic conditions and public safety. The impact of illumination, which is uncharacteristic in rural, countryside areas, may also be substantial and thereby unacceptable. The overall intensity of activity, especially lighting, would mean that the locational criteria for general golf development would be rigorously applied.

DC11 Proposals for golf driving ranges will only be permitted when it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant effect on the character or appearance of the countryside, residential amenities, traffic conditions or public safety, having regard to:

(1) the size and number of bays and the impact of the bulk and design of buildings and enclosure fencing;

(2) the impact and suitability of floodlighting, including reflected light;

(3) the degree of physical change and visibility.
Equestrian Development

5.67 Equestrian activities are an increasingly popular form of leisure pastime and also make a recognised contribution to the rural economy, attracting a significant number of planning applications for related developments of both domestic and commercial nature.

Commercial equestrian centres, riding schools and livery stables are now widespread, although the majority of proposals for equestrian development relate to the provision of essentially small-scale or private stables. In some circumstances (as specified in the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 1995), the erection of stables or loose boxes within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse for the domestic needs or enjoyment of the occupants of the dwelling may enjoy permitted development rights and therefore not require planning permission.

5.68 The grazing of horses can be akin to agricultural use and may be an acceptable alternative use of agricultural land, although the random proliferation of horse-related activities and associated buildings within rural areas may be detrimental to the character and appearance of the countryside. The subdivision of farm holdings and formation of numerous paddocks with individual stables or field shelters can create a fragmented landscape and a pattern of enclosures out of keeping with the locality. The degree of visual intrusion created by horse-related development is likely to be more significant in areas of special landscape quality and other areas of an open character.

5.69 Where stabling or loose boxes are proposed solely for private and domestic purposes, development should be of an appropriate modest scale and physically well related to the associated dwelling. Careful attention should be given to siting and landscaping details to avoid exposed or prominent locations. Traditional style and materials should be used. In appropriate circumstances where the structures proposed are of a temporary nature, time limitations may be imposed. Development should not create or perpetuate a serious traffic hazard.

5.70 Developments such as maneges or sand schools, particularly those which are illuminated, and larger scale stables for domestic and commercial use, as well as large and small scale commercial equestrian enterprises, including livery stables and riding schools, entail a potentially greater intensity of activity which is likely to have a substantial impact upon the character and amenity of the countryside. The cumulative impact of such developments can be very marked.

5.71 The Council recognises that a rural location is usually required for equestrian enterprises. Isolated development, being away from existing buildings, would represent inappropriate scattered development in the countryside. This refers to either the dwellinghouse in relation to domestic stables or existing, normally farm, complexes in respect of liveries. Similarly, such development on exposed or prominent sites which are poorly related to vehicular access or bridleways will be resisted. The potential impact of horse-related development may be reduced by compactly grouping new buildings and by the provision of an appropriate landscaping scheme to help absorb features into the landscape.

5.72 New equestrian development should be well related to existing public bridleways in order to minimise the need to exercise horses on the highway, but regard will be had to increased levels of erosion of both bridleways and the wider countryside arising from over-intensification of use. Particular concerns over the level of usage of Ashdown Forest are partly addressed by the special controls of the Board of Conservators. Potential traffic generation, effects on the amenities of local residents and other normal planning considerations will be assessed in relation to other policies in this Plan.

DC12 Applications for small scale stables or loose boxes principally for domestic and private purposes will be permitted where the following criteria are met:-

- (1) appropriate siting, scale and design in keeping with the locality, with adequate pasture to support the horses. Particular regard will be had to the potential impact, including the cumulative effect, of proposals within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;**
- (2) proposals should not be sited in prominent or isolated locations.**

DC13 Applications for small scale commercial stables and larger equestrian developments and uses of land, including sand rings and maneges, will only be permitted where the following criteria are met:-

- (1) appropriate siting, scale and design in keeping with the locality, with adequate pasture to support the horses. Particular regard will be had to the potential impact of proposals within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;**
- (2) proposals should not be sited in prominent or isolated locations, and should be satisfactorily integrated with existing buildings;**
- (3) the impact of floodlighting, changes in levels or other ancillary operations on the surrounding countryside and local amenities is acceptable;**
- (4) satisfactory integration with the public bridleway network;**
- (5) the proposal does not create an unacceptable impact on the local road network.**

Motor and Gun Sports

5.73 The Council supports and encourages the development of sport and recreational activities in the District, and outdoor recreation is generally viewed as an activity which is appropriate to a rural location. However, some recreational pursuits, such as motor sports, clay pigeon shooting and combat gaming, can radically affect the character of the countryside. By their very nature, such activities involve generating noise and disturbance, and consequently often cause concern in terms of their potential impact upon the natural environment or other people's enjoyment of the countryside.

5.74 Participation in motor and gun sports, as well as newer forms of leisure which require a countryside setting, has increased significantly in recent years, partly in association with the diversification of farming activities. This frequently occurs on an occasional basis without requiring express planning permission, under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 1995. However, where such activities are proposed on a permanent basis, planning controls can be used to ensure that issues such as noise, disturbance, access, etc, are adequately taken into account and, where appropriate, controlled by conditions.

5.75 In the consideration of proposals for motor and gun sports, it is important to ensure that a balance is struck between the needs of such pursuits and the conservation and amenity aims of the Plan. The Council has therefore formulated a set of criteria against which proposals for these types of sporting and recreational activities will be judged to ensure there are no adverse effects in terms of noise nuisance, nature conservation, visual intrusion, etc. In respect of noise nuisance, it should be recognised that noise levels considered to be unacceptable in planning terms may not necessarily constitute a statutory nuisance under Environmental Health legislation.

5.76 Planning permission is unlikely to be granted for such activities within or adjacent to areas where it is intended to provide only for recreational development in association with the quiet enjoyment of the countryside or where the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats is paramount. Sites where such activities are unlikely to be appropriate include ancient semi-natural woodland, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, national and local nature reserves, sites of nature conservation interest, and sites and monuments of archaeological importance.

Motor Sports

5.77 Motor sports are distinguishable from most other sporting activities principally in terms of their noise

emission. Ecological disturbance and physical erosion can also be a significant problem, both for organised events and informal motor vehicle activities. At sites within Wealden, four-wheel drive events and motorcycle scrambling and racing have led to concerns over noise and dust, and occasionally resulted in serious damage to sites of high nature conservation or landscape value.

5.78 Clearly, the capacity of individual sites to withstand the pressure of recreational vehicular use is highly variable. The Council operates an agreed code of conduct with the Auto Cycle Union for the staging of organised one-day motorcycle events in the District, in order that the suitability of the proposed location can be determined in advance. However, the temporary use of sites within the District for off-road motor sports indicates a clear demand for more permanent facilities, particularly for young people who wish to 'scramble' or race motorbikes, preferably reasonably close to home.

5.79 Suitable locations would include well screened sites at least a quarter of a mile from residential properties but close to a main road. Degraded land, former mineral sites and set-aside farming land which meet these criteria may be appropriate. A comprehensive management approach would also be a requirement of any proposal for motor sport provision, either through the lease or ownership of land by a private operator or club, or through the integration of individual site management with wider countryside management initiatives.

Clay Pigeon Shooting

5.80 Clay pigeon shooting is a traditional rural sport which is growing rapidly in popularity. Shoots usually take place on farmland on an occasional basis without requiring planning permission. However, the noise levels generated can cause disturbance to residential properties over a wide area, and in Wealden have been a frequent cause for complaint by local residents. Shooting can also adversely affect sensitive wildlife habitats, in terms of both noise disturbance and pollution by lead shot.

5.81 Where permanent facilities are proposed, a limited reduction in the impact of noise levels can be achieved by careful location, e.g. disused mineral workings, or by the provision of acoustic screening, such as willow walls or earth banks. Clearly, however, clay pigeon shooting is not suitable on sites in close proximity to residential areas and any noise attenuation measures should be carefully assessed to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the countryside.

Combat Games

5.82 Newer leisure activities can cause danger, as well as noise and disturbance. 'Combat' or 'adventure'

gaming is a team activity increasingly used by companies for staff assessment, training and recreation. The games are played by two opposing teams of between 20 and 30 adults and generally take place in a fairly large area of woodland in the countryside. Participants wear protective goggles and are provided with small air pistols or guns which fire dye pellets. The games usually involve stealth but can be more war-like with the use of pyrotechnics, such as fireworks or thunderflashes.

5.83 The nature of combat games requires relatively remote woodland sites without public access which, by virtue of their relative lack of disturbance, are often valuable for wildlife. The presence of large numbers of people moving around in such areas therefore has the potential to cause serious ecological damage. Clearly, the degree of damage will depend upon the intensity of use and the nature of the site, but, in general, woodlands are likely to be particularly sensitive due to their soil structure and the nature of their vegetation and birdlife.

5.84 Ancient semi-natural woodland is a habitat that is generally of a high significance for nature conservation and, wherever possible, recent secondary woodland should be sought in preference to ancient woodland for the playing of combat or adventure games. However, in all cases proposals for such activities will be very carefully assessed to ensure that there are no adverse effects in terms of nature conservation, noise nuisance, public rights of way, new buildings, access and car parking.

DC14 Proposals for motor or gun sports, including combat games, will not be permitted within or adjacent to the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Pevensy Levels Site of Special Scientific Interest, or the Ashdown Forest (defined as the area enclosed by the boundary of the Medieval Pale of 1372). Elsewhere, such proposals may be permitted outside the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, provided that the following criteria are met and can be controlled by condition:

(1) the Council is satisfied that the proposal will not generate an unacceptable level of noise and activity in the locality.

(2) the proposal will not be visually intrusive in the landscape and will be well screened by existing vegetation, particularly within or adjacent to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;

(3) the proposal will not adversely affect areas which are of importance for flora, fauna, geological or landform features, or adversely affect ancient semi-natural or other important woodland. Where appropriate, a woodland management plan should be submitted and approved by the Council and implemented within a programme agreed by the Council;

(4) the proposed activity will take place within a clearly defined area with an appropriate buffer zone to the boundaries of the site and any public rights of way;

(5) any buildings or structures must be sited to minimise their impact on the countryside and must be removed from the site on cessation of the recreational use.

In all cases, conditions will be attached to any permission controlling the hours and frequency of use, the type and nature of the activity, and fencing of boundaries. Normally, the Council will only be prepared initially to grant temporary planning permission so that the environmental impact can be fully assessed.

Angling

5.85 The popularity of angling, together with pressures to reduce the amount of land in agricultural production, have led to an increase in proposals to create or improve ponds and lakes for private and commercial fishing. Commercial fisheries can be an appropriate land use in the countryside, often assisting with rural economic diversification whilst securing environmental and amenity gains in terms of landscape, wildlife habitat and public access enhancement. However, such proposals may not always be compatible with the conservation of the character and appearance of the countryside, particularly where significant physical changes to the landscape or topography are required or a site of existing nature conservation importance is affected.

5.86 A pond or lake that has been carefully designed for wildlife, fish and anglers will support a wide variety of wetland plants and animals, as well as being an attractive place for visitors. However, a proposed pond site can sometimes be valuable for wildlife already, particularly if it is waterlogged or uncultivated, and the loss of important areas for nature conservation may not be acceptable under other policies in the Plan. Commercial fishing proposals can also cause damage at existing pond sites through the clearance of aquatic or bankside plants or the trampling of bankside vegetation by anglers. The Council will therefore normally require such proposals to be accompanied by a landscape management scheme,

which provides for the retention and enhancement of existing features of nature conservation importance.

5.87 It is also evident that a new pond or lake may have a significant impact on the countryside through the creation of spoil or the construction of dams or embankments, which can appear as alien or intrusive features in the landscape. The disposal of excavated material is another important consideration since spreading it around the site or using it to fill in low lying areas nearby may cause unnecessary harm to valuable wildlife habitats or landscape features. Parking and access arrangements, together with any new buildings or lighting, will also need careful attention in terms of the impact of the proposal on the overall character of the site and its setting. Applications should provide sufficient detail to enable a proper assessment of all the above considerations.

5.88 The creation of a pond or lake, particularly on-line of an existing watercourse, can have significant implications on the downstream flow due to water loss through evaporation and seepage. Commercial fisheries can also have a detrimental impact in terms of water quality. The Council will therefore need to be satisfied that the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the quality or quantity of flow in the downstream watercourse. The Environment Agency, whose consent is required for proposals to impound or abstract water, advises that the creation of ponds or lakes upstream of the Pevensey Levels SSSI is likely to damage its special interest and should not normally be permitted.

DC15 The creation or improvement of ponds or lakes for private or commercial fishing in the countryside (outside the development boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map) will be permitted where the following criteria are met:-

(1) the proposal will not be visually intrusive in the landscape through the construction of embankments or other earthworks;

(2) the proposal, including the disposal of any excavated material within the site, will not adversely affect areas which are of importance for flora, fauna, geological or landform features, or adversely affect ancient semi-natural or other important woodland. Where appropriate, a landscape management plan should be submitted and approved by the Council, and implemented within a programme agreed by the Council;

(3) the size and scale of the proposal would be compatible in terms of the nature and intensity of use with its rural location;

(4) the proposal will not adversely affect the residential amenities of the neighbourhood by reason of noise or disturbance;

(5) any buildings or structures will be sited to minimise their impact on the countryside and should be removed from the site following cessation of the activity;

(6) the maintenance and enhancement of public access, where appropriate;

(7) there will be no detriment to the quality or quantity of flow in the downstream watercourse;

(8) the proposal is not created on-line of a watercourse upstream of the Pevensey Levels Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Airstrips and Air Sports

5.89 Although presently at a relatively low level, there is growing interest in recreational flying, including hang-gliding, gliding and use of microlight aircraft which do not require an airport or airfield from which to operate. In addition, the flying of model aircraft is a well established hobby sport.

5.90 There are various legislative controls over such developments, particularly relating to operational requirements. The principal planning concern of such uses relates to noise generation. This may be a particularly sensitive issue in areas close to housing areas and areas of important nature conservation value. In assessing the likely impact of noise, regard should be paid to Government guidance. The introduction of a high level of activity into the countryside may itself be out of keeping with its quiet, rural amenities.

DC16 Proposals for the development or use of land and buildings related to small airfields, airstrips and air sports will only be permitted where they accord with the Plan's environmental policies, with particular attention to noise and landscape impact.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

5.91 The defined settlement "development boundaries" provide for the housing needs of the District over the Plan period. Outside of the development boundaries, residential development is generally resisted in accordance with Policy GD2. In such areas, housing development will not be permitted unless it is:-

(1) essential for the purpose of agriculture or forestry or other rural enterprise for which a rural location is essential, in accordance with Policy DC2;

(2) an acceptable scheme for affordable housing in accordance with HG3;

(3) the conversion of an existing agricultural or other rural building, in accordance with Policy DC8;

(4) a replacement dwelling of an appropriate size, in accordance with Policy DC18;

(5) an extension or alteration of an appropriate scale, in accordance with Policy DC19;

(6) the conversion of an existing property, in accordance with Policy DC20;

(7) accommodation to meet the acknowledged needs of gypsies or travelling showpeople, in accordance with DC21.

5.92 The prior existence of sporadic and scattered housing within the countryside is recognised, but it is considered that any intensification or addition to this would be contrary to the Plan's overall development strategy and be detrimental to rural amenities as well as making abnormal demands on services. The individual settlement chapters and, in respect of certain other settlements without development boundaries, explain the considerations in determining the area within which new housing may be permitted.

DC17 Housing development will not be allowed outside development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, unless it conforms with other policies in the Plan.

Replacement Dwellings

5.93 Notwithstanding the general policy of restraint in relation to housing in the countryside, the suitable replacement of existing properties, normally on a one for one basis, is considered reasonable. This approach is accepted in principle by County Structure Plan Policy S21(2). This does not apply to derelict buildings or others where the residential use has been abandoned; such 'replacements' would be regarded as new dwellings.

5.94 In view of the strong environmental and rural character considerations in the countryside, it is particularly important to minimise the visual, landscape, amenity and traffic impact of replacement dwellings. The size of the replacement would be limited to a similar scale as the original, normally measured by its gross floorspace. An exception may be made for substandard accommodation in order to enable reasonable amenities to be achieved. Siting

should also be similar to the original, unless repositioning can significantly reduce the impact of development. Replacement may provide the opportunity for development to better harmonise with the locality. The Council would endeavour to avoid abuses of the policy whereby lawful uses become established and new building is subsequently sought.

5.95 The redevelopment of listed buildings and those in Conservation Areas are not normally permitted (Policies EN19 to EN22 refer). Furthermore, it is evident that the countryside is particularly rich in vernacular buildings which contribute to the character of rural areas, and their retention would normally be encouraged.

DC18 Outside development boundaries, as defined on the Proposal Map, the replacement of an existing dwelling by another dwelling in the same curtilage will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

(1) the proposal is of a comparable size and massing to the existing building;

(2) it is in keeping with the character of the locality, having regard to the appearance and general design of the original building;

(3) it is similarly sited within the plot, unless an alternative position would result in clear landscape, highway access or local amenity benefits;

(4) it does not result in the loss of a property of valuable local character, unless it is not reasonably capable of being made structurally sound or otherwise improved.

In sensitive locations, permitted development rights relating to future extensions and other structures may be removed.

Residential Extensions

5.96 Within countryside locations, residential extensions and alterations may have a greater environmental impact than those to dwellings within development boundaries by virtue of their visual openness, landscape impact and the rural character of either the property or its setting. Careful consideration to rural extensions is consistent with the general approach of minimising the intrusion of development in the countryside.

5.97 Therefore, in addition to the criteria for residential extensions within development boundaries, as set out at Policy HG10 (relating to the protection of the character and amenities of the property,

neighbouring dwellings and the locality), greater attention may be given to the need to maintain and enhance rural amenities.

5.98 Accordingly, residential extensions in the countryside should normally be appropriate in size and character in relation to the original dwelling or group of dwellings. Extensions and alterations to listed buildings and buildings in Conservation Areas are specifically covered by Policies EN19 to EN22. Other traditional buildings of rural character, including oasts, farmworkers' cottages, lodge houses, toll houses and converted agricultural buildings, also warrant careful regard to their character. Extensions to agricultural dwellings should also have regard to the considerations at Policy DC2. Policy DC8 above sets out the Council's approach to extensions when considering proposals for the residential conversion of rural buildings.

5.99 Account shall properly be taken of the cumulative impact of extensions, including the effect on the character of the original property. Ancillary buildings within the curtilages of residential properties such as garden sheds, garages and summer houses can frequently be erected without the need for planning consent. Nevertheless, when permission is required, it is appropriate that proposals be subject to the same considerations as for residential extensions and alterations. Annexes to existing dwellings would be considered similarly, providing that they are unambiguously intended for that purpose. A legal agreement may be sought to tie an annexe to the main property where these involve the change of use of a rural building, under Policy DC8. Detached annexes would normally be treated as new dwellings.

DC19 Outside development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for extensions and alterations to existing dwellings and for ancillary buildings within their curtilages should meet the following criteria:

- (1) the proposal should accord with the criteria of Policy HG10;**
- (2) the proposal should not be intrusive in the landscape or detrimental to the rural setting;**
- (3) the proposal should normally be of an appropriate size and character relative to the original dwelling, and not visually dominate or otherwise adversely change the character of the existing building or, where appropriate, the group of buildings;**
- (4) in the case of an annexe, the proposal should normally be physically attached to the dwelling and not lend itself to future subdivision to form a new dwelling.**

5.100 Proposals for the extension of residential curtilages within the countryside will be considered in relation to the potential change in rural character and amenities that may result from the resulting enclosure, domestic use, associated minor buildings, structures, hard surfacing and other paraphernalia. In order for such extensions to be acceptable in environmental terms, it may be necessary to minimise the visual impact by ensuring sensitive boundary treatment and limiting new buildings and structures on the land. However, in many circumstances, the outward encroachment of residential activity forms and associated enclosure may detract from the rural landscape character, particularly where a generally open appearance prevails.

Subdivision of Larger Properties

5.101 There is a substantial legacy of larger properties, especially in countryside locations, including houses which are now too large for single family occupation together with certain other buildings, such as hotels and institutions of a residential nature. Such buildings are usually well integrated within the rural scene and their retention thereby encouraged. As well as affording the potential for institutional or employment uses, they may represent a valuable resource for a variety of housing needs.

5.102 The conversion and subdivision of larger properties may be appropriate where it maintains the integrity and character of the property, including its grounds, as also referred to in Policy HG9 for properties within development boundaries, as well as meeting the normal residential amenity, access and parking criteria. In addition, within particularly quiet, remote areas, the creation of a large number of dwelling units, with associated increases in activity, may be inappropriate. The conversion of typical, family-type accommodation would normally be inappropriate, as referred to in Chapter 6.

5.103 In order to maintain the character of any important features of the property, including gardens, restrictions on permitted development may on occasion be considered necessary. Extensions and alterations would be considered in accordance with Policy DC19, although in order to maintain their visual integrity and character, only very limited additions may be appropriate.

DC20 Outside development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, the conversion and subdivision of a larger property into smaller dwelling units may be permitted where:-

- (1) the character and integrity of the property, including its grounds and setting are suitably retained, including where appropriate by the removal of permitted development rights;**

(2) no significant extension or alteration is involved.

Gypsy and Travelling Showpeople Sites

Gypsies

5.104 Gypsies are defined by their nomadic habit of life. The term excludes travelling showpeople, who are considered in the following section. The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 removed the duty on Councils to provide gypsy sites, although a discretionary power remains. However, it is necessary to give clear planning policy guidance in the Plan in line with recent Government advice in Circular 1/94: Gypsy Sites and Planning for both private and public sites, particularly in view of the increased onus on private provision.

5.105 There is no apparent unmet need to allocate sites for gypsies. The area does not have a strong gypsy tradition, the level of provision was accepted in 1987 as adequate by virtue of 3 public sites across the District, and the regular counts show a relatively low occurrence of unauthorised sites. Latest statistics (for July 1998) record 23 caravans on authorised sites and 22 caravans on unauthorised encampments.

5.106 Consideration should nonetheless be given to the treatment of extensions to existing sites and new private sites. Circular 1/94 states that it will not generally be appropriate to make such provision in areas of open land where development is particularly restricted, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It does not exclude sites in rural or semi-rural settings, but points out that care is needed to ensure consistency with environmental, agricultural and other countryside policies. Locations on the outskirts of built-up areas may be appropriate where these afford reasonable access to facilities and services, but should still avoid encroachment into open countryside. Amenity and access factors are also important, particularly as gypsy sites often combine both residential and business elements.

5.107 In view of the above factors and the limitation imposed by the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, other high quality countryside and the general absence of 'urban fringe' land around settlements, it is likely that very few suitable sites will come forward.

Travelling Showpeople

5.108 Specific consideration has also been given to the provision of sites for travelling showpeople, in accordance with Government guidance in Circular 22/91. Accommodation needs are unusual in that they combine residential, storage and maintenance uses.

5.109 Wealden has not been traditionally closely associated with showmen's sites, perhaps due to its relative remoteness from large urban centres. There is presently only one site with planning permission for 'winter quarters' in the District, at Hackhurst Lane, Lower Dicker. There have been a few enquiries about additional sites, essentially as a consequence of people moving onto unauthorised sites in the District and of the displacement of showmen in other parts of the region. However, there has been no recorded demand arising from the local area, from displacement or otherwise.

5.110 It must be recognised that such development can, by its very nature, be visually intrusive in a rural or other sensitive landscape setting. Conversely, close proximity to residential properties can also be inappropriate because of the potential disturbance from the maintenance and testing of equipment during winter months, as well as its visual impact. However, proximity to schools and other community facilities is normally sought. Circular 22/91 therefore suggests urban fringe locations may be appropriate.

5.111 In the absence of a clear local need for such sites, and as no specific site has been identified as being suitable, it is appropriate to set out a criteria-based policy. Where a site is considered suitable, it will normally still be appropriate to control the extent of storage and times of testing equipment to minimise its impact on local amenities. Also, the future availability of the site for such purposes should be ensured.

DC21 Proposals for new gypsy sites, extensions to existing gypsy sites and sites for travelling showpeople will not be permitted unless the following criteria are met:

- (1) the site is conveniently located in relation to schools and other community facilities;**
- (2) there is no adverse impact on the character of the countryside, particularly having regard to Policies EN4-12;**
- (3) the local environment and residential amenities will not be adversely affected;**
- (4) there is a satisfactory means of vehicular access and the local road network is adequate.**

Where appropriate, controls to limit the hours of testing equipment and to ensure the future occupancy by travelling showpeople would normally be sought.

Residential Mobile Homes

5.112 Policy HG13 sets out the Council's overall approach to residential mobile homes, including caravans. Their form, design and materials are fundamentally out of keeping with the character and appearance of the countryside, as well as potentially representing a sporadic introduction of residential uses contrary to the Plan's development strategy. Therefore, residential mobile homes would not normally be appropriate in the countryside.

5.113 An exception may be made for the temporary stationing of a residential mobile home or caravan in association with an agricultural or similar rural enterprise in accordance with Policy DC2 above. Also, where existing mobile home sites exist within the countryside, some rationalisation within the sites' well defined limits may be appropriate if this would bring about significant improvements in local visual amenities.

5.114 Residential mobile homes can provide low cost accommodation, thereby improving access to the housing market. Their redevelopment by permanent dwellings may result in the loss of more affordable housing and be visually or environmentally unacceptable and such proposals will therefore normally be resisted.

DC22 Residential mobile homes, including caravans, will not be permitted in the countryside unless these are on a temporary basis and are essential for the proper functioning of the farm, woodland or other enterprise in accordance with Policy DC2. The rationalisation of existing sites may be permitted only where significant environmental benefits would result. The redevelopment of existing mobile homes by permanent dwellings will be resisted unless on an individual basis where proposals meet the criteria of Policy DC2.

Implementation

5.115 All the policies in the Development in the Countryside chapter will be implemented by the Council primarily through its development control function.

Monitoring

5.116 The key areas to be monitored will include:

- (1) new agricultural dwellings;
- (2) planning applications to remove agricultural occupancy conditions;
- (3) number of rural building conversions and their use;

- (4) applications for golf courses, equestrian activities and gun or motor sports;
- (5) applications for replacement dwellings and extensions.

Housing

Introduction

6.1 It is an important function of the Local Plan to provide an adequate and continuous supply of land for housing within the context of the County Structure Plan, whilst ensuring that the required new development has the least harmful impact on the environment and respects the character of existing development. On this basis, this chapter contains policies for controlling the amount, type and location of new housing development in the District.

6.2 There are an estimated 138,000 people living in the District, with around half living in the five main towns. The population shows a relatively uniform age structure with the largest proportion of people in the 30-44 age group, although the southern part of the District is characterised by a higher proportion of elderly persons. There are some 59,200 dwellings in the District, an increase of 7,400 since 1986, with around 83% owner occupied, 7% local authority and some 6% rented privately.

6.3 There is an existing housing commitment over the Plan period for some 1,640 dwellings in the District and it is estimated that a further 1,230 dwellings could be built on unidentified or 'windfall' sites. This could result in the population growing to around 140,000 by 2004.

6.4 A more detailed breakdown of population and housing characteristics is given in Appendix 1. Further information on the towns is given in the relevant chapters.

STRATEGY

6.5 The Plan's strategy, as set out in Chapter 2, seeks to give priority to protecting and enhancing the quality of the environment by maintaining the existing settlement pattern and ensuring that new development respects and harmonises with the character of existing development and the surrounding landscape.

6.6 In terms of housing, the Council's strategy seeks to ensure that future housing requirements are met for all sections of the community, including those in local housing need. In achieving this aim, careful consideration will be given to the availability of local services and community facilities whilst creating a safe and attractive residential environment, maintaining the existing character and amenity of towns and villages, and protecting the countryside.

6.7 As part of this strategy, the objectives of the Plan with regard to housing are:-

(1) to ensure that an adequate and continuous supply of housing land is available in relation to County Structure Plan policies;

(2) to assist in the provision of affordable housing for those in a local housing need;

(3) to protect and enhance the character and amenity of the towns and villages;

(4) to promote a high standard of amenities, design and layout in new housing developments;

(5) to encourage a mix of housing types on new developments;

(6) to encourage the retention and improvement of the existing housing stock.

(7) to encourage the provision of special needs housing including housing for the disabled.

6.8 In formulating the strategy for housing, the Council has had regard to Government guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing, and to the policies in the County Structure Plan. As outlined in Chapter 2, the approved County Structure Plan provides for a level of new housebuilding for the period 1986-2001 which takes account of the natural change in population and local housing need, is related to the supply of jobs and is consistent with a reduced level of net in-migration. The housing policies in the Deposit Draft Replacement County Structure Plan 1996 imply reductions in the average house building rate, net in-migration and the level of population growth compared to recent years.

HOUSING PROVISION

6.9 As outlined in Chapter 2, the County Structure Plan requires provision to be made in Wealden District for 8,500 dwellings for the period 1986-2001. The Deposit Draft of the Replacement County Structure Plan proposes the provision of 6,600 dwellings in Wealden for the period 1991-2006. Whilst this level of housing provision will be subject to careful examination during the latter stages of the Structure Plan Review, the Council considers it appropriate to accommodate a proportion of the growth within the Local Plan's timescale to 2004. On this basis, there is a pro-rata requirement for the provision of a further

1,320 dwellings in Wealden for the period 2001 to 2004.

6.10 However, there is already a substantial commitment to new housing on land with planning permission and allocated in the Council's existing Plans, including major housing and associated development at Stone Cross. When this is added to the estimated number of dwellings likely to be built on unidentified sites (as discussed below), it is evident that the resulting housing supply figure exceeds the County Structure Plan requirement. Therefore, as illustrated in the table below, in numerical terms no new major allocations of housing land are required to be made in the Local Plan.

Housing Provision to 2004

	Dwellings
Approved Structure Plan Requirement 1986-2001	8,500
+Deposit Draft Structure Plan Requirement 2001-2004 (proportion)	1,320
	9,820
-Housebuilding Completions 1986-97	7,430
Balance	2,390
Housing Land Supply to 2004	
Existing housing commitments (planning permission, allocations)	1,640
+Future development on unidentified sites (estimated)	1,230
Therefore, housing provision exceeds Structure Plan requirement by	480

6.11 The relatively high level of housing land supply is due in part to the incidence of large previously unidentified sites (sometimes known as 'windfall' sites) coming forward, together with the subsequent allowance made for future development on such sites (in the range 0.4ha to 1ha) which Government guidance advises may be made. Similarly, an allowance is made for future development of smaller sites in view of the pressure that exists for infilling, conversion of larger properties, changes of use of buildings and redevelopment of existing sites. It must be recognised that where such development conforms with the relevant policies in the Plan, it cannot realistically be resisted, even when there is no numerical requirement for new housing development. It is assumed that there will be a decline in the rate that

large and small unidentified sites come forward over the Plan period and, in the case of large unidentified sites, that not all permissions will be implemented.

6.12 While new housing allocations are not required, the Council recognises that the large housing provision will need time to be assimilated into the community, both physically and socially, particularly with regard to the provision of local services and community facilities such as health and education. However, a limited number of allocations have been retained from previous Local Plans in Crowborough, Buxted, Lower Dicker and Friday Street, and some limited new allocations are made in Hailsham. The housing allocations and the main committed sites are described in the relevant town or village chapter.

6.13 The housing position over the 2006-2011 period is less clear and is beyond the timescale of this Local Plan. The Deposit Draft of the Replacement Structure Plan includes a County provision figure of 10,400 dwellings. It proposes new land allocations of 3,300 dwellings to be concentrated mainly in the Low Weald with strategic allocations focused upon peripheral expansions of Hailsham, Polegate and Uckfield but also including about 500 dwellings to be dispersed among the other smaller towns and villages. Only when the new Structure Plan has been approved following the Examination in Public in Spring 1998 and the likely publication of modifications, will the amount and strategic location of new housing development in Wealden for the period 2006-2011 be known. This will then form the basis for a future review of the Wealden Local Plan.

HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

6.14 It has already been shown that the Council can meet the County Structure Plan housing provision for Wealden for the period up to 2004. In addition, in line with Government guidance, the Council aims to ensure the availability of a five year supply of housing land in relation to the housing provision in the County Structure Plan in accordance with its Policy S3. At 1st April 1997 the Council was able to demonstrate 7.4 years supply of land in relation to the housing policies in the 1991 County Structure Plan and the Deposit Draft Replacement County Structure Plan 1996.

HG1 The Council will aim to maintain a minimum of a five year supply of available housing land in relation to the housing provision in the approved County Structure Plan.

COUNCIL'S HOUSING STRATEGY

6.15 The Council, like many other Councils across the country, is concerned about the lack of affordable

housing for local people, particularly in the villages. The problem has increased in recent years due to escalating house prices and the decline in the provision of public sector housing which has traditionally been the principal source of new social housing.

6.16 The Council has developed a corporate approach to meeting local housing need which has resulted in the adoption of an 'exceptions' planning policy (discussed further below), the completion of a Parish survey of local housing needs, the establishment of the Anderida First Housing Association as a District-based association, the recent completion of a number of schemes providing housing to rent on assured tenancies for local people, and the identification of further development opportunities across the District.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable Housing on New Development

6.17 Recent Government guidance advises local planning authorities that a community's needs for affordable housing is a material planning consideration which may properly be taken into account in formulating Local Plan policies. Where there is a demonstrable lack of affordable housing to meet local needs, planning authorities may reasonably seek to negotiate with developers for the inclusion of an element of affordable housing in large new developments on allocated land and other suitable housing sites. Planning authorities may include policies in Local Plans indicating their intention to do so. Such policies should give clear guidance on what the authority regards as affordable housing and on the arrangements expected to ensure that it is reserved for those who need it.

6.18 In the light of the evident need for affordable housing in the Parish Surveys, the Council considers it important that large new housing developments in the District should include such provision where appropriate. The Council considers that subsidised housing for rent should be provided in order to cater for those people in urgent need. In line with the Government's guidance, it is considered that the policy should be flexible, with the amount of affordable housing on individual sites depending on the overall scale of the proposed development, the mix of dwellings proposed, and the need for such housing in the area. The policy will apply to housing developments of 25 or more dwellings, or residential sites of 1 hectare or more, irrespective of the number of dwellings. In accordance with Circular 6/98, the Council will undertake further survey work on local housing need and the available supply of land for housing to ascertain whether lower thresholds are appropriate. The Council will normally look towards 30% of the dwellings being in the affordable category

although on appropriate sites a higher proportion would be acceptable. Although the assessment of local housing need will normally relate to a town or parish, the Council will also have regard to wider needs within the District as contained on the housing needs register. The policy would not normally apply to small-scale or infill sites.

6.19 Proposals for the development of affordable housing will be subject to a planning obligation that the housing is only used for the purposes of providing housing accommodation to meet the objectives of a registered social landlord, except where tenants exercise their right to acquire a property under the purchase grant scheme under the Housing Act.

HG2 Within the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, where there is a demonstrable lack of affordable housing to meet local needs, the Council will seek the provision of an element of affordable housing in new, large-scale housing developments.

The amount of affordable housing will depend upon the overall size of the development proposed, the mix of dwelling types proposed and the demonstrable need for affordable housing in the area.

6.20 As the vast majority of housing land in Wealden is already committed through planning permissions and, as stated previously, there is no need for major new allocations of housing land in the District, there will be limited opportunity to implement this policy.

Affordable Housing 'Exceptions' Policy

6.21 In many rural areas of Wealden there are particular difficulties in securing an adequate supply of affordable housing for local needs. Government guidance advises local planning authorities that the existence of arrangements to ensure that new housing would be available for local needs would be a material consideration which the authority should take into account in deciding whether to grant planning permission, particularly when considering the release of small sites which would not otherwise be released for housing. Such sites will be released as 'exceptions' to normal policies for housing development and would be additional to the provision made in the development plan for general housing demand within or adjoining existing villages. The release of such sites will essentially be a matter for local judgement.

6.22 The Council's local housing needs 'exceptions' policy is an integral part of the corporate approach to meeting housing needs in the rural areas, and is recognised as such in the Wealden Housing Strategy. In line with Government guidance, the policy permits small-scale housing development outside the defined development boundaries in order to meet an identified

housing need among those local people who are unable to compete in the normal housing market. To date, several schemes have been successfully implemented and some further development is in the pipeline.

6.23 However, the Council believes that the most appropriate and effective means of addressing local housing need would be through allocating land specifically for affordable housing, and thereby creating a new planning use class. In planning terms, it is very unlikely that sufficient 'exceptions' land will be found to meet all local housing need, as experience shows that most sites will not be acceptable in relation to the environmental, character, services and traffic considerations.

6.24 In all cases put forward under the exceptions policy, the Council will seek to ensure that the scheme can be assimilated into the local area, both physically and socially, and will look for support from the local community.

6.25 The Council's policy has regard to Government guidance on the locational aspects, environmental considerations, assessment of need, definition of 'local', and the provision of cross-subsidy when considering proposals for affordable housing.

6.26 As the policy relates to land outside the development boundaries where development will not normally be permitted, the principal issue is whether a site is suitable in planning terms. The Council attaches particular importance to the location of a site in relation to an existing settlement and local services, the scale of development proposed, the impact on the character of surrounding development, the landscape and countryside, as well as other normal planning criteria.

6.27 With regard to need, the Parish surveys provide an initial indication of the general extent and nature of local housing need, as a basis for further detailed investigation by the Council's housing department or a housing association when a suitable development site has been identified (see Appendix 4). The initial evidence from the survey and schemes that have been implemented suggests that, in the light of income levels among those in need, the appropriate tenure is rental through assured tenancies, i.e. with no right to buy. Shared ownership of usually up to 50% equity may also be appropriate in some cases. With the likely building cost of around £40,000 to £45,000 for a two-bedroom dwelling (1997 figure), the land cost should be low compared to housing market value in order to help ensure that the dwellings can be truly affordable.

6.28 Outright purchase of a property would be inappropriate, partly because the cost of provision is likely to exceed the purchasing power of local people in need, even when initial discounts are offered, but principally due to the difficulty of retaining the

property for meeting local needs on a subsequent change of occupant. This latter consideration is relevant to the policy of preventing 'staircasing' to outright ownership in shared ownership schemes.

6.29 Although the policy would not preclude any developer carrying out a suitable scheme with appropriate covenants on the land or legal agreements, the Council will normally require the involvement of a Housing Association or a Village Trust with an appropriate lettings policy.

6.30 While the policy does not allow general demand housing outside the development boundary to cross-subsidise the funding of affordable housing, it could apply where the private housing is in the development boundary and the affordable housing is outside as an exception to policy.

6.31 The Statutory Instrument identifying exemptions from the purchase grant scheme for housing association tenants (the right to buy) defines the areas where the principle of development may be acceptable under the policy, i.e. only exception sites which fall under an exempt area will be considered under the policy.

HG3 In exceptional circumstances, planning permission may be granted for small scale residential development in rural areas outside development boundaries in order to meet an identified local housing need among those people unable to compete in the normal housing market.

(A) Proposals for such development will only be permitted where the Council is satisfied that the following criteria are met:-

(1) the proposed development is located within or adjacent to an existing village or other settlement and provides good accessibility to local services, e.g. shops and schools;

(2) the proposed development is not intrusive in the countryside and is not harmful to the character of the landscape;

(3) the scale of the proposed development is appropriate in relation to the size of the settlement. Development should be in keeping with the character of adjoining development and the locality, and with local building styles;

(4) the proposed development conforms with the Plan's policies for access, parking, retention of trees, landscaping and impact on neighbouring properties;

(5) there is clear evidence of an unsatisfied local housing need in the parish that cannot be met through normal market mechanisms;

(6) the proposed development is of a size, type and cost, whether for rent or shared ownership, directly appropriate and affordable for those people in proven local housing need identified in (5) above;

(7) the future control of any dwellings can be ensured forever through the imposition of covenants and/or appropriate legal agreements;

(8) the proposal can be shown to be viable and achieve affordable housing.

(B) Applicants for planning permission will be asked to demonstrate how their proposals meet criteria (5)-(8) above, which will then be the subject of assessment by the Local Planning Authority, advised as appropriate by the Local Housing Authority or a Housing Association.

(C) Proposals which include the provision of general demand housing outside the development boundaries to cross-subsidise the funding of low cost housing will not be acceptable.

(D) Proposals for shared ownership housing must be of a form that will not allow 'staircasing' to outright ownership.

(E) For the purposes of this policy, the categories of need are defined as:-

(1) existing residents needing separate affordable accommodation in the area (including young persons, the elderly in inappropriate accommodation, and families in cramped or otherwise unsuitable accommodation);

(2) previous residents who have been obliged to leave the village or parish through lack of affordable accommodation and who now wish to return to such accommodation;

(3) persons whose work provides an important service to the community and who need to live within or close to the local community but need affordable housing;

(4) persons with the genuine offer of employment locally who are unable to take up

such an offer due to the lack of affordable housing.

With preference given in the following order to:-

(a) persons living for at least 12 months or brought up in the village and other people who would meet the criteria for need in (E)(2)-(4), provided that if an insufficient number of such people are available then:

(b) the same considerations outlined in (E)(a) would apply to the Wealden Parish and then

(c) to neighbouring Wealden Parishes and then

(d) to Wealden District and finally

(e) to a suitable applicant nominated by the Council from its Housing Waiting List if, within six weeks of any dwelling becoming available for letting, the vacancy cannot be filled under the provisions of (E)(1)-(4), (a)-(d).

NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Development Boundaries

6.32 Past experience has shown the value of defining the extent to which the Council will allow new housing development around towns and villages. As explained in Chapter 3, the Council has adopted the use of development boundaries to make a clear distinction, in policy terms, between town or village areas where certain forms of development may be appropriate and areas outside development boundaries, which are primarily rural and where the protection and enhancement of the countryside is of paramount importance.

6.33 On this basis, in the light of Policy GD1, planning permissions for new residential development will normally be granted only on land which is located within the development boundaries, provided that the development conforms with the relevant policies and proposals in the Plan.

Residential Character

6.34 In recent years, many settlements in the District have accommodated a significant amount of residential development in the form of infilling and redevelopment, sometimes at a higher density than surrounding development. While this has undoubtedly helped to relieve the pressure on rural land in line with Government and County Structure Plan policies, the Council is concerned that any such 'town cramming' may gradually erode the character and amenity of the

towns and villages, especially when new development involves the loss of trees, hedgerows, gardens and other important open space.

HG4 Within the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, the established character of existing residential areas will be protected.

6.35 Since the overall density of development suitable on a particular site will depend upon a number of factors, including the nature of the site and the character of adjoining development, the need to protect the amenities of adjoining properties and the type of accommodation proposed, the adoption of firm density standards could lead to a regimented and monotonous approach and is therefore not considered appropriate. Normally, however, the density of new residential development will be expected to reflect and complement the character of its surroundings, as set out in Policy HG4.

6.36 On certain sites, particularly close to the centres of towns and the larger villages, an increase over prevailing density levels may be acceptable in the case of small unit accommodation, normally in the form of flats, to meet the needs of smaller households (including sheltered housing for the elderly), but only where there is no detrimental effect on the character of the area.

6.37 In contrast, there are a number of residential areas with an established and distinctive character normally created by large detached houses set in spacious gardens with mature tree cover, hedgerows and other landscaping. Where such areas are within development boundaries, the Council is concerned that pressure for redevelopment and infilling could erode the particular character of these areas. On this basis, specific policies are contained in the relevant town and village chapters to protect the established low density character of certain areas.

Estate Development

6.38 A mix of dwellings throughout the District is important to meet the wide range of housing demand, from first time buyers, single people, families and the elderly as well as creating visual interest and character in new housing development. However, experience has shown that densities in excess of 135 habitable rooms per hectare are not normally appropriate for estate forms of development, having regard to the need to create a satisfactory environment for future occupants, including adequate provision of daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy, garden space, play space and amenity areas.

6.39 In addition to meeting the planning criteria set out in Policy EN27, particular attention should be paid in new estate development to creating smaller individual

housing areas, wherever possible, each with a well defined structure creating a sense of identity within it. This can be achieved by making good use of existing tree and hedgerow belts, open spaces, other natural features, the road network, house layout and design. Particular care will be taken to ensure that satisfactory arrangements are made for off-street parking which do not result in a proliferation of parking on estate roads.

HG5 Within the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, the Council will seek a mix of dwelling types and sizes, on new estate developments.

Wherever possible, estate development should provide for the creation of smaller individual housing areas by making good use of existing tree belts and hedgerows, open spaces, natural features, road network, and dwelling layout and design.

Crime Prevention

6.40 In line with Government advice, the Council is concerned to ensure that the design, layout and landscaping of new housing development makes crime more difficult to commit, increases the risk of detection for potential offenders and provides people with a safer, more secure environment. In considering proposals for large new housing developments, the Council will consult with the Police Authority at an early stage.

HG6 Within large new housing developments, regard should be paid to crime prevention in the design and layout of the housing areas, particularly in terms of street lighting, security of property and surveillance of access roads, footpaths, amenity space, parking areas and landscaping where this is consistent with good layout and design.

Energy Conservation

6.41 Government guidance emphasises the important role that development plan policies may play in conserving energy and reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, particularly in relation to the location of new development. With regard to new housing development, the guidance suggests that full and effective use of land should be made within existing urban areas, that development should be closely related to public transport networks and located so as to minimise car use for journeys to work, school and other local facilities, and with provision made for walking and cycling.

6.42 Within housing developments, factors such as housing type, orientation and general aspect can influence energy conservation and are important considerations in the design and layout of new housing areas. Energy efficiency within dwellings themselves is primarily covered by the Building Regulations. The Council's Energy Plan seeks, among its objectives, to promote high standards of energy efficiency in the Council's housing stock.

HG7 Within housing development, consideration should be given to energy conservation in the design and layout of new housing areas, particularly with regard to the aspect of the development, the housing type proposed and the orientation of the dwellings.

Retention and Improvement of Housing Stock

6.43 The Council considers it important to maintain and where possible improve the existing housing stock. In terms of planning policy, this can be achieved by the Council seeking to resist the loss of residential accommodation, permitting the conversion of large properties to smaller units, and allowing extensions and alterations to existing dwellings.

HG8 The Council will resist the loss of residential accommodation (by change from residential to another use or by redevelopment), unless the following special circumstances apply:-

- (1) the residential use is not appropriately located;**
- (2) the building is unsuitable for residential use in its present form and is not capable of being readily improved or altered in order to make it suitable; or**
- (3) the retention of the building or use for residential purposes would prevent an important development, redevelopment or other change of wider benefit to the community.**

6.44 In appropriate cases, the housing stock can be increased by converting larger properties into smaller unit accommodation, thereby making a valuable contribution to the supply of smaller dwellings. This would only be acceptable subject to normal planning criteria being met, and it would usually be inappropriate for normal family-type accommodation to be converted.

HG9 The Council will, in appropriate cases within the development boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map, permit the conversion of larger houses into smaller dwelling units when this is acceptable in terms of the character and suitability of the premises and site.

6.45 The extension of existing dwellings is often an effective means of improving the housing stock. Small-scale extensions can often be built without the need to seek planning permission from the Council. Where extensions do need permission, the Council would wish to ensure that the scale and design of the extension is generally appropriate in relation to the existing dwelling and surrounding area, and that the amenities of neighbours are not adversely affected.

HG10 Within the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, the extension and alteration of existing dwellings will be permitted where the scale, style, design and materials are appropriate and sympathetic in relation to the existing buildings, and there is no significant adverse effect on the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

6.46 Within the community there are those people, mainly the elderly and disabled, who are in special need of care and support, and for whom conventional housing may not be suitable. In such cases, specialist accommodation is required, normally in the form of nursing homes providing direct nursing care, residential care homes providing physical and emotional care and support, sheltered housing providing shared accommodation and supervision, and group homes providing shared accommodation for special needs groups such as the disabled or handicapped.

6.47 Whilst the Council recognises the demand that exists for special needs accommodation, it is also concerned about the impact on the character and amenity of an area from the high density nature of such development, the possible concentration of such uses causing an influx of elderly people into the area, and the ability of local health and social services to provide the care needed.

6.48 Whilst the development of special needs accommodation would be appropriate within development boundaries, normal planning criteria would need to be met in accordance with Policy EN27 particularly with regard to protecting character and amenity. The Council's car parking standards provide for the differing requirements of nursing homes,

residential care homes, sheltered housing and other schemes designed for the retired/elderly. In considering proposals for special needs accommodation, the Council will also have regard to the accessibility of the necessary support services such as health care, as well as other community facilities, shops and public transport. The Council will encourage development to conform with the standards for mobility housing contained in Appendix 5.

HG11 Within the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for special needs housing will be permitted when appropriate community facilities are reasonably accessible.

6.49 The development of special needs accommodation is not generally considered to be appropriate in the countryside in view of the significant visual and environmental impact that can result as well as the relative remoteness from the necessary community facilities. However, in line with countryside policies as set out in Chapter 5, the conversion of large residential properties may be appropriate, particularly where a higher level of care is provided as part of the proposal.

HG12 Outside the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, special needs housing will not be allowed unless it involves the extension of existing accommodation in accordance with Policy DC19, or the conversion of a large residential property in accordance with Policy DC20.

Housing for the Disabled

6.50 In line with the Plan's strategy in Chapter 2, the Council recognises the importance of securing an accessible environment in new housing development for both residents and visitors, including wheelchair users and other people with disabilities or special access requirements. Public sector housebuilding in Wealden accounts for a relatively small proportion of total housing development and the scope for making a significant contribution to meeting the housing needs of the disabled is clearly limited. There is, therefore, an important role to be played by the private sector in the provision of such housing, particularly as the Government's 'Care in the Community' initiative encourages more elderly and disabled people to remain in their own homes.

6.51 Within Wealden, some 22% of households have residents with a limiting long-term illness, health problem or handicap which limits their daily activities or the work they can do (1991 Census). It is estimated that there are around 2,300 wheelchair users in the District. Within the public sector housing stock in

Wealden, there are only 45 dwellings that are specifically designed for the disabled.

6.52 It is the Council's intention that as far as is reasonable through the planning system, new housing will contribute to meeting the needs of people with disabilities and enable them to live as independently as possible in the community. If an increasing proportion of the general housing stock is designed to a standard which makes this possible, it will allow people with disabilities more choice of housing and will make it increasingly unnecessary for people to move or restrict their visits to neighbours if they become less mobile, and will reduce public expenditure on costly adaptations when people become disabled. It is widely accepted that there are two levels of provision for disabled people, namely, general mobility housing and wheelchair housing.

General Mobility Housing

6.53 General Mobility Housing is housing that can be visited by, or adapted for use by, people with mobility problems, including those who may use wheelchairs.

6.54 A summary of design standards for mobility housing, as contained in the Sussex Coast and Countryside Access Guide produced by the Access Officers of the Borough and District Councils in East Sussex, is included in Appendix 5. The Council will encourage developers to build new dwellings to these standards, including conversions and alterations wherever practicable

Wheelchair Housing

6.55 Wheelchair Housing is usually provided in a single storey building or at ground floor level. It is designed and built specifically for use by families who may have one or more members who are wheelchair users. All rooms and facilities in the property are accessible to and can be used by those confined to a wheelchair.

6.56 A summary of design standards for Wheelchair Housing, as contained in the Sussex Coast and Countryside Access Guide referred to above, is included in Appendix 5. The Council will encourage the provision of an element of Wheelchair Housing to be built to these standards within large new housing developments. These dwellings should be evenly distributed throughout the development and should cater for a varying number of occupants. Such sites should normally be located close to shops, services and public transport, and be in an area of level ground.

6.57 In the light of these standards developers are encouraged to consider the needs of disabled people and others with special access requirements at an early stage in the design process, and the Council has nominated an Access Officer who acts as a central point of contact for advice and guidance.

Residential Mobile Homes

6.58 Government guidance advises that residential mobile homes may have a part to play in providing low cost accommodation for small households. However, in considering such developments, the Council will have regard to the impact of development on the landscape and character of the area and require normal provision for access and parking, children's play and amenity space, landscape, and all other relevant planning criteria that normally apply to new housing development. Residential mobile homes in the countryside are covered by Policy DC22.

HG13 In considering proposals for residential mobile home sites, the Council will require development to conform with all relevant housing policies in the Plan.

Implementation

6.59 All the policies in the Housing Chapter will be implemented by the Council primarily through its development control function.

Monitoring

6.60 Key areas to be monitored include:-

- (1) housing completions;
- (2) housing land availability;
- (3) incidence of 'unidentified' sites;
- (4) the mix of dwelling types and sizes;
- (5) housing needs;
- (6) affordable housing completions and commitments;
- (7) population levels.

Business

Introduction

7.1 The Council believes that a healthy economy is integral to the vitality of the District and the general welfare of its residents. Business development is necessary to meet growing employment needs, to foster local enterprise and to enable firms to respond to changing market conditions. It can also be a positive element in conserving and improving the environment.

7.2 Wealden's economy is dominated by 'service sector' jobs, notably in retailing, hotels and catering, public services, banking and other local services. Together these account for over two-thirds of all employment in the District, which in 1991 totalled about 30,000 (excluding self-employment). The manufacturing sector is relatively small, but includes good representation in growth industries such as food and drink, several forms of engineering, plastics and data processing. Small businesses predominate in all sectors, with some 10,000 people in self-employment.

7.3 A feature of local employment patterns is the significant proportion of people who find work outside the District, mainly in the nearby larger towns such as Eastbourne and Tunbridge Wells. This is particularly so for residents employed in professional and managerial jobs. Even so, some 60% of local people are employed locally and employment opportunities have increased at a relatively high rate compared to neighbouring Districts in recent years. Unemployment in the District is currently low, representing some 1.7% of the workforce at October 1998.

STRATEGY

7.4 The Council recognises the importance of industrial and commercial development to help both the local and national economy prosper. It is also important to integrate this with environmental objectives. Indeed, the balance between economic, social and environmental objectives is a central issue for the Local Plan, as reflected by the overall strategy set out in Chapter 2. In accordance with the Plan's economic aims (Aims 6 and 7), the strategy for business seeks to provide for continuing growth in the number and quality of available job opportunities well related to job requirements in the towns and villages, while still protecting the attractive, largely rural character and unspoilt countryside of the District.

7.5 Due regard is paid to Government guidance, notably Planning Policy Guidance Note 4 (PPG4): Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms, and PPG7: The Countryside – Environmental

Quality and Economic and Social Development, as well as to the approved County Structure Plan. The policies and proposals of the Local Plan should contribute to boosting the County economy in accordance with the County Structure Plan. In endeavouring to accommodate likely business development requirements, careful consideration will be given to the needs of local firms.

7.6 The Plan's land use policies for employment provision complement the Council's "Economic Development Strategy". This Strategy, which is reviewed annually, identifies the District Council's activities "to develop a sustainable and prosperous economy which recognises and maintains the environmental qualities of the area". It dovetails with the East Sussex Economic Strategy for the regeneration of the County economy.

Amount

7.7 The Plan looks to provide for a realistic expectation of local job needs, including those arising from the unemployed, together with a reduced reliance on out-commuting, a greater proportion of 'high quality' jobs and a reasonable choice of sites and premises. Provision should still be consistent with the County Structure Plan aim of striking a sustainable balance with the demands for housing and the protection of the environment. In particular, the overall amount of industrial and commercial development should not fuel demand for further housing growth.

Quality

7.8 Full regard is paid to the County Structure Plan's aim to replace as far as possible the characteristic low quality, low wage jobs by providing for longer term, well-rewarding employment. It endorses measures to broaden the range of available jobs, including the promotion of appropriate major new high quality 'business park' allocations that will attract key growth sectors, such as high technology industries, banking and finance, and other prestige office users. It is also important that all development achieves high standards of layout and design, respecting and enhancing environmental qualities.

Distribution

7.9 The County Structure Plan strategy acknowledges that the larger coastal towns of Eastbourne, Bexhill and Hastings are intended to be the focal points of business development, aided by improving transport

infrastructure. Locally, the Local Plan essentially continues established policies, seeking to guide the majority of business development to the towns within the District.

7.10 Within the more rural parts of the District, the Council is concerned to improve accessibility to jobs, to reduce the 'affordability gap' between house prices and earnings, to sustain the vitality of settlements, and maintain local services. Therefore, policies and proposals will seek to maintain rural employment, mainly in the villages, especially those with established service and employment functions, consistent with environmental considerations. In the wider countryside, the conservation of the environment is a primary consideration. New development is normally resisted, although this need not preclude certain sensitive small-scale developments and other appropriate responses to agricultural changes.

7.11 Objectives with regard to the local economy are accordingly defined as:-

(1) to ensure an adequate supply of land and premises for business use to meet local employment needs;

(2) to provide for a distribution of employment well related to planned housing development and consistent with environmental objectives;

(3) to improve the overall range and quality of employment opportunities, through 'high tech' and other prestige developments;

(4) to enable reductions in unemployment and out-commuting;

(5) to encourage local enterprise and the growth of indigenous businesses;

(6) to provide for most business development in the towns;

(7) to support the rural economy with suitable employment opportunities in the villages and wider countryside, as appropriate.

7.12 The approach in the Deposit Structure Plan Review maintains a balance between economic and environmental objectives, seeking to integrate these in a more sustainable manner. It encourages a strengthening of the economic base which will help reduce unemployment and long distance commuting. It proposes means to boost the supply of business land, including the release of 'flagship' business parks and some new employment sites as well as the bringing forward of existing land and premises. The emerging policy direction is regarded as in line with the business strategy of this Plan. Consideration is given to the level of provision over the Local Plan period below.

DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Labour Supply and Job Requirement

7.13 There is a forecast increase in economically active people (that is those either in work or seeking work) of 4,000, a 6% growth over ten years up to 2004. Having regard to the need to cater for the existing unemployed and taking account of commuting patterns, with a reduced rate of net-out-commuting in accordance with the Plan's strategy, it is estimated business employment provision should aim to provide for the order of an additional 1,300 jobs over the Plan period.

Labour Demand

7.14 Consideration is also given to likely labour demand as a result of business growth. While this will be greatly influenced by the overall state of the economy, it is evident that the Plan's proposals together with existing commitments will enable a rate of employment growth comparable to that of the last ten years.

7.15 Actual floorspace completions have fluctuated somewhat in recent years. Although planned floorspace growth is comparable with an average rate of development since 1986, it should be recognised that the Plan's strategy is not to promote unconstrained growth but to relate primarily to local needs, fully respecting the particular environmental qualities of the area.

Land Requirement

7.16 Converting the additional job requirement to land requirements is not an exact science; latitude is necessary to allow for a variety of sites to meet differing needs and changing assumptions, as well as for the reasons referred to above. Also, the ability to meet qualitative objectives depends on the nature and availability of individual sites.

7.17 In quantitative terms, it is estimated that the amount of business floorspace required over the Plan period to meet the needs arising from population growth, a return to low unemployment, changing employment patterns and a reduced level of out-commuting amounts to some 16-22 hectares. Assumptions made in reaching these figures are shown in Appendix 2. It should be recognised that a higher level of provision will be needed to ensure a choice of sites and continuity of supply.

7.18 Monitoring carried out by the Council shows that at April 1997 there were outstanding commitments for business development, as represented by existing Local

Plan allocations and planning permissions, for some 139,000 square metres of floorspace, equivalent to approximately 34 hectares of land, mostly on new sites. Additional supply exists in the form of current vacant units and the potential for future extensions or redevelopment of premises.

7.19 It is evident that even allowing for a generous additional supply to provide sufficient choice and flexibility, the identified business land and premises commitments should readily meet forecast need in line with economic objectives over the Plan period. Also, it provides for a rate of development similar to that which has taken place over the last 10 years, which includes both boom and recessionary periods.

7.20 Business sites are well distributed within the District, mainly within towns, and otherwise in accordance with Structure Plan and Local Plan strategies. Also, many sites are currently available for development. Where constraints do exist, they are not likely to prevent development as market conditions improve within the Plan period. Notwithstanding the evident adequacy of allocated and available business land, the situation will be monitored. This is particularly significant in the southern part of the District in view of the contribution of certain key sites to supply, both in Wealden and Eastbourne, and the importance of planned transport improvements. This will also assist in ensuring that land supply is responsive to any unforeseen changes in local economic circumstances.

BS1 The Council will undertake annual studies of business land supply in the District to ensure an adequate level of provision in terms of the scale, type, location and timing of development well-related to local needs.

7.21 Such studies will build upon existing monitoring of business commitments and completions and involve collaborations with relevant local authorities and other bodies with an interest in local economic development, as well as owners/developers of identified sites. Action to address any demonstrable shortage of available land will depend upon the circumstances giving rise to it, but may include efforts to advance infrastructure provision or otherwise remove any constraints on already identified sites. Any new land use proposals to meet longer term requirements should be furthered through a formal review of the Local Plan once the Structure Plan Review is approved. A further land release outside of the formal Local Plan process would be contemplated only in the event of any significant constraints being unlikely to be overcome in a reasonable period of time and this having a major effect on the adequacy of the Plan's employment land provisions. The carrying out of studies needed to identify a major business park in the Polegate area are considered separately below.

Business Park Development

7.22 The approved County Structure Plan makes provision for new high quality "business parks" as a means of expanding and broadening the economic base of the Eastbourne/Wealden area. These include two allocations in Eastbourne Park, for an office park and a science and technology centre, as well as one at the former Maresfield Camp near Uckfield. Each of these has already been identified in adopted Local Plans.

7.23 In addition, Structure Plan Policy CA/E1 proposes another major land allocation for employment purposes in association with the completion of the A27 Polegate Bypass, the A22 New Route and related investigation of the potential for rail access. Any allocation is also to be subject to further investigation of the scale, type and timing of development required. The Deposit Draft County Structure Plan 1991-2011 reaffirms the proposal for a major, high quality business park at Polegate, similarly subject to the outcome of studies to determine the precise location, size and nature but also dependent upon the commencement of sections of the A27 road improvements which will bypass Polegate.

7.24 The District Council will undertake such studies in accordance with the County Structure Plan policy in close consultation with the County Council and other agencies, such as the Highways Agency, MAFF, utility providers and railway operators. It is intended that the site(s) will be identified within the Plan period and brought forward via a development brief. This will be subject to public consultation. An ad-hoc land release prior to the approval of this development brief would be inappropriate and unacceptable.

7.25 The studies will include consideration of the scale and type of development appropriate to meet the strategic purpose, the timing of proposed road improvements which will ensure the good access necessary for its success, the findings of investigations into rail access and the relationship with other major business allocations, as well as the environmental impacts of development. Any new business site in the area would inevitably have a significant environmental impact, but the Council will seek to minimise encroachment into the attractive countryside setting of Polegate, to retain critical countryside gaps and otherwise ensure that development does not unduly prejudice local amenities. The Council must also have regard to the Deposit Structure Plan Review, which proposes significant new housing development in the Low Weald with specific reference to Polegate.

BS2 The District Council will carry out the studies referred to in CA/E1 of the approved Structure Plan, and will identify a site or sites to conform to sub-paragraph (1)(a) of that policy.

DISTRIBUTION OF DEVELOPMENT

7.26 Within the District, the nature and dispersed pattern of development has resulted in a broad spread of business activity. The towns are clearly the main centres of employment, with each having at least one sizeable established industrial estate or business area. Many of the villages also play an important employment role for their surrounding rural area both through their local services and in some cases distinct business areas. The main business areas in Wealden are shown on Figure 4.

7.27 Government planning policy guidance on the provision for business development is contained in PPG4 and PPG7. PPG4 encourages locational policies which minimise the need to travel, especially by car, and which utilise energy efficient modes of transport. This is endorsed in PPG13 – Transport, which applies this principle particularly to activities which attract a large number of trips. Such activities should be located in urban areas. It also seeks a better balance between homes and jobs, including facilitating home working. PPG7 highlights that many businesses can operate successfully in rural areas with benefits to the local economy and employment prospects. New development should be sensitively related to the existing settlement pattern.

7.28 The whole of Wealden may be regarded as a rural area. However, for the purposes of the Plan, the term 'rural areas' is applied to all those parishes which do not contain a town. This reflects their essentially rural character as well as low population density. The limited differences in economic characteristics and trends between the urban and rural parts of the District partly reflect the nature and spread of towns around the District. Accordingly, and taking account of environmental factors, the towns should continue to be the main locations for employment serving the rural parts of the Plan area. Even so, it is appropriate for reasons of accessibility, support for local communities and services and other socio-economic considerations to provide for some new employment within the rural areas themselves.

7.29 In considering the appropriate distribution of employment in accordance with the stated objectives, regard is also had to the distance from larger settlements, including towns close to the District. Policies appropriate to the various locations are developed below.

TOWNS

7.30 As discussed above, the towns are intended to continue to be the focus of development in their localities. In relation to business development, this relates to the existing industrial estates that serve them

and, where appropriate, to any extension or addition to them. It is thought preferable for environmental, traffic and servicing reasons to continue to concentrate industrial uses and business investment within these 'town business areas'. Accordingly, new firms wishing to locate in the District and existing ones seeking to expand will be encouraged to locate principally in these areas.

7.31 The scale and location of business development appropriate in each town is separately addressed in their respective chapters, reflecting their function of meeting essentially local employment needs. It may be seen that there are several proposed additions to existing business areas:

- at Crowborough, the allocation of an extension to Millbrook business area;
- near Hailsham, the allocation of an extension to Hackhurst Lane business area;
- at Hailsham, the allocation of land at Station Road/Old Swan Lane and a small extension to the Diplocks Way business area;
- at Heathfield, the allocation of an extension to Ghyll Road business area.

7.32 Also, at Heathfield, there is additional potential for development through some redevelopment and consolidation of business uses at Burwash Road to complement the existing industrial estates at Station Road and Ghyll Road.

BS3 The Council will seek to concentrate business development principally within the town business areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, namely:

- (1) Millbrook, Crowborough**
- (2) Farningham Road, Crowborough**
- (3) Lexden Lodge, Crowborough**
- (4) Diplocks Way, Hailsham**
- (5) Hackhurst Lane, Lower Dicker**
- (6) Station Road, Hailsham**
- (7) Station Road/Old Swan Lane, Hailsham**
- (8) Ghyll Road, Heathfield**
- (9) Station Road, Heathfield**
- (10) Chaucer, Polegate**

(11) Bellbrook, Uckfield

(12) Ridgewood, Uckfield

7.33 Within the areas listed above, uses falling within B1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (see Appendix 7) will be acceptable in principle. Proposals for B2 (general industry) and B8 (warehousing) uses will be determined in accordance with Policies BS11 and BS12 below. Retail uses within town business areas will only be permitted where they accord with relevant policies in Chapter 8. All development, including new building, redevelopment and extensions, should meet the general design and layout criteria at Policy EN27.

7.34 Other employment proposals could come forward elsewhere in towns, as defined by their development boundaries. To be acceptable, these should be compatible with local environmental and amenity considerations, and of an appropriate scale. This approach is considered consistent with Government advice concerning the need to avoid unreasonable restrictions on business activities of an appropriate scale in residential areas. (Homeworking is considered separately at Policy BS15 below). Large-scale proposals would conflict with the priority attached to the main business areas and pose far greater risks of intrusion upon their surroundings.

BS4 Within town development boundaries but outside the town business areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, large scale proposals for new business development, redevelopment or extensions will be resisted. Small-scale proposals may be permitted, subject to the following considerations:

(1) the proposal is of a nature and scale appropriate to the function and character of the settlement and its immediate environment;

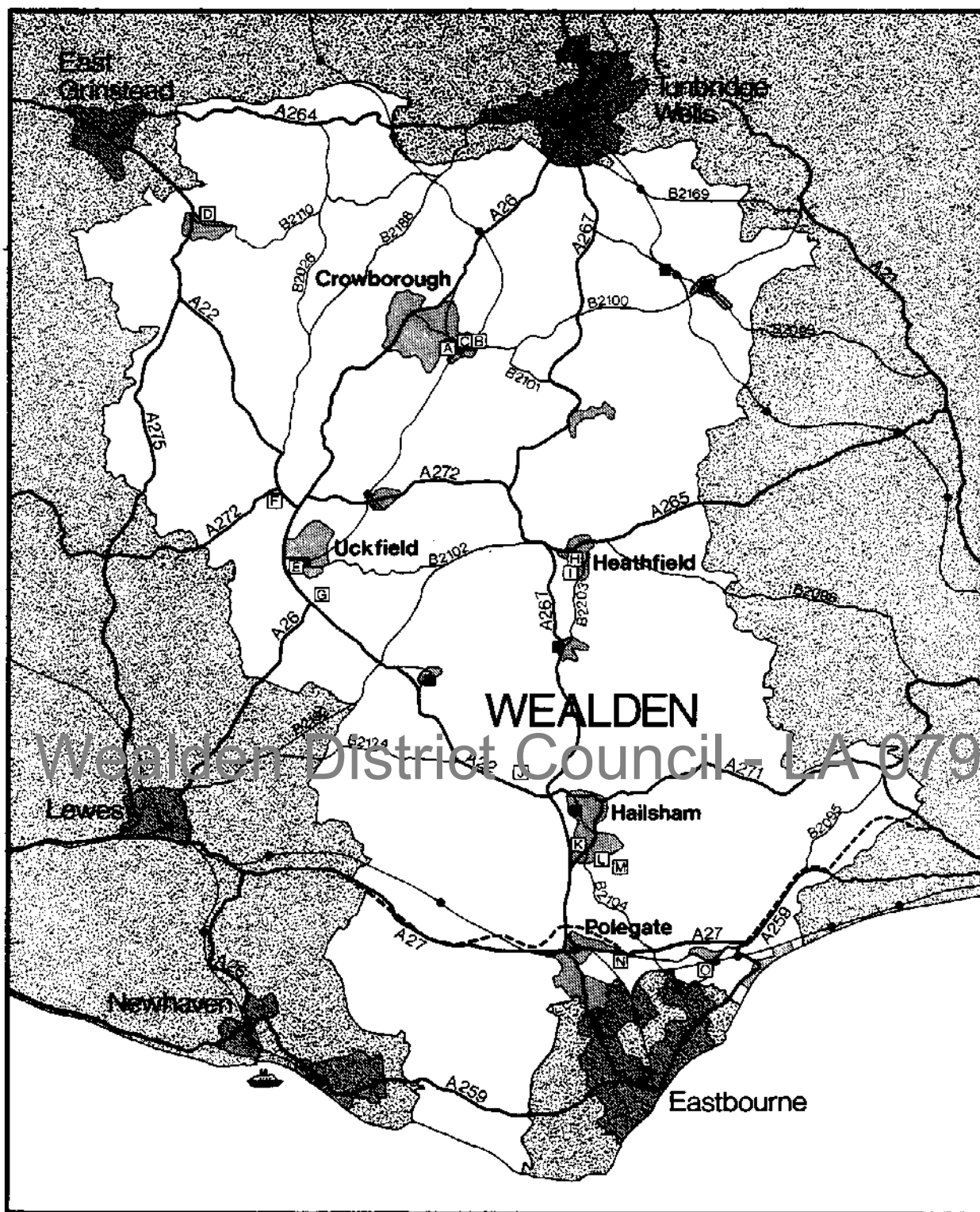
(2) the likely volume and nature of traffic movements would not have an adverse impact on the local road network, highway safety or local amenities.

7.35 Development in accordance with this policy will often involve the re-use, redevelopment or extension of existing business land and buildings. Such sites, which are scattered throughout the towns, can be important to the local economic structure and, collectively, provide a significant number of jobs. The loss of such sites to other uses may not be readily compensated for by provision elsewhere. This may well occur if a larger business site is involved or, conversely, where small workshops would be lost and no alternative opportunities exist on the recognised business areas or elsewhere in the locality. Also, business premises adjacent to town centres may be valuable in

complementing the commercial functions. Therefore, in appropriate circumstances the loss of existing business sites to other non-employment uses will be resisted so long as this would not perpetuate local environmental or amenity concerns.

BS5 Within town development boundaries but outside the town business areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, the Council will seek to retain business land and premises which afford important local employment opportunities and, where appropriate, complement provision in the town business areas or town centres. The continued business use should not be likely to cause demonstrable harm to the environment or the amenities of local people.

Main Business Areas



Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Wealden District Council LA079944 1998

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| [A] Farningham Road, Crowborough | [I] Ghyll Road, Heathfield |
| [B] Millbrook, Crowborough | [J] Hackhurst Lane, Lower Dicker |
| [C] Lexden Lodge, Crowborough | [K] Diplocks Way, Hailsham |
| [D] Station Road, Forest Row | [L] Station Road, Hailsham |
| [E] Bellbrook, Uckfield | [M] Old Swan Lane, Hailsham |
| [F] Ashdown Business Park | [N] Chaucer, Polegate |
| [G] Ridgewood, Uckfield | [O] Mountney Bridge, Westham |
| [H] Station Road, Heathfield | ■ Other business areas |



Figure 4

This plan is for illustrative purposes only, and does not form part of the Proposals Map.

0 5 10 kilometres
Not to scale

VILLAGES

7.36 Villages represent the focus of rural life. The general approach to the villages is explained in Chapter 18. Development boundaries are defined for those villages where some degree of development is considered appropriate. The need for local employment is one consideration in determining the scale and nature of change to be permitted in villages. In individual villages, the scale and nature of employment provision, if any, should reflect its function, location, relationship to other settlements, character and transport facilities, as well as accord with environmental and other site considerations.

7.37 Many larger villages within the District provide a broad range of local services for their surrounding area, often serving nearby smaller settlements as well the more dispersed development in the countryside around them. This varies by degrees; it is perhaps most apparent in Forest Row, Wadhurst, Mayfield, Horam, Herstmonceux, East Hoathly and Ninfield. Pevensey Bay, Alfriston and Pevensey/Westham have local services boosted by the tourism trade, while Buxted, East Dean/Friston and Rotherfield have a similar function even though they are relatively close to neighbouring towns. This is not exclusive, but is indicative of the important role of the villages in the settlement pattern.

7.38 Service employment is often complemented by other business activity. Significant concentrations are found at:-

Forest Row	-	Station Road
Wadhurst	-	Durgates and Wadhurst Business Park
Horam	-	Merrydown PLC
Westham	-	Mountney Bridge
East Hoathly	-	South Street

7.39 These villages and their respective business areas offer employment opportunities within the rural areas, and are well distributed across the District. In order to maintain and where possible enhance local job opportunities in these locations, it is proposed that they be appropriately defined and their focal business employment role within the rural area, complementing the principal town business areas, recognised.

7.40 The potential for further allocations of land suitable for small-scale, sensitive business development, including extensions to the above areas, has also been assessed. Proposed additions to existing business areas include:

- at East Hoathly, the allocation of a small extension to the South Road business area;

- at Westham, the allocation of a small extension to the Mountney Bridge industrial estate.

7.41 Also, at Horam, planning permission has been granted for extensions to the Merrydown site, while at Forest Row, permission exists for an office development at Pilstye within the Station Road business area.

BS6 Within the rural parts of the Plan area, the Council will seek to concentrate business development within the village business areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, namely:

(1) Station Road, Forest Row

(2) Durgates, Wadhurst

(3) Wadhurst Business Park

(4) Merrydown, Horam

(5) Mountney Bridge, Westham

(6) South Street, East Hoathly

7.42 Within these areas, uses falling within Class B1 of the Town and Country Planning (Uses Classes) Order 1987 (see Appendix 7) will be acceptable in principle. Uses falling within Classes B2 and B8 may be acceptable in certain circumstances having regard to the criteria at Policies BS12 and BS13 below. Retail uses within village business areas will normally be resisted, but may be permitted where they accord with the relevant policies in Chapter 8.

7.43 Business activity in the villages is by no means exclusive to the above areas. Smaller concentrations exist in many more villages besides, and which also play an important part in providing local employment opportunities and in contributing to the vitality of settlements. Government guidance refers to the need to accommodate small businesses in villages as a material consideration in redevelopment proposals.

7.44 The considerable environmental constraints on the outward expansion of villages and the need to protect their countryside settings support the retention of existing business sites that may assist the rural economy. It is particularly important to retain these sites in villages with dispersed business locations, especially those which are environmentally sensitive and which have few suitable alternative locations.

BS7 Within village development boundaries, but outside the village business areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, the Council will seek to retain business land and premises which provide

important opportunities for local employment unless the existing use causes demonstrable harm to the environment or the amenities of local people.

7.45 As in towns, the Council will also support suitable employment proposals elsewhere in village development boundaries which are consistent with local amenity and environmental considerations. This will normally require that proposals are small in scale. It is recognised though that in certain villages, especially smaller ones, there may well be very little scope for further development without intruding into their landscape setting or the residential, historic or rural character of the settlement. Nonetheless, the Council will consider each proposal individually and only resist employment generating development when there are sound planning reasons for so doing.

BS8 Within village development boundaries but outside village business areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, large-scale proposals for new business development will be resisted. Small-scale proposals may be permitted taking account of the likely contribution to employment within the rural area.

THE COUNTRYSIDE

7.46 Agricultural employment in the District has fallen by over 600 jobs since 1987, to some 2,840 jobs in 1995. It is still an important sector of the local economy, especially in rural parishes. Former farm buildings provide an important means of diversifying employment in the rural areas, through their conversion for a range of business purposes.

7.47 The Council's general policies relating to the countryside are contained in Chapter 5. The main thrust of these is to continue to restrain development and to maintain the essential environment and landscape character of the countryside, with particularly careful control in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty together with other designated areas and especially vulnerable landscapes.

7.48 New industrial and commercial development outside development boundaries is resisted in accordance with Policy GD2. Such development, both buildings and use of land, can very rarely be satisfactorily incorporated in the landscape and the activity, including traffic, associated with it is generally intrusive in the rural scene, especially if in open countryside or more remote areas. The provisions made for employment serving the rural areas in towns and villages, as well as through suitable conversions and expansions, should be readily sufficient to provide both wide and varied employment opportunities for rural people.

7.49 There is already a number of industrial and commercial concerns located outside of settlements, often having been operating for many years prior to current planning controls. These may now form an integral part of the rural economy and provide readily accessible jobs for local people. To help promote the rural economy, proposals for expansion, redevelopment or intensification may be permitted within existing sites. However, environmental considerations remain critical, and such development should only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the landscape and rural character of the countryside would be conserved or improved and that other environmental, local amenity, traffic, access, layout and design considerations are satisfactorily handled in keeping with the surroundings.

BS9 Proposals for expansion, redevelopment or intensification within existing business sites outside development boundaries will be permitted only where the following criteria are met:-

(1) there would be no adverse effect on the landscape or on the character of open countryside and, in appropriate cases, would provide for environmental improvements;

(2) it would not detract from the rural environmental qualities by virtue of the use of the site or traffic generation.

Proposals which would be likely to create a significant number of jobs should be well located in relation to towns or villages.

7.50 Certain new business activity may be satisfactorily introduced into the countryside through the conversion of suitable rural buildings. Appropriate criteria are set out in Policy DC7. The value of such opportunities as a means of diversifying the rural economy is recognised by the priority given to business conversions over those to other uses, including residential. Policies for tourism and leisure development in the countryside are set out in Chapters 10 and 11 respectively.

TYPES OF BUSINESS ACTIVITY

7.51 The Council is mindful, in accordance with Government advice, of the needs of different forms of business activity, from high technologies and prestige offices to 'bad neighbour' industries and distribution oriented operations, and small firms in particular.

High Technology and Prestige Developments - Ashdown Business Park

7.52 Overall provision for high technology industries and other office-based activities has been discussed above. Within the District, the proposed Ashdown Business Park near Uckfield is planned to serve such uses. Centrally situated adjacent to the A22/A272 junction, and benefiting from good accessibility to Crawley and to the coastal towns, it should provide a focus for prestige development in inland East Sussex. As such, the Council believes that it will be a major source of jobs, particularly high quality jobs, that are important to broadening the economic opportunities in the District. It is recognised that the economic climate has not been favourable to the implementation of this Business Park, but the Council will continue to promote its development at the earliest opportunity.

7.53 The site is allocated for a Business Park in the Uckfield Local Plan and the majority of the site gained outline planning permission in 1988 for that use. However, circumstances have changed over time such that a review of the policy and the original Maresfield Camp brief is considered necessary.

7.54 The term 'Business Park' is now often used to describe an industrial estate. The Council's intention at the Ashdown Business Park is to create a landscaped parkland setting principally for 'high tech' and office use. These proposed uses are intended to complement rather than duplicate the more conventional industrial developments at the Bellbrook Business Area, Uckfield, and at other industrial areas in the District.

7.55 When first promoting this former Army Camp for employment use, the opportunity was seen for a carefully planned low density business development in a high quality landscaped setting, taking advantage of the substantial woodland areas. Within the overall area a 'developable area' was defined. Past storms have significantly reduced the woodland and this led to a re-examination of the proposals. It is considered that the developable area could be enlarged, providing the opportunity to develop at a lower site coverage to the overall benefit of the scheme. Advantage should be taken of the natural regeneration on the site and a central water feature could be created.

7.56 It is considered appropriate to maintain the allocation for a Business Park and that a new planning brief be prepared to guide future development.

BS10 Land adjacent to the A22/A272 junction south-west of Maresfield, as defined on the Proposals Map, is allocated for a Business Park.

The Council will actively promote the early implementation of the Business Park.

A new planning brief will be prepared by the Council to set down the development principles for the site which will include, inter alia:

- (1) a planned landscaped setting, taking advantage of the existing tree cover;**
- (2) a low site coverage and buildings restricted to two storeys;**
- (3) a high standard of design and materials;**
- (4) significant new landscaping;**
- (5) a management agreement for existing and proposed planting;**
- (6) users will be restricted to office, research and development, training and certain industrial uses, principally those of a high technological nature;**
- (7) vehicular access from the A272.**

Business Activity within Business Areas

7.57 The vast majority of existing business development is of either a light industrial (within Class B1) or general industrial (within Class B2) nature as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (See Appendix 7). Class B1 activities are defined as relating to an office use (other than financial or professional services), research and development or industrial processes which can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit. By implication, such uses should be acceptable within any recognised business area subject to them meeting site specific criteria including those of layout and design.

BS11 Uses falling within Use Class B1 will be appropriate on all town and village business areas, as defined on the Proposals Map.

7.58 B2 uses are those which may cause disturbance if located in residential areas and are hence better segregated from dwellings. B2 development is, for the greater part, capable of being satisfactorily located within the town business areas. In the village business areas, they may be satisfactorily accommodated, but proximity to houses may limit scope in some sites. This is amplified in relation to individual areas in the relevant village chapter. Any proposal will be considered in relation to strict environmental, traffic and amenity criteria.

BS12 Uses falling within Use Class B2 will be permitted in the town and village business areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, where the following criteria are met:-

(1) the scale and nature of manufacturing process involved is compatible with local amenities;

(2) the likely volume and nature of traffic movements would not have an adverse impact on the local road network, highway safety or local amenities.

7.59 There may be circumstances where existing businesses, often long-established, are intrusive either to adjacent residential properties or within their general setting. The Council will use its planning and enforcement powers to prevent undue disturbance to local amenities and would encourage the re-use of such sites in a manner more compatible with the surroundings. In relation to intrusive 'established uses', enforced relocation is not practicable, but the Council would support alternative uses where a clear environmental gain would result.

7.60 Many of the larger business areas have good access to the primary road network and, hence, are well suited to distribution-oriented businesses. Indeed, it is considered that existing and committed sites should satisfy local demand for such businesses over the Plan period. Future increase in interest as a result of improvements to the A27 South Coast Route will be monitored, although priority in the economic strategy is afforded to more intensive, high quality development and employment. Also, there are strong environmental arguments against further release of major sites in this area.

BS13 Warehouse uses falling within Class B8 may be acceptable on the town and village business areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, where the following criteria are met:-

(1) the scale and operation of the proposed development shall be compatible with local amenities;

(2) the likely nature and volume of traffic movements would not have an adverse impact on the local road network, highway safety or local amenities;

(3) the proposed development would not unduly prejudice the availability of suitable

local manufacturing premises or employment opportunities.

7.61 Other commercial activities not falling within a specific use class may also be accommodated on business areas. However, the Council is cautious about significant retailing activity in business areas because of the potential effects on promoting and maintaining viable and attractive town and other centres, the availability of business accommodation and related traffic generation and congestion. Specific provision is made on certain main business areas where it can be demonstrated that complementary rather than adverse effects will occur. Otherwise a more restrictive approach exists. Retailing policies are set out in Chapter 8. Residential development is also precluded from business areas, where environmental conditions are not generally consistent with proper residential amenities.

Business Activity Outside Business Areas

7.62 The Council's policies for business development outside defined Business Areas but within settlement development boundaries are provided by Policies BS2 and BS3 (for towns) and Policies BS5 and BS6 (for villages), while such development in the countryside is governed by Policies GD2 and BS8. However, the appropriateness of particular types of business activity in these locations will depend largely upon amenity considerations, such as noise and disturbance, visual impact or associated traffic generation.

7.63 While Class B1 uses are defined by their appropriateness within residential areas, their physical scale and visual impact, as well as traffic generation, may warrant certain controls. Class B2 uses involve processes which normally warrant a degree of segregation, particularly from residential properties. However, the revised Use Class encompasses a range of activities with varying degrees of noise, smell, fumes, etc. Therefore, each use must be judged on its own merits, although the potential in villages or other areas with an established residential character will be very limited, whereas more scope may exist in countryside locations or certain mixed use areas. Storage and distribution uses within Class B8 raise particular concerns of traffic generation, such that larger operations should have ready access to the main road network. The introduction of significant traffic volumes, particularly of lorries, on residential roads or narrow country lanes is normally inappropriate.

BS14 Outside town and village business areas, proposals for changes of use between alternative business uses, including warehousing, should meet the following criteria:-

(1) the scale and nature of the use, including ancillary activities, is compatible with the residential amenities of the locality;

(2) the likely nature and volume of traffic movements would not have an adverse impact on the local road network, highway safety or local amenities;

(3) the proposed development would not unduly prejudice the availability of suitable local manufacturing premises or employment opportunities;

(4) the proposed development would not adversely affect the character of the countryside.

Small Firms

7.64 Small businesses are a key element in the employment pattern within Wealden. Nearly 80% of firms employ less than 10 people. There are also some 11,000 self-employed residents, representing 20% of all jobs in the District. Like East Sussex as a whole, the area can be described as having a “small firm economy”.

7.65 The Council’s Economic Development Strategy recognises the important role of small businesses in the local economy. It supports their development through sponsorship of business counselling provided by the Eastbourne and District Enterprise Agency (EDEAL), providing managed small workshops and promoting training schemes.

7.66 The Council’s Leap Cross Enterprise Centre continues to offer valuable accommodation for rent to start up businesses on easy “in/out” terms. Further provision of small units will be encouraged, either by new build, sub-division or conversion. Policies BS4 and BS8 enable such provision in settlements, while Policies DC6 and DC7 encourage the conversion of suitable rural buildings for employment generating uses. Existing premises are valuable in enabling small firms to establish and expand into, and Policies BS5 and BS7 seek to ensure appropriate business land and premises are retained in towns and villages.

Home Working

7.67 The 1991 Census indicates that some 4,500 people in the District work from home. It is forecast that this phenomenon will increase as communications technologies develop. A consequence of this trend is to retain more employment in areas distant from commercial centres, including the rural areas. This may benefit the local economy as well as bring about reduced commuting.

7.68 For several activities involving no change in the residential character of a dwelling, planning permission is not required. In accordance with Government advice,

the Council does not seek to enforce a rigid separation of residential and business activities. A wide range of businesses may be satisfactorily carried on in residential or rural areas without unreasonably interfering with the enjoyment of amenities or prejudicing the character of the area. However, if a business does become unduly dominant or intrusive to local amenities as a consequence of either the nature of the operations or its expansion, then the Council would properly seek to restrict such activity and would, in appropriate circumstances, take enforcement action. It would normally expect the business to relocate to a recognised business area. It follows that suitable business activities will generally be small scale, not noisy in nature and not generate abnormal traffic flows.

BS15 Proposals for home-based business activities in residential areas may be permitted where the following criteria are met:-

(1) the business is not likely to have a detrimental effect on the amenities of properties or the character of the area by virtue of its nature or scale of operation;

(2) the accommodation, including parking, is likely to meet the long term needs of the business.

Proposals for the significant expansion of businesses in residential areas will not be permitted.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

7.69 The Council aims for a high standard of design in all industrial development. Policy EN27 identifies general layout and design considerations. Proposals should combine fitness for purpose with quality buildings and spaces around them to the benefit of both ‘users’ and the wider environment. A range of design approaches may normally be entertained within the main business areas, although proposals should still take account of the general nature of adjacent development and have regard to the prominence of the site.

7.70 Notwithstanding the design of built form, sites should incorporate landscaping to contribute to the overall appearance of development, and schemes will be required under Policy EN14. This is particularly important within large developments and on the boundaries of business areas, where screen planting may often be necessary to ‘soften’ the impact of industrial buildings on adjacent areas. Where external storage is acceptable, this should be well screened from public vantage points and should not interfere with areas set aside for parking, etc. Developments are

expected to fully provide for and retain sufficient parking and manoeuvring space within the site in accordance with approved standards.

Implementation

7.71 All the policies in the Business Chapter will be implemented by the Council primarily through its development control function.

7.72 Policy BS10, the proposed Ashdown Business Park, will be promoted through direct Council action in association with the East Sussex County Council, other landowners and appointed developers.

Monitoring

7.73 The key areas to be monitored include:-

- (1) industrial land availability;
- (2) floorspace completions - size and use class;
- (3) vacant premises;
- (4) take-up rates;
- (5) loss of industrial land/premises;
- (6) unemployment rates;
- (7) commuting patterns.

Shopping

Introduction

8.1 Shopping is a vital activity for the well-being of residents in the District, particularly with regard to essential goods and services. Furthermore, in employment terms, retailing is an important sector of Wealden's economy. The Local Plan provides the framework for meeting the shopping needs of a growing population whilst also having regard to the expected increase in different types of expenditure and the changing pattern of shopping. The latter is brought about by changes in consumer preference and increasing personal mobility which widens the catchment of major retail centres and widens the choice available to residents.

8.2 Within Wealden, the majority of shopping facilities are concentrated in the town centres of Crowborough, Uckfield, Heathfield, Hailsham and Polegate, which provide for their population and surrounding area as well as being important locations for employment. Neighbourhood centres, village centres and 'corner shops' principally meet important day to day needs for food and other convenience goods. Several retail warehouses provide mainly for the needs of car-borne shoppers often purchasing bulky goods, e.g. DIY. Outside the District, the sub-regional shopping centres of Tunbridge Wells and Eastbourne have a major influence on shopping patterns, particularly with regard to the provision of higher value comparison goods, e.g. furniture and clothes, and the provision of food in large 'edge of town' stores. Other types of retailing such as discount and club shopping, and factory outlet centres, which have emerged nationally are considered unlikely to establish in Wealden in view of the limited population catchment.

STRATEGY

8.3 The Plan's strategy, set out in Chapter 2, provides for the maintenance of the existing settlement pattern by giving priority to locating new housing, business and shopping development in the towns, which are the main centres of population served by public transport, in order to protect the countryside and minimise unnecessary vehicle trips.

8.4 In this regard, the Plan's strategy for shopping is to maintain and where possible improve the level and choice of shopping facilities in the District in order to meet the needs of all sections of the community whilst recognising the existing pattern of shopping provision, the demand for new forms of retailing, and the importance of protecting and enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centres.

8.5 As part of this strategy, the objectives of the Plan with regard to shopping are:

- (1) to promote the town centres as the principal shopping locations in the District through encouraging new development and improving the environment, infrastructure and services;*
- (2) to complement the town centres by supporting local shopping and service provision within the smaller centres, 'corner shops' and 'edge-of-town' facilities where appropriate;*
- (3) to maintain the provision of village shops and services;*
- (4) to carefully control new shopping development outside recognised centres and ensure it does not result in a significant loss of existing facilities;*
- (5) to promote high quality shopping environments.*

8.6 In formulating the strategy for shopping, the Council has had regard to Government guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 'Town Centres and Retail Developments', and to the policies in the County Structure Plan. The County Structure Plan gives priority to maintaining and enhancing the quality, range and character of the main town centre shopping areas through shopping and other proposals (including traffic management). County Structure Plan policies would normally allow new shopping facilities within or contiguous with existing centres, and carefully control out of town development.

NEW SHOPPING DEVELOPMENT

8.7 In line with the shopping strategy and objectives, it is the Council's policy to direct the majority of new shopping development to the town centres as part of its firm commitment to maintaining and enhancing their vitality and viability, reducing reliance on the private car and encouraging alternative means of travel. Government guidance in PPG6 puts emphasis on a plan-led approach to promoting development in town centres, both through policies and the identification of locations and sites for development. The guidance also puts emphasis on the sequential approach to selecting sites for development and includes support for local centres.

8.8 The Council also recognises the important role of local neighbourhood centres, and small individual shops within the towns and villages in meeting mainly

local day to day needs, and will encourage further small scale provision where appropriate. In order to complement the role of the town centres, appropriate provision is made for non-food retail warehousing at Hailsham and Uckfield.

SH1 Within the District, new shopping facilities will be directed to the town centres of Crowborough, Uckfield, Heathfield, Hailsham and Polegate. Local shopping and service provision within neighbourhood centres and individual shops within towns and villages will be supported. Appropriate provision is made for non-food retail warehousing.

TOWN CENTRES

8.9 During the 1990's a number of new shopping developments have been completed in Wealden's town centres, principally based on large new supermarkets, with the most recent in Hailsham. Generally, there has been an increase in the number of service uses in the town centre e.g. building societies, estate agents.

8.10 The town centres are also important locations for a wide range of financial and professional services, business uses, leisure facilities and housing. A healthy and prosperous shopping centre is a key factor in attracting such investment, not only to the town centre itself but also to a much wider area. As well as being a focus of commercial and community activities, the town centres also provide an important source of employment.

8.11 The Council's commitment to maintaining and improving the vitality and viability of the town centres is based on a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach which includes a wide range of policies, proposals and initiatives. These include the following elements:-

- (1) encouraging the preparation of town centre strategies, action programmes and management plans;
- (2) encouraging a high quality of new shopping development within the main shopping areas and resisting the loss of retail floorspace;
- (3) encouraging new services, office development, community facilities and residential use, where appropriate;
- (4) promoting environmental improvements;
- (5) encouraging traffic management measures, including traffic calming and pedestrian schemes;
- (6) encouraging improved access and signing for cars and other motor vehicles, public transport, cyclists and

pedestrians, including the disabled and others with special access requirements;

(7) improving the level, quality and management of public car parking;

(8) maintaining a high standard of refuse collection and street cleaning.

8.12 The emphasis is placed on good management, which should relate to an agreed strategy and action plan for the centre. In pursuit of this the District Council will work closely with the Town Councils and Chambers of Commerce.

Main Shopping Area

8.13 Main shopping areas have been defined in order to provide an identifiable focus for shopping within which increased retail activity could take place by new development, redevelopment of existing floorspace and the more efficient use of existing floorspace and land. The main shopping areas have been carefully defined having regard to the extent of the existing shopping centre, the nature and character of land uses contiguous with it, and any future requirements for new shopping facilities. Where the Council is promoting new shopping development proposals, these have been included within the main shopping area together with any other areas contiguous with the existing shopping centre that are considered suitable for retail purposes.

8.14 On this basis, the main shopping areas represent a clear policy statement that further shopping proposals outside the defined area will normally be resisted. Whilst the main shopping areas as defined provide a focus for retail activity, they also serve to prevent inappropriate outward growth of the existing shopping centre, to protect the amenities of residential areas from encroachment by commercial activities and to resist the loss of housing and business land. The detailed considerations relating to the definition of each of the main shopping areas are contained in the relevant town chapter. The policies that apply within the main shopping areas are set out in the following paragraphs.

New Shopping Development

8.15 It is considered important to include a policy for encouraging new retail uses within the main shopping areas where the prime objective is to create a high quality shopping environment for residents, visitors and the business community itself. In addition to the general principles of layout and design in Policy EN27, particular emphasis will be placed on achieving a high standard of design and layout in new shopping development which should enhance the character and appearance of the town centre. For environmental and safety reasons, satisfactory rear service access should be provided where possible. Where necessary,

developers will be expected to contribute towards highway improvements.

SH2 Within the main shopping areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, new development and the redevelopment or conversion of existing properties for shopping uses will be encouraged and permitted when the following criteria are met:

- (1) the proposed development makes a positive contribution to enhancing the character and appearance of the town centre;**
- (2) for larger scale proposals, where appropriate, a comprehensive approach to development is taken;**
- (3) satisfactory rear service access is provided wherever possible;**
- (4) contributions are made by developers towards highway improvements should these become necessary because of the additional traffic generated.**

Service Uses

8.16 Within the main shopping areas, the prime consideration will be the continuity of the shopping frontage. However, the Council recognises that a variety of uses can help sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centres. Financial and professional services provided direct to the visiting public (Use Class A2), often in shop type premises, are an established part of the shopping scene, e.g. building societies, estate agents, banks. Similarly premises providing food and drink (Use Class A3) are often located in shopping areas, e.g. restaurants, hot food takeaways and public houses.

8.17 Whilst the Council wishes to support a degree of diversification within the town centres, a careful balance needs to be struck between the occasional provision of service uses at ground floor level and the detrimental effects of a concentration resulting in areas of 'dead' frontage in terms of retail activity. Within the main shopping areas in Wealden, existing A2 uses are generally well dispersed, although there are some small groupings in certain locations. The incidence of A3 uses and other non-retail uses tends to be less frequent. However, a continuing concentration of service uses could undermine the retail function of the main shopping areas, and the Council will continue to resist proposals where this could result.

8.18 Where service uses at ground floor level are considered acceptable, it is important that visual amenity is maintained wherever possible by the

provision of a shop-type window display in keeping with the character of the shopping area. Whilst helping to improve the vitality of town centres, A3 uses are often available to the public outside normal shop hours, sometimes until late at night, which can bring associated environmental problems of smell, litter and noise. In considering A3 proposals, the Council will have full regard for the likely impact on the amenity of the area, particularly if there is residential property in the locality, and where necessary will require appropriate measures to be taken to ameliorate the effects.

SH3 Within the main shopping areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for the conversion of ground floor shops for financial and professional purposes within Use Class A2, food and drink purposes within Use Class A3 or other service uses will only be permitted where the following criteria are met:

- (1) there is no disruptive effect on the shopping frontage through a concentration of non-retail uses;**
- (2) provision is made for a window display appropriate to a shopping frontage which is in keeping with the character of the shopping area;**
- (3) there is no detrimental effect on the character or amenities of the area through smell, litter or noise.**

Amusement Centres

8.19 Proposals for amusement centres incorporating fruit machines, pin tables, video games, etc, within shopping areas, whilst adding to the vitality of a town centre, can often result in many objections being raised. In planning terms these normally relate to a loss of retail floorspace, the noise and disturbance that can result from both the activities carried on and the clientele using the centre. Those problems can be heightened by long opening hours and the external appearance of the premises, particularly where proposals include open fronted facades, outside display and use of machines, and illuminated signs. Open fronted facades and outside activities can add significantly to the noise and disturbance created. Other considerations of a more social or moral nature are the responsibility of the Council as a licensing authority under the Gaming Act 1968 and are not planning matters.

8.20 Although amusement centres are not frequently proposed in Wealden's main shopping areas, in considering such proposals the Council will pay full regard to protecting both their retail function and their

character and amenity. To this end, as with A2 and A3 uses, the Council will resist proposals which result in a concentration of non-retail uses which would result in areas of 'dead' frontage in terms of retail activity. In order to protect visual amenity and reduce noise and disturbance, a shop-type window display in keeping with the character of the main shopping area will be required and no open fronted facade with outside display and activity will be permitted. Where appropriate, the Council will require adequate noise attenuation measures to be undertaken such as sound-proofing and self closing doors, and will consider the use of conditions in any planning permission to limit opening hours.

SH4 Within the main shopping areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for the use of ground floor shops for amusement centres will only be permitted when:

- (1) the criteria in Policy SH3 (1) and (2) are met;**
- (2) there is no display or activity outside the premises;**
- (3) there is no detrimental effect on the character or amenities of the area through noise and general disturbance.**

Where appropriate, planning permission will be subject to conditions relating to noise attenuation, opening times and outside activities.

Offices

8.21 Other 'office' uses within the town centres that do not fall within Use Class A2 fall within Use Class B1. Conversion of existing premises above ground floor level within the main shopping area can provide valuable accommodation for local firms, provide additional job opportunities and generally broaden the base of the town centre without compromising the function of the main shopping area as a focus for retail activity. Such uses will normally be encouraged and permitted when the proposal conforms with the relevant policies in the Plan. However, the conversion of ground floor shops to B1 use would not normally be acceptable within the main shopping areas.

SH5 Within the main shopping areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for the use of existing premises above ground floor level for business purposes within Use Class B1 will be encouraged and permitted. The conversion of ground floor premises to business use within Use Class B1 will not be permitted.

Residential Uses

8.22 Within the town centres, there are often flats above existing shops and offices providing a valuable type of residential accommodation which helps to give a vitality to the area outside normal shopping hours as well as improving security of property. Government guidance emphasises the scope that may exist for bringing empty and under-used floorspace above shops back into use for housing purposes which, in certain cases, may be of an affordable nature. New residential uses above ground floor level would be acceptable subject to meeting normal planning criteria relating to parking and amenity. Although unlikely, the conversion of ground floor shops to residential use would not normally be acceptable.

SH6 Within the main shopping areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for the use of existing premises above ground floor level for residential purposes will be encouraged and permitted. The conversion of ground floor premises to residential use will not be permitted.

LOCAL SHOPPING

Neighbourhood Centres

8.23 Outside the town centres, neighbourhood centres such as Jarvis Brook and Whitehill Road, Crowborough; Framfield Road, Uckfield; and Hailsham Road, Heathfield, cater for the daily or casual needs of nearby residents and those passing by, as well as containing a number of more specialist shops. The important role of village centres is discussed later.

8.24 The Council recognises the importance of local shopping and service facilities for meeting the day to day needs of the community and has promoted small scale shopping proposals in association with major housing development at Stone Cross, Grovelands Farm, Hailsham, and Rocks Park, Uckfield. The Council wishes to support further provision within or contiguous with neighbourhood centres, but only when this is acceptable in terms of the scale of the proposal (including the impact on trade in the town centres), local need, and environmental, amenity and traffic considerations. Most neighbourhood centres include residential properties and are surrounded by residential areas.

8.25 Furthermore, some centres already suffer from traffic congestion and road safety problems, often resulting from a lack of off-street parking and servicing. Care will need to be taken to ensure that any new proposals would not be detrimental to the character and amenity of the neighbourhood centres, and in this regard the Council will ensure that proper

provision is made for access, car parking and servicing. Specific policies for the Jarvis Brook and Whitehill Road areas in Crowborough and Framfield Road, Uckfield, are contained in the relevant town chapter.

SH7 Outside the main shopping areas and the neighbourhood centre of Jarvis Brook, Crowborough, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for new shopping facilities within or contiguous with neighbourhood centres may be permitted when the following criteria are met:

(1) the need for the particular site and scale of proposal can be demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction;

(2) the proposals do not have a detrimental effect on the residential character and amenity of the area, particularly with regard to traffic congestion, access and parking.

'Corner Shops'

8.26 Outside the town and neighbourhood centres there are a large number of small individual 'corner shops' mainly serving important day to day needs in residential areas, particularly for the less mobile members of the community, as well as catering for occasional passing trade. Garage shops associated with petrol filling stations sometimes provide ancillary sales of food and other convenience goods. Whilst these are aimed principally at the travelling motorist, they can be of particular benefit to the community where provision in an area is lacking or where the shop remains open until late at night. The Council supports the provision of small convenience goods shops, when appropriate in their scale and location to serve local needs and where there is no detrimental impact on the residential character and amenity of an area, particularly with regard to car parking and traffic generation. The important role of village shops and services is discussed later.

SH8 Proposals for small individual shops which are not within the main shopping areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, nor within or contiguous with neighbourhood centres, may be permitted when the criteria at SH7 are met.

NEW RETAIL SITES – THE SEQUENTIAL TEST

8.27 Government guidance in PPG6 advises that in drawing up their development plans, local planning authorities should, after considering the need for new development, adopt a sequential approach to selecting sites for new retail development. A sequential

approach means that first preference should be for town centre sites, where suitable sites or buildings suitable for conversion are available, followed by edge-of-centre sites, district and local centres and only then out-of-centre sites in locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport.

8.28 However, in view of the policies towards town centres, protecting the countryside and minimising vehicle trips, proposals for new retail facilities outside development boundaries will be resisted unless they conform with specific policies in the Plan.

8.29 In line with the sequential approach, the Council has made provision for new retail development in the town centres by the inclusion of development opportunities within the main shopping areas. As other sites will continue to come forward for retail development, a criteria based policy in line with the sequential test in PPG6 is considered appropriate. Priority is given to locating new retail development within the main shopping areas in the town centres which define the areas where new shopping development will be encouraged and permitted. Proposals within or contiguous with neighbourhood centres will also be considered in the light of Policy SH7 and the scale and function of the centre as set out in PPG6.

8.30 Whilst it is not the role of the Council to inhibit competition between retailers or methods of retailing, in line with County Structure Plan policy and Government guidance, the Council will wish to be satisfied that the impact of a proposal outside the main shopping areas on the viability and vitality of the town centre as a whole is acceptable, either individually or cumulatively with other proposals. The Council will require the submission of a retail impact study in appropriate cases.

8.31 The retention of an adequate supply of business land and premises in terms of amount, quality and distribution reflects County Structure Plan policy and is vital in relation to the aims of the Council's Economic Development Strategy. Similarly, the Council is required to maintain an adequate supply of housing land in relation to the County Structure Plan, in line with Government guidance. Therefore the Council would resist a significant loss of either housing or business land.

8.32 New shopping proposals, particularly large-scale schemes, can generate high amounts of traffic which can create or perpetuate problems of traffic congestion or road safety where the local road network is inadequate for the level of traffic involved. Such problems can also occur through inadequate car parking and substandard access which can often arise from the conversion of existing premises. In all cases provision should be appropriate for retail use.

8.33 In terms of accessibility, PPG6 advises that edge of centre locations will be determined by what is an easy walking distance for shoppers walking to, but more importantly away from, the store carrying shopping. The limits will be determined by local topography, including barriers to pedestrians, such as major roads and car parks, the strength of attraction of the town centre, and the attractiveness of the route to or from the town centre. However, most shoppers are unlikely to wish to walk more than 200 to 300 metres, especially when carrying shopping. The definition of edge of centre will vary between places, with large centres usually able to attract people to walk further than small centres.

8.34 In the case of out of centre locations, developments should be genuinely accessible by a variety of modes of transport, so that a significant proportion of customers and staff will be able to get to the development by means other than the car. The Council would seek to establish whether public transport would be sufficiently frequent, reliable, convenient and come directly into or past the development from a wide catchment area, although this may be less of a consideration with small developments to serve local needs. Development should be easily and safely accessible for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people from the surrounding area.

SH9 Proposals for retail development should be located within main shopping areas, as defined on the Proposals Map. Where suitable sites within the main shopping areas are not available, proposals for sites on the edge of the main shopping areas or within or contiguous with neighbourhood centres will be permitted when criteria (1) to (5) below are met.

Proposals for out of centre development will not be permitted unless located within the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map and suitable sites are not available either within or on the edge of the main shopping areas or within or contiguous with neighbourhood centres. Where such proposals are made they would be considered against criteria (1) to (5) below.

(1) either individually or cumulatively with other proposals or developments, there would be no serious effect on the vitality and viability of a town centre as a whole;

(2) there would be no significant net reduction in the amount, quality or distribution of land and premises available for business development;

(3) there would be no significant net reduction in the amount of land available for housing;

(4) the local highway network is adequate to accommodate the amount of additional traffic to be generated;

(5) proposals on the edge of main shopping areas should be within easy walking distance of the main shopping areas; out of centre proposals should be accessible by a choice of means of transport.

VILLAGE SHOPS

8.35 Several of the larger villages within the District provide a wide range of shopping facilities and services for both residents and passers-by as well as serving the needs of the surrounding rural areas. In many smaller villages, single shops, often with sub-Post Office facilities, play an important role in providing principally for food and other day to day needs. Generally, there has been a decline in village shopping provision as increased car ownership, personal mobility and customer choice has led to main food shopping at large supermarkets within the towns. This trend has clearly been to the detriment of the less mobile members of the community and has resulted in the need for longer car journeys.

8.36 In a number of cases village shops have been replaced by more specialist shops, such as antiques or furniture, particularly in areas attractive to tourists. However, such a change is outside the control of the Council. The conversion of village shops to residential use is difficult to resist when the continued commercial use has been demonstrated not to be economically viable. In these circumstances, the Council has limited control over the loss of village shops and Post Offices.

8.37 It is recognised that the retention of village shops and the provision of new shopping and service facilities in the villages will be based largely on commercial considerations and, in many cases, the personal commitment of the shopkeeper concerned. In a few smaller villages, following closure of a shop, Post Office facilities and newsagencies have been accommodated in alternative premises such as village halls or public houses, often with the encouragement of the Parish Council and the Sussex Rural Community Council. The Council undertakes a number of initiatives itself and in association with the Sussex Rural Community Council to encourage investment in village shops.

8.38 The Council wishes to see the current level and choice of village shops and services maintained and improved. New shopping facilities should be

appropriate to the village concerned and proposals will therefore be considered in the light of local need, scale and location, and the requirement for a particular site as set out in Policies SH7 and SH8.

8.39 Adequate and convenient parking is important in order to maintain the viability of village centres, and this needs careful examination when considering the provision of off-street car parks and traffic management measures.

SH10 Within the villages, the Council will seek to maintain and improve the level and choice of village shops and services by:

(1) supporting proposals for new shopping facilities when they conform with the criteria in Policies SH7 or SH8;

(2) considering the needs of shops and local services in planning the provision of off-street public car parks;

(3) considering the trading viability of shops and services in the future implementation of traffic regulations or traffic management measures.

SHOPPING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Farm Shops

8.40 The Council is anxious to prevent a proliferation of retail development in the countryside in view of the landscape and environmental impact, the possible effect on existing shopping centres, local and village shops, and the Plan's strategy to minimise unnecessary vehicle trips. However, a number of retail uses such as garden centres and farm shops do occur in the countryside, and it is recognised that the sale of produce derived wholly from the relevant holding or enterprise does not itself normally require planning permission. Whilst an element of imported produce is sometimes sold in farm shops, particularly in view of the seasonal nature of produce, this should not be of such a scale as to create a separate retail use, unrelated to the original farm holding or enterprise. Where permission is granted for the sale of produce not from the holding, planning conditions will be required to ensure that the sale of home grown produce remains the principal use. In these circumstances the Council will also take into account the advice in Paragraph 3.21 of PPG6. Proposals for garden centres will be considered in the light of Policy SH12.

SH11 Outside the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals involving the sale of agricultural, horticultural and other produce which is not principally derived from the relevant holding or enterprise will not be permitted unless:-

(1) the sale of produce derived from the relevant holding or enterprise remains the principal use;

(2) the proposed development is not intrusive on the landscape nor detrimental to the rural character of the locality;

(3) the additional traffic generated does not have an adverse impact on local roads by reason of their inadequate capacity or rural character;

(4) the site has good accessibility to an existing settlement and is not in an isolated countryside location;

(5) the proposals would not reduce countryside gaps which are considered important to prevent the coalescence of settlements.

Garden Centres

8.41 In recent years, as leisure time has increased, garden centres have become increasingly popular with car-borne shoppers who are able to buy a wide range of goods, often in bulk, which can meet most of their gardening needs. Garden centres usually require large areas of land for open display of plants, garden buildings, furniture and ornaments and other goods, as well as large buildings providing additional sales areas and sometimes refreshment facilities. Furthermore, such development often includes exterior lighting, advertisements and signs, large areas of car parking and new access arrangements. These characteristics can be intrusive on the landscape and detrimental to the rural character although in some cases new planting can help mitigate their visual impact over time. In terms of their impact, garden centres contrast sharply with a nursery where glasshouses or polythene tunnels are normally the main features.

8.42 In view of the large areas of land required for garden centres, there has been pressure to locate in the countryside, with some having grown incrementally from a small nursery operation. Whilst a countryside location may be appropriate, particular care will be taken to ensure that development is acceptable in terms of its impact on the landscape and rural character of a locality, the associated traffic generation, accessibility considerations and protection of countryside gaps. For these reasons an isolated countryside location would not be favoured.

SH12 Proposals for new garden centres and the expansion of existing ones outside the development boundaries, as defined on the

Proposals Map, will be permitted when the following criteria are met:

- (1) the proposed development is not intrusive on the landscape nor detrimental to the rural character of the locality;**
- (2) the additional traffic generated does not have an adverse impact on local roads by reason of their inadequate capacity or rural character;**
- (3) the site has good accessibility to an existing settlement and is not in an isolated countryside location;**
- (4) the proposals would not reduce countryside gaps which are considered important to prevent the coalescence of settlements.**

Implementation

8.43 All the policies in the Shopping Chapter will be implemented by the Council, primarily through its development control function. Whilst a countryside location may be appropriate, particular care will be taken to ensure that development is acceptable in terms of its impact on the landscape and rural character of a locality, the associated traffic generation, accessibility considerations and protection of countryside gaps.

Monitoring

8.44 The key areas to be monitored include:-

- (1) new retail/service floorspace;*
- (2) loss of retail floorspace;*
- (3) ground floor changes of use in main shopping areas;*
- (4) non-food retail warehouse planning applications.*

Transport

Introduction

9.1 The Local Plan has been prepared against a national background of rising car ownership and increasing car use, growing levels of road freight, both in terms of volume carried and size of heavy goods vehicles, and a declining public transport facility, both in terms of level of service and number of passengers carried. At the same time, there is increasing public concern over the environmental impact of road traffic, particularly traffic congestion, pollution, road safety, energy conservation and the impact of new roadbuilding on the countryside.

9.2 Within Wealden, transport matters are primarily the responsibility of the County Council, the Highway Authority, in terms of maintenance and improvement of the highway network (excluding trunk roads), the provision of support for public transport, and the management and control of traffic. The Department of Transport is responsible for maintenance and improvement of the A27/A259 South Coast trunk road. Wealden District Council is responsible for the provision of off-street public car parks and, as Local Planning Authority, for controlling the scale and location of new development.

STRATEGY

9.3 The Government clearly has a major role to play in influencing the balance of transport demand away from the private car and lorry towards public transport, with more freight on railways. However, as PPG13 advises, development plans should aim to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and the policies in this Plan have been framed accordingly.

9.4 As set out in Chapter 2, the Council aims to provide a strategy for transport seeking to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, whilst encouraging a safe efficient and environmentally conscious system for the movement of goods and people. Furthermore, it will place increased value on environmental considerations in transport planning, particularly on amenity and the landscape, traffic calming and public transport.

9.5 As part of this strategy, the objectives of the Plan with regard to transport are:-

(1) to promote a transport system to complement the settlement pattern in the District, which seeks to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and encourages the conservation of energy and natural resources;

(2) to promote modern and efficient transport links for people and goods to and from the District as a fundamental necessity for a healthy local economy;

(3) to support and encourage planned highway improvements which would reduce the impact of through traffic on communities, help the economy and improve safety;

(4) to minimise the landscape, environmental and ecological impact of new road proposals and other highway schemes, and wherever possible seek environmental improvements;

(5) to promote and actively support the safe and convenient movement of cyclists and pedestrians, including provision for the needs of the disabled and others with special access requirements;

(6) to encourage a comprehensive and co-ordinated system of public transport;

(7) to provide an appropriate level of off-street public car parking in towns and villages;

(8) to protect and, where possible, enhance the character and amenity of towns and villages by reducing congestion and pollution, and improving road safety;

(9) to ensure that access, car parking and local highway conditions are satisfactory when determining the scale and location of new development;

(10) to make appropriate provision for roadside facilities on primary routes whilst minimising the environmental impact.

9.6 The County Structure Plan supports improvements to the 'trunk road box' in East Sussex and adjoining counties (M25, M23, A23, A27, A259 and A21) in order to cater for longer distance traffic, providing connections between the County's main coastal towns and major centres outside the County such as Crawley/Gatwick and Greater London. The improvement of the A27/A259 South Coast trunk road is seen as vital for the economic well-being of the County. Some limited improvements to the cross country A26 and A22 primary routes may be appropriate to deal with localised problems of safety and to achieve economic or environmental improvements. The maintenance and enhancement of public transport services is supported and increased use of the rail network encouraged.

Transport Policies and Programme

9.7 The County Council's Transport Policies and Programme (TPP) is the annual statement of plans and programme for implementing the County Structure Plan policies on transportation. It is also the bid to the Government for Transport Supplementary Grant and approval to borrow for capital expenditure purposes.

Transport and Environment Strategy for the Eastbourne Area

9.8 In June 1995, a Transport and Environment Strategy for the Eastbourne area was approved by the County Council. The District Council was involved in the preparation of the Strategy which, whilst concentrating on Eastbourne, also works to maximise opportunities presented by the proposed A27 and A22 highway improvements for Polegate, Willington, Stone Cross, Westham, Pevensey and Pevensey Bay. This will include traffic calming schemes and environmental improvements. The Strategy will enable joint bids for future funding to be made for transport infrastructure as part of the "package" approach through the TPP.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

9.9 Although many of the policies in this chapter are environmentally based, there are a number of issues that are specifically environmental in their nature. These include considerations of the environment and landscape impact of new road proposals and the traffic impact of new development. Energy conservation issues associated with transport and the settlement pattern are considered in Chapter 4.

Road Proposals : Environment and Landscape Impact

9.10 As outlined in Chapter 4, the District has a high quality landscape, large parts of which are covered by Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, together with a rich heritage of historic buildings, traditional settlement patterns and areas of designated nature conservation and woodland importance. In the light of this, the Council attaches great importance to making a careful assessment of the environmental and landscape effects when considering new road proposals. In appropriate cases, the Council will seek the submission of an Environmental Statement. Furthermore, the Council will encourage the relevant highway authorities to actively seek and consider local views.

TR1 All new road schemes should have regard to the constraints of the environment both natural and built to minimise their environmental impact.

In assessing the potential impact of such schemes, the Council will pay particular attention to:

- (1) the amenities and character of the countryside, towns and villages;**
- (2) the effects on local communities;**
- (3) Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other areas of important landscape value;**
- (4) areas of designated nature conservation, woodland and historic importance;**
- (5) the character and setting of listed buildings and Conservation Areas.**

9.11 At a more detailed stage, such as following the selection of a preferred route, the Council is anxious to ensure that any potential noise and visual intrusion is minimised. To this end, significant landscaping will normally be required to provide sensitive and effective screening, and where overhead lighting is necessary every effort will be made to minimise its visual impact, particularly in countryside areas, subject to achieving the necessary safety standards.

TR2 In considering detailed road proposals, the Council will seek to ensure that the relevant highway authority undertakes measures to minimise the degree of visual and noise intrusion through sensitive overhead lighting where this is required, and appropriate landscaping, including earth mounding, contouring and planting.

Traffic Impact of New Development

9.12 The Council is concerned to ensure that when considering planning applications, the proposed development should not create nor perpetuate unacceptable traffic conditions. Proper provision should be made for access for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. Developers will be expected to make adequate provision for car parking and, where appropriate, cycle parking in all new developments. The Council's parking requirements are set out in Policies TR11 and 16. In addition, in appropriate cases, developers will be expected to make provision for public transport which may include laybys, bus shelters and adequate turning areas.

TR3 Planning applications for new development will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

- (1) the proposed development does not create or perpetuate unacceptable traffic conditions;**

(2) a satisfactory means of access (vehicular, cycle and pedestrian) is provided to meet Local Planning and Highway Authority standards;

(3) where appropriate, the provision of suitable public transport facilities.

TRUNK ROAD PROGRAMME

9.13 Within Wealden the A27/A259 route is part of the 'trunk road box' formed by the M25, M23/A23, A27/A259 and A21 motorways and trunk roads, which longer distance traffic in this part of the South East is encouraged to use. The A27/A259 forms part of the Folkestone to Honiton South Coast Trunk Road.

9.14 A number of improvement schemes were to have been completed or under construction in time for the opening of the Channel Tunnel. However, parts of the Department of Transport's programme have continued to slip, and for a number of years both the County Council and District Council have consistently expressed their concern over the slow progress being made.

9.15 Of particular importance to the District are the four proposed schemes in the Department of Transport's trunk road programme. These are the A27 Wilmington and Selveston bypasses, Polegate Bypass, A259 Pevensey - Bexhill improvement and the Bexhill-Hastings Western Bypass. All these schemes are illustrated on Figure 6 and are discussed in detail below.

9.16 The Government has completed its comprehensive national review of trunk road schemes, to determine the role which roads should play in an integrated transport policy and to establish a forward investment programme for the trunk road network. All of the trunk road schemes in Wealden have been subject to this review. The outcome of the review has resulted in the A27 Polegate Bypass being included in the targeted programme of improvements. However the remaining trunk road schemes in Wealden are to be the subject of further studies.

9.17 It is vital to Wealden that these road proposals are implemented as early as possible to provide traffic relief to towns and villages along the existing roads as well as helping the local economy through improved access, as recognised in the Council's Economic Development Strategy.

9.18 On this basis the Council will continue to support the earliest implementation of these road proposals but will wish to further consider details of the preferred routes (other than the Polegate Bypass where all the statutory procedures are complete). The Department of

Transport's proposed and published routes for these schemes, as indicated on the Proposals Map will be safeguarded from prejudicial development.

TR4 The Department of Transport's route of the A27 Polegate Bypass and published routes of the A27 Wilmington and Selveston Bypasses, A259 Pevensey-Bexhill Improvement and Bexhill-Hastings Western Bypass, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be safeguarded from prejudicial development.

A27 Lewes-Polegate Improvement

9.19 In 1993, the Department of Transport published a preferred option for improvements to the A27 between Lewes and Polegate to dual carriageway standard. This scheme was subsequently included in a review as a potential candidate for smaller scale improvements. The outcome of this review was announced in November 1996 and put forward three locations for road improvements between Lewes and Polegate, comprising bypasses for the villages of Wilmington, Selveston and Alciston, and a new alignment between Southerham and Beddingham.

9.20 The Council has advised the Department of Transport that it welcomes the principle of upgrading the A27 between Polegate and Lewes, subject to a full assessment of the detailed proposals.

A27 Polegate Bypass

9.21 The Department of Transport's proposed route for a dual carriageway bypass to the north of Polegate extends from a grade separated roundabout junction on the A22 north-west of Sayerland Road to a double roundabout junction near Dittons Farm in the east where it will join the Pevensey Bypass as shown on Inset Map 47. A wide variety of landscaping, planting and contouring is proposed along the length of the new road and in association with the proposed roundabouts, in order to help minimise the visual and noise impact. The proposals include a new pedestrian and bridleway bridge over the bypass to enable continuation of the Cuckoo Trail from Polegate to Heathfield, and a new footbridge at Sayerland Road which the Council supports subject to minimising its environmental impact through careful design and the use of materials. All necessary statutory procedures for the bypass are complete.

Pevensey Bypass

9.22 This single lane carriageway route, running from Dittons in the west and bypassing Stone Cross, Westham and Pevensey and coming out at the start of the A259, was opened in December 1990. Its completion has helped relieve the historic cores of

these villages of through traffic and resulted in a significant environmental improvement.

A259 Pevensey-Bexhill Improvement

9.23 The Department of Transport has published its preferred option for an improvement to the A259 between the Pevensey Bypass and the proposed Bexhill-Hastings Western Bypass. The scheme proposes the construction of a new dual carriageway. The existing carriageway would then be used solely for westbound traffic and a new carriageway to the north of the existing road would be used for eastbound traffic. The draft Orders were published in the latter part of 1994 and a public inquiry was subsequently held. The Secretary of State proposes that further studies be carried out prior to making a decision on the draft Orders.

9.24 Although the Council fully supports the need for an improvement to this part of the A259, it remains concerned over the environmental impact on the Pevensey Levels Site of Special Scientific Interest, which is proposed for additional designation as a Ramsar site, i.e. a Wetland of International Importance, under the provisions of the Ramsar Convention.

A259 Bexhill-Hastings Western Bypass

9.25 Whilst the greater part of the bypass will be located within Rother District and Hastings Borough, its most western part will fall within the rural south-east of Wealden. A preferred route for the dual carriageway bypass which leaves the existing A259 south of New Lodge Farm was announced in December 1990 and the draft Orders were published in the latter part of 1994. A public inquiry has been held, concurrent with the A259 Pevensey – Bexhill Improvement proposals. The Secretary of State proposes that further studies be carried out prior to making a decision on the draft Orders.

COUNTY ROAD PROGRAMME

9.26 The three County primary routes which pass through the District are the A22 London to Eastbourne road, the A26 Newhaven to Maidstone (North Kent) road and the A272 west of Maresfield. These all serve to link the towns and villages of the District to the main motorway and trunk road network. A number of important schemes have been completed including the A22 Maresfield and East Hoathly bypasses and the A26 Boars Head to Eridge improvement.

9.27 The County Council is proposing a number of further improvements to the A22 and A26 in the District, principally on grounds of road safety, traffic volume and environmental improvement. New schemes are proposed for an A22 New Route into Eastbourne, dualling of the existing A22 between Nightingale Farm and the planned Polegate Bypass, and a programme of gap closures in the central reservation

on the A22 between Boship Roundabout and the proposed Polegate Bypass. The District Council will encourage the County Council to implement these proposals at the earliest opportunity.

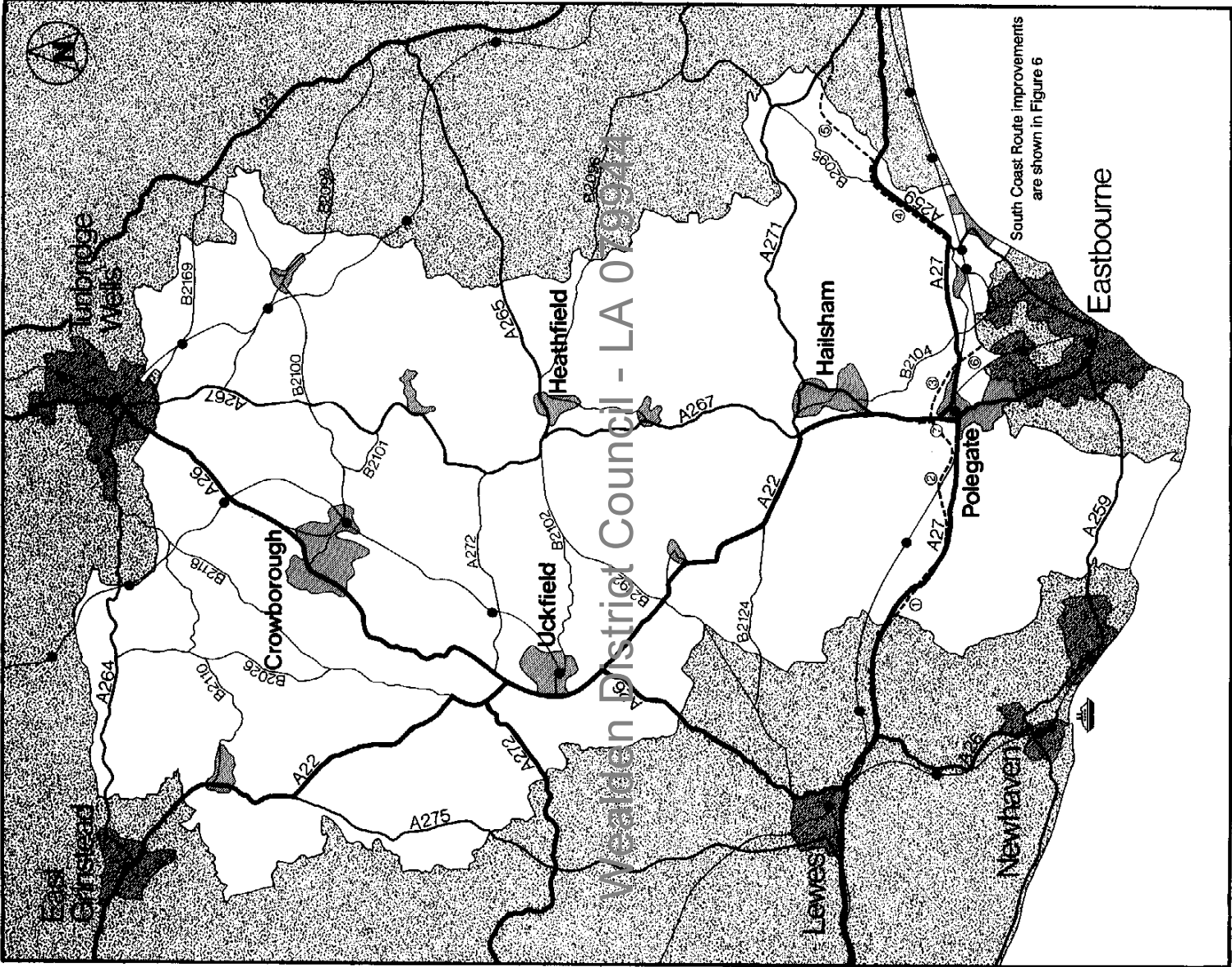
A22 New Route

9.28 The A22 is the main route into Eastbourne town centre. The County Council's proposal for an A22 New Route into Eastbourne bypasses Willingdon, where severe traffic congestion occurs at peak times, and provides improved access to the expanding eastern parts of Eastbourne. The first section of the road, between Willingdon Drove and Seaside, opened to traffic in 1995 and it is anticipated that the remaining section, between Willingdon Drove and Dittons, will be completed in 1998/99. It is intended that the new road will connect with the existing A27 Pevensey Bypass and the proposed A27 Polegate Bypass. The route, which is indicated on the Proposals Map, will be safeguarded from prejudicial development.

TR5 The area of land for the A22 New Route into Eastbourne Borough, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be safeguarded from prejudicial development.

A22 Dualling - Nightingale Farm to A27 Polegate Bypass

9.29 The dualling of the short, heavily trafficked section of A22 from Nightingale Farm to the proposed A27 Polegate Bypass has not been implemented as it is dependent upon a start being made on the Polegate Bypass. Its implementation will result in a complete section of dual carriageway



- KEY**
- Primary routes
 - Major distributors
 - Railways
 - A27 Selmeaton Bypass preferred route
 - A27 Wilmington Bypass preferred route
 - A27 Polegate Bypass, proposed route
 - A259 Pevensy - Bexhill improvement, preferred route
 - A259 Bexhill - Hastings Western Bypass, preferred route
 - A22 New Route, proposed
 - A22 proposed dualling

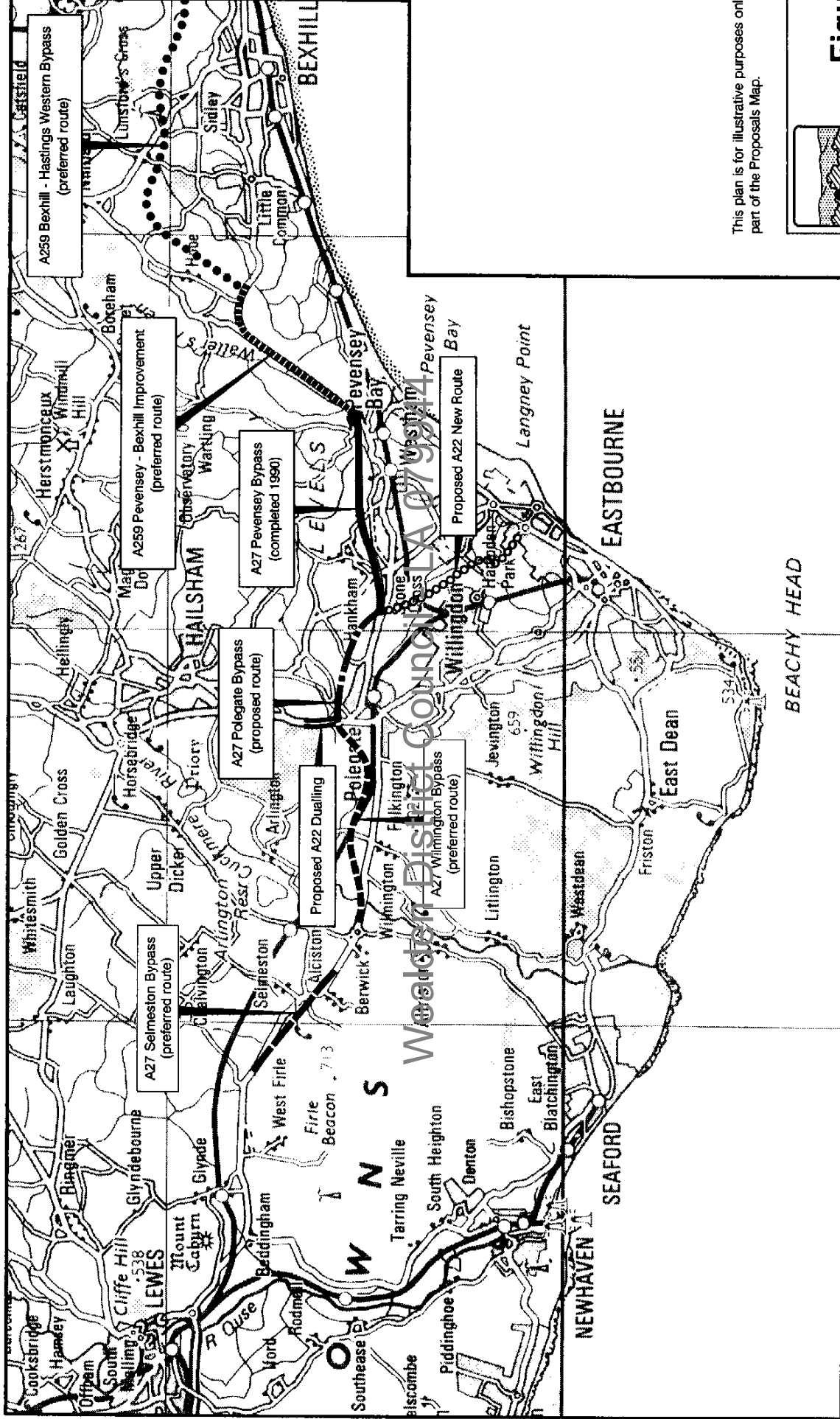
This plan is for illustrative purposes only, and does not form part of the Proposals Map

Figure 5

0 1 3 5 7 kilometres

Not to scale

A27 and A259 South Coast Route Improvements



This plan is for illustrative purposes only, and does not form part of the Proposals Map.



Figure 6

0 2 4 kilometres 1:100,000

between the junction with the proposed Polegate Bypass and Boship Roundabout. The affected land will be safeguarded from prejudicial development.

TR6 The area of land reserved for the dualling of the A22 south of Nightingale Farm, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be safeguarded from prejudicial development.

A22 Boship Roundabout to Polegate Bypass gap closures

9.30 In conjunction with the dualling scheme referred to at Paragraph 9.29 above, it is proposed to close a number of gaps in the central reservation of the existing dual carriageway section of the A22. This section of road has a very high accident rate, principally due to these gaps which allow traffic to either cross the dual carriageway or join it without the provision of proper slip roads. An additional roundabout was completed in 1994 to cater for turning traffic once the gaps are closed. As with the dualling scheme, implementation of the gap closures is dependent upon a start being made on the Polegate Bypass.

A22/A26 Future Improvements

9.31 The County Council, as Highway Authority, considers that some limited improvements to the A26 and A22 primary routes may be appropriate, but only where there are clear local safety, economic or environmental benefits. It is acknowledged that the very sensitive nature of the environment, particularly in the area of Ashdown Forest, will place severe constraints on any schemes which may be acceptable. The identification of a need with respect to accident studies and traffic forecasts does not therefore automatically mean that proposals will be acceptable. Each will have to be given very careful consideration.

9.32 Whilst the Council fully supports the early consideration of any such schemes, it will wish to ensure that a full assessment of the landscape and environmental impact is undertaken, particularly where schemes are proposed within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Ashdown Forest.

High Weald Transport and Environment Strategy

9.33 The County Council has started to introduce traffic calming and management measures in the High Weald area as part of the High Weald Transport and Environment Strategy. It will oppose schemes for East Grinstead in West Sussex, which would lead to a significant increase in traffic in East Sussex, and it will not support bypasses for Forest Row and Nutley. The County Council will investigate, in conjunction with West Sussex County Council, the upgrading of the A272 west of Maresfield, together with traffic management measures in the area between the A22 and

A23/M23, north of the A272. However, the District Council supports further investigation of improvements to the A22, including bypasses to Forest Row and Nutley.

ROADSIDE FACILITIES

Primary Routes

9.34 Motorists travelling along major routes have come to expect a wide range of roadside services, including commercial facilities such as a petrol filling station, restaurant and overnight accommodation as well as non-commercial facilities for public use such as toilets, telephones, picnic and children's play areas, and tourist information. Government guidance suggests that the precise number, location and frequency of filling stations and related facilities will depend in the first instance upon private sector responses to market demands as well as upon normal planning and safety considerations. The Government is keen to encourage the development of individual key sites to become the focus for a range of facilities for all motorists, including lorry drivers.

9.35 Of local relevance is the County Council's strategy "Roadside Facilities on the Primary Routes in East Sussex", published in July 1988. This suggests criteria for the frequency of provision of roadside facilities on primary routes, together with suggestions for provision of lorry parks and overnight accommodation.

9.36 Facilities including a new petrol filling station and restaurant have been provided on the A259 at the junction of the A27 Pevensey Bypass, at the Boship Roundabout at the junction of the A22, A267 and A271 and at the junction of the Uckfield and Maresfield Bypasses. In the light of the Structure Plan policy requirement for the provision of roadside facilities in association with planned improvements to the A27 and A22 routes, land has been allocated under Policy PW3, to the west of the proposed A27/A22 roundabout at Polegate for this purpose. Further details are given in Chapter 16.

New Facilities

9.37 The provision of commercial roadside facilities on primary routes in Wealden is now considered adequate having regard to Government guidance, County Structure Plan policy and the County Council's roadside facilities strategy.

9.38 In line with District-wide policy set out in Chapter 4, it is not considered that new roadside facilities will be appropriate within the environmentally sensitive character areas of the High Weald and Sussex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Coastal Levels. Outside these

areas, where the need for the facilities and the site in question can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council, particular attention should be given to ensure that the visual intrusion arising from the new built form, lighting and signage is minimised by careful design, including the use of traditional building forms and materials, wherever practical, and appropriate landscape screening. A comprehensive range of facilities will normally be required in order to prevent further proliferation of facilities on separate sites.

TR7 Proposals for new commercial roadside facilities along primary routes outside the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, will not be permitted within the High Weald and Sussex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the Coastal Levels.

Elsewhere such proposals will only be permitted on primary routes outside the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, if the following criteria are met:

- (1) a need can be demonstrated for both the proposed facilities and the particular location that cannot be met by either existing or planned facilities;**
- (2) where appropriate, the Council will encourage a comprehensive range of both commercial and non-commercial facilities to be provided;**
- (3) the layout and form of development and use of materials should respect the character and appearance of the locality and ensure an appropriate standard of amenity within the site;**
- (4) substantial landscape planting, including buffer strips and mounding, shall be provided along the site boundaries prior to the completion of development, wherever practicable.**

Non-Primary Routes

9.39 There are many other roadside facilities throughout the District on non-primary routes, mainly providing petrol filling stations. Along these routes, traffic flows are considerably lighter than on the primary routes and are normally more local in their nature. On this basis it is unlikely that any proposals for new commercial roadside facilities or the large scale expansion of existing ones along the non-primary routes will be justified as an exception to normal policies of countryside restraint.

9.40 However, in certain cases there may be opportunities for the small scale expansion or

redevelopment of existing facilities to serve the needs of the non-primary routes which would have an acceptable environmental impact. For example, reference is made in Chapter 15 to the possible development of local roadside facilities within the Burwash Road Commercial Area, at the junction of the A265 with the B2096 Battle Road, Heathfield. As in the case of new roadside facilities, the Council will seek to ensure that the visual intrusion resulting from any redevelopment or small scale extension proposals will be minimised.

TR8 Proposals for new commercial roadside facilities and the large scale expansion of existing facilities along non-primary routes outside the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be resisted. Proposals for small scale extensions and the redevelopment of existing facilities may be permitted where the criteria set out in Policy TR7(3) and (4) are met.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Road Safety and Traffic Calming

9.41 Whilst the planned road improvements will assist the efficient movement of through traffic, the Council wishes to see these increasingly supported by measures to manage and control the movement of local traffic in order to provide safer conditions for road users, a more efficient use of the road system and overall environmental improvements for residents and visitors. In particular, measures are needed to reduce the speed and volume of traffic which is often detrimental to the safety and amenity of villages, town centres and residential areas.

9.42 The Council will encourage the County Council to increase the necessary funding and introduce road safety and traffic management schemes in the District, where appropriate, including traffic calming measures. Particular care should be taken in any traffic management scheme to ensure that suitable provision is made for people with disabilities. In addition, consideration should be given to the need for servicing properties and other essential access requirements. The Local Plan identifies various locations where there is considered to be a need for measures to mitigate the effect of traffic, as set out in the relevant town and village chapters.

9.43 In recent years, the wider use of 'traffic calming' measures to physically restrain traffic for safety and amenity reasons in both urban and rural situations has received much attention. Such measures can include the provision of road humps, chicanes, road closures, planting areas and street furniture as a means of reducing vehicle speeds and discouraging unnecessary

through traffic. Traffic calming measures can often be part of a wider traffic restraint policy for a town or village which could also include speed limits, cycle provision, on-street parking controls, lorry management and pedestrianisation.

9.44 In considering proposals for new housing development, the Council is concerned that the associated traffic generation on local roads does not have a detrimental effect on road safety or residential amenity. Traffic calming measures may be preferable to other highway improvements made necessary by development such as road widening, which in some cases may not be possible. Following consultation with the Highway Authority, the Council will seek the provision of appropriate traffic calming measures by the developer, both within the proposed development and on the relevant parts of the wider road network. These will normally be secured by the completion of an appropriate legal agreement.

TR9 In considering proposals for new housing development, where necessary and appropriate, the Council will seek the provision of suitable traffic calming measures.

Heavy Goods Vehicles

9.45 The Council is concerned that heavy goods vehicles using narrow country lanes and travelling through villages on roads not designed for that purpose have a detrimental effect in terms of safety and amenity. However, in many cases, such vehicles need to gain access to farms and businesses located within the rural areas. Also, it is the policy of the County Council to allow heavy lorries to disperse over the available road network rather than to concentrate on selected roads, themselves perhaps little more suitable than the rest. Restrictions are, however, placed on particularly unsuitable roads. The aim is to improve the environment for residents and other road users.

9.46 As part of the Local Plan strategy to encourage through traffic to use the trunk and primary road network, the Council will seek to control the movement of heavy goods vehicles within the District. This could be achieved by resisting development proposals where the effects of lorry generation and attraction would be environmentally unacceptable, by encouraging the County Council to introduce Traffic Regulation Orders to control the movement of heavy lorries, and by making representations to the Licensing Authority with regard to applications for goods vehicle operating licences.

TR10 The Council will seek to control the movement of heavy goods vehicles within the District by resisting development proposals which would have a detrimental impact on the environment by reason of a material increase in

the generation and attraction of heavy goods vehicles within villages and along unsuitable country roads.

Cycling

9.47 The Council recognises that cycling has important health and fitness benefits and can play a significant role in achieving a more efficient and sustainable transport system. The County Council's Cycling Strategy, which was adopted in 1994, sets out to 'promote cycling as a safe, convenient, attractive, low-cost, healthy and environmentally friendly mode of transport for both utility and recreational journeys, and thereby to increase the proportion of journeys made by bicycle'. It is an objective of this strategy that 'cycle audits' of roads, rights of way and development proposals be carried out to ensure that the needs of cyclists are taken into account as far as possible. An integrated network of cycle routes is also being developed to cater for both utility and recreational journeys.

9.48 The Council recognises the vulnerability of cyclists and will ensure the relevant Highway Authority takes the needs of cyclists into account when designing new road schemes or alterations to the existing road network, and in preparing traffic management schemes. Furthermore, in carrying out its development control function, the Council will take into consideration the needs of cyclists to ensure opportunities are taken to provide facilities such as cycle parking areas, where appropriate, and promote safety in general. Cycle parking standards are to be drawn up for use in considering proposals for new development as part of the implementation of the Cycling Strategy.

TR11 In major development schemes, particularly in town centres, developers should provide covered and secure cycle parking areas.

TR12 In dealing with development proposals the Council will take into account the Cycling Strategy for East Sussex.

A Healthy Cycling Plan for the Eastbourne Area

9.49 A 'Healthy Cycling Plan for Eastbourne' has been produced by consultants on behalf of the Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, the County Council and East Sussex Health Authority. It follows from and builds upon the County Council's Cycling Strategy and puts forward policies and measures to encourage cycling in Eastbourne and the surrounding area, including Pevensey, Polegate, Westham and

Willingdon. Proposals for Polegate and Willingdon are set out in Chapter 16.

Footpaths and Bridleways

9.50 Within the towns and villages, the provision of a comprehensive footpath network is vital for safe and convenient pedestrian access within housing areas and to places of work, schools, shops and other community facilities. The County Council, as Highway Authority, is responsible for providing new footpaths alongside public highways. The District Council, as Local Planning Authority, secures the provision of footpaths within new developments and, where appropriate, links with the existing network.

TR13 The Council will seek to secure the provision of safe and convenient pedestrian routes in new developments, which should link to the existing footpath network where appropriate.

CAR PARKING

9.51 Car ownership in East Sussex increased from 247 vehicles per 1000 population in 1980 to 361 vehicles per 1000 population in 1990, an increase of 46%. Within East Sussex, Wealden had the highest level of car ownership in any District in 1991, with 38% of households having two or more cars compared to 23% of households for East Sussex as a whole. In the light of continuing growth in car ownership and the likely traffic generation from the high level of housebuilding and industrial commitments in the District, the provision of adequate car parking is an important issue for the Local Plan.

9.52 Recent Government advice in PPG13 says that local authorities should adopt planning policies to limit parking provision for developments and other on or off-street parking provision to discourage reliance on the car for work and other journeys where there are effective alternatives. In the Council's view, reducing, or not meeting the demand for car parking without these effective alternatives would affect the vitality and viability of town centres. Moreover, Wealden residents have to travel to towns and villages for many services and, since the District is largely rural, may never be able to make these journeys easily, if at all, by public transport.

9.53 For these reasons, it is not realistic at present to reduce parking provision, particularly in town centres, as the alternative means of transport do not exist. Future opportunities to reduce existing levels, or not to meet demand, may also be limited by the dispersed nature of the District. Nevertheless, the Council has adopted the advice in PPG13 on reducing the need to travel, and it lies at the heart of the objectives of the

Plan, both towards sustainable development generally and transport in particular. Indeed, the improvement of public transport is likely to rely on a co-ordinated approach with parking provision.

9.54 The Council will therefore keep the provision of parking under review during the lifetime of the Plan as part of its overall policy towards travel, and particularly in the light of the effect on public transport of the actions described in Chapter 9. This review will also consider the relevant level of parking standards to be applied under policy TR16.

Off-Street Car Parking

9.55 The District Council is responsible for and active in providing and maintaining public car parking spaces. The Council operates a system of long and short stay parking spaces on all its car parks throughout the District. The Council has limited financial resources available for the provision of new car parks or extending existing ones, and through necessity, priority is normally given to towns and larger villages where demand is greatest. In some cases the availability of suitable sites can be a problem.

TR14 Throughout the Plan period the Council will review the need for off-street parking spaces, and the level of parking to be provided as part of development proposals, in the light of the objectives of reducing the need to travel, especially by car, and of improving public transport. New car parks will only be provided when the review shows a need for them, and where resources and sites are available.

9.56 The Council operates a commuted payment car parking policy in Crowborough, Hailsham, Heathfield, Polegate and Uckfield, and other settlements, where appropriate. The policy enables payments from developers to be accepted in certain cases towards the provision of public car parking spaces where the necessary provision cannot be met on individual sites, and the alternative would be normally to refuse planning permission.

TR15 In Crowborough, Hailsham, Heathfield, Polegate and Uckfield, and other settlements where deemed appropriate, the Council may accept commuted payments for vehicle parking spaces by agreement with intending developers where:-

(1) there is a need to provide a reasonable number of parking spaces which cannot be met on individual sites but which can be met in a reasonable time in proposed public car parks nearby;

(2) the settlement in which the development is proposed appears in the Council's approved car parking capital programme.

Car Parking Standards in New Development

9.57 The Council, as Local Planning Authority, operates a set of standards in order to ensure that adequate off-street parking and servicing provision is made to accommodate the traffic generated by new development. These standards have been produced by the County Council and adopted by the District Council. It is the policy of the Council that all developments should normally provide for the parking and servicing demand that they create on site, unless provision can be secured elsewhere, e.g. garage courtyards, or public car parks through commuted payments.

9.58 A summary of the Council's parking standards, including provision to be made for the disabled, is set out in Appendix 6. These provide guidance to developers, forming a consistent basis for development control purposes, and are therefore included as part of the Local Plan.

TR16 In considering all development proposals, the Council will require the on-site provision of vehicle parking and servicing in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 6.

Park and Ride

9.59 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council proposes a Park and Ride scheme to serve Tunbridge Wells. This is a scheme where large surface car parks are provided at the peripheries of the town with regular bus services into the town centre and back. Whilst this Council supports the principle of a park and ride scheme for environmental and traffic reasons, it does not accept that sites should necessarily be provided within the Wealden area, where clear environmental objections exist.

9.60 To date, no suitable site has been found where a park and ride car park would not harm the rural character of its surroundings or the landscape of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and where these concerns would be outweighed by the benefits of park and ride. It is proposed that the two Councils continue to work together through a methodical approach of landscape analysis to explore whether alternative sites would be more acceptable in terms of their landscape and environmental impact.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

9.61 Although there has been a significant increase in car ownership over the last ten years, there are still a large number of households without the use of a car who are dependant on bus and rail services for access to shopping, employment, recreation and other community facilities. In view of the rural nature of the District, in many cases people are reliant on more than one form of public transport for their needs. Furthermore the provision of a comfortable, economic and convenient public transport system is essential if, in the longer term, there is to be a reduction in the reliance on the private motor car, a reduction in overall vehicle trips and the conservation of energy which could only be achieved by providing a real choice between different modes of travel.

9.62 Land-use policies in the Local Plan, such as Policy EN2, seek to reduce the need to travel by influencing the location of development. Whilst the maintenance and improvement of public transport services are not strictly land-use matters, except for the protection of former rail lines, the Council has wider corporate aims relating to public transport which are outlined below.

9.63 The Council will continue to encourage and support the County Council, as public transport authority, and the relevant railway organisations to maintain and enhance the quality and reliability of public transport services, and wherever possible, co-ordinate the provision of bus and rail services. In addition, the railway service has a role to play in reducing the need for freight to travel by road and the Council would wish to encourage the switch of road freight onto the railways wherever possible.

9.64 Since deregulation in October 1986, bus operators are able to schedule routes and the frequency of services that they believe to be commercially viable. The County Council, in order to retain the levels of service that existed prior to deregulation, is providing "Local Rider" services on less popular routes. This is particularly important in a rural district like Wealden where the dispersed nature of the population makes the guarantee of passenger numbers more difficult.

9.65 There are three railway lines which run through the District, each of which terminates in London. The Hastings to Charing Cross line has stations at Wadhurst and Frant, the Uckfield to Victoria line has further stations at Buxted, Crowborough and Eridge, and finally the Hastings and Eastbourne to Victoria line has stations at Pevensey Bay, Pevensey and Westham, Polegate and Berwick.

9.66 In recent years, the withdrawal of a number of peak hour trains on the Uckfield to London line has served to undermine the quality of the service and has given rise to concern over the whole future of the line. The Council feels strongly that an improved service and an increased level of investment on the line is needed for the social and economic well-being of

Uckfield residents, particularly in view of the growing population. The Council will continue to urge the relevant railway organisations to maintain and improve the quality and reliability of this rail service, particularly the electrification of the Uckfield – Hurst Green section of the line.

Uckfield-Lewes Reinstatement

9.67 Although the Uckfield-Lewes line was closed in 1969, Policy CA/T8 of the County Structure Plan seeks to restrict development which would significantly prejudice the possible reinstatement of a railway along the route of the former line north of the junction of the Hamsey Loop at Hamsey. Possible routes to connect with the Lewes to Haywards Heath line would need to be investigated.

9.68 In the past, British Rail consistently maintained that the scale of investment needed to reinstate the line was not justified in relation to the likely passenger demand and that a significant financial commitment from an outside body would be necessary. For this reason, British Rail made no financial provision for re-opening the line and, furthermore, stated that it would be in competition with funds for electrification of the Uckfield-Hurst Green line.

9.69 The prospects for reinstatement of the line are uncertain in view of rail privatisation. It is possible that in the medium to long term a franchisee will express interest in running the Uckfield-Hurst Green section of the line and wish to re-open the section to Lewes to connect in the longer term with the main Eastbourne-London line at Lewes now that the Railways Act 1993 encourages such possibilities. Indeed the Lavender Line Preservation Society has expressed interest in a longer term proposal to open up the Lewes to Uckfield line. The Society currently operates a limited service as a leisure attraction along part of the former line from Isfield station to the north. The Society's proposals are the subject of an ongoing examination by the County Council together with this Council, Uckfield Town Council and other interested parties.

9.70 Despite this uncertainty, the Council recognises that there would be benefits to local residents of a reinstated rail service providing a direct link between North Wealden, Lewes, and the coastal towns as an alternative to road transport. On this basis, and in line with Structure Plan policy, the Council will not permit development on the former railway line that would significantly prejudice its reinstatement.

TR17 Development which would significantly prejudice the reinstatement of the former Uckfield to Lewes railway line shown on the Proposals Map will not be permitted.

9.71 A study is being undertaken by East Sussex County Council, Wealden District Council and other local authorities on the potential for introduction of a regional rail service between the South Coast and north and east Kent using existing and disused railway lines between Lewes, Tunbridge Wells and Ebbsfleet. The possible future reinstatement of an Uckfield to Lewes rail service is being included as part of this study.

Polegate-Pevensey Link

9.72 The Structure Plan includes a policy that development which would significantly prejudice the reinstatement of a Polegate to Pevensey rail link will be restricted (CA/T9). The County Council considers that a short link just north of Hampden Park junction would be practical if it is needed and can be justified. The County Council's objective is to provide an improved train service on the South Coast route between Ashford and Brighton with the option of not stopping at Eastbourne, although the relevant railway organisations do not consider this to be supportable.

TR18 Development which would significantly prejudice the reinstatement of a Polegate to Pevensey rail link via a short link north of the Hampden Park Junction shown on the Proposals Map will not be permitted.

Spa Valley Line

9.73 The closure of the Eridge to Tunbridge Wells branch line effectively removed the rail link between the Uckfield line and the Tunbridge Wells line. However, the Tunbridge Wells and Eridge Railway Preservation Society has established a private railway between the Tunbridge Wells West and Eridge stations to be known as the Spa Valley Line. This is hoped to comprise the reinstatement of a limited public transport service as well as a steam and diesel tourist service which would then connect with the regular Connex South Central services at Eridge. The Society has successfully obtained financial backing for the project and has purchased the section of the former line between Birchden Junction to the south of Groombridge and Tunbridge Wells West Station. The laying of this section of the line is complete. The remainder of the line between Birchden Junction and Eridge will stay in the ownership of Railtrack.

9.74 The Council supports the Preservation Society in its efforts to reinstate the use of the line and views it as a potential recreational and tourist attraction connecting the Pantiles area of Tunbridge Wells with the attractive countryside of the north Wealden area.

9.75 In the light of the Preservation Society's commitment to the re-opening of the railway service, a policy to protect the route from prejudicial development is appropriate.

TR19 Development which would significantly prejudice the reinstatement of the former Eridge to Tunbridge Wells West railway line shown on the Proposals Map will not be permitted.

Stone Cross Railway Station

9.76 Policy CA/T7 of the County Structure Plan proposes the investigation of a new railway station to serve Stone Cross, North Langney and Eastbourne Park. At present, there is no commitment to a particular site. However the County Council, Eastbourne Borough Council and this Council have commissioned a study to evaluate the need for and the impact of a new station in the Stone Cross area. The Consultant's report concluded that the investment case for a Stone Cross station is not made purely in financial terms but that once externalities are included, then the broader case for the investment can be made. The appraisal results are however sensitive to key assumptions. Whilst the Council has given its support in principle for a new station, it is considered that at the present time there is insufficient justification for the provision of a specific site for this purpose.

Implementation

9.77 Policies TR1-TR4 inclusive, TR6-TR13 inclusive and TR15-TR19 inclusive in the Transport Chapter will be implemented by the Council primarily through its development control function.

9.78 Policies TR5 and TR14 will also be implemented by the Council through discussions and negotiations with the East Sussex County Council and other agencies.

Monitoring

9.79 The key areas to be monitored will include:-

- (1) the progress on the A27/A259 Trunk Road Schemes;*
- (2) the progress on Primary Road Schemes;*
- (3) traffic management/calming schemes;*
- (4) new or improved pedestrian/cyclist routes;*
- (5) car parking provision and usage in the towns and villages;*
- (6) public transport services - routes and timetabling.*

Tourism

Introduction

10.1 The tourism industry has shown considerable growth in recent years, reflecting greater affluence, more leisure time and increased mobility. Tourism is now a widespread and highly varied activity which makes a significant contribution to the national economy. All the signs suggest that tourism will continue to increase both in scale and significance, whilst changing in response to the growing numbers of overseas visitors, the continuing trend towards short break holidays, and the increase in day visits.

10.2 Tourism can bring significant economic, social and environmental benefits to the area. It not only contributes towards the local economy in terms of creating jobs and generating income, but often helps to safeguard and support local services and amenities. It has the potential to assist the conservation of the countryside and historic buildings, to stimulate improvements to infrastructure, and to generally enhance the District as a place in which to live, work and invest.

10.3 However, it is also recognised that tourism can have environmental costs as well as benefits. For example, tourist traffic, if not carefully managed, can cause congestion and damage at popular locations, while the needs of visitors sometimes generates pressure for inappropriate development. The quality of Wealden's environment is its greatest tourism asset and it is essential to ensure that the growth of tourism does not erode the very character and appearance of the areas that visitors come to see and enjoy.

STRATEGY

10.4 The Council has adopted a positive stance towards tourism in recognition of the important contribution it can make to the quality of life and economic prosperity of the District. At the same time, the Council recognises that tourism and the environment are mutually dependent and that it is in the long term interest of tourism to protect and enhance the environment that sustains it. Furthermore, the environment has an intrinsic value which outweighs its value as a tourism asset. Its future enjoyment and its long term survival must not be prejudiced by short term considerations. The Council's main objectives in relation to tourism are:

(1) to support the development of tourism, whilst recognising the need for a balance between such development and the protection of the heritage and environment of the area;

(2) to promote environmental quality as the key tourism resource of the District;

(3) to encourage the development of tourism that is compatible with the District's environment and which can help maintain and support it;

(4) to recognise that tourism is a positive activity with the potential to benefit the community and the place as well as the visitor and in any location to seek a balance between their needs;

(5) to ensure that tourism activities and developments respect the scale, nature and character of the place in which they are sited;

(6) to encourage high quality tourism developments, whilst seeking to extend the geographical spread of tourism within the District;

(7) to develop visitor management and education especially targeted at sensitive and fragile areas.

10.5 These objectives have evolved within the framework provided by the Council's overall Economic Development Strategy for the District, the County Structure Plan, the County Tourism Strategy and the South East England Tourist Board Tourism Strategy, and endorse the 'Principles for Sustainable Tourism' set out in the recent Government Task Force report on Tourism and the Environment. The objectives also take account of the Government's Planning Policy Guidance Note on Tourism (PPG21).

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND FACILITIES

10.6 In Wealden, the high quality of the natural and built environment is the principal attraction for visitors. The Downs, the Weald, the coastline, historic properties and gardens, the country lanes, villages and farms offer an attractive and accessible resource of immense diversity and appeal. At the same time, it is recognised that tourism developments which provide a range of things to see and do can be important in encouraging longer stays, providing somewhere of interest in wet weather and catering for different interests. However, public enjoyment of the District ultimately depends upon its conservation. The Council therefore attaches a high priority to maintaining the quality of Wealden's environment, particularly its countryside, and to ensuring that the standard of tourist facilities are of a similar high quality.

10.7 The scale and nature of appropriate tourism development will vary according to the nature of the area under consideration. The further promotion of tourist enjoyment of the countryside should be primarily aimed at small-scale enterprises that draw on the character of the countryside itself: its beauty, culture, history and wildlife. Tourist facilities which assist the purposes of conservation and recreation, for example by bringing appropriate new uses to historic buildings or opening up new opportunities for access to the countryside, will be encouraged. The planning, design, siting and management of all new tourism developments should be in keeping with the landscape and, wherever possible, seek to enhance it.

10.8 In the countryside, small-scale, locally run enterprises to service the needs of visitors will be encouraged, provided that the development is in accordance with other policies in this Plan and the conservation and enhancement of the landscape, woodland and wildlife. Within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Ashdown Forest, new tourism and leisure-related development outside of the village development boundaries will be restricted to the conversion of existing buildings and informal recreation in association with the quiet enjoyment of the area.

TM1 Outside the areas identified in Policy TM2, proposals for new or extended tourist attractions and facilities will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

(1) the proposed development would respect, and where possible, enhance the character, heritage and environmental quality of the area;

(2) the proposed development would make an important contribution to diversifying and upgrading the tourist attractions and facilities in the District in keeping with changing demands;

(3) within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, particular care is given to siting, design and appearance in accordance with Policy EN6.

TM2 Within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Ashdown Forest (defined as the area enclosed by the boundary of the Medieval Pale of 1372), proposals for new small-scale tourist attractions and facilities outside of the village development boundaries will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development:

(1) represents the use of an existing agricultural or other rural building in accordance with Policy DC7;

(2) is compatible with the character of the Downland or the Ashdown Forest;

(3) complements, and is consistent with, the quiet informal enjoyment of the countryside.

10.9 The Council is examining the accessibility of existing tourist attractions and facilities for wheelchair users and other groups with impaired mobility. The needs of these groups will be taken into account in the consideration of new development proposals, in accordance with Policy EN28, and the Council will support measures to improve accessibility for such groups whenever possible.

HISTORIC VILLAGES

10.10 Wealden has a wealth of attractive and historic villages, many of which benefit from the employment and income generated by tourist expenditure and also from the support that visitors give to local services and facilities. However, small communities can feel overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of visitors and a careful balance therefore needs to be struck in all villages between the needs of the visitor and the resident population. New visitor attractions should enhance the unique appeal of an individual village, relate to its heritage or contribute towards environmental conservation and enhancement. Tourism proposals which are unsympathetic or out of scale or character with their surroundings will be firmly resisted.

THE COAST

10.11 Wealden's coastline is a valuable tourism resource, combining good weather, attractive beaches, the dramatic and famous feature of the Seven Sisters, and proximity to well known resorts and marina developments. It comprises two contrasting stretches either side of Eastbourne: the largely undeveloped cliffs and downland between Cuckmere Haven and Belle Tout to the west, and the resort of Pevensey Bay to the east. Although only six miles in total, these stretches of coastline represent important areas for tourism and recreation.

Birling Gap

10.12 Birling Gap is one of only two places between Cuckmere Haven and Eastbourne which offers access to the beach. The National Trust supported by this Council and others has undertaken improvements to

enhance the general appearance and to provide appropriate facilities for visitors to the area. The District Council has replaced the steps to the beach and has produced a Beach Management Plan. It will continue to provide and encourage the improvement and sensitive management of this prominent location within the Sussex Heritage Coast area.

Pevensey Bay

10.13 Pevensey Bay is a small but popular seaside resort which receives a large influx of holidaymakers during the summer. Most overnight visitors stay either on the large caravan sites along the A259 to the west of the resort or in rented holiday homes. In order to improve the seafront environment and public access to the beach, the Council will promote and encourage appropriate enhancements, including the consideration of relevant development proposals.

Water Quality

10.14 The public's growing awareness of and increased expectations with regard to the cleanliness of beaches means that a significant improvement in the water quality of Wealden's bathing beaches is essential, particularly if the quality theme of the tourism strategy is to be realised.

ACCOMMODATION

10.15 A successful tourist industry is clearly dependent upon the availability of a high quality and wide range of visitor accommodation. Generally, therefore, the Council will view favourably additions and improvements to the range and quality of tourist accommodation in the District, provided there is no conflict with policies for the conservation of the countryside. The following section outlines the current levels of provision for all types of accommodation and establishes policies for controlling and managing provision in the future.

Hotels and Serviced Accommodation

10.16 There are over 120 hotels and guest houses in the District providing around 1,850 bedspaces. However, an accommodation survey carried out by the Council in 1991 identified scope for an improvement in the type and range of accommodation offered. In particular, there is a need for further purpose-built budget or mid-range hotels if suitable sites can be found. Proposals for this type of accommodation on primary routes in the countryside will be considered against Policy TR7.

Self-Catering Accommodation

10.17 Within the countryside there is a growing demand for good quality self-catering accommodation. The provision of this type of accommodation through the conversion of farm buildings is often possible, and this would be a particularly appropriate means of meeting the need for simple hostel or bunkhouse accommodation accessible from the South Downs Way. In the latter case, provision should be made for stabling or pasture for horses where bridleway access exists and such provision would not conflict with other policies in the Plan.

TM3 The Council will support proposals to convert farm buildings to a hostel or similar facility to provide overnight accommodation to serve those walking or cycling in the District. This applies particularly to locations where there is no access for ordinary vehicles, although access for emergency vehicles must be available.

10.18 The extensive storm damage to the District's woodland in 1987, together with the changing financial arrangements affecting woodland cultivation and planting, has resulted in some woodland areas being investigated for the development of holiday village or chalet accommodation. Such developments are virtually synonymous with low-density residential development, though with more scope for sympathetic design and screening, and, in view of the significant landscape quality of the District, require very careful consideration. It is considered important for environmental reasons to resist new holiday village or chalet park proposals within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Coastal Levels, and elsewhere such proposals will only be considered where both a specific holiday need can be demonstrated and an environmental planning gain can be achieved.

TM4 Proposals for new holiday villages or chalet parks will be strongly resisted in the Sussex Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Coastal Levels. Outside of these areas, such proposals will only be permitted where the following criteria are met:

- (1) a specific holiday need can be demonstrated;**
- (2) the proposal would restore a damaged or derelict site or offer some other form of environmental enhancement;**
- (3) the size and scale of the proposal would be compatible in terms of appearance and intensity of use with its location;**
- (4) the proposal would not be visually intrusive in the landscape and would be well screened by**

existing vegetation, particularly in locations adjacent to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;

(5) the proposal would be adequately landscaped both within and around the site.

Caravan and Camping Sites

10.19 Pevensey Bay has the highest concentration of holiday caravans in Wealden, reflecting its role as the major resort in the District and the high demand for holiday accommodation along the South Coast generally. There are currently around 500 static caravans and 200 touring pitches, representing about 37% of the total District provision. The Low Weald area contains a similar number of pitches, probably reflecting its easy access to the coast and policy constraints on the provision of caravan and camping sites within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Coastal Levels. By contrast, the High Weald has only 200 pitches, or 10% of the total provision. The average size of sites in this area is much smaller than elsewhere, reflecting the high proportion of certificated sites and the landscape quality of the area.

10.20 Whilst the Council wishes to ensure that there are adequate facilities for caravanning and camping in the District to meet future demands, this objective must be balanced with the need to protect and conserve the environment that attracts holidaymakers in the first place. Holiday caravan sites can be very intrusive in the landscape, especially on the coast, and static caravan sites can have a particularly damaging impact. Touring caravan and camping sites generally have a lesser impact due to their lower density, seasonal use (mainly during the summer when vegetation cover is greatest). The Council will encourage the improvement of landscaping on existing caravan and camping sites, particularly along the coastline. The South East England Tourist Board sees little scope for the further development of static caravan parks; the main emphasis should be placed on the upgrading and improvement of existing facilities to satisfy an increasingly sophisticated and discerning market, rather than any additional provision of sites. However, a growing demand for touring caravan and camping facilities is anticipated.

10.21 In view of the above considerations, proposals for new static caravan sites or for a change of use from touring pitches to static pitches will not be permitted. However, the Council will seek to encourage improvements to existing static caravan sites by allowing their expansion where this would enable improved layouts or better landscaping to be implemented.

TM5 Proposals for new static caravan sites for holiday purposes, or the change of use of touring pitches to static pitches, will not be permitted. Proposals for extensions to such sites may be permitted if this would result in better layouts and landscaping.

10.22 The high quality of the landscape in Wealden limits the number of locations where the further provision of touring caravan and camping facilities might be permitted, and careful consideration needs to be given to proposals for new sites, especially in designated areas. On the Ashdown Forest, it is considered that new caravan or camping sites would be unacceptably damaging to the open, unspoilt quality of the landscape and its sense of remoteness and seclusion. Proposals for such facilities will therefore be strongly resisted in this location.

TM6 Within the Ashdown Forest (defined as the area enclosed by the boundary of the Medieval Pale of 1372) proposals for touring caravan and camping facilities will be strongly resisted.

10.23 The Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty similarly has a landscape of exceptional sensitivity where caravan or camping parks would inevitably be visually intrusive or otherwise damaging to its unspoilt, rural character. The Coastal Levels, including the Pevensey Bay area where demand for caravan and camping facilities is highest, comprise a flat, open and visually exposed landscape, which forms the setting for Pevensey Castle and the historic villages of Pevensey and Westham. It is not considered that the further provision of such facilities can be sustained in this location without unacceptable damage to its landscape character. However, extensions to existing sites may be permitted where the proposals would result in improved layouts and landscaping. Within both the Sussex Downs and the Coastal Levels, small sites for lightweight tents may be permitted in appropriate locations.

TM7 Within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Coastal Levels, proposals for touring caravan and camping facilities will be strongly resisted, with the exception of small sites for lightweight tents. Extensions to existing sites may be permitted if this would result in better layouts and landscaping.

10.24 The demand for touring caravan and camping facilities has been and can continue to be partly met by providing new sites in the Low Weald area, where the gently undulating nature of the landscape is more suited to accommodating such facilities than the adjoining areas. However, in recognition of the need to disperse tourism around the District and away from the

areas most under pressure from visitors, it is considered that some further limited provision for touring sites can also be made within the High Weald Area, outside of the Ashdown Forest, particularly in view of its heavily wooded character and pronounced valleys. Any sites in this area should be small-scale, well dispersed throughout the area, and have good local access. Extensions to existing sites may provide a valuable opportunity for improved layouts or better landscaping to be implemented.

TM8 Outside of the areas identified in Policies TM6 and TM7, proposals for new or extended touring caravan and camping facilities will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

- (1) there is good accessibility from the primary or secondary route network, but preferably no direct access onto a primary or trunk road;**
- (2) the size and scale of the proposal would be compatible in terms of appearance and intensity of use with its location;**
- (3) the proposal would not be visually intrusive in the landscape and would be well screened by existing vegetation, particularly in locations within or adjacent to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;**
- (4) the proposal would be adequately landscaped, both within and around the site;**
- (5) on large sites, adequate provision would be made for the recreational needs of site users;**
- (6) the proposal would not result in an unacceptable concentration of caravan or camping sites;**
- (7) in the case of extensions, the proposals should result in an improved layout and landscaping.**

Within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, particular care will be taken to ensure that proposals respect and maintain the landscape character in accordance with Policy EN6.

Caravan Storage

10.25 There is a demand for storage facilities for touring caravans in the countryside where sites are perceived by caravan owners to be more secure and less expensive than elsewhere. However, it must be recognised that the storage of caravans can, by its very nature, be visually intrusive in a rural or other sensitive

landscape setting. Typically, caravans are stored outdoors in close proximity to one another and are normally only removed for short periods during the summer. The resulting visual impact can be as harmful as that of a static caravan site or other forms of outside storage and will rarely be compatible with policies which seek to maintain the character and appearance of the countryside.

10.26 Generally, therefore, the outdoor storage of caravans in the countryside will be resisted by the Council and such proposals will be expected to locate on appropriate business areas in accordance with the criteria set down for storage uses in Policy BS13 of Chapter 7. Small-scale proposals for the storage of caravans within existing buildings in the countryside may also be permitted, provided that the criteria in Policy DC7 of Chapter 5 are met.

TM9 Proposals for the outdoor storage of touring caravans will not be permitted in the countryside (outside the development boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map).

VISITOR MANAGEMENT

10.27 The quality of the visitor experience is based, in large part, on the quality of the local environment. However, there are a number of locations in the District where the inherent quality of the place is in danger of being lost or damaged by mounting pressures on the site. These pressures can be caused by a combination of too many visitors, limited capacity or fragility of the site, and concentrated periods of use dictated by visitor demand. The results are overcrowding, physical wear and tear and, occasionally, conflict with the local community.

10.28 Where these problems do exist, they are often concentrated at particular points and specific times and many, although not all, can be resolved by better management of visitors. Information and interpretation can give people a greater understanding and appreciation of a locality and site which, in the long term, can make for responsible visitors who have a greater awareness of the sensitivity of the environment. The Council will therefore support and encourage the development of information and interpretive facilities to increase visitors' understanding and enjoyment of the District's natural and built heritage, provided that these are sensitively designed and sited and comply with the policies of this Plan.

TM10 Proposals for interpretative facilities for the natural and built environment should be sensitively designed and sited, and should comply with other policies in the Plan.

10.29 Other measures which can be taken to alleviate visitor pressures include controlling the volume of visitors through traffic management and alternative marketing strategies or adapting the site to cope. A number of bodies are involved in a range of visitor management initiatives at sensitive sites and locations around the District, for example the Sussex Downs Conservation Board and the Ashdown Forest Conservators. Such initiatives, whilst important, lie beyond the scope of the Local Plan but the Council will support and encourage them and, where possible, introduce its own schemes and projects.

10.30 The Council recognises that well-positioned and effective tourist information can broaden the visitor's awareness of what the District has to offer, make it easier for the visitor to locate what they are seeking and help to disperse tourism around the area. The Council is responsible for existing tourism information centres and points, and is promoting the provision of a new centre within the proposed roadside facility at Polegate. It will also seek to identify deficiencies in tourist information points in the District and promote further provision in appropriate schemes.

10.31 Given that the vast majority of visitors arrive by road, primarily by car, the Council will also support and encourage traffic management initiatives, such as the positive routing of visitor traffic to avoid areas of congestion and sensitive sites as well as the investigation of traffic restrictions, traffic calming measures and pedestrian priority schemes in areas under pressure from large numbers of visitors. It will also seek to identify, provide and ensure the effective management of off-street car parks in such locations.

Implementation

10.32 Policies TM1 to TM10 inclusive will be implemented by the Council primarily through its development control function.

Monitoring

10.33 The key areas to be monitored will include:-

- (1) the provision of new tourism attractions and facilities;
- (2) tourist accommodation in converted rural buildings;
- (3) touring caravan and tent pitches;
- (4) information and interpretative facilities in the District.

Leisure and Recreation

Introduction

11.1 Participation in sport and recreation has increased significantly during the last decade in line with rising disposable incomes, increasing leisure time and the growth of public interest in health and fitness. Most people now take part in some form of active recreation, whether it is playing a sport or simply walking in the countryside. This trend seems likely to continue in the foreseeable future, with greater demands for further and better recreational facilities.

11.2 In Wealden, the Town and Parish Councils have traditionally been responsible for the provision of recreational open space, including children's playgrounds, playing fields, and other facilities for outdoor sport. Indoor recreational facilities are largely concentrated in the three multi-purpose leisure centres managed by the District Council at Crowborough, Hailsham and Uckfield. However, financial constraints are increasingly limiting the ability of public bodies to make direct provision for such facilities, and it is likely that the private and voluntary sectors will play a growing role in meeting future leisure requirements.

11.3 This chapter addresses recreation and open space requirements within the District, focussing principally on the need for outdoor playing space within the towns and villages. Proposals for leisure-related developments which may arise in the countryside, such as additional golf courses, facilities for motor sports or 'combat' gaming, are considered within the context of Chapter 5, while tourism-related proposals are covered by the policies in Chapter 10. Site specific proposals are detailed in the appropriate settlement chapter of the Plan.

STRATEGY

11.4 The Council recognises the important contribution that recreation can make both to the individual's health and sense of well-being, and to the general quality of life enjoyed by those living and working in Wealden District. It therefore aims to promote the development of sport and recreation in the District, to achieve greater levels of participation in sporting and recreational activities, and to encourage the provision of a wide range of recreational opportunities to benefit all sections of the community. In seeking to achieve these aims, it will work in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary agencies.

11.5 The Council will seek the retention and provision of recreational open space in towns and villages,

together with the development of an appropriate range and standard of facilities for indoor sport and recreation. It is the aim of the Council's corporate Leisure Strategy to develop and promote the role of Crowborough, Hailsham and Uckfield as local centres for indoor sports and leisure activities in view of their overall accessibility and existing level of facilities. At the same time the Council will support and encourage Town and Parish Council initiatives to improve the existing level of recreational provision in other towns and villages, in recognition of their important role in meeting the leisure needs of the wider community.

11.6 Within the countryside further opportunities for quiet, informal recreation will be sought and encouraged. The Council aims to develop the potential for access to the countryside through the public rights of way network, the further improvement and extension of the Cuckoo Trail, and the provision of publicity and information for both residents and visitors.

11.7 In accordance with this strategy, the main objectives for recreation are:-

(1) to encourage the provision of a wide range of opportunities for both formal and informal recreation where this would not adversely affect the amenities of adjoining occupiers or the attractiveness of the countryside;

(2) to safeguard, and make the most effective use of, existing outdoor playing space, and to improve the level of provision wherever possible;

(3) to seek to ensure that adequate provision is made for outdoor playing space and informal amenity areas within new residential developments;

(4) to improve access to the countryside;

(5) to encourage Town and Parish Council and voluntary initiatives in the provision of sports and recreational facilities, where appropriate.

11.8 These aims have been formulated having regard to Government guidance, particularly in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17, 'Sport and Recreation', and the strategic framework provided by the Council's corporate Leisure Strategy and the County Structure Plan. The policies of the County Structure Plan make provision for more and better recreational facilities but in a carefully controlled and managed way to protect the environment, both for its own sake and as a recreational asset.

OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE

11.9 Government advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 states that it is the Local Planning Authority's responsibility to take full account of the community's need for recreational space, to have regard to current levels of provision and deficiencies, and to resist pressures for the development of open space which conflict with the wider public interest.

11.10 The standard most generally applied to the provision of outdoor playing space is that recommended by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA), of a minimum of 2.4 hectares per thousand population. This comprises 1.6-1.8 hectares of space for youth and adult use (including playing pitches, courts and greens) and 0.6-0.8 hectares of children's play space (defined as equipped playgrounds and casual play space within housing areas). The standard specifically excludes informal amenity space, ornamental gardens, parks and woodland.

11.11 Appendix 8 indicates the overall provision of outdoor playing space in Wealden's towns, illustrating those that fall below the NPFA recommended levels and the particular deficiencies in the provision of children's play space. However, a reasonable level of provision is achieved in many of the rural areas of the District, with most of the larger villages possessing at least one recreation ground. Areas of deficiency are considered in more detail in the following sections.

11.12 The principal requirement for youth and adult use derives from the four team sports of cricket, football, hockey and rugby. In previous years, the provision of sports pitches has been achieved in association with large new housing developments. However, Local Plan studies have identified a need for additional sports pitches in all Wealden's towns, with a number of facilities suffering from over-use. Unfortunately the opportunities for providing additional pitches are limited due to the lack of sites in Town or Parish Council ownership, although land has been identified for the provision of further playing fields at Crowborough, Hailsham, Heathfield, Polegate and Uckfield, as described in the relevant town chapters. Consultations carried out with Parish Councils indicate a degree of satisfaction with the overall level of pitch provision in rural areas, except at Danehill, Framfield, Hellingly and Maresfield. Areas of the District deficient in facilities for tennis and bowls are listed in Appendix 8. Town and Parish Council initiatives for the provision of further outdoor recreational facilities will be supported where appropriate.

11.13 The opportunities for rectifying the shortfall in children's play space are limited due to financial constraints and the fact that the worst deficiencies occur within existing residential areas, where there is

little prospect of suitable sites becoming available. However, a number of potential locations for additional provision are identified in the individual settlement chapters where appropriate, and the Council will normally require the provision of adequate children's play space in all large new residential developments, in accordance with Policy LR3.

11.14 It is clear from the deficiencies in outdoor playing space identified above that there is a need for this Council and the Town and Parish Councils to realise opportunities to secure the provision of additional facilities where appropriate. Policy LR1 states the Council's intention to ensure that adequate recreational open space is provided to meet the needs of existing and future residents.

11.15 In order to provide an appropriate basis for the provision of outdoor playing space, the Council has adopted as a minimum standard the recommendation of the NPFA, as outlined above.

LR1 The Council will seek to ensure that adequate outdoor playing space is provided in towns and villages within the District in accordance with the levels recommended by the National Playing Fields Association. This will be achieved by:

- (1) protecting existing outdoor playing space or other open space with recreational or amenity value (Policy LR2);**
- (2) the provision of children's play space in new residential developments of 30 or more dwellings (Policy LR3);**
- (3) the provision of artificial turf pitches on appropriate sites.**

Existing Outdoor Playing Space

11.16 In view of the shortages of outdoor playing space within the District and the difficulties in securing new public open space, it is important that existing facilities are retained and their use maximised. It is also important that other recreational open space which is, or could be, of benefit to the local community is retained for public use. Playing fields, whether owned by public, private or voluntary organisations, are regarded as particularly significant for their recreational and amenity value. The Council will therefore protect such facilities from development, in accordance with the advice set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17, unless specific circumstances apply.

LR2 Development proposals which would result in the loss of existing outdoor playing

space, or other open space with recreational or amenity value, will not be permitted. In particular, planning permission will not be granted for the loss of existing playing fields, whether privately or publicly owned. An exception may be made where the redevelopment of part of the site would enhance the recreational facilities available, where alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available nearby, or where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that there is an excess of outdoor playing space in the area.

Outdoor Playing Space in New Housing Developments

11.17 It is now widely accepted that new residential developments should make adequate provision for recreational open space to meet the needs of the prospective occupants. The standards adopted for such provision are usually related to the NPFA target of 2.4 hectares per thousand population, as outlined above. However, whilst the provision of outdoor playing space in accordance with NPFA standards can generally be readily achieved on large new residential development, for smaller schemes it is seldom possible to provide a worthwhile and usable level of open space on site.

11.18 In view of the limited size and number of the housing sites likely to come forward in the period to 2004, over and above the committed situation, it is considered that it would be unrealistic in this Plan to require all new residential developments to incorporate the full range of open space facilities recommended by the NPFA. The Council has therefore identified a threshold above which developers will normally be required to provide play space for children, as set out below. In determining the precise requirement for any individual development, the following factors will also be taken into account:-

- (i) the type of housing proposed;
- (ii) the location of the site;
- (iii) any local play space deficiencies.

Children's Play Space

11.19 It is considered that the provision of adequate play space for children should, in most circumstances, be an essential requirement of all developments of 30 or more dwellings. Within such developments, the Council will therefore require the provision of safe and readily accessible play areas at a rate of 0.6-0.8 hectares per thousand population. This overall allocation should comprise both an equipped children's play area at a rate of 0.2-0.3 hectares per thousand

population, and casual or informal play space at a rate of 0.4-0.5 hectares per thousand population, as described below. An exception to this policy will be made in the case of sheltered housing or other specialist accommodation for the elderly/retired.

11.20 Equipped play areas should be located within a short walking distance of each home, with safe and convenient pedestrian access. They should include provision for the under fives, be provided with seating, and allow easy supervision by parents. Particular attention should be given to minimising disturbance to adjoining residents and avoiding the risk of vandalism and crime by means of layout, design and location. Play equipment should conform to British Standard 5696 and normally be installed by first occupation of the associated housing. Appropriate safety surfacing will be required in all equipped play areas.

11.21 Casual play space, or kickabout areas, are important to meet the needs of children for casual play, informal games and other activities which cannot normally take place within an equipped playground or sports field. To fulfil their purpose, such areas should be situated within a short walking distance of each home and sited to avoid the risk of road accidents or nuisance to neighbours. They are not meant for organised team games nor do pitches need to be marked out. They should be carefully landscaped, free-draining and for the most part reasonably level to allow for ball games. Where appropriate, provision could be made for part of these areas to be hard-surfaced to allow opportunities for activities such as cycling.

LR3 The Council will require new residential development of 30 or more dwellings to contain children's play space at a rate of 0.6 – 0.8 hectares per thousand population, including an equipped area at a rate of 0.2 – 0.3 hectares per thousand population. This space should:-

- (1) be located where it can be used safely, conveniently and without causing excessive noise or other disturbance to adjoining areas;**
- (2) be properly drained, laid out, equipped and landscaped;**
- (3) be additional to any amenity, incidental or other open space.**

A capital sum, or other arrangement to the satisfaction of the District Council, will be sought for future maintenance.

11.22 Rather than applying an average household size to calculate the population of a proposed development, it is considered more appropriate to base such an assessment on the number of people likely to occupy

each dwelling. The method which will be used to implement the above policy is detailed in Appendix 8.

Artificial Turf Pitches

11.23 Artificial turf or 'all weather' pitches can theoretically accommodate 30 times more hours of play than natural grass and are now gaining wide recognition, particularly by sports such as hockey. Whilst synthetic pitches do not normally solve the problem of peaking usage (e.g. at weekends), they do allow for play throughout the year and, with floodlighting, can substantially alleviate pressures on existing playing fields. Such facilities are most beneficially located within school sites in order to maximise day time usage.

11.24 The Sports Council has identified Crowborough as a priority area for a floodlit artificial turf pitch. In East Sussex such facilities are currently limited to Seaford and Portslade. Whilst the Council seeks to encourage the provision of artificial turf pitches on appropriate sites in Crowborough and other parts of the District, it recognises that floodlighting, together with increased levels of activity in the evenings, can be of particular concern in some areas. Proposals for artificial turf pitches will therefore only be permitted where the amenities of adjoining occupiers and the character of the locality would not be unacceptably affected.

LR4 Proposals for the provision of artificial turf pitches may be permitted where there is no unacceptably adverse impact on the amenities of adjoining occupiers or the character of the locality. Control over hours of operation may be required by condition of any planning permission.

INFORMAL AMENITY AREAS

11.25 In addition to the provision of outdoor playing space, informal open space has a valuable role in terms of its recreational and amenity potential. This type of space, which includes both open and wooded areas, offers opportunities for passive recreation and often makes an important contribution to the character of an area and to wildlife conservation, particularly within built-up areas.

11.26 Whilst it is desirable that everyone should have convenient access to informal open space, this does not fall within NPFA guidelines nor are there any other generally accepted standards which can be applied. However, in order to offset to some extent the deficiencies in formal outdoor recreation facilities, the Council will take every opportunity to increase the amount of informal amenity space which is accessible to the public. This will include utilising the amenity

potential of existing features and providing additional open space in association with the development of new sites.

11.27 A number of opportunities for the provision of informal open space have been identified and are described in the relevant settlement chapters. In addition, Policy LR5 seeks to secure informal amenity areas, additional to the children's play space required to meet minimum standards, in all large housing developments.

LR5 The Council will seek the provision of informal amenity space, additional to the outdoor playing space required under Policy LR3, in all large new housing developments, where appropriate, incorporating existing landscape features such as trees, hedgerows, etc.

ALLOTMENTS

11.28 The District Council, Town Councils and many of the Parish Councils maintain allotments. The existing provision within the District is generally adequate, with evidence of vacant plots in many areas, and there is no known requirement to allocate additional land for allotment purposes at present. However, it is considered that existing allotments represent a valuable facility, particularly in view of the trend towards increased leisure time. Proposals to develop allotment land will therefore normally be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that suitable alternative provision will be made elsewhere or that other exceptional circumstances prevail.

LR6 Proposals for the development of allotment land will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that adequate and suitable alternative provision can be made elsewhere.

INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

11.29 Wealden is relatively well-equipped in terms of indoor sports facilities. Goldsmith's Leisure Centre in Crowborough, Utopia in Uckfield and the Lagoon in Hailsham, each offer an extensive range of facilities for indoor sports, including swimming, squash, badminton, 5-a-side football, basketball, gymnastics, trampolining, weight training and fitness classes. Since the completion of the dual use sports hall at Heathfield Community College, 80% of the District's population now live within three miles of public indoor leisure facilities.

11.30 In view of this wide range of provision, the often very high costs of providing new facilities, and current constraints on public spending, the Council's Corporate Leisure Strategy gives priority to maximising the usage of the existing leisure services rather than making direct provision for additional indoor facilities. Initiatives such as the Oasis Project, which aims to increase participation in recreational activity through partnership between the Council and health agencies, are already achieving success in this respect at all three Leisure Centres..

11.31 Whilst there is unlikely to be further public sector provision of purpose-built indoor sports facilities during the Plan period, it is recognised that there may be a demand for commercial facilities catering for sports such as tennis, squash and fitness-training. Such facilities need to be as accessible as possible and do not generally require a rural location. They usually involve substantial new buildings and car parking and, in view of the strategy of protecting the countryside from inappropriate development, it is considered that new proposals for indoor sports facilities should normally be located within the town or village development boundaries. Small-scale proposals may be acceptable in the countryside where they are ancillary to an existing use or represent the use of an existing building. However, planning permission is unlikely to be granted for such uses in the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or on the Ashdown Forest, where it is intended to provide only for informal recreational activity in association with the quiet enjoyment of the countryside in accordance with Policy S18 of the approved Structure Plan.

LR7 Proposals for indoor sports or leisure facilities will not be permitted outside development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, unless they are small in scale and are ancillary to an existing use, or represent the use of an existing agricultural or other rural building, in accordance with Policy DC7.

11.32 Whilst the leisure centres in the towns have extensive catchment areas, covering the north, south and centre of the District, it is recognised that recreational opportunities for a significant proportion of Wealden's population remain limited. The more rural areas lack facilities for indoor sport and recreation, and access to the towns is often restricted due to a lack of private transport or the inadequacy of public transport. This particularly affects those sections of the community who characteristically have low sports participation rates, i.e. women, children, the elderly and disabled.

11.33 Obviously, most small rural communities are not able to support the provision of a purpose-built sports hall. Such facilities, as well as being expensive to construct, will usually accrue heavy revenue costs

and will rely on a large catchment population to be financially viable.

11.34 However, in most parts of the District, community halls already make a vital contribution to village life and, with minor adaptations, many could accommodate a wide range of recreational pursuits. These facilities are managed by a variety of different organisations, including Parish Councils, voluntary bodies and churches. Consultations with the Town and Parish Councils have identified a need for new community halls at East Dean, Herstmonceux, Laughton, Polegate and Willingdon. Specific proposals are contained in the relevant settlement chapter where appropriate, but Policy LR8 provides for new, extended or improved facilities where other opportunities arise.

LR8 Proposals for new, extended or improved community halls will be permitted within the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map. In exceptional circumstances, proposals for such facilities will be permitted outside the development boundaries provided that the following criteria are met:

- (1) the proposed development is essential to meet the needs of the local community;**
- (2) the proposed development cannot be accommodated satisfactorily within the development boundaries;**
- (3) the proposed development would not be unduly intrusive in the landscape, or detrimental to the character and appearance of the countryside.**

COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION

11.35 The importance of the countryside for recreation lies in the wide variety of opportunities it offers to people of all ages, capabilities and interests. Countryside recreation is now the most popular form of outdoor leisure activity and covers an enormous range of pursuits, including well established sports such as angling and newer activities such as hang gliding. The vast majority of people, however, visit the countryside to enjoy casual or informal activities that require no particular skills and few, if any, special facilities.

11.36 Whilst recognising the landscape and other environmental constraints to development in much of the District, the Council is aware of the need to improve and extend opportunities for both residents and visitors to enjoy the countryside and its wildlife. It will therefore support and encourage measures to

facilitate access to the countryside for informal and passive recreation, where this is consistent with other policies and proposals in the Plan. Such measures will include negotiating access agreements with landowners, promoting and developing safe routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, and the introduction, where appropriate, of picnic areas, car parks and other visitor facilities at access points to the wider countryside.

(3) provision of new indoor community facilities;

Footpaths and Bridleways

11.37 The public footpath and bridleway network represents a valuable recreational resource, enabling walkers and riders to gain access to and enjoy the countryside with minimal disturbance to farmers and other landowners. The Council will promote the use of this network by encouraging its maintenance and improvement where possible, seeking to ensure that all routes are appropriately surfaced, signposted, waymarked and kept free of obstruction and seeking to promote, where development affects public rights of way, the maintenance of these routes by preventing their obstruction or promoting a sensitive diversion.

The Cuckoo Trail

11.38 An important existing facility is the Cuckoo Trail, a traffic free path for shared use by walkers, cyclists, the disabled and, in parts, horse riders between Heathfield and Polegate. The Council, in association with Sustrans Ltd, is working with the County Council and local Parish Councils to extend the Trail northwards to the Kent border and southwards to Eastbourne, where it will link with similar facilities being provided in the Eastbourne Park area. It is envisaged that within ten years the Trail will form a key link within the National Cycle Network, a series of high quality, safe and attractive routes reaching all parts of mainland Britain. In addition the Council will promote the use of other leisure cycle routes and seek new opportunities for recreational cycling.

Implementation

11.39 Policies LR1 to LR8 inclusive will be implemented by the Council primarily through its development control function.

Monitoring

11.40 The key areas to be monitored will include:-

(1) the overall provision of outdoor play space in the towns and villages;

(2) the provision of outdoor play space in new housing developments;

Community Services

Introduction

12.1 This chapter gives consideration to the availability of infrastructure and other community facilities to serve existing and new development. It outlines the responsibilities of the various agencies involved in the provision of community services and includes the Council's planning policies relating to the provision of infrastructure and other community services in association with new development.

STRATEGY

12.2 The Council is keen to promote a full range of local community services to be available and accessible within the District to meet the reasonable expectations of existing and new residents. This is especially pertinent to new housing development. The concerns about such services becoming stretched by major new developments or about delays or other inadequacies in accompanying services and community facilities are recognised and will be addressed as fully as possible.

12.3 With the exception of recycling facilities, the District Council is not the Authority or Agency responsible for directly providing the services. Its influence is principally as the Local Planning Authority responsible for local plan preparation and development control. The service providers, who have been consulted during the preparation of this Plan, will be able to take account of the Plan's proposals and policies in their own programmes.

12.4 Certain services are provided locally, for example libraries, while others have nationally determined levels of service. There are changes in the form of delivery of many services, particularly as some move into the private sector. This necessitates continued close liaison between the Council and the relevant agencies to ensure service provision and development is properly co-ordinated and is not disrupted or prejudiced.

12.5 It is the aim of the Plan's strategy to ensure that all works, services and community facilities required by development will be provided at the appropriate time. In accordance with this the following objectives are defined:-

(1) to support the provision of a wide range of community services to meet the needs and expectations of the existing and future residents;

(2) to assist the relevant service providers to assess and develop their own programmes to meet the

requirements of the existing and the projected population and developments of the Local Plan in an efficient manner;

(3) to avoid any delays or other inadequacies in the availability of community services.

GENERAL APPROACH

12.6 In view of the prior need to secure the necessary infrastructure to service new development and the important contribution that the community services referred to above make to the quality of life, it is appropriate to clearly set down the policy framework within which to consider development proposals, including ones for the supply of those services. Accordingly, in line with Structure Plan Policies S4 and S5 and the above strategy, the following policy is put forward:-

CS1 Development will not be permitted before the Council is satisfied that the capital works directly required to service the development are provided at the time development takes place or will be provided at the appropriate time.

12.7 In accordance with this policy, in appropriate cases developers and landowners will be expected to provide the works and services made necessary by proposed developments or will be expected to make financial contributions to such works. Where necessary and appropriate these will be secured through legal agreements. This policy is in line with Government guidance in Circular 1/97 which states that such works should be directly related to and made necessary by the proposed development. The policy should not be taken to infer that development which is otherwise unacceptable would be made acceptable through the provision of such works and services.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

12.8 The provision of health care within Wealden underwent a fundamental administrative change in April 1993 with the formation of a new County-wide East Sussex Health Authority, effectively merging the former Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings Health Authorities. The new Health Authority, which is organised to relate to District and Borough boundaries, is responsible for the 'purchasing' of health care, while the actual provision of health services throughout

Wealden now rests with the Eastbourne and County Healthcare NHS Trust.

12.9 Hospital care for residents of the northern parts of the District is currently met by facilities in Tunbridge Wells together with those in Crowborough and Uckfield. The Crowborough War Memorial Hospital in Southview Road provides a locally valued range of primary health care and maternity services. Grove House has been built within the grounds of the hospital and provides both psychiatric and elderly day care facilities. The Uckfield Community Hospital provides a wide range of comprehensive health care facilities.

12.10 In terms of general hospital health care, the southern part of the Plan area is served by the hospitals in Eastbourne. These include the Eastbourne District General Hospital and All Saints' Hospital. Planning policies applicable to nursing homes are contained in Chapter 6.

12.11 The County Council's County-wide Community Care Plan 1998/2001 examines existing services and outlines proposals for the provision of a wide range of community care services, including group homes which are operated jointly by Social Services and the Health Authority.

12.12 The East Sussex Family Health Services Authority (FHSA) co-ordinates and partly funds the provision of doctors' surgeries as well as the services provided by dental practitioners, pharmacists and opticians. A number of the doctors' practices in the District have tentative plans to alter and expand their premises owing to cramped conditions. However, the FHSA generally considers that there is no shortfall in the provision of general practitioner services.

12.13 The Council considers it important that doctors' and dental surgeries be adequately provided for within the towns and villages of the District. Accordingly, the Council would look sympathetically on any proposals for new, replacement or extensions to surgeries in accordance with the relevant policies in the Plan. In particular, they should not have a detrimental impact on residential character and amenities, particularly with regard to car parking and traffic generation.

12.14 The County Council Social Services Department is responsible for the provision of a range of social services throughout the District.

EDUCATION

12.15 The County Council is the Local Education Authority responsible for the maintained education service in the District. The County Council is aware of the planned housing developments across the District and the likely increases in population and school aged children arising from such developments. Its programme for school places into the next century takes account of these and other factors.

12.16 The dual use of educational buildings and playing fields for community purposes can make a valuable contribution to providing for additional community use and recreational provision. It is therefore considered appropriate that, whenever possible, land and buildings in the ownership of educational bodies be made available for community use. Indeed, in relation to playing fields, their availability for public use is the policy and practice of the Local Education Authority, and other educational institutions often make a significant contribution to meeting the recreational needs of local communities.

12.17 It is also the policy of the County Council, as the Local Education Authority, that new local authority buildings should normally be designed to facilitate community use. The Council will work closely with the County Council to apply this policy to the proposed primary schools in the District.

MAGISTRATES COURTS

12.18 In 1993 the East Sussex Magistrates' Courts Committee carried out a review of the provision of services within the District. In response to the Courts Committee's consultation, the Council expressed its concern over the rationalisation of courthouse provision within the District which could result in a reduction of services and the closure of the existing courthouses in Hailsham, Mark Cross and Uckfield. It emphasised the importance of retaining a permanent courthouse within the District as an essential public facility. The Courts Committee took the decision to close all three Courts with effect from October 1993 for Hailsham and April 1994 in the case of Mark Cross and Uckfield, thereby leaving Wealden without a Court in its area.

12.19 The Magistrates' Courts Committee is committed in principle to a courthouse in the north Wealden area and considers that Crowborough is the best location.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

12.20 The emergency services - police, ambulance and fire - have been advised of the Plan's housing and commercial proposals. They will consider their future services in the light of these developments and population increases.

UTILITIES

General

12.21 Developers and property owners are advised to contact the respective utility service authorities at an early stage regarding water supply, foul drainage, surface water drainage, electricity, gas or telephones. This will help ascertain particular site requirements, and costings where appropriate. Consideration should also be given to the implications for development of services crossing a site, both for the built form and landscaping. Principal services affecting land allocations in the Plan are discussed in the relevant chapter.

12.22 In general terms, there are no significant constraints on the provision of water, gas, electricity and telephones. Particular issues in relation to water supply, foul and surface drainage are discussed below.

12.23 The Water Industry Act 1991 provides for infrastructure charges to be collected by Statutory Sewerage and Water Undertakers. In cases where development is conditional on a particular utility service being completed, occupation may be restricted until such provision is available.

Water Supply

12.24 South East Water Ltd incorporates the previous Eastbourne, Mid Sussex and West Kent Water Companies and is responsible for the supply of water throughout the District. In terms of existing water resources, although there is currently greater capacity in some parts of the Plan area than others, there is not considered to be an overall shortage of supply across the Plan area to meet planned development and hence meet its obligation to provide supplies to all new development. The Environment Agency is responsible for the overall management of water sources. Abstractions from both ground and surface waters require a licence from the Agency.

12.25 In order to provide for the projected increases in water demand, South East Water's resource strategy is aimed at developing a number of sources which are able to supplement supply. Water supplies, although currently adequate to meet existing demands, will become critical during the Plan period and therefore, developers are advised to contact the Water Company as soon as possible to ensure that a water supply can be provided.

Drainage

12.26 The Council will expect that wherever possible new development is connected to the foul sewerage systems and that surface water is able to be disposed of efficiently and adequately.

CS2 Planning applications will be permitted only where adequate provision is made for

surface and foul water drainage to meet Local Authority standards, taking into consideration the adequacy or otherwise of the existing systems it will feed, to avoid increasing the risk of flooding by surcharging mains or increasing surface water run-off to watercourses.

Foul Drainage

12.27 Southern Water Services Ltd. is the statutory sewerage undertaker for the District. The majority of the settlements in the District are served by sewers and several inland wastewater treatment works. Pevensey, Westham, Pevensey Bay and part of Stone Cross are served by the Pevensey Bay Sea Outfall. The flows to this outfall are to be transferred to a new outfall at Langney Point as part of the Eastbourne Wastewater Treatment Scheme. The works that are being carried out are part of Southern Water Services Ltd. Operation Seaclean in order to comply with the European Union's Bathing Water Directive.

Surface Water Drainage

12.28 The Environment Agency is responsible for safeguarding the quality of all water resources. It controls the discharge of any effluent, which includes surface water from any commercial development or new road into any surface or groundwater source. The Agency is also concerned with protecting such water resources from the contamination of land and physical disturbance.

12.29 Under the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Land Drainage Act 1991, the Environment Agency has a statutory duty to exercise general supervision over all matters relating to flood defence. Both the Environment Agency and the Council have permissive powers relating to ordinary watercourses, other than those lying within the Upper Medway Floodplain. This comes under the jurisdiction of the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board. The Environment Agency also has permissive powers to undertake work on main river and sea defences.

12.30 In many parts of the District, particularly the rural areas, there are no public surface water sewers available and surface water disposal must be achieved by discharge to private surface water sewers, watercourses or soakaways. Where appropriate, the provision of new private surface water sewers will be encouraged.

12.31 Surface and groundwater resources require protection from pollution and disturbance arising from new development. Damage can occur due to the physical disturbance of groundwater by quarrying, road construction and new mineral workings, or through contamination by waste disposal, industrial processes and disturbance of contaminated land. Surface water from major new developments will generally discharge

into existing watercourses. However, where these watercourses are considered inadequate to accept the increased run-off, or where it is considered that the development may cause flooding, the developers will be required to provide adequate on-site surface water attenuation facilities or improve the watercourse where appropriate, all to the satisfaction of the Council and the Environment Agency, if necessary following appropriate investigations.

12.32 There is a need to ensure harmonisation in the activities of the four agencies which have responsibility for drainage. The Environment Agency and Wealden District Council are Land Drainage Authorities with responsibilities for land drainage, Southern Water Services is responsible for public surface water sewerage and East Sussex County Council is the Highway Authority responsible for highway drainage. Such accord may best be achieved through the preparation of detailed development and maintenance plans.

Willingdon Levels Catchment Area

12.33 Eastbourne Borough Council has proposed a major drainage and flood mitigation scheme in the Eastbourne Park area, comprising a series of artificially created storage lakes, as well as an improved drainage outfall to the sea via the Crumbles Sewer. This will allow future development within parts of the Willingdon Levels Catchment Area lying within Eastbourne Borough to be implemented without creating flooding and surface water run-off problems. Figure 8 indicates the general extent of the Catchment Area. The area within Wealden District is fully defined on the Proposals Map.

12.34 Development proposals within or discharging into the Willingdon Levels Catchment Area will receive particular attention in order to ensure the maintenance of an efficient drainage system within the whole of the Catchment Area and the proper protection of the Levels. The Council will continue to liaise closely with Eastbourne Borough Council and the Environment Agency on all developments with surface water drainage implications proposed within the Willingdon Levels Catchment Area.

CS3 All development within the Willingdon Levels Drainage Catchment Area shown on the Proposals Map will be required to make adequate provision for drainage. Such provision should accord with the level of development proposed and with surrounding developments, in order to ensure that no overall reduction in flood storage capacity or increased surface water run-off occurs without adequate compensatory measures.

WASTE DISPOSAL

12.35 East Sussex County Council, as Waste Planning Authority, has reviewed its policies for waste in the County Structure Plan and is preparing a Waste Local Plan for the whole County, jointly with Brighton and Hove Council, which will identify sites and set out planning criteria for waste developments. This Plan will set out in more detail how waste should be dealt with in East Sussex within the context of Structure Plan policies and the East Sussex Waste Strategy discussed in Chapter 4. The County Council is also responsible for deciding planning applications for waste operations and enforcing controls over waste developments.

12.36 As Waste Disposal Authority, the County Council is responsible for arranging for the disposal of household and other waste collected by Borough and District Councils, through contracts with private waste companies who actually provide or operate the disposal facilities. The County Council also provides Household Waste (or Civic Amenity) Sites, which include recycling centres, and supports recycling schemes operated by Borough and District Councils and others. The County Council's current policies and proposals for waste disposal, together with operational matters, are contained in the "Waste Disposal Plan 1988-98".

12.37 As Waste Regulation Authority, the Environment Agency's responsibilities include issuing and enforcing management licences to operators of waste facilities, regulating the handling and transport of waste.

12.38 Borough and District Councils have sole responsibility for collecting the County's household waste and are responsible for the majority of household waste recycling. Most commercial and

Willingdon Levels Drainage Catchment Area

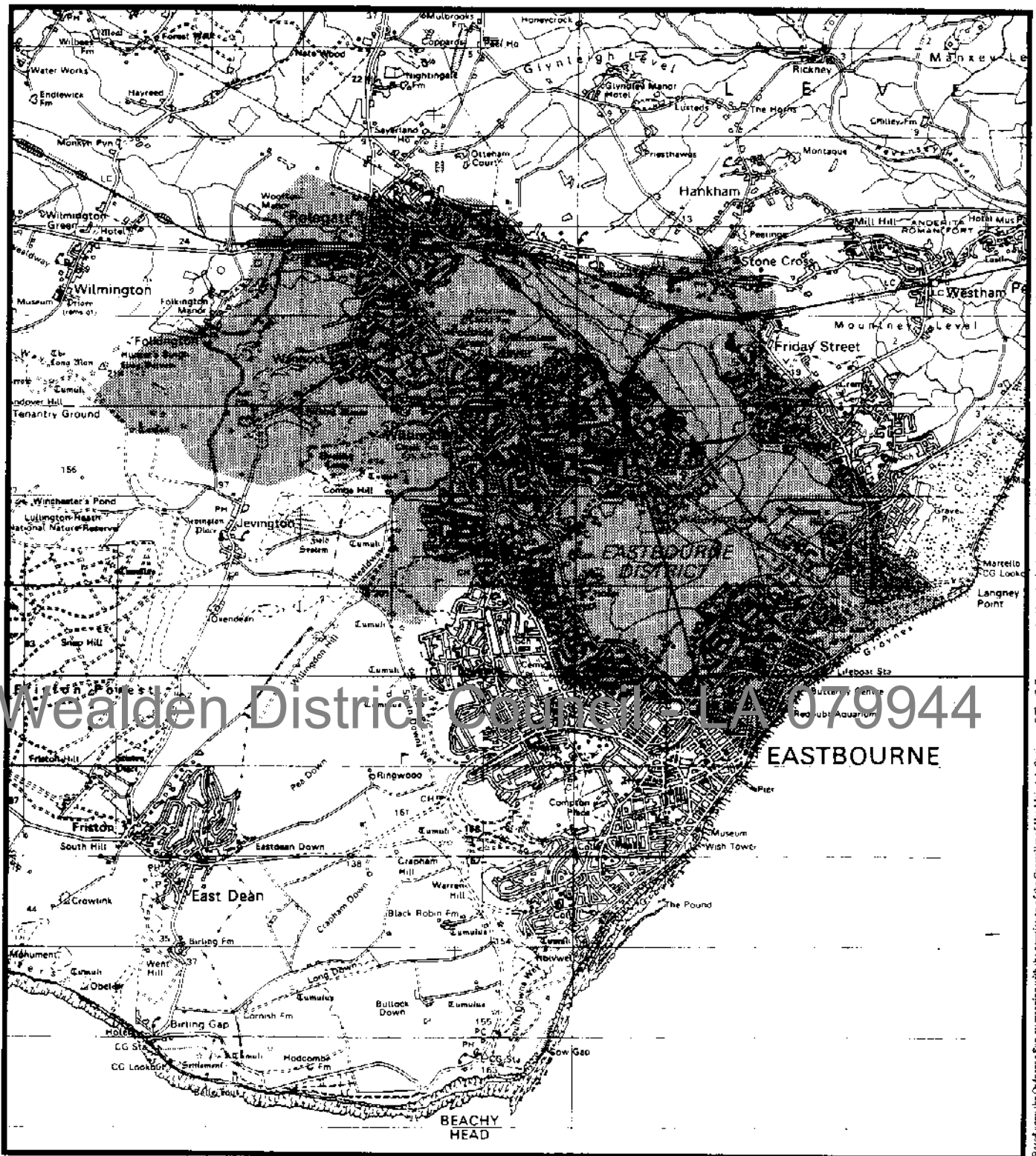


Figure 7

This plan is for illustrative purposes only and does not form part of the Proposals Map.

0 10 20 30 kilometres
Not to scale

industrial waste is collected and disposed of entirely within the private sector.

12.39 It is a policy of the County Council's Waste Disposal Plan that a new landfill facility be sought in or near the northern part of the District.

12.40 The District Council is responsible for the collection of domestic waste throughout Wealden, while the provision of household waste facilities is the responsibility of the County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority.

Recycling

12.41 The District Council has a commitment to the recycling of waste, not only to assist the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources but also to reduce the demand for landfill and waste incineration sites. In response to the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council updates its Recycling Plan on an annual basis, demonstrating how it proposes to achieve the Government's target of recycling 25% of all household waste materials by the year 2000.

12.42 Sixty-seven recycling centres have been provided by the Council in Wealden, some of which have been specially constructed. These centres comprise newspaper, rag, can and bottle banks and, in one case, a plastic bottle bank. In addition a considerable number of bottle banks are located on private sites. Neighbourhood Recycling Points are being introduced in accordance with the Council's Recycling Plan.

12.43 Subject to the Council's policy on neighbourhood recycling points within new housing areas, within new housing developments over 40 dwellings, when appropriate, a purpose built enclosure should normally be provided to accommodate recycling containers for use by local residents. Screen walls and a roof should be provided to minimise the environmental impact of the facility both in terms of appearance and noise containment. The recycling area should be suitably located to avoid excessive disturbance to residents but should be adjacent to an access road for convenient emptying of the containers. On safety grounds, facilities should not be placed near to children's play areas. The management and maintenance of these neighbourhood recycling centres will be the responsibility of the District Council.

CS4 Within new housing developments over 40 dwellings, when appropriate, the Council will seek the provision of a purpose built enclosure for the containment of recycling facilities which should be located where it can be used safely and conveniently, without causing nuisance or excessive disturbance to residential amenities, and be accessed directly from the main estate road.

12.44 In addition, the Council will seek the provision of recycling areas in association with various commercial and community uses, e.g. supermarkets, hotels, community halls, household waste sites and public car parks. Recycling areas should be conveniently located, accessible by vehicles and should normally be screened. The management and maintenance of these recycling areas will be the responsibility of the District Council.

CS5 Within new commercial and community development, where appropriate, an area for recycling facilities should be provided which should be conveniently located, accessible by vehicles and should normally be screened.

Implementation

12.45 Policies CS1 - CS5 will be implemented by the Council primarily through the use of its development control functions.

Monitoring

12.46 The key areas to monitor will be the ability of the community service providers to meet the demands placed on them and the progress in meeting the stated objectives of both this Plan and their own plans and programmes.

Uckfield

(Inset Map No.53 - Mapsheet)

Introduction

17.1 Uckfield is one of the larger settlements in the District with a population of around 13,000. It is situated some seven miles south of Crowborough within the attractive, undulating countryside of the Low Weald, and surrounded by small woodlands, hedgerows and open farmland. The town serves as a local employment centre providing a range of jobs in manufacturing and services, and as a shopping centre for both its residents and those in the surrounding rural area.

17.2 Uckfield has experienced significant growth over the last decade or so. Large scale housing developments have been completed which has resulted in the population growing by over a third since 1981.

STRATEGY

17.3 The strategy for Uckfield recognises the significant rate of development and change that has taken place in the town in recent years. There is, in addition, still a large commitment of land for housing development in the town which should cater for the needs of existing and future residents. Furthermore, there is no numerical requirement to release further areas of land for residential development in order to meet County Structure Plan housing provision. The Council therefore considers that the opportunity should be taken for Uckfield to assimilate, both physically and socially, past development and further development that is committed. Furthermore, a period of consolidation is considered important in order to enable the necessary provision of community services for the new population to take place.

17.4 There are also considered to be significant environmental constraints to the outward expansion of the town. Further development would encroach onto areas of attractive countryside and would be detrimental to the rural setting of the town. This would be particularly intrusive in the open landscape to the south west. Development would also conflict with the Plan's policies to protect the important gap between Uckfield and the villages of Maresfield and Five Ash Down.

17.5 For the above reasons, further expansion of Uckfield to facilitate significant growth is not favoured by the Council and no new allocations of housing or business land are proposed. On this basis, the Council's strategy for Uckfield is to provide for a lower rate of development than over the past decade, with increased

emphasis on meeting local housing and employment needs and securing an appropriate level of community services and facilities. Priority will be given to maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre by encouraging new investment, creating a safe and attractive shopping environment, and improving accessibility.

17.6 In relation to this strategy, the objectives are:-

(1) to protect the landscape setting of the town and the important countryside gaps between the town and surrounding villages;

(2) to maintain and enhance the function of the town as a local employment, shopping and service centre;

(3) to provide for a broad range of new employment opportunities related to the anticipated needs of existing and future residents;

(4) to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre;

(5) to maintain and encourage an improvement in the availability of local services and community facilities.

17.7 The Council's strategy for Uckfield is consistent with the County Structure Plan which states that the role of the town as a local housing, employment, shopping and services centre will be maintained and developed.

POPULATION AND HOUSING

17.8 The population of Uckfield is estimated to be 13,000 persons. This figure is expected to rise to around 13,350 by 2004. Population and housing statistics for Uckfield are contained in Appendix 1.

Housing Policy

17.9 The amount of land in Uckfield committed for development with planning permission for housing, together with unidentified sites which may come forward for development through infilling, redevelopment and conversions within the built up area could result in the construction of around 330 new dwellings during the Plan period. Commitments are illustrated in Figure 13. The future incidence of unidentified sites within the development boundary will depend on the extent to which proposals satisfy normal planning criteria and conform with the policies in the Plan.

17.10 This overall level of housing provision represents a marked reduction in the previously high rate of development that has taken place over the past decade or so in line with planning policy. However, in view of the environmental constraints to outward expansion and the fact there is no numerical requirement for additional housing development, the Council considers the release of further land to be inappropriate and unnecessary.

UC1 Within the Uckfield development boundary, as defined on the Proposals Map, new housing development will be permitted on undeveloped land, by infilling, by redevelopment and by conversion of a building to residential use, providing that the proposals conform with all other relevant policies in the Plan.

EMPLOYMENT

Existing Situation

17.11 In recent years Uckfield has attracted a significant amount of industrial and commercial investment and now provides a wide range of jobs in manufacturing and services. The majority of activity is contained on the two main business areas at Bellbrook and Ridgewood, together with a variety of businesses in the town centre. Policies for uses appropriate within these business areas are contained in Chapter 7.

17.12 To the north-west of the town, there is a proposal for a new prestige high-tech office and business park which could result in the provision of over 1,000 jobs. The low density, landscaped character of the development would complement the more traditional business areas in Uckfield. The development would provide a valuable opportunity to attract 'high quality' employment to the District and the Uckfield area in particular, and would make an important contribution to meeting the employment needs of Uckfield residents.

Business Land

17.13 Over the Plan period, in order to provide for the increase in the local workforce as well as to improve the balance between homes and jobs and help revitalise the town, additional business floorspace will be required. However, potential exists through the development of land within the town with planning permission on the Bellbrook Business Area. Additional business floorspace is available in vacant premises in the town. On this basis, in order to meet local employment needs, there is at present no apparent

numerical requirement to release new areas of land for business development.

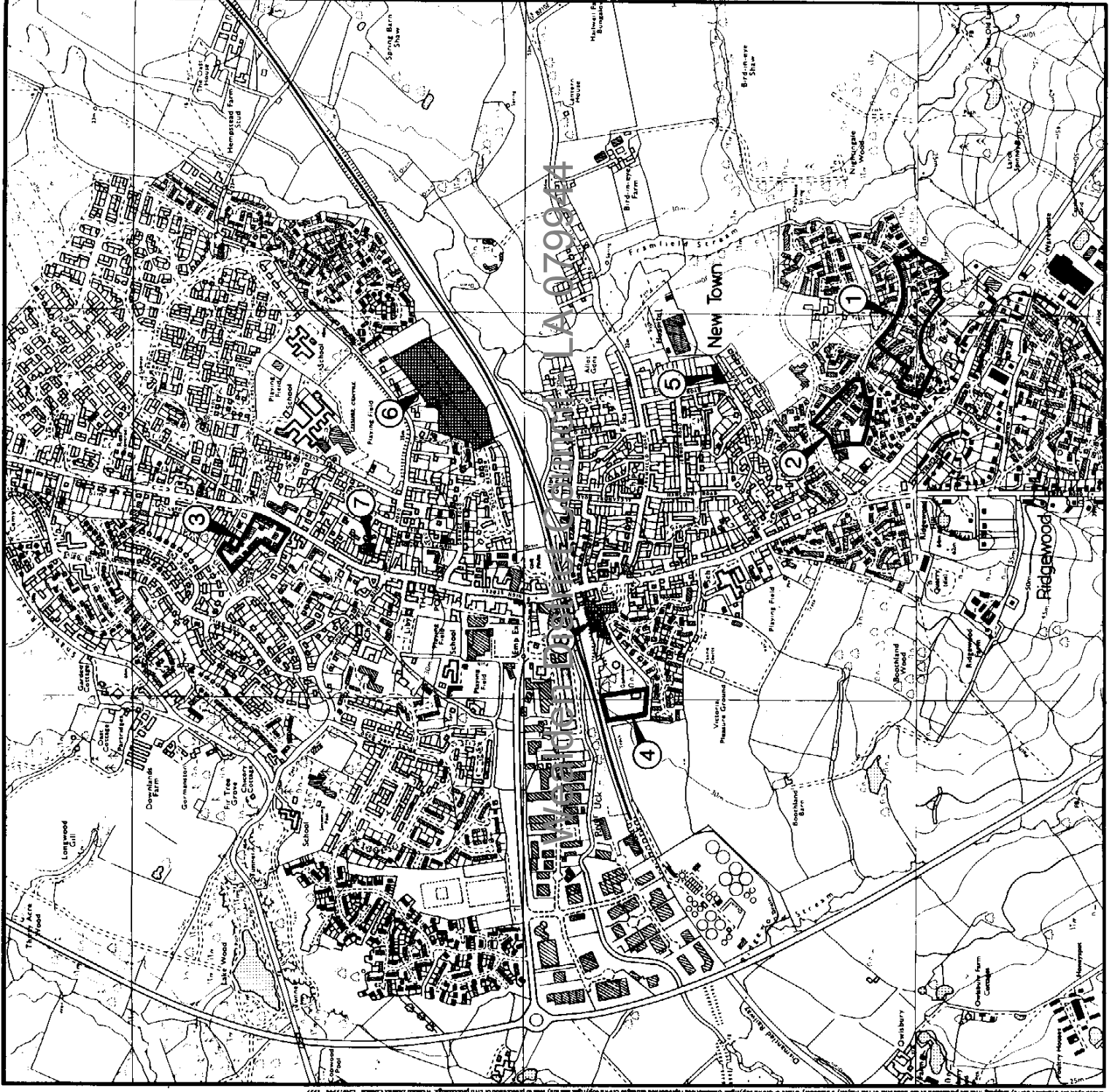
17.14 Careful consideration has been given to allocating additional business land in order to promote further development over and above existing commitments. However, in the light of the assessment of employment needs and the environmental constraints that exist for expanding either Bellbrook or Ridgewood Business Areas, or indeed that apply to development on other greenfield sites around the town, the Local Plan makes no new allocations of business land.

17.15 The Council recognises that this implies a reduced rate of business development over the Plan period when compared to that which has taken place over recent years. However, this reflected the previous strategy for growth and, in contrast, both Structure and Local Plan strategies for Uckfield focus on meeting local needs and assimilating the commitment that exists. Furthermore, the release of new areas of land for employment purposes could fuel the demand for additional housing development over and above that already committed. It should also be recognised that new business development in Crowborough for which there is a relatively high level of commitment will serve a wide area and could potentially meet some of the employment needs of Uckfield and North Wealden residents.

DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARY

17.16 The development boundary for Uckfield seeks to conserve the rural setting of the town and prevent outward encroachment of development into the attractive surrounding countryside which would be intrusive on the landscape and detrimental to its character. The development boundary follows existing development, includes current housing and industrial commitments, but excludes some peripheral areas in order to prevent an intensification of development that would be detrimental to their loose-knit, more rural character and an extension of ribbon development along the roads into the town.

Housing Commitments in Uckfield (April 1997)



This plan is for illustrative purposes only, and does not form part of the Proposals Map.

Figure 12

17.17 In the northern part of the town, the development boundary follows Snatts Road and the edge of Manor Park but excludes land and buildings beyond where there is a distinct change to a more rural character, emphasised by Views Wood, Paygate Wood and other areas of attractive woodland which are prominent in the landscape. Properties at Ringles Cross have been excluded in order to prevent an intensification of development which would be detrimental to the more loose-knit rural character. Furthermore, it is considered particularly important to resist inappropriate development within the area between Uckfield and the villages of Maresfield and Five Ash Down in order to prevent a possible coalescence of the settlements. A policy to protect the gaps between the development boundaries of these settlements is contained in Chapter 4.

17.18 Along the eastern edge of the town, the development boundary follows the curtilages of existing properties and includes the committed housing sites south of Hempstead Road and at Harlands Farm, together with the new community hospital. However, land within the floodplain of the River Uck and Framfield Stream, the wider areas of farmland and woodland to the east, and the small ribbon of properties along Bird-in-Eye Hill have been excluded to prevent an outward encroachment of development into an essentially rural landscape.

17.19 To the south, in the Ridgewood area, New Road marks a notable change in character between the relatively compact built-up area and the more rural character created by the wooded grounds of Ridgewood House, the recreation ground, allotment gardens and countryside beyond. For these reasons the development boundary follows New Road, includes the business area, but excludes adjoining land where it is considered that new development would be intrusive on the landscape and detrimental to its rural character. To the west of Lewes Road the development boundary excludes existing development in order to prevent an intensification which would be detrimental to its more loose-knit character.

17.20 Along the western edge of the town the development boundary generally follows the edge of the built-up area in order to prevent an outward encroachment of development into existing and proposed buffer and recreational areas and into the countryside beyond. To the south of Bell Farm Road, the development boundary follows the edge of Bellbrook Business Area but excludes an area of land that is proposed for public open space. Further south the landscape is very open and exposed to long distance views from the bypass and beyond, and has therefore been excluded from the development boundary in order to prevent intrusive development. To the north of Bell Farm Road the development boundary includes the new housing estate west of Rocks Park but excludes the public parkland further west and the buildings and grounds of Buckswood Grange School, where the

mature tree cover creates a distinctly rural character on the fringe of the town. Further north, areas of mature woodland are prominent features in the landscape and have therefore been excluded from the development boundary.

TRANSPORT

17.21 Uckfield is located at the confluence of the A22 (London to Eastbourne) and A26 (Maidstone to Newhaven) roads. The A26, A22 and A272 west of Maresfield are classified as primary routes. These all serve to link the towns to the main motorway and trunk road network.

17.22 In the town centre, some congestion occurs along the High Street and Bell Farm Road, particularly at peak times. However, since the bypass opened, the town centre has benefited from the removal of through traffic, in particular heavy goods vehicles.

17.23 The possibility of closing part of the High Street to vehicular traffic has been carefully considered, but is not a practical option as the High Street remains the principal route for local traffic travelling between the northern and southern parts of the town and for traffic using the town centre.

17.24 Within the Harlands Farm residential development, provision has been made for the distributor road to be continued towards Bird-in-Eye Hill should this be needed in the future. However, at present, such a link road does not form a proposal in the Local Plan.

TOWN CENTRE

17.25 The town centre is the commercial heart of Uckfield, with a variety of shops, offices and other businesses providing services and employment opportunities for the town and its surrounding area. It is also the location for a number of community facilities including the Civic Centre and the Library.

17.26 The commercial town centre has developed in a linear form along the High Street (the former A22) and comprises a number of areas with different shopping and business characteristics. The main shopping area has developed between the cinema in the north and the railway in the south. More recently the focus of shopping activity has shifted southwards as a number of shopping developments have taken place, namely Bell Walk and the supermarket south of Luxford Field.

Main Shopping Area

17.27 A main shopping area has been defined in order to provide an identifiable focus for shopping within which increased retail activity can take place by new development, redevelopment of existing floorspace and the more efficient use of existing floorspace and land. The general policies for shopping and business activities which may be permitted within the main shopping area are all contained in Chapter 8.

17.28 The main shopping area has been carefully defined having regard to the extent of the existing shopping centre, the nature and character of land uses contiguous with it, and any future requirements for new shopping facilities. On this basis, the main shopping area represents a clear policy statement that further shopping proposals outside the defined area will normally be resisted.

17.29 In defining the main shopping area for Uckfield, the Council has given careful consideration to the potential of the town centre to accommodate a new shopping development. Although a significant increase in demand for new retail floorspace in the town centre may not occur over the Plan period, the Council considers it important to identify locations for new development in order to provide a framework for further investment. After a careful assessment of the opportunities for new shopping development within or on the fringes of the town centre, the area considered to offer the greatest potential for a comprehensive development scheme is the area to the east of the High Street opposite its junction with Bell Farm Road. Elsewhere in the town centre, opportunities are considered to be far more limited, being constrained by existing development, the Conservation Area and the desire to broaden rather than further elongate shopping development.

17.30 The site referred to above currently comprises one supermarket and a number of unit shops fronting the High Street with principally residential use at upper floor levels, an area of public car parking and access road which also serves the adjoining office development. An area of land allocated for public car parking in the Uckfield Local Plan abuts the eastern boundary. The Council believes the area could accommodate a comprehensive redevelopment for shopping purposes, subject to the careful consideration of the traffic implications of such a proposal. Development could accommodate a new larger food supermarket together with a number of unit shops at ground floor level. Above ground floor level, the provision of residential accommodation and office accommodation would be encouraged. Proposals for redevelopment will depend on market demand and the co-operation of the landowners concerned.

Secondary Shopping Areas

17.31 The commercial frontages to the High Street outside the main shopping area have a mixed use of

shops, services, offices, restaurants, garages and public houses. Many of the shops are of a specialist nature and several have changed to non-retail use in recent years.

17.32 These shops and other businesses fronting the High Street north of the Town Hall and south of the railway perform an important role as secondary shopping areas, complementary to the main shopping area. It is considered that this function should be maintained but a significant expansion of shopping uses resisted in view of the policy to concentrate new shopping floorspace in the main shopping area. In these areas, on the edge of the main shopping area, new retail proposals will also be considered under Policy SH11.

17.33 Small scale proposals for office use, financial and professional services as well as other services appropriate to a town centre may be acceptable subject to access, parking and amenity considerations. The reference to Use Classes in the following policy relates to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 - see Appendix 7.

UC2 The function of the areas north of the Town Hall and south of the railway as secondary shopping areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be maintained. Major expansion of shopping uses within Use Class A1 will not be permitted, although small scale extensions to existing premises may be acceptable. Proposals for small scale development, extensions and changes of use of existing premises to uses within Use Class A2 (Financial and Professional Services), A3 (Food and Drink) and B1 (Business) will be permitted.

Former Railway Station Site

17.34 The former railway station site is located on the southern edge of the town centre and is vacant following construction of the new railway station to the east of the High Street. The site is located within the development boundary, on the edge of the main shopping area, and a wide range of uses may be appropriate where they accord with the policies in the Local Plan.

17.35 The former railway station buildings themselves are part of the town's heritage and their attractive Victorian architecture makes an important contribution to the character of the southern part of the town centre. In accordance with the policies which aim to conserve the built environment, the retention, refurbishment and conversion of the buildings for alternative uses will be sought by the Council. Whilst re-instatement of a railway station use in association with re-opening of the Uckfield to Lewes line remains a long term possibility, as discussed in Chapter 9, additional uses could also be accommodated in the buildings.

17.36 Within the site, appropriate measures will need to be taken to restrict development which would significantly prejudice reinstatement of the former Uckfield to Lewes railway line, as required by Structure Plan and Local Plan policies.

17.37 Use of the existing access off the High Street to serve new development on the site would not be supported by the Highway Authority due primarily to poor visibility in a southerly direction. The alternative of access from Bell Lane to the north would involve bridging the River Uck and would need to allow for reinstatement of the former railway line and provide for a level crossing at a later date. Access from Bridge Farm Road to the south is constrained by the change in levels down to the station site and the likely impact of traffic on a residential area and on the junction with the High Street. Development proposals would need to consider the access constraints in detail in consultation with the Council and the Highway Authority.

17.38 Provision for safe and convenient pedestrian access should be made through the site from the High Street which will enable the proposed River Walk (Policy UC8) to be continued through the town centre towards the bypass.

17.39 Development proposals should be prepared on a comprehensive basis and be of a design to reflect and complement the architecture of the existing railway station buildings where appropriate. Further guidance will be prepared by the Council to set out more fully the development issues and include guidance based on the general policies in the Plan.

High Street, New Town

17.40 Along the High Street between Framfield Road and New Place, a number of the large Victorian properties have been converted to residential flats in recent years. The area also has potential to further enhance opportunities for small scale office development on the periphery of the town centre.

17.41 Several of the properties in the area are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest and many others, by reason of their age and architectural style, make an important contribution to the character of the area which is prominent on the approach to the town centre. Whilst the Council considers that residential flats and office uses are appropriate in this area, in accordance with the Plan's policies to conserve the quality of the built environment, a presumption in favour of redevelopment is no longer considered appropriate. The Council will normally resist redevelopment within the area unless there are structural or other reasons which would justify redevelopment or the building does not possess the necessary character to warrant its retention.

UC3 Within the area between Framfield Road and New Place, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for the conversion of properties for office use or residential flats will be permitted.

Land north of Bell Farm Road

17.42 The County Council has closed the fire station which was situated within a residential area at Keld Avenue. Planning permission was granted for a new facility in Bell Farm Road which has now been built and is fully operational.

Elsewhere in the Town Centre

17.43 Outside the areas defined above, the remaining parts of the town centre within the inset map area comprise primarily residential properties (including housing commitments), public open space and public car parking. It is considered likely and appropriate that these uses would remain undisturbed, although small scale development proposals may be appropriate where they conform with normal planning criteria and the policies in the Plan.

Car Parking

17.44 There are currently some 855 public car parking spaces in Uckfield town centre. The car parks at Luxford Field, the supermarket off Bell Lane and at Bell Walk operate at near capacity during peak periods but spare capacity exists elsewhere, mainly at the 'Somerfield' car park.

17.45 Over the Plan period it is anticipated that extra car parking spaces will be needed in view of the projected growth in population and the likely increase in car ownership levels. An extension to the existing car park at the rear of the 'Somerfield' supermarket is proposed which could accommodate some 150 spaces. The land in question is well related to existing shopping facilities in the High Street and adjoins the area which the Council believes could accommodate a shopping redevelopment. The additional car parking could be implemented as part of redevelopment proposals or alternatively, the Council could seek to implement the proposal if adequate resources were available.

UC4 Land east of the existing 'Somerfield' car park is allocated for public car parking.

OTHER SHOPPING FACILITIES

17.46 Outside the town centre a number of local shops and services are located in a neighbourhood centre at

Framfield Road and a DIY retail warehouse has opened on the Bellbrook Business Area.

Framfield Road

17.47 Framfield Road provides shopping facilities and services for the daily or casual needs of local residents and passing trade as well as containing a number of more specialist shops. It is also the location for a number of industrial and commercial uses, including factories and builders' merchants, and it provides access for the new community hospital at its eastern end. The commercial uses are interspersed with many residential properties along its entire length.

17.48 Framfield Road is classified as the B2102 and is a busy cross-country route linking the town with the A275 at Cross-in-Hand via the villages of Framfield and Blackboys. There are on-street parking controls along its northern side in order to aid the free flow of traffic. The use of Framfield Road by through traffic adds to the problems of congestion and road safety caused by a general lack of off-street parking and servicing provision for both residential and commercial properties. The problems of congestion and road safety have a detrimental effect on the amenity of the area, particularly for local residents.

17.49 Proposals for new shopping facilities within or contiguous with neighbourhood centres will be considered in the light of Policy SH7. However, the Council is concerned that further development for shopping or other commercial purposes could add to the problem of traffic congestion with the resulting deterioration in residential amenity. Limiting further traffic congestion is also considered essential to ensure safe and convenient access is available for emergency vehicles travelling to and from the Fire Station, and the new hospital and ambulance station.

17.50 Careful consideration has been given to constructing a public off-street car park, but in view of the dispersed nature of houses and commercial premises along the road, it is felt unlikely that a single car park would significantly improve the situation. On this basis, the high cost of constructing such a car park, where land acquisition would have to reflect a commercial or residential value, could not be justified. In view of the limited opportunities available to improve the current situation, the Council will ensure that development proposals that result in a material increase in traffic generation along Framfield Road or in further on-street parking and servicing are normally resisted. Development proposals will be considered in the light of Policy SH8 and the more restrictive policy for Framfield Road.

UC5 Development proposals which result in a material increase in traffic generation or any increase in on-street parking or on-street

servicing along Framfield Road, as defined on the Proposals Map, will not be permitted.

Retail Warehousing

17.51 The Council's policies give priority to investment in Uckfield town centre and include policies for new shopping development, as set out earlier in this Chapter. In line with the District-wide policies set out in Chapter 8, the Council considers that some provision for non-food retail warehousing outside the town centre is appropriate but only on a scale that would complement the role of the town centre. At present, there is a small DIY store of 900 square metres on the Bellbrook business area occupying a former industrial unit together with some ancillary retailing in other premises

17.52 Some further provision outside the town centre on Bellbrook business area is therefore considered appropriate, particularly in view of its good access to the A26 via Bell Farm Road and the availability of suitable land and premises. Such provision could be achieved either by new development or the refurbishment of existing buildings.

17.53 Within the Bellbrook business area, in addition to the provision already made for the DIY store, it is considered that some 2,500 square metres of additional non-food retail floorspace would be appropriate which, with the required access for car parking, servicing and landscaping, could result in about 0.6 hectare within the industrial estate being developed.

UC6 Proposals for non-food retail warehouse development of up to a maximum of 2,500 square metres of gross floorspace within the Bellbrook business area, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be permitted when the criteria in Policy SH9 are met.

17.54 Over and above this provision, further proposals for retail warehousing and other shopping facilities outside the town centre will be considered in the light of Policy SH9 where a particularly strong case should be made and a number of specific criteria met.

CONSERVATION

17.55 The historic centre of Uckfield around the northern part of the High Street contains a concentration of buildings listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. The special architectural and historic character of this part of the town has been recognised by its designation as a Conservation Area, the extent of which is shown on the Inset Maps. After careful consideration, the Council has extended the existing Conservation Area. The

Council attaches particular importance to the control of development in Conservation Areas and development affecting listed buildings, and District Wide policies are put forward in Chapter 4.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Education

17.56 There are six primary schools serving the Uckfield area. Secondary education for the town and surrounding villages is provided by the Uckfield Community College. The County Council considers that the expected increase in secondary school pupils over the Plan period will require extensions to be built to the college.

Community Facilities

17.57 The Utopia Leisure Centre offers a range of indoor recreational facilities, whilst the main outdoor facilities are at the Victoria Pleasure Ground, the New Road Recreation Ground at Ridgewood, Hempstead Lane, Luxford Field, New Barn Farm and at West Park. Outdoor playing space in the town is currently below the minimum standard recommended by the National Playing Fields Association as discussed in Chapter 11. The vast majority of existing provision is in the form of playing pitches for youth and adult use and the level of provision of children's play space is well below the recommended standard.

17.58 In the light of this assessment and the projected population growth, it is important that further provision is made for outdoor play space over the Plan period. New playing pitches have been provided at the Harlands Farm housing development and the Town Council has advised that, in the light of demand that continues to exist for playing pitches, it proposes to acquire and lay out land south of Victoria Pleasure Ground. With regard to public open space for more passive forms of recreation, recent developments and further proposals will considerably improve provision in the town. In addition, an area of land to the north of The Mount and The Drive is owned by the District Council and is considered appropriate for public open space.

UC7 The following areas of land, as defined on the Proposals Map, are allocated for public open space purposes:

(1) Land to the south of Victoria Pleasure Ground.

(2) Land to the north of The Mount and The Drive.

Footpaths

17.59 Public footpaths provide access to the surrounding countryside, including the attractive Views Wood. It is the Council's policy as set out in Chapter 9 to promote a safe and convenient footpath and bridleway network by maintenance and improvement where possible, and securing the provision of footpaths in new developments which should link with the existing network, where appropriate.

17.60 The creation of a riverside walk from Hempstead Mill to the town centre is proposed in order to extend the existing public footpath that runs northwards into Buxted Park and provide an attractive local walk. To date negotiations with the relevant landowners to obtain public access have not been successful, although the District and Town Council remain committed to the proposal. Furthermore, it is considered appropriate to extend the walk through the town centre as far as the bypass. The Council would support the investigation of ways in which the appearance and amenity of the river and its environs can be improved.

UC8 A riverside walk will be provided between Hempstead Mill and Uckfield Bypass, as defined on the Proposals Map.

Implementation

17.61 Policies UC1 - UC3, UC5 and UC6 will be implemented by the Council primarily through its development control policy.

17.62 Policy UC4 will be the responsibility of the Council and/or the private sector.

17.63 Policies UC7 and UC8 will be the responsibility of the Uckfield Town Council.

Villages

Introduction

18.1 The District contains a large number of villages and small settlements which vary in their nature from the larger villages which provide local services and employment to their surrounding areas, to small hamlets which are entirely residential in character.

18.2 The villages are diverse in their form and character, and many retain a distinct local identity based on historic buildings, traditional settlement patterns and attractive landscape settings.

18.3 The wider issues of housing, employment, transportation, etc, together with general policies that apply throughout the District, have been considered in previous chapters of this Plan and are briefly referred to later.

STRATEGY

18.4 The Plan's overall strategy, as set out in Chapter 2, provides for the majority of new development in the main towns, but also recognises that some villages will accommodate limited growth. The villages are a key part of the settlement pattern in the District and play an important role in the provision of housing for a large section of the population as well as jobs and services to the local community and surrounding rural areas.

18.5 The Council recognises this important role which the strategy for the villages seeks to maintain and enhance whenever possible. In determining the scale and nature of development and change in the villages, the Council has regard to their function and location in relation to neighbouring towns and villages, the need to protect their established character and rural setting, and the availability of local services.

18.6 As part of this strategy, the objectives of the Plan with regard to the villages are:-

(1) to conserve the established character of the village, its surrounding countryside and its landscape setting;

(2) to maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the residential nature of the villages;

(3) to promote the provision of affordable housing on appropriate sites through the 'exceptions' policy;

(4) to maintain and, where appropriate, improve the level and choice of local employment opportunities;

(5) to maintain and, where possible, improve the level and range of community services and facilities;

(6) to encourage the highway authority to implement appropriate traffic management measures.

18.7 The County Structure Plan strategy for the villages looks to the District Councils in their Local Plan preparation to determine the scale and nature of development (if any) in the villages. The strategy sets out criteria for village development, including the provision of local employment and housing opportunities for local need, whilst preserving and enhancing village character. Local Plans are to define village development boundaries where appropriate.

ENVIRONMENT

18.8 The villages and smaller settlements in the District are set within attractive countryside, and many are within the undulating landscapes of the Sussex Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The landscape quality of this rural setting normally dictates against further outward development of the villages which would be to the detriment of their character. Many of the villages have a distinctive character, often established around an historic core with areas of more scattered development on the rural fringe.

18.9 It is these environmental considerations, together with the location and function of the village in terms of providing employment and local services, that set the context for the development policies that apply to villages.

Development Boundaries

18.10 It is an important role for the Local Plan to identify those villages which the Council consider could accommodate some small scale new housing and employment development over the Plan period. Many villages will have reached the limit of their natural growth while in others some limited provision can be made for modest development without significant harm to the countryside or to the settlement itself. Whilst only limited provision is made for new development in the villages, major expansion has occurred and is committed at Stone Cross on land previously allocated for housing.

18.11 An assessment of all the villages and small settlements has been made in the context of County Structure Plan policies and the knowledge that no further housing land is required to meet the Structure Plan housing provisions. The study assessed

environmental considerations, including the character of the settlement and its setting, the location and function of the settlement, and the availability of services and infrastructure.

18.12 Where some limited new development would be considered acceptable in principle, either within the settlement or at its periphery, a development boundary has been drawn. As explained in Chapter 3, a development boundary does not attempt to define the physical or social limits of a village but defines the area to which Policy GD1 applies to give a sound basis for development control decisions.

18.13 In general terms, a development boundary seeks to prevent inappropriate outward encroachment into the surrounding countryside, an intensification of development in peripheral areas and ribbon development along roads. It excludes areas of more scattered development where the spaces and gaps around buildings contribute to a more rural character. Outside the development boundary, more restrictive District-wide policies apply which strictly control new housing, industry and many other forms of development.

Villages with Development Boundaries

18.14 The villages listed below have development boundaries and the considerations relating to the definition of the boundaries, together with the specific policies that apply within them, are set out in the individual village chapters, which follow this chapter, in alphabetical order.

Alfriston	Isfield
Berwick Station	*Lower Dicker
Blackboys	Lower Horsebridge
Broad Oak	Maresfield
Buxted	Mark Cross
Cross-in-Hand	Mayfield
East Dean and Friston	Maynards Green
East Hoathly	Ninfield
Fairwarp	Nutley
Five Ash Down	Pevensey
Five Ashes	Pevensey Bay
Forest Row	Punnett's Town
Framfield	Rotherfield
Groombridge	Stone Cross

Hadlow Down	Upper Dicker
Halland	Vines Cross
Hartfield	Wadhurst
Herstmonceux	Westham
Hooe Common	Windmill Hill
Horam	

* whilst not having a development boundary, Lower Dicker has been included in this list in view of housing and business allocations in the settlement.

Settlements without Development Boundaries

18.15 There are a number of other smaller villages and settlements where development boundaries have not been defined as the Council considers that new housing or commercial development would be inappropriate. This is normally because new development would be damaging to the character of the settlement and its rural environment, but may also reflect the lack of services and facilities. The following smaller villages and settlements fall within this category:-

Alciston	High Hurstwood
Arlington	Jevington
Balls Green	Laughton
Bells Yew Green	Litlington
Berwick	Little Horsted
Best Beech Hill	Magham Down
Blackham	Muddles Green
Bodle Street Green	Old Heathfield
Boreham Street	Ripe
Cade Street	Rosers Cross
Chelwood Common	Rushlake Green
Chelwood Gate	Selmeston
Chiddingly	Town Row
Colemans Hatch	Upper Hartfield
Cousley Wood	Waldron
Cowbeech	Wartling

Danehill	West Dean
Fletching	Wilmington
Frant	Withyham
Hankham	
Hellingly	

18.16 Each of these settlements is briefly referred to in alphabetical order in Chapter 20. In these cases the more restrictive Plan-wide 'countryside' policies outside the development boundaries apply which seek to prevent new development which would harm the character and appearance of such areas.

18.17 It is recognised that the lists set out above are not exhaustive of all the smaller settlements and hamlets in the District. However, the restrictive policies outside development boundaries would also apply to any other settlement or hamlet not listed in those paragraphs.

HOUSING

18.18 The Local Plan makes provision for a limited amount of new housing in the villages but, in overall terms, significant new housing development is not proposed in the rural part of the District. The main exception is the new settlement at Stone Cross where development has commenced. This is consistent with the Plan's housing strategy, principally for environmental and landscape reasons and because further land is not required numerically to meet the County Structure Plan housing provision.

18.19 However, the District Council is concerned about the lack of affordable housing, particularly in the villages where high house prices prevent local people on modest incomes, often the young or elderly, from buying or renting in the normal housing market. As part of its corporate approach to meeting local housing need, the Council's 'exceptions' policy may allow the release of small sites for affordable housing to meet a specific need outside village development boundaries.

18.20 With regard to general housing provision within the villages, new housing will be restricted to the area within the village development boundary in accordance with Policy GD1 and where proposals accord with other policies and proposals in the Plan.

18.21 It is particularly important to recognise the distinctive character of the village when considering new housing proposals. This character varies widely within Wealden through such factors as historic growth, landscape and topography, layout and the building materials used. Contrast, for example, the small linear Downland settlements and their traditional

flint buildings set within a rolling landscape with the larger ridge-top villages in the High Weald with brick or stone buildings, and hung tiles or weatherboarding.

18.22 It is especially important that new development should respect and harmonise with the particular character of the village. The Council will have careful regard to the density, scale, form and detailed design of the proposed development, together with the materials used and the quality of the environment being created.

EMPLOYMENT

18.23 Many of the villages within the District are important employment centres for their local communities and surrounding rural areas. The Council's employment strategy as set out in Chapter 7 seeks to maintain existing employment within the villages and encourage an improvement in the level and choice of local employment opportunities available. Government guidance on the rural economy emphasises the need to accommodate local commerce and industry in villages by the re-use and adaptation of existing buildings and by making provision, where appropriate, for sensitive, small-scale new development. In addition, the conversion of rural buildings, often on the periphery of villages, provides important opportunities for new employment, and this is discussed further in Chapter 5.

18.24 A number of existing business areas are identified in the larger villages which provide the focus for development within the rural area. In view of the character of the villages in the District and their sensitive countryside setting, particularly in the Sussex Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the opportunities to allocate further land for new business development are limited. This Plan contains allocations for land to accommodate new business uses at East Hoathly, Forest Row, Lower Dicker and Westham, and these are described further in the relevant village chapter.

18.25 The Council wishes to encourage small scale employment uses within the village development boundaries, particularly where the village has an employment centre function, but this will be subject to environmental considerations including traffic, access and impact on residential amenities and village character. In the majority of cases, in view of the residential character of the village and the need to prevent encroachment into the countryside, there is little scope to expand opportunities for local employment. A policy against which new employment proposals in villages can be considered is put forward in Chapter 7.

18.26 In the light of the environmental constraints that exist for new business development in the villages, it is

particularly important that as many sites and premises as possible are retained in employment use. The Council recognises the pressure to convert small premises to other uses, usually residential. However, small premises form a vital part of the rural employment pattern, bringing vitality to the settlement and often helping the viability of local services. A policy seeking to resist the loss of such premises is put forward in Chapter 7.

CONSERVATION

18.27 The development policies for the villages recognise and reflect the importance of maintaining the character and amenity of each village, and the need to conserve the attractive surrounding countryside, particularly where the village lies within one of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

18.28 Many of the villages in the District are based on historic settlements which contain a rich heritage of listed buildings, and in a number of cases, their special architectural and historic character has been recognised by the designation of a Conservation Area. The Council attaches particular importance to the control of development in Conservation Areas and development affecting Listed Buildings, and District-wide policies are put forward in Chapter 4.

TRAFFIC

18.29 It is recognised that the residential amenities and general environment of many villages are adversely affected by the movement of traffic, particularly through traffic. The Council supports the Department of Transport and the County Council in their programme of work to improve the primary road network, and indeed urges the early completion of this programme. New roads and bypasses are providing relief to a number of villages, and more will be helped in this way, particularly along the A27/A259 route (see Chapter 9).

18.30 It is also recognised that many villages will have to continue to accept through traffic movements. In such cases it is important to consider whether traffic management measures, including traffic calming, can be introduced to reduce traffic speed and create a safer, more pleasant environment. The Council will urge the County Council to introduce measures to control and manage traffic wherever possible. In the majority of cases, the County Council as Highway Authority has no major proposals in the villages. In addition, the need for further car park provision in the villages will be monitored.

SERVICES

18.31 Local village shops, often with sub-Post Office facilities, play an important role in providing principally for food and day to day goods. Village halls and areas of public open space which provide playing pitches and children's play areas are important community facilities. The Council will seek to maintain and improve the level and choice of village shops and services; the appropriate policies are put forward in Chapter 8.

18.32 The village recreation grounds and village halls are important facilities serving the local community and surrounding areas. The village hall is often a focal point for a local community providing opportunities for limited indoor recreation, public meetings and meetings by local clubs etc. Thus it is an aim of the Plan to maintain and where possible improve the level and choice of recreation and community facilities in the villages and resist their loss to alternative uses. The provision of community facilities is primarily the responsibility of the Parish Councils whose resources for new schemes are extremely limited. In certain cases, however, the Council will consider giving financial assistance towards community facilities.

Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright
 Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Wealden District Council LA079944 1999

Inset Map No.54 Uckfield Town Centre

KEY

- Inset Map boundary
- Development boundary
- Main shopping area
- Secondary shopping and service areas
- Office and residential policy area
- Public car park
- Framfield Road development policy
- Safeguarded route of former Uckfield to Lewes railway
- Riverside walk
- Conservation Area

Plan wide policies are listed on the main Proposals Map.

Based upon the Ordnance Survey map, permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Wealden District Council LA079944.

- Inset Map boundary
- Development boundary
- Town Centre Inset Map boundary
- Business areas
- Framfield Road development policy
- Public open space
- Riverside walk
- Safeguarded route of former Uckfield to Lewes railway
- Local Nature Reserve/Local Trust Reserve
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Conservation Area
- Historic Park and Garden



Proposals Map

0 200 400 metres 1:10,000

Wealden Local Plan December 1998

-  Inset Map boundary
-  Development boundary
-  Main shopping area
-  Secondary shopping and service areas
-  Office and residential policy area
-  Public car park
-  Framfield Road development policy
-  Safeguarded route of former Uckfield to Lewes railway
-  Riverside walk
-  Conservation Area

Plan wide policies are listed on the main Proposals Map.

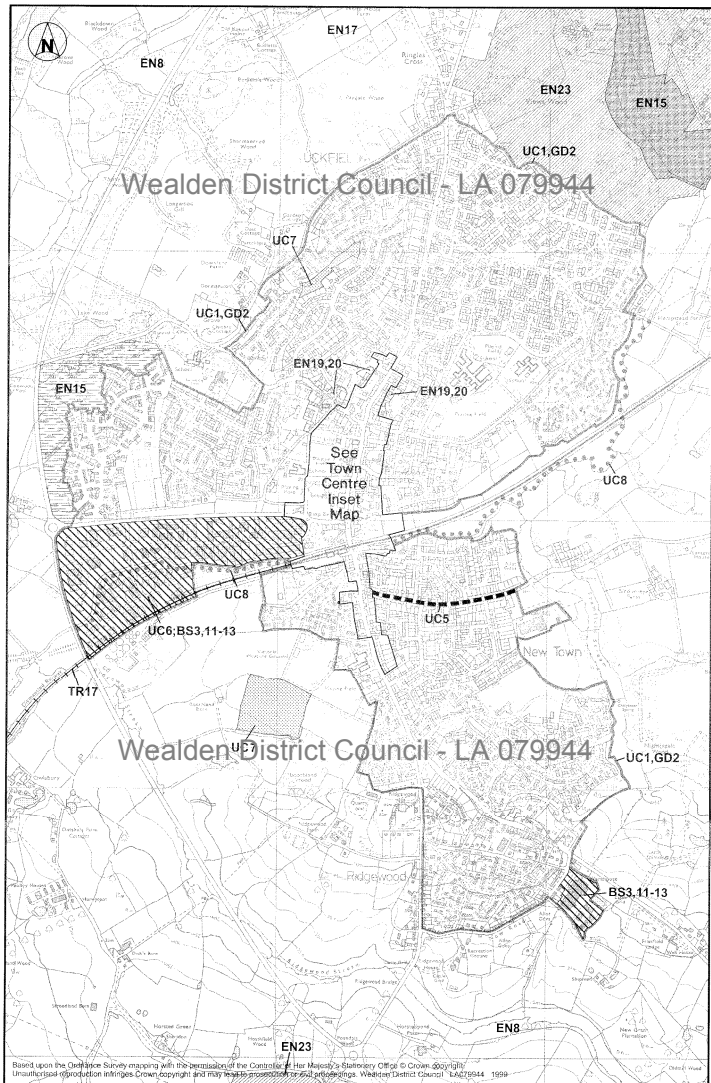


Proposals Map

0 50 100 metres 1:2500

Wealden Local Plan December 1998

Inset Map No. 53 Uckfield

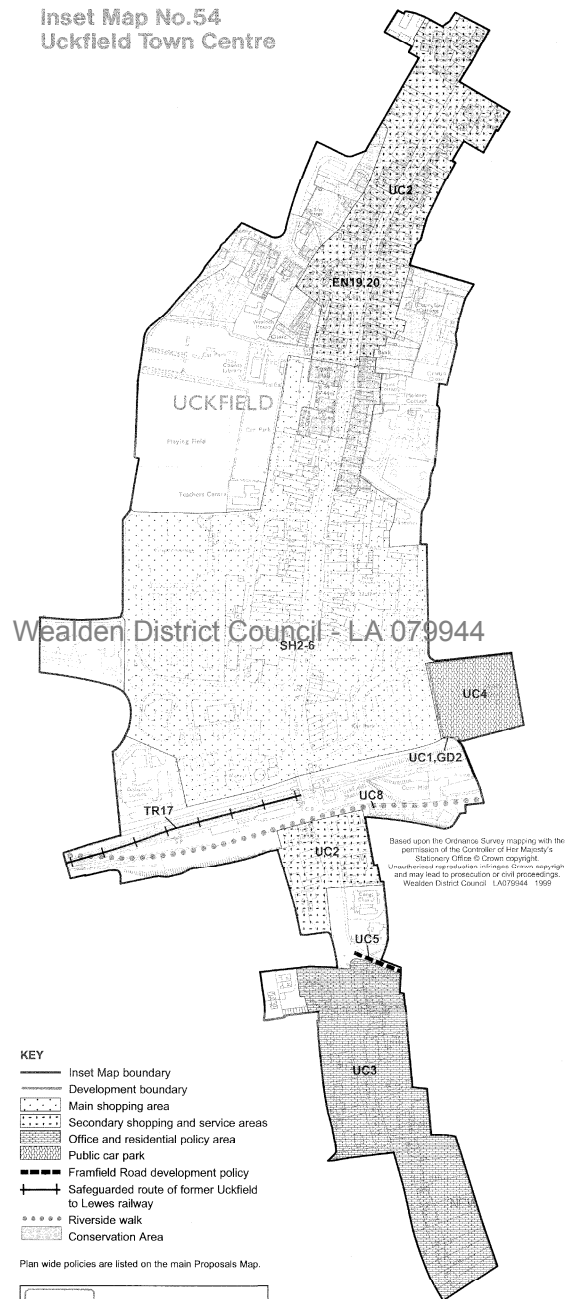


- KEY**
- Inset Map boundary
 - Development boundary
 - Town Centre Inset Map boundary
 - Business areas
 - Framfield Road development policy
 - Public open space
 - Riverside walk
 - Safeguarded route of former Uckfield to Lewes railway
 - Local Nature Reserve/Local Trust Reserve
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest
 - Conservation Area
 - Historic Park and Garden

Plan wide policies are listed on the main Proposals Map.

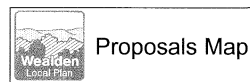


Inset Map No.54 Uckfield Town Centre



- KEY**
- Inset Map boundary
 - Development boundary
 - Main shopping area
 - Secondary shopping and service areas
 - Office and residential policy area
 - Public car park
 - Framfield Road development policy
 - Safeguarded route of former Uckfield to Lewes railway
 - Riverside walk
 - Conservation Area

Plan wide policies are listed on the main Proposals Map.



Wealden Local Plan December 1998