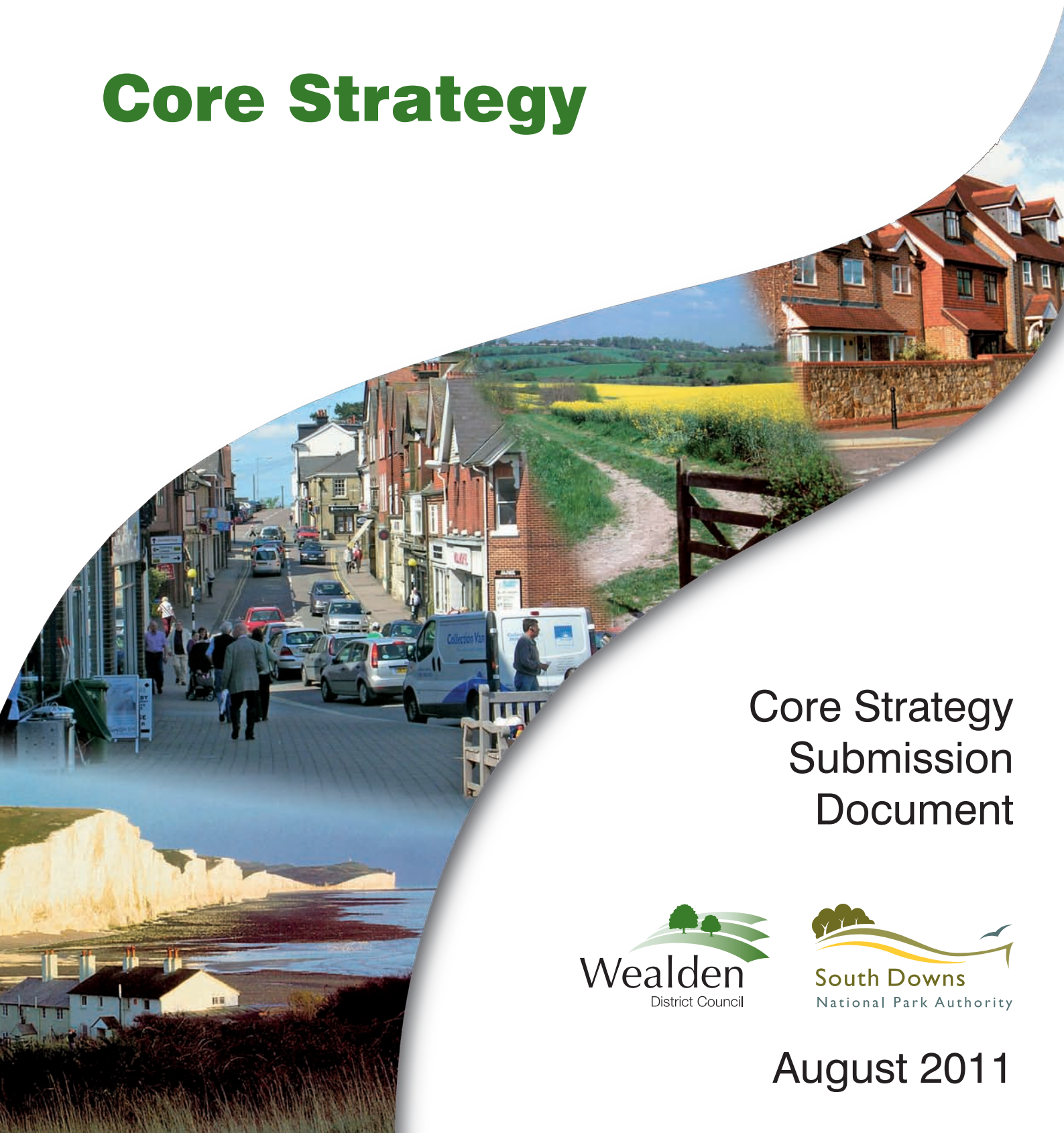
Wealden District (Incorporating Part of the South Downs National Park)

Local Development Framework

Core Strategy



Core Strategy Submission Document

Wealden District Council

South Downs National Park Authority

August 2011

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You may also visit the Hailsham Customer Help Point, Prospects House, 7-9 George Street, Hailsham, BN27 1AD between the hours of 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday, to view Local Development Framework documents.

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



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Working with the South Downs National Park Authority

On 1st April 2011 the South Downs National Park Authority became the statutory Planning Authority for the South Downs National Park. This Joint Core Strategy applies to that part of the South Downs National Park which is situated within Wealden District.

In commenting upon the proposed Core Strategy document the South Downs Joint Committee / Shadow National Park Board as predecessor to the National Park Authority considered it to be a sound document and based upon robust evidence. During the South Downs National Park Authorities shadow year, the Planning Committee formally endorsed the Draft Wealden Core Strategy as the proposed strategic planning policy framework for that part of the National Park within Wealden District.

In due course the South Downs National Park Authority will produce its own, Park-wide Core Strategy, which will supersede this Core Strategy as it applies to the area of the National Park within Wealden District.

Working with the South Downs National Park Authority

Working with the South Downs National Park Authority

Summary

This Core Strategy has been produced following extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. It is supported by a number of detailed evidence studies and background papers which are available on our website at www.wealden.gov.uk.

The Strategy promotes sustainable growth to meet our needs by balancing the ability of our environment and infrastructure to accommodate that growth. We have tested a number of alternatives and consider the approach now proposed to be the most reasonable and deliverable when assessed against possible alternatives. Our Core Strategy runs until 2030 and aims to deliver some 400 homes per annum over the plan period, but will be subject to annual monitoring and review.

Wealden wishes to retain its rural character and high quality environment whilst also providing sufficient growth to improve the performance of our economy, regenerate our market towns and provide a more vital future for villages. We also wish to reduce the disparities in economic performance that are apparent within the District by enhancing employment opportunities, particularly in south Wealden, and tackling deprivation. We will to seek to optimise opportunities for the provision of much needed affordable housing, subject to environmental and other limitations.

To promote sustainability, ease of access to services and to reduce the carbon footprint of development most growth is proposed in the form of sustainable urban extensions. The Strategy proposes significant growth within Hailsham(1300 dwellings) and Uckfield (1000 dwellings) with additional growth at Stone Cross (650 dwellings) and Polegate (700 dwellings) to help meet the needs of the south of the District and to support the agenda for regeneration and investment emerging from the Local Development Framework of our neighbouring authority Eastbourne Borough Council. Lesser and proportionate growth is proposed for Crowborough (300 dwellings) and Heathfield (160 dwellings) owing to environmental and economic constraints. To further support sustainable development, increase in economic performance and the provision of employment opportunities, the Strategy allocates some 40,000 sq metres of employment land, principally in Hailsham, Polegate and Uckfield and promotes provision of an additional 17,000 sq m of retail floorspace, centred upon Uckfield and Hailsham.

To support our rural areas we have developed a settlement hierarchy based upon sustainability, accessibility and range of services available. Thirteen settlements are identified as suitable to sustainably accommodate growth in order to support the vitality of our villages and rural areas. These will provide for some 455 units over the lifetime of the Core Strategy.

Summary

1 Introduction

What is the Core Strategy?

1.1 The Core Strategy is the key policy document which sets out how the places and communities within Wealden will change up until 2030. This document has been produced in consultation with the public and other organisations who have an interest in the future of Wealden.

1.2 The Core Strategy is only one of the documents, which will steer change in the next 24 years, in a collection of documents known as the Local Development Framework (LDF). Following the Core Strategy we will be producing more Development Plan Documents (DPD) which will be guided by the Core Strategy. These Development Plan Documents are called Strategic Sites DPD and Delivery and Site Allocations DPD collectively called Site Allocation DPDs. Together these documents comprise the new development plan for Wealden and will eventually replace the saved adopted Wealden Local Plan policies.

1.3 Further details of saved Wealden Local Plan policies and the timetable for the production of the Local Development Framework are set out in the "Local Development Scheme 2009-2013".

How is the Core Strategy structured?

1.4 The Core Strategy describes the current interaction of people and places in Wealden, and from this key issues and the need for change is identified. The aspirations of the Local Development Framework are described through the long term vision, with associated objectives for the District as a whole. These objectives are delivered through the spatial strategy, which identifies how much development is intended to happen where, when and by what means it will be delivered. In order to ensure that the spatial strategy is delivering the vision and objectives, arrangements for managing and monitoring delivery are identified within the document.

How has it been prepared?

1.5 The Core Strategy is founded upon, but does not duplicate, guidance contained within a series of documents provided by the Government called Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance. It also takes into account local strategies and policies, factual evidence, responses from consultations and views from all the partners involved in the Core Strategy process. Specific regard has been made to the responses to the Spatial Development Options Consultation in 2009 and Town and Parish Council responses supplemented with Parish Templates and Town Master Plans. Of the six alternative housing consultation options, proportionate growth and growth in the Lewes/ Uckfield railway line catchment were not as well received as the options which focused growth on Uckfield, Polegate and Hailsham. The spatial strategy reflects the preferred elements contained within individual options expressed by respondents, as reported to the Cabinet LDF Sub Committee in December 2009 and reported in Background Paper 1: Development of the Core Strategy.

1.6 The Core Strategy also contributes to the achievement of sustainable development through Sustainability Appraisal where alternative options have been assessed against the Council's agreed sustainabilty criteria, meeting the requirement of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. The delivery of necessary infrastructure, required to deliver the Core Strategy, is detailed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

1.7 A number of specialist studies have been produced to help provide a robust evidence base to inform the Local Development Framework including the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, The Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. A comprehensive list of evidence base studies can be found on the Council's website www.wealden.gov.uk. In addition to these a number of background papers have been produced, which explain how we have developed the Core Strategy.

These papers include:

BP1: Development of the Core Strategy

BP2: Managing the Delivery of Housing

BP3: The Economy and the Provision of Jobs

BP4: Provision for Gypsies and Travellers

BP5: Biodiversity

BP6: Green Infrastructure

BP7: Summary of Town Masterplanning Documents

BP8: Summary of Core Strategy Consultation and Participation

BP9: Assessment of the Core Strategy under the Habitat Regulations

BP 10: Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy

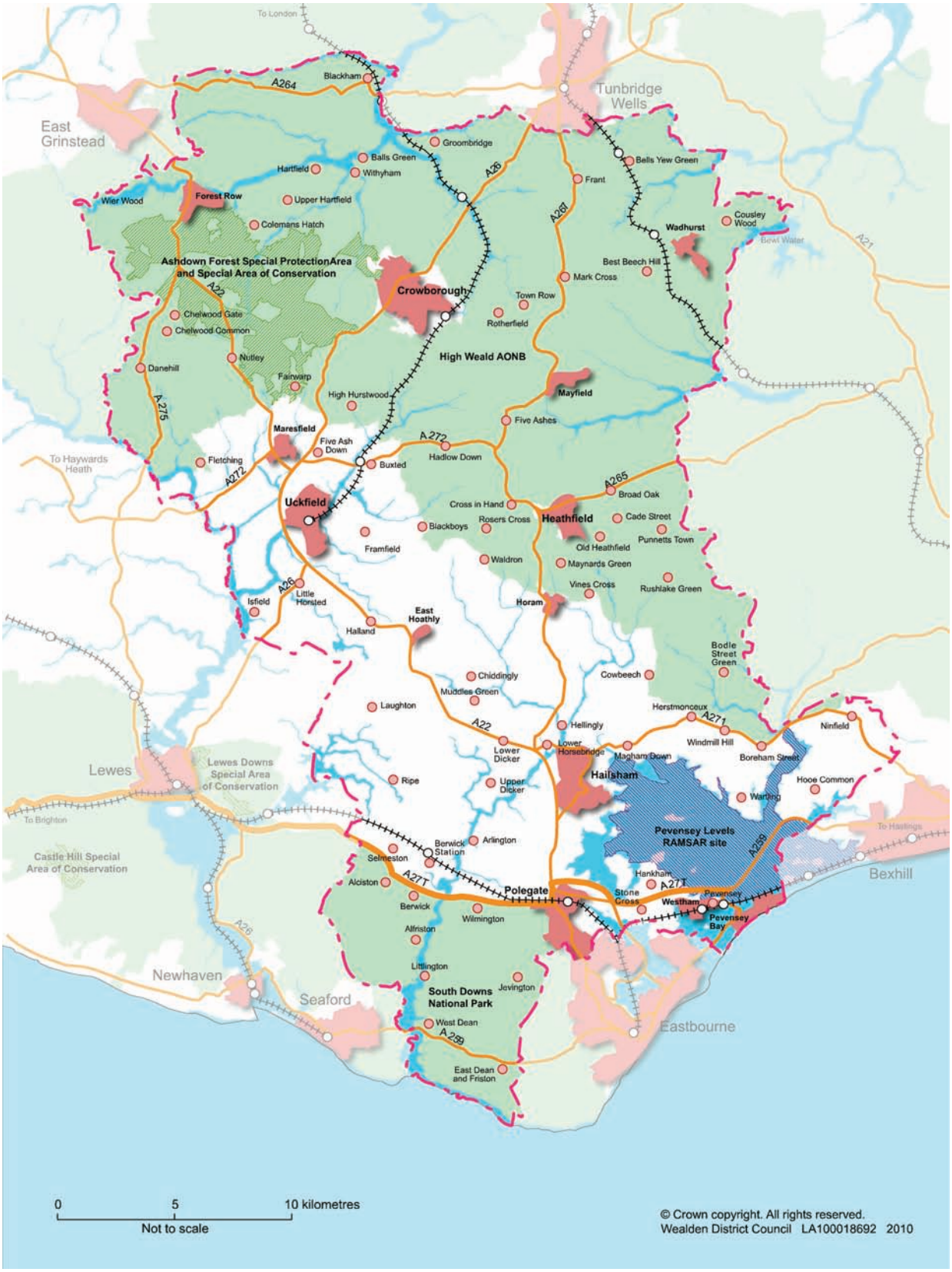
BP 11: Infrastructure Delivery Plan

BP12: Equalities Impact Assessment

BP13: Implementation and Monitoring Framework

2 Context

Figure 1 Wealden in context



Picture of place and key issues

2.1 The description of Wealden's communities, places and key issues reflects the Council's adopted Sustainable Community Strategy themes. The assessment of the unique qualities of Wealden identifies those key issues which need to be addressed through the spatial strategy. Figure 1 illustrates some of the features that make Wealden unique.

Settlements and communities

2.2 Wealden is a large rural district, encompassing a large number of settlements and communities. It has a dispersed and varied settlement pattern with a choice of a number of small market towns, villages and hamlets. Each settlement has its own unique characteristics and functions, depending on its location and historical influences.

2.3 Historically, five main towns are identified within Wealden namely Crowborough, Hailsham, Heathfield, Polegate and Uckfield. However, because of location, environmental attributes, infrastructure and the close proximity of larger towns/ cities including Brighton and Hove, Eastbourne, Tunbridge Wells and Crawley/ Gatwick Wealden's towns have not grown to be significant centres in the South East. The larger settlements outside the District exert a significant influence in terms of providing for jobs, health care, leisure, further education and shopping. This competition means that in many respects towns and villages within Wealden are under threat from, as well as benefiting from, these neighbouring influences.

2.4 Unlike other Districts, Wealden is not dominated by any one of its towns and overall it is a District of many centres. The towns generally serve the local population, with interactions between smaller settlements and towns and between the towns themselves. Any significant change to this settlement pattern has the potential to change the way in which the settlements co-exist, and the vibrancy of our main towns.

2.5 Wealden does attract a small workforce from outside of the District, with some settlements and areas attracting visitors due to the environmental and historical qualities of the area. In such a large rural District it is recognised that the rural areas contribute to the general economy by underpinning tourism, which in turn provides opportunities for creating jobs, attracting investment and bringing in wealth.

2.6 Half of the District's population of around 146,000 live outside the towns, at locations in the rural parts of the District. This dispersed settlement pattern creates particular challenges for local service provision, and makes an efficient and viable public transport system more difficult to provide. The lack of access to a frequent public/ sustainable transport system in a number of the rural settlements has lead to a reliance upon the private motor vehicle. In addition to this, existing networks of main roads and railways tend to focus on routes to London and large towns outside the District, rather than between the towns themselves. This has restricted investment in the local economy, and impacted upon access to employment and leisure opportunities for residents within the District. The impact of the dispersed settlement pattern and the resulting reliance of the private motor vehicle including decreasing social mobility, local traffic issues, environmental impact and

high carbon emissions are all matters that need to be weighed and addressed in developing our spatial strategy.

2.7 The challenge for the Core Strategy is to focus growth where it is most accessible and sustainable, whilst maintaining the balance between rural settlements and larger service centres, ensuring that the facilities and services within the towns are supported for the wider community. Our spatial strategy must recognise that some of our settlements, while having limited opportunities to accommodate significant growth, could support some development to meet the needs of the community. However, in other settlements, in less sustainable locations, additional growth will simply encourage more travel and out commuting and the potential for increasing social inequality.

The environment of Wealden

2.8 One of Wealden's principal assets is the high quality of its environment. This is reflected in the high proportion of the District which is protected for its landscape and biodiversity importance. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the South Downs National Park together cover some 60% of the District, in formal recognition of its landscape quality. The internationally important areas of conservation at Ashdown Forest and the Pevensey Levels are also situated within the District. The location and scale of future development will be restricted by its potential impact on all these designated areas, although opportunities exist to enhance the quality of the District's biodiversity and geodiversity overall.

2.9 The countryside is also a recreational resource for residents and visitors, with attractions including the South Downs National Park, Ashdown Forest, High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Pevensey Levels. In this way Wealden helps make a unique contribution to the quality of life of those who live outside the District, in more built up areas of the region, as well as to its own residents.

2.10 The richness and diversity of its biodiversity, landscape and heritage are significant factors in making the District such a desirable place in which to live. This coupled with a limited legacy of brownfield land places additional pressures on the abundant supply of greenfield land. Our Core Strategy needs to ensure that the growth required to meet needs makes the best use of resources without compromising future requirements, and makes an overall positive contribution to the environment where possible. Working in partnership to manage our natural resources is crucial, ensuring that the attractiveness of the resource is not diminished through uncontrolled visitor pressure or development.

2.11 The Core Strategy should contribute to mitigating climate change by seeking to reduce carbon emissions and other greenhouse gases through: the appropriate selection of areas for growth; providing sustainable transport alternatives to the private motor vehicle; sustainable construction techniques; and use of renewable and low carbon energy sources. Adapting and mitigating climate change is also necessary through avoiding inappropriate development in areas of high flood risk and supporting appropriate flood risk infrastructure; providing for a resilient environment within our built up areas; protecting our landscape; and planning for the future effects of climate change on biodiversity through the green infrastructure network.

Working in Wealden

2.12 The District's economy is heavily dependent on the service sector as well as, to a lesser extent, the construction industry, agriculture, fishing, energy and water sector. Whilst this has helped generate high levels of employment, workplace salaries in the District are relatively low. There are high levels of out-commuting with higher paid earners to the north of the District accessing jobs outside of the District compared to the south.

2.13 Although the economy is dominated by small businesses, with only a few employers employing more than 10 people, very few of these are in what are generally regarded as the main business growth sectors. However, Wealden's contribution to the overall East Sussex economy is greater than other East Sussex authorities.

2.14 Three quarters of small businesses in the District are farm based, often in former agricultural buildings converted to business space, and increasing numbers of people work from home. The diversified agricultural sector makes a significant impact on the area both in terms of its economy and by shaping the landscape. Because of its rural character and dispersed settlement pattern, the limited provision of high speed/capacity broadband in the District seriously restricts business development, particularly but not exclusively in the rural areas.

2.15 The special features of the District attract visitors to Wealden. The coast, attractive villages, and the South Downs and Ashdown Forest are particularly popular visitor destinations. Employment related to tourism in such activities as hotels, catering, camp sites and other visitor facilities is a significant employment sector.

2.16 With an ageing population, prospects for economic growth could be undermined by a workforce of insufficient size and skills. There is also an identified shortage of good quality modern business premises, particularly freehold, and especially those suitable for smaller and starter businesses. Our key challenge for the economy is to identify how the Core Strategy can assist in creating better prospects for economic growth, with particular emphasis on the south Wealden area. This is necessary to reduce out commuting, reduce the wage gap between north and south of the District as well as tackling pockets of unemployment across the area and increasing the contribution to the economy, and to enhance the prospects of East Sussex as a whole. The Council is committed to delivering economic growth, with particular emphasis on the south Wealden area, and will continue to work with partners to support economic growth through the Local Enterprise Partnership and related initiatives.

Living in Wealden

2.17 Wealden's good quality of life, and its proximity to London and the Crawley/ Gatwick growth area, creates a high demand for housing, especially in the north of the District. Demand has in the past exerted considerable upward pressure on house prices, and has caused a widening gulf between local incomes and market prices, and led to severe shortages of affordable housing. Whilst the affordability gap between incomes and house prices can be addressed in part by economic processes the need to provide affordable housing stock remains a priority for the Council. This demand for affordable housing also

provides a need to increase the stock of market housing within the District, with an established need for smaller dwellings in north Wealden and family homes in south Wealden.

2.18 While the general picture is of an attractive and reasonably affluent area with high car ownership and low population and crime rates, Wealden is not without social problems that also need to be addressed. There are significant inequalities within the District, with areas of relative affluence masking pockets of deprivation and health inequality. There is a sharp contrast between high and low incomes and there are strong geographical disparities, with higher mean incomes in the north contrasting with lower incomes around Hailsham and Polegate in the south. Individual experiences of hardship are no less important, and often more difficult to target in such an extensive rural area. However, it is necessary to seek to reduce inequalities and imbalance in the District's population by addressing problems and creating opportunities for a better quality of life, for example through improved education, health, leisure and recreation. This involves ensuring accessibility to services and determining the best pattern of development across the District to ensure it is sustainable and supports the future role and function of settlements. Wherever possible the sustainability of development should not be compromised by the lack of adequate infrastructure, including public transport, recreational facilities and green space. Partnership working, particularly with the Local Strategic Partnership, will be essential in addressing issues of deprivation and inequalities, to address health issues, education provision and community welfare.

2.19 Wealden's population comprises around 62,000 households. The District has a comparatively small ethnic minority population. The age structure has a much smaller proportion of the population in the 15-39 age range than the national average, with a significantly above average number of people of pensionable age. Without some intervention this structure is set to continue with predicted increases in the proportion of the population over 75 years, and continuing net loss of the population within the 15 to 24 year age range.

2.20 The ageing population and comparatively low birth rate would result, without in-migration, in an overall reduction in Wealden's population. Even with a net increase in in-migration, assisted by the provision of housing, the ageing population has an impact on the amount of people living in Wealden in the workforce. In order to maintain and enhance the working age population to sustain and grow our economy and to sustain our town centres and services, Wealden is reliant upon in-migration. Coupled with the changing nature of household formation this provides an overall increased need and demand for housing and accompanying growth.

2.21 Overall the Core Strategy is not seeking to change the character of Wealden. Residents will still look to other centres outside of the District for employment, leisure, recreation and healthcare, however there will be greater choice and opportunities for residents, visitors and businesses in the future than at present.

2 Context

3 Key Elements of the Wealden Spatial Strategy

3.1 The spatial strategy addresses social, economic and environmental issues unique to Wealden, as well as local aspirations. This section introduces the individual elements of the strategy that results in the vision for the future and the objectives to be achieved. Further information on the development of the strategy is contained within Background Paper 1: Development of the Core Strategy.

Wealden settlement hierarchy

3.2 A critical part of our approach in this Core Strategy is that the future allocation of development and growth is based upon the attributes and constraints of settlements. Against this background, a review of Wealden's towns and a detailed assessment of its villages has been undertaken.

3.3 The settlement classification sets out the role of individual towns and villages in Wealden as a basis for the distribution of development through the settlement hierarchy. By identifying those places that have the greatest amount and range of employment, community facilities and support services, and which are best served by public transport, the hierarchy helps ensure that the majority of Wealden's residents can access these whilst minimising the need to travel. In this way the settlement hierarchy contributes both to the development of sustainable communities and reduction in our carbon footprint. It can also assist the organisation and delivery of services by partners and key infrastructure stakeholders. It also helps meet the aims of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Plan by supporting greater prosperity, improved health and social care and learning opportunities, and improved opportunities for public transport and access. The key elements of the settlement hierarchy that underpin our spatial strategy are set out below and are shown in Figure 2.

Table 1 Settlement Hierarchy

Settlement type	Function	Towns/ villages/ Hamlets
Primary centre	A large accessible settlement by road and public transport with a centre containing a large range of shops, including the sale of high order goods, a range of leisure opportunities and facilities including a hospital with Accident and Emergency services. Settlement meets all its own needs.	Tunbridge Wells/ Tonbridge and Eastbourne (All outside of the District boundaries)
Secondary centre	An accessible settlement by road and public transport containing a range of shops, including high street chains, and facilities including a hospital. Settlement meets the majority of its own needs.	East Grinstead, Lewes and Haywards Heath (All outside of the District boundaries)

Settlement type	Function	Towns/ villages/ Hamlets
District centre	An accessible settlement by road and public transport containing a range of shops, employment opportunities and facilities including secondary school. Not reliant upon other centres within the District to meet day to day needs, but requires support from other secondary or primary centres to meet needs of the residents.	Crowborough, Uckfield and Hailsham
Service centre	Sustainable locations with a range of jobs, services and facilities, serving predominantly nearby communities and the wider rural area but with accessibility to larger centres.	Heathfield, Polegate and Willingdon, Stone Cross, Wadhurst and Forest Row
Local service centre	Settlements that have a more limited supply of social and economic infrastructure including employment and where local residents depend upon other centres to meet a broad range of needs with some form of accessibility to those centres.	Mayfield, Frant, Buxted, Herstmonceux, Ninfield, Pevensey Bay, Horam, Alfriston, Groombridge, Hartfield, Westham, and Rotherfield
Neighbourhood centre	A settlement with limited, basic or no facilities but with access to another centre, or a settlement with facilities but poor accessibility or access only to a service or local centre	Pevensey, East Hoathly, Maresfield, Danehill, East Dean, Five Ash Down, Berwick Station, Broad Oak, Withyham, Fletching, Nutley, Boreham Street, Laughton, High Hurstwood, Little Horsted, Isfield, Upper Dicker, Lower Horsebridge, Hellingly, Ripe, Selmeston, Magham Down, Windmill Hill, Rushlake Green, Bells Yew Green, Mark Cross, Cross-in-Hand, Chelwood Gate
Other unclassified settlements	This category covers a wide range of settlements with few or no facilities and services, and where further development would be unsustainable.	All other settlements in Wealden

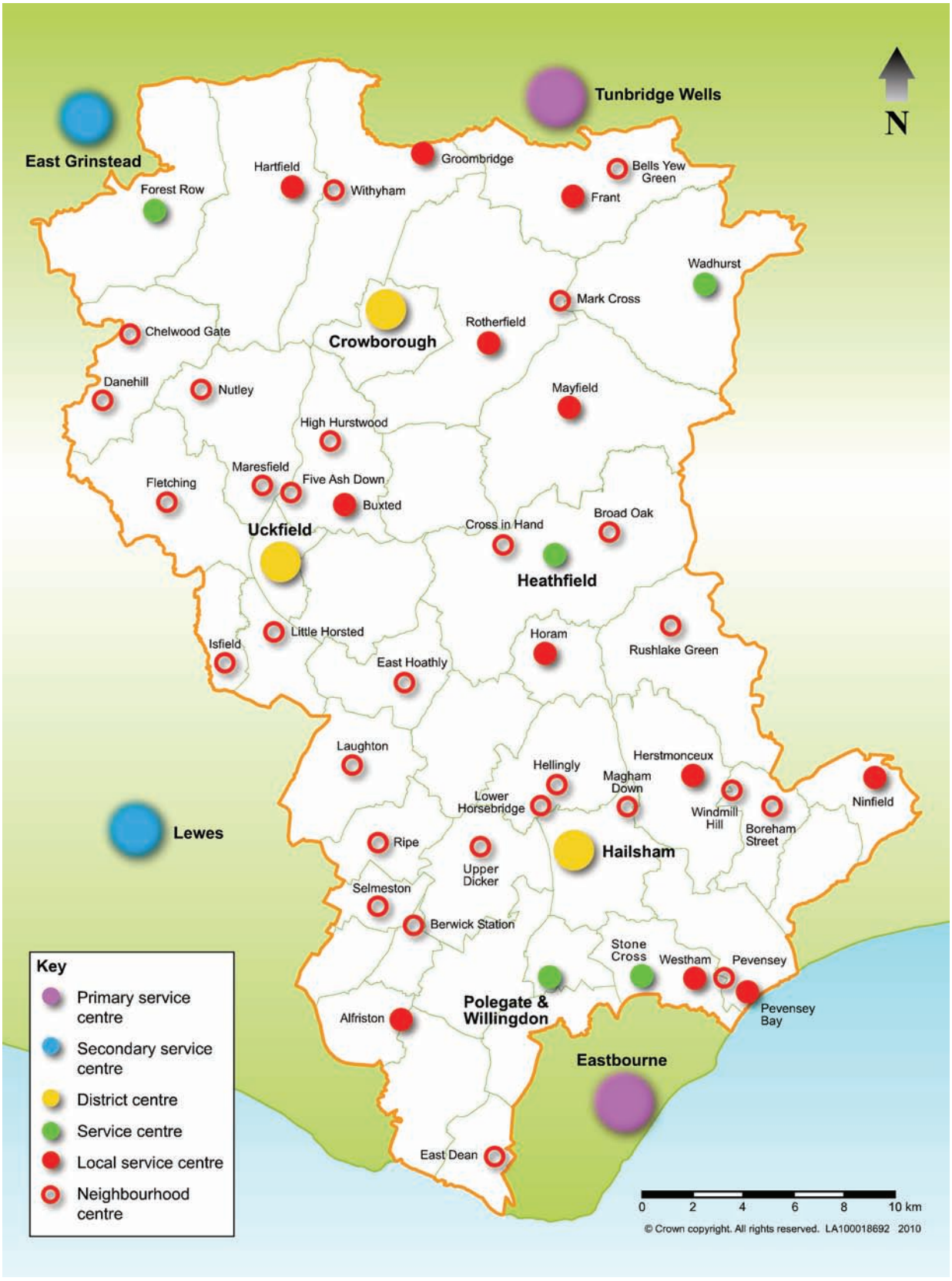
3.4 The settlement hierarchy is based on the pattern of settlements that has evolved over many years. Our spatial strategy seeks to reinforce this pattern rather than change it, and to clearly acknowledge that future development in some of these settlements is more sustainable than in others. The key issue for Wealden is to accommodate the development needs within environmental and infrastructure limitations, whilst promoting more sustainable patterns of development through improved accessibility to key services and facilities, public transport and employment. Evidence confirms that if more sustainable patterns of living are to be promoted, the large majority of future planned growth in Wealden needs to be focused on the towns and larger villages in the hierarchy, where facilities, services and site opportunities exist.

3.5 In order to sustain the hierarchy more detailed development management policies will be developed in the Site Allocation DPDs that will follow this Core Strategy. These will include a criteria based policy to support facilities required by communities. The Council will also consider the need for provision of District wide facilities and or function through subsequent DPDs.

3.6 The Core Strategy also addresses the provision of development boundaries, in accordance with the spatial strategy. Development boundaries are used to define built up areas (within the development boundary) and the countryside (outside the development boundary). In principle development in the countryside is subject to greater restrictions, to preserve the character of the rural area. Development inside the development boundary is subject to a number of design and land-use controls but allows the development of not only housing but retail, employment, leisure, recreation and community facilities including doctors surgeries. There are a number of towns and villages including District Centres, Service Centres and Local Service Centres where retention of the development boundary is appropriate to allow the market, subject to certain controls, to provide for the amenities required for a community. In some, but not all cases, where housing is required there may be an opportunity to consider extending development boundaries and this will be addressed in later DPDs.

3.7 After careful consideration of our settlements and our growth strategy it is considered appropriate to apply countryside constraints to neighbourhood centres and other unclassified settlements. This does not necessarily mean that growth will not be allowed, but that it will need to reflect the character and needs of the area.

Figure 2 Settlement Hierarchy



Housing

3.8 Since 2006 and up until 1st April 2010 1331 dwellings have been built within Wealden. In addition, 3558 dwellings have been committed through extant planning consents and deliverable Non Statutory Plan allocations. In total we have already identified around 4889 dwellings that can or have been delivered in the plan period between 2006 and 2030.

3.9 Government guidance clarifies that the level of future housing provision should take into account current and future levels of need and demand for housing, affordability and local capacity and constraints. It is clear that Wealden is a desirable place to live with significant issues of affordability and a need to provide for economic growth and regeneration. Previous trends show that migration is the main driver of population growth within East Sussex and Wealden, which is set to continue. On average, over the last six years, there has been a net gain of 600 persons per year from migration predominately from within the United Kingdom. The majority of the moves to and from East Sussex originate from the South East and London, with many moves in the South East from and to our neighbours in West Sussex and Kent.

3.10 Trend based projections[(1)] show an increase in population in Wealden from 2006 to 2030 of around 19,000 persons, which equates to around 16,800 households. This shows the demand for both market and affordable housing is high, and in excess of that which could be accommodated or delivered within Wealden. To meet this need the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment has identified a number of individual sites where housing would be suitable, available and achievable.

3.11 Although significant housing need has been identified, and individual sites have been assessed as suitable other environmental, economic, social, infrastructure and community aspirations have shaped the amount of growth that can be accommodated in Wealden. Through this assessment and in order to support our rural areas and the critical rural infrastructure of our villages the potential to deliver 455 additional dwellings has been identified in rural villages. To ensure maximum sustainability, ease of access to services and to reduce the carbon footprint of development most of our growth is proposed in the form of sustainable urban extensions. In order to improve the performance of our economy, regenerate our market towns and meet housing needs 4230 additional dwellings have been identified as urban extensions or infill in Heathfield, Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Willingdon, Stone Cross and adjacent to the boundary with Tunbridge Wells in the Parish of Frant. In total, with commitments, this provides for around 9600 dwellings between 2006 and 2030.

3.12 Each of the five towns has their own ambitions, as identified through town masterplanning exercises, and constraints to growth. The level of development and change proposed in our Core Strategy takes into account these ambitions, wider social and economic needs of the District as well as local constraints.

1 Office of National Statistics trend based projections. East Sussex County Council's projections 2006 to 2031 show a population increase of around 20,000 persons equating to 13,500 households and 13,000 additional dwellings

3.13 The towns of Crowborough and Heathfield are dominated by the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and Crowborough has the additional influence of the Ashdown Forest and the high level of nature conservation protection afforded by the Habitats Directive. However, there is a need to retain and enhance the role of the centres providing services not only to local residents but also to surrounding villages. Both centres have limited employment opportunities and residents look to other centres for services and facilities. The proximity of Tunbridge Wells to Crowborough and the relatively poor accessibility of Heathfield has an influence on both places. As a result of these factors growth is limited within both settlements and can accommodate an additional 300 and 160 dwellings in Crowborough and Heathfield respectively.

3.14 Uckfield has provided through its Masterplan an ambition to regenerate and change. Its location, younger demographic, housing land and employment prospects provides opportunities for growth, and to meet local and wider housing needs. It has a significant function in providing services to a wide rural area, including Heathfield, and strengthening of that role could help social and environmental aspirations of reducing reliance on the private motor vehicle. The need to provide for local road network infrastructure also contributes to the need for the provision of significant growth of 1000 dwellings in and around the settlement of Uckfield.

3.15 The town of Tunbridge Wells is situated on the boundary of Wealden, and provides limited opportunities of extensions to that urban area, albeit situated within the rural parish of Frant. An extension to this urban area, compatible with the surrounding character of the area and located outside of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, would help to address wider housing needs, by providing housing opportunities in an area of Wealden that in itself has limited potential due to the landscape designation.

3.16 The south Wealden settlements of Hailsham, Polegate, Willingdon and Stone Cross all provide opportunities to encourage economic growth in order to help regenerate the south Wealden area, and to provide for significant local affordable housing needs as well as wider market requirements. All of these settlements are subject to constraint due to strict limitations on the ability of the waste water treatment works to discharge treated waste water into the Pevensey Levels. The number of additional houses in north Hailsham is limited to 1750 dwellings and in south Hailsham, Polegate, Willingdon and Stone Cross the number of additional dwellings is limited to 1,500 dwellings to meet environmental requirements, having regard to completions since 2006 and extant planning consents as of 1st April 2010. However, there are issues that need to be addressed within each area. Improvements within Hailsham and Hellingly are supported through the Hailsham and Hellingly Masterplan. Hailsham town requires growth and regeneration, in order to create a more self sufficient community and ensure the provision of services to the wider rural area. Deprivation issues need to be tackled, but also issues of transport infrastructure. Polegate and Willingdon rely heavily upon Eastbourne for a number of services yet require local facilities as well to ensure continuation of the role of the service centre. Stone Cross due to its close proximity with Eastbourne and potential links with Polegate, with particular regard to the train station, is a sustainable solution to the need to provide a workforce within the area and meet overall housing needs.

3.17 This pattern of growth seeks to meet wider housing needs and demands, and is also influenced by economic need, environmental considerations, infrastructure capacity and the overall balance of settlement function. The strategy supports rural areas through some growth within sustainable villages and the expansion of the role of the centres at Uckfield and Hailsham whilst acknowledging the influences of Tunbridge Wells and Eastbourne as larger centres within the vicinity of the settlements of Polegate, Willingdon, Stone Cross and Crowborough.

Employment and business

3.18 The District already has a good supply of business land and premises and the majority of economic activity and employment will continue at these sites. However, the strategy requires land to be allocated for job-creating development in order to increase employment growth and economic activity. The strategy is aimed at increasing the opportunity for people to work close to where they live, whilst recognising where the employment market would wish to locate and the ability to deliver. It recognises the importance of all sectors of a diverse local economy and the need to make the most of Wealden's assets to secure a healthy local economy which is compatible with its sensitive and high quality environment.

3.19 The strategy makes better use of land already in employment use and encourages the redevelopment and intensification of suitable sites as and when they become available. However, additional land provision will be required for employment purposes in order to provide for growth in the economy.

3.20 The creation of jobs will be encouraged and supported across various employment sectors. For planning purposes land will be allocated for "employment" uses (B class - offices, research, industrial, storage and distribution) and retail (A1 class - comparison and convenience). The floorspace figures set out in Policy WCS1 refer only to the B class and A1 class uses. However, job opportunities will arise in other sectors that do not necessarily fit into one of these categories but will contribute to overall job growth including leisure, recreation, tourism and other commercial uses.

3.21 There are a number of previous employment allocations that are not yet developed. These include the Ashdown Forest Business Park and Hackhurst Lane. The Employment Land Review considered the quality of employment sites allocated in the Local Plan(s) and employment sites with planning consent and reviewed the deliverability of the sites. Further work has been undertaken to update the information, and the supply of employment land is taken into account in the calculation of future requirements. Both Ashdown Business Park, near Maresfield and Hackhurst Lane at Lower Dicker are considered viable and both sites now have planning consent. However, if delivery has not commenced by 2020 the strategy will need to be re-considered in order to deliver any shortfall. Allocations in the Local Plan that have been identified in the Employment Land Review as undeliverable will be reviewed as part of the Site Allocation DPDs. In addition, adopted Local Plan business areas and associated policies will require review through the LDF process.

3.22 The Council's strategy is to encourage and support business in a flexible manner in order to improve economic prosperity and reduce economic disparities across the District by:

- recognising and seeking economic investment where available to help deliver the strategy;
- retaining existing business areas, where viable, and review all allocated site and business areas identified in the adopted Local Plan;
- allocating business land in Uckfield to balance the proposed housing growth, meet need in north Wealden in a deliverable location, support the reduction in levels of out-commuting and potentially reduce the need to travel by private transport;
- allocating business land in Hailsham to provide for local need, and combined with Polegate to meet wider aspirations to improve the economy in south Wealden and Eastbourne;
- ensuring provision for a range of sizes, types and locations of premises to meet a range of business needs, including start up, move on, and expansion accommodation to bring forward more private sector investment, jobs and economic growth to the County, and in particular employment land provision in south Wealden and Eastbourne;
- encouraging the redevelopment and intensification of existing business and employment areas, and supporting the improvement of the quality and flexibility of accommodation to meet a variety of requirements;
- supporting the provision of flexible accommodation for small and medium enterprises and encouraging start up businesses, including through the provision of additional managed workspace;
- improving economic performance and the employment offer of town centres;
- supporting rural diversification where appropriate, particularly where needed to support the landscape, and through the conversion of redundant rural buildings;
- addressing the current problems associated with poor broadband coverage;
- supporting the visitor-based service sector and the local tourism industry;
- encouraging the means of securing what is termed “smart” growth (that is economic growth that does not rely on importing labour or require more land) for example by encouraging more flexible working practices, greater use of technology, and more home-working. This may include the development of live/work units on residential or mixed use sites, subject to safeguarding residential amenities etc;
- working with partner agencies to improve workforce skills, for example by the provision of training facilities associated with employment sites. This may be particularly focused in the Hailsham/ Polegate/ Willingdon area;
- providing suitable parking provision, taking into account the need to create more self sufficient and sustainable communities; and
- supporting and encouraging services and facilities in rural villages that support local employment.

3.23 The Core Strategy details how much employment land will be provided and where, however policies concerning business and employment within Wealden will be contained within the Site Allocation DPDs, unless already contained within national guidance.

Retail

3.24 Based on the projected additional dwellings to be provided, the Wealden District Council Shopping Study 2008 recommends the need for the strategy to make provision for additional retail development in Wealden towns in both convenience and comparison shopping categories.

3.25 The Council's strategy is to improve the retail offer by:

- reviewing shopping areas within the towns and enhancing shopping provision especially within Uckfield and Hailsham;
- encouraging an appropriate mix of uses, including residential development, leisure and other employment provision in the towns;
- supporting enhancement of retail provision in District, Service and Local Service Centres, where appropriate;
- seeking to retain and where possible enhance existing services within villages; and
- providing suitable parking provision, taking into account the need to create more self sufficient and sustainable communities.

3.26 Policies concerning shopping provision will be contained within the Site Allocation DPDs, unless already stipulated within national guidance.

Tourism

3.27 The South Downs National Park, the Ashdown Forest, the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the coast, the District's market towns and villages all attract visitors to Wealden. Employment related to tourism (in areas such as hotels and guest houses, caravan parks, shops and restaurants, visitor attractions etc.) is a significant contributor to the economic performance of the District. Tourism also supports facilities and amenities which can be enjoyed by residents as well as by visitors to Wealden. The protection and maintenance of high quality environments throughout the District add to the quality of life for all.

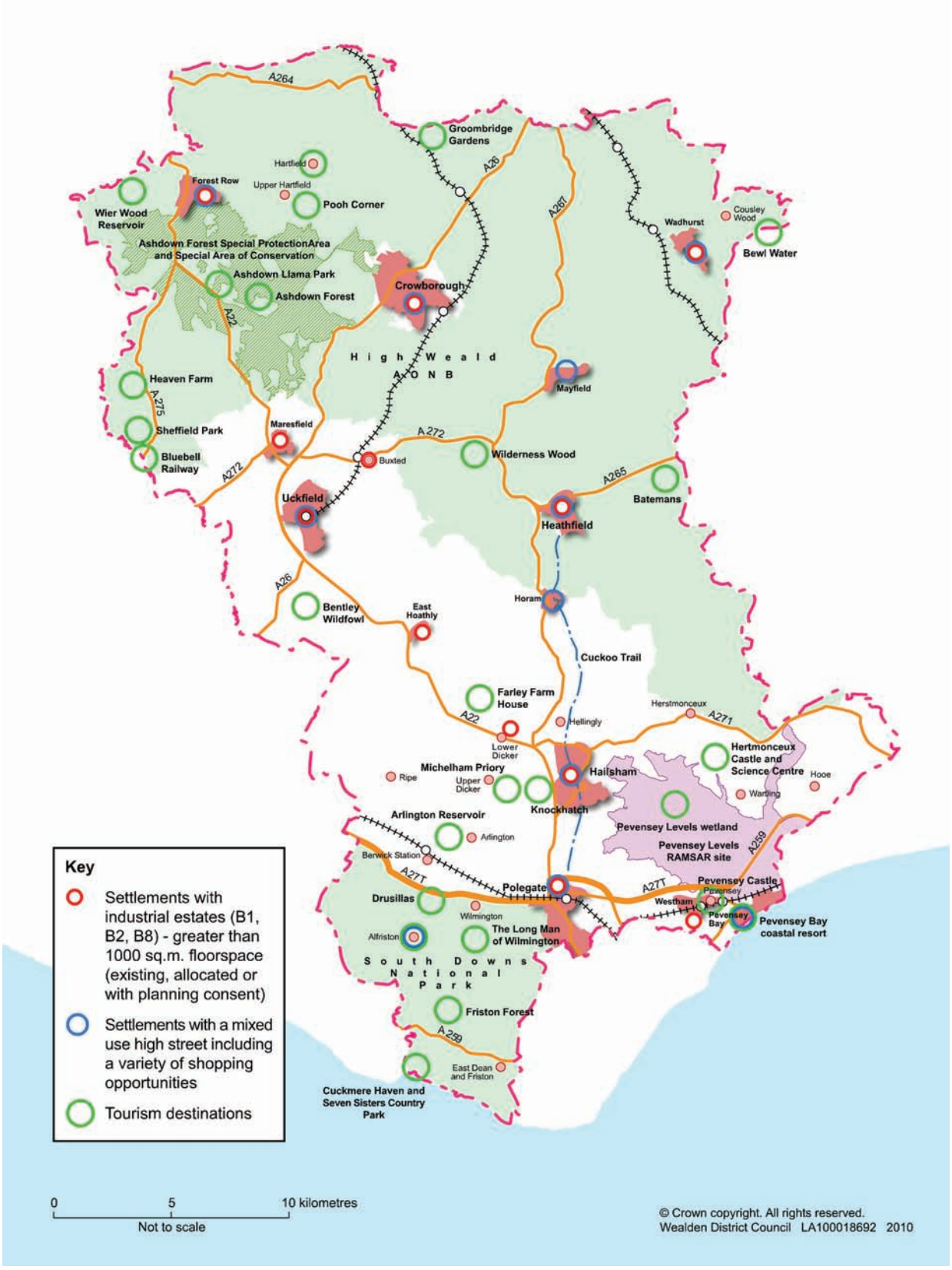
3.28 The Council's strategy is to increase visitor spending by:

- retaining serviced and non-serviced accommodation wherever possible, and supporting the development of new accommodation where appropriate including bed and breakfast accommodation;
- encouraging and supporting tourism businesses to adapt to change, and to provide the opportunity to extend the length and frequency of tourist visits;
- encouraging appropriate tourism initiatives which promote use of environmental recreational resources in an environmentally responsible manner and encouraging the re-use of suitable redundant rural buildings for tourism and visitor purposes;
- supporting the improvement of the quality of existing attractions, where appropriate;
- enhancing the town centres by promoting the role of tourism in the regeneration of settlements;

- supporting measures that relieve tourism and visitor pressures on the most vulnerable parts of Wealden's environment specifically the National Park, Ashdown Forest and the Pevensey Levels and which would help visitor management to protect and enhance vulnerable habitats and landscapes; and
- improving the quality of recreational opportunities and managed access to sites with tourism potential.

3.29 Policies concerning tourism within Wealden, following this strategy, will be contained within the Site Allocation DPDs, unless already contained within national guidance.

Figure 3 Location of Business, Retail and Tourism within Wealden District



Environment

3.30 Wealden's environmental attributes have an important part to play in the development of the spatial strategy and had a significant impact upon the assessment of suitability of housing land in relation to the SHLAA. As a result development has been excluded on nationally and locally designated biodiversity sites, sites subject to high and medium probability of flood risk (including climate change), and sites have been carefully scrutinised with regards to landscape impact. The Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area has also been taken into account and development excluded within 400 metres where there is a potential to impact on protected bird species. This assessment has had an impact on the spatial strategy, and has resulted in limited growth in some of our towns and villages.

3.31 Wealden is home to two internationally important sites Ashdown Forest, designated a Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation, and the Pevensey Levels Ramsar site and proposed candidate Special Area of Conservation. In addition to limiting development in the Hailsham, Polegate, Willingdon and Stone Cross areas, measures will be required in following DPDs to ensure that any new development in the south of the District will not increase pollution levels or surface water run off to the Pevensey levels.

3.32 In accordance with advice from Natural England it will be necessary to reduce the recreational impact of visitors resulting from new housing development within 7 kilometres of Ashdown Forest by creating an exclusion zone of 400 metres for net increases in dwellings, requiring the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) in Uckfield and Crowborough and requiring contributions to on site management measures at Ashdown Forest. In addition, measures will be required, as well as monitoring, to reduce the nitrogen emissions emanating from the increased number of vehicles using the roads crossing Ashdown Forest and Lewes Downs Special Area of Conservation, which is situated in Lewes District adjacent to the A26. Measures include creation of more self sufficient communities in order to provide an alternative to trips by motor vehicle, on-site management techniques and use of SANGS to provide alternative recreation space outside of Ashdown Forest.

3.33 Government guidance provides a level of protection for our environment, particularly nationally and internationally designated sites, which will not be duplicated in this Core Strategy. However, our strategy has been guided by high levels of protection on local and national levels, and more detailed policies are contained within the Core Strategy and further policies will be provided in subsequent DPDs.

4 Vision and Spatial Planning Objectives

4.1 Our vision for Wealden is drawn from the responses received from public consultations and working with stakeholders including the Local Strategic Partnership, Parish and Town Councils and Members of Wealden District Council concerning the vision elements of the Core Strategy. For further information electronic links are provided in Background Paper 8: Summary of Core Strategy Consultation and Participation and the vision elements in the Spatial Development Options Consultation.

Our vision is that:

By 2030 Wealden will have successfully accommodated growth to meet future needs whilst protecting and enhancing its essential rural character and high quality environment and promoting the countryside as a resource for recreation and tourism. Its market towns will have been regenerated providing opportunities for residents to access suitable housing, local jobs, services, facilities and recreational opportunities and a number of its villages and rural settlements will have enhanced their sustainability through successful growth including provision of affordable housing.

Wealden's spatial planning objectives

SPO1 We will help manage countryside resources and assist in the development of the rural economy whilst protecting and enhancing recognised biodiversity and geodiversity attributes, in particular we will protect the internationally important sites of the Pevensey Levels and Ashdown Forest and other designated areas of bio and geodiversity. We will also protect, and will work with others to enhance and manage, the distinct landscapes of the District, particularly, but not exclusively, those nationally designated

SPO2 We will ensure that the intrinsic quality of the historic environment is protected and that Wealden's environmental, heritage and cultural assets are used appropriately to encourage suitable tourism development and support inward investment

SPO3 To help address the need for homes, to ensure the economic prosperity of the District and to support its residents and the changing requirements of residents in terms of size, type, tenure and location of homes, whilst protecting our valued environment we will provide for at least 9600 homes within Wealden from 2006 to 2030. The phased delivery of on average 400 dwellings per annum across the 24 year period of the strategy provides a realistic timeframe for the market to deliver the housing, and is a rate that allows our communities to adjust to the growth and create mixed and balanced communities. This timescale also better provides for the timely delivery of necessary infrastructure. The majority of new housing will be accommodated within, or as sustainable extensions to, existing towns, while allowing for limited growth within those villages capable of accommodating development in a sustainable fashion. Development will be focused in and around the settlements of Hailsham/ Hellingly, Polegate/ Willingdon/ Stone Cross and Uckfield to help stimulate investment in those centres, and, to varying but lesser degrees, in and around Crowborough and Heathfield to meet housing need

SPO4 We will ensure the long term viability of our five principal towns by supporting a range of improvements compatible with their local retail and service functions and reflecting the scope that exists for physical change within their centres. This will include more substantial investment in Uckfield and Hailsham which will allow multi-agency planned and managed developments with improved business and community infrastructure, and with a range of new job opportunities

SPO5 We will continue to work with East Sussex County Council and schools to meet the learning needs of local people, and to ensure that the local workforce has the necessary skills and facilities to be able to participate fully in local employment

SPO6 In order to improve economic prosperity we will support the growth of the Wealden economy by helping existing companies to expand and develop. We will help improve the range of employment opportunities available and provide for an additional 40,000 sq. metres net of employment floorspace, to that already committed, and 17,000 sq. metres net of retail floorspace. There will be an increased opportunity for people to work close to where they live, to improve access to jobs, help reduce current levels of net out commuting from Wealden and decrease the net out migration of 15 to 24 year olds. New jobs will make a positive contribution to the improved economic performance of Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Willingdon and assist in tackling forms of deprivation caused by economic circumstances

SPO7 We will encourage reduction of the need to travel by car by concentrating development where it can most closely relate to public transport opportunities, improving the offer of our towns in terms of retail, leisure and recreation and by making it easier to travel by more sustainable modes of transport. We want to see noticeable improvements in journey quality for those people making trips on foot, bicycle or by public transport

SPO8 We will maintain and where appropriate enhance through the encouragement of growth, the effective network of villages that will continue to support the day to day needs of our rural communities, and which will accommodate some additional growth where this would be sustainable

SPO9 We will ensure development takes full account (by mitigation or adaptation) of the likely forecast impacts of climate change including: minimising the emissions of greenhouse gases; the use of non-renewable energy and natural resources; and by encouragement of construction using sustainable techniques

SPO10 We will seek to ensure the safety of residents and reduce the economic impact of flooding events by avoiding the allocation of land for employment and housing growth in areas subject to medium and high flood risk, taking into account the predicted impact of climate change

SPO11 We recognise the shortfalls in open space, leisure and recreational facilities identified within the District and will work with others to enhance the District's geodiversity and biodiversity by creating a coherent network of green infrastructure, especially in and around our towns, that can better support wildlife and reduce the impact of climate change as well as improving human health through increased accessibility

SPO12 We will continue to work with partners to help ensure that Wealden remains a safe place, with levels of crime and disorder well below the national average, and to achieve significant improvements in the safety records on Wealden's roads

SPO13 We will encourage the development of high quality, safe and attractive living environments for communities in both towns and villages, while promoting local distinctiveness through good design in all new development. We want future built development to create spaces and places which are sustainable, distinctive and durable- places where people will want to live. These will be expected to make a real contribution to addressing climate change issues and addressing the needs of our ageing population

SPO14 We will maximise the use of previously developed land for new development wherever possible, and make the most efficient use of existing resources, for example by ensuring housing densities are compatible with the particular location and by utilising existing capacity in infrastructure, services and facilities

SPO15 We will ensure, with our partners, that the spatial strategy's infrastructure requirements are clearly identified and will work with partners to ensure that this is provided at the right time to support development. New development will be expected to contribute to strategic and local infrastructure requirements, through both on site facilities and financial contributions for off-site works. In some cases development will require to be phased to ensure delivery of necessary infrastructure to support proposed growth

5 Spatial Strategy Policies

5.1 The spatial strategy policies identify what will be delivered on a strategic scale, and when, in line with the spatial strategy. It provides clear direction and information concerning provision of homes and employment and retail from 2006 to 2030.

Provision for homes and jobs

5.2 Wealden's spatial strategy requires land to be allocated for future housing, employment and infrastructure developments. This will be carried forward in the Site Allocation DPDs that follow this Core Strategy. The purpose of our Core Strategy is to confirm the overall strategic land requirements, identify the broad locations of the main growth areas, and ensure that the necessary overall supply of land is deliverable.

5.3 Housing developments already committed[(2)] mean that this Core Strategy, and the DPDs that follow, will be allocating land for at least 4685 additional dwellings over the period April 2010 – March 2030.

5.4 The provision of employment land is based on the latest Employment Land Review update which establishes a need for some 128,695 sq. metres net floorspace between 2006 and 2030. Employment developments in the pipeline[(3)] mean that the DPDs following the Core Strategy will be allocating land for at least 40,000 sq. metres net floorspace of B1, B2 and B8. If growth is slower than forecast, or if other circumstances change, it may be necessary to revise the requirements to reflect a more realistic demand for employment land.

WCS1 Provision of Homes and Jobs 2006-2030

Land will be identified in subsequent Development Plan Documents for the provision of some 4685 net additional dwellings in Wealden District to provide for 9600 dwellings over the period 2006-2030.

Provision will be made for some net additional 40,000 sq. metres net employment floorspace (B1/B2/B8) to provide for 128,695 sq. metres net employment floorspace and 17,000 sq. metres net additional retail floorspace over the period 2006-2030.

Distribution of homes and jobs

5.5 The broad distribution of land to be allocated for housing development to meet the requirements of Policy WCS1 is guided by the strategy objectives and our settlement hierarchy. Our strategy seeks to concentrate growth at the urban areas, but especially at Hailsham and Uckfield. Within the rural areas there is a wide variety of settlements some

2 Includes extant planning consents as of 1st April 2010, Non Statutory Local Plan allocations assessed as deliverable or developable and planning consent granted on land east of Battle Road WD/2009/2705
3 Includes Non Statutory Wealden Local Plan allocation for Ashdown Business Park

of which are assessed as suitable to accommodate some further housing development in an appropriate fashion.

5.6 Specific account has been taken of the distribution of land with potential for housing development identified in the Council's 2010 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. This will ensure that there is a reasonable prospect of delivering dwelling requirements.

WCS2 Distribution of Housing Growth 2006-2030

Land will be allocated to meet the housing provision of WCS1 in accordance with the following distribution:

Town/settlement	*Built or already committed[4] (dwellings)*	*New allocations (dwellings)*	*Total dwellings (2006-2030)*
Uckfield	*742*	*1000*	*1742*
Hailsham and Hellingly	*1645*	*1300*	*2945*
Polegate and Willingdon	*565*	*700*	*1265*
Stone Cross and Westham	*42*	*650*	*692*
Crowborough	*632*	*300*	*932*
Heathfield and Waldron	*292*	*160*	*452*
Adjacent to Tunbridge Wells boundary (within Frant Parish)	*53[5]*	*120*	*173*
Rural villages	*918*	*455*	*1373*
Total Wealden	*4889*	*4685*	*9574*

Broad locations for housing development in Policy WCS2 are shown as insets on the Key Diagram. Individual sites to meet these housing provisions will be allocated in the Site Allocation DPDs.

4 *Includes extant planning consents as of 1st April 2010, Non Statutory Local Plan allocations assessed as deliverable or developable and planning consent granted on land east of Battle Road WD/2009/2705*

5 *Commitments for Frant Parish including the settlements of Frant and Bells Yew Green*

Use of previously developed land

5.7 For the last 10 years some 80% of housing completions in Wealden have been on previously developed (brownfield) land. As similar site opportunities for future growth in Wealden are limited, it will not be possible to maintain this high proportion in future years. Evidence suggests that the expected contribution from brownfield land over the period from 2010-2030 may be nearer 35%.

5.8 The brownfield component of the spatial strategy is therefore likely to be well below the national annual target of 60% identified in Planning Policy Statement 3. However, this is an average target and in a rural area such as Wealden, where there is a limited supply of brownfield opportunities, it is inevitable that there will have to be a substantial use of greenfield land to meet existing and future housing needs.

Windfalls

5.9 Strategic policy WCS2 makes no allowance for windfall sites. However over the past 10 years around 200 dwellings per annum have been provided as windfall. Whilst the projected provision of such sites cannot be included at this stage in land supply projections, completions on these sorts of sites will count towards the overall house building totals achieved in Wealden. Windfalls will be used as part of the manage and monitor system, and provide some limited contingency. However, windfall sites can increase the demands on the District's environmental and infrastructure constraints, and this in turn could have a determining effect on overall delivery capacity at any particular settlement. Through monitoring arrangements the Council will need to ensure that the unplanned development of windfall sites does not conflict with the strategy.

WCS3 Distribution of Employment (B Class) and Retail (convenience and comparison)

Land will be allocated to meet the employment and retail provision of Policy WCS1 in accordance with the following distribution:

Town/ Settlement	*New allocations Employment (B1/B2/B8) (net floorspace sq. metres)*	*New allocations Retail (A1 convenience and comparison) (net floorspace sq. metres)*
Uckfield	*12,650*	*10,707*
Hailsham and Hellingly	*8,650*	*6,230*
Crowborough	*0*	*0*
Heathfield	*0*	*0*
Polegate and Willingdon/ Stone Cross	*16,890*	*0*
Rural area	*0*	*0*
Total Wealden	*38,190*	*16,937*

Broad locations for employment and retail development in Policy WCS3 are shown as insets on the Key Diagram. Individual sites to meet these provisions will be allocated in the Site Allocation DPDs.

Strategic development areas

5.10 The key diagram identifies broad locations for future development. The exact extent and detailed form of the developments at these locations are not defined precisely on a map. This will be undertaken at the Site Allocation DPDs that follow this Core Strategy.

5.11 The Council recognises the need to identify a deliverable supply of housing land for both the short-medium and the longer term. Our Core Strategy therefore identifies "strategic development areas" that are of such a scale that they are considered critical to the delivery of the overall strategy.

5.12 A number of strategic development areas will be priority for inclusion in the Strategic Sites DPD, in line with the housing trajectory and to ensure delivery.

WCS4 Strategic Development Areas

The following strategic development areas are the locations that are considered to be critical to the delivery of the overall strategy.

- SD1: Land at West Uckfield
- SD2: Land at East Hailsham
- SD3: Land at North Hailsham
- SD4: Land at South Polegate and East Willingdon
- SD5: Land at Dittons Road, Polegate
- SD6: Land at East and South East of Stone Cross
- SD7: Land at North Stone Cross
- SD8: Land at Pine Grove, Crowborough
- SD9: Land at Jarvis Brook, Crowborough
- SD10:Land at South East Crowborough
- SD11: Land at North West Heathfield
- SD12: Land adjacent to Tunbridge Wells, in the Parish of Frant

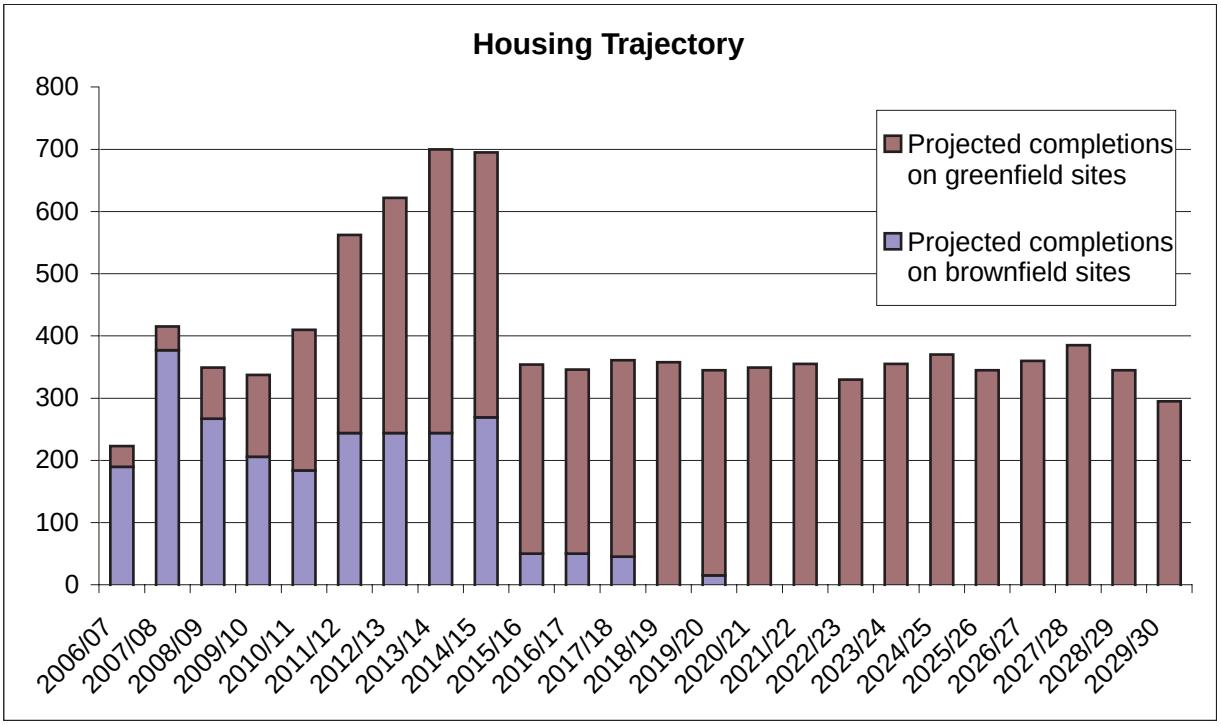
Managing the release of housing land

Housing trajectory

5.13 Over the last 21 years on average 400 dwellings have been built per annum across the District. Based on this delivery rate, and the spatial strategy with focus of significant development in Uckfield, Hailsham and Hellingly, Polegate and Willingdon and Stone Cross, it is considered that a similar rate in the future is achievable. An average delivery rate of 400 dwellings per annum will help to ensure integration of development into existing communities, provides a realistic rate for the market to deliver, allows for master planning of large sites and the timely provision of infrastructure. The following trajectory sets out what has been achieved in Wealden from 2006 to date and our forecast of future housing delivery until 2030. This will be kept under review and annual monitoring reports will update the trajectory as necessary to demonstrate how progress will be made towards meeting our housing growth targets.

5.14 The trajectory shows the change in housing delivery performance that will be required over the plan period to 2030 to ensure that sufficient housing is provided to meet the housing provision target of 9600 dwellings to 2030.

Figure 4



5.15 The trajectory includes projected completions from sites which have been assessed as being deliverable based on a range of evidence, including the Council's published SHLAA. This includes sites which already have planning consent in addition to sites allocated in the Non Statutory Local Plan which currently do not have planning consent that are considered suitable, available and achievable. The trajectory peaks in the period 2013 to 2015 as this is the period when a large number of sites allocated in the Non Statutory Local Plan are anticipated to be built out.

5.16 Post 2015 the aim is to phase delivery such that new housing development is delivered at a constant rate in order to ensure that there is a continuous housing supply throughout the Plan period, allowing for market considerations, the ability of our community to assimilate growth and the development and delivery of necessary infrastructure. The following phasing will apply.

Figure 5 Phasing of Development

	2010 /11	2011 /12	2012 /13	2013 /14	2014 /15	2015 /16	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21	2021 /22	2022 /23	2023 /24	2024 /25	2025 /26	2026 /27	2027 /28	2028 /29	2029 /30	
Projected completions											3558										
Uckfield urban extension (SD1)																					1000
East Hailsham urban extension (SD2)															600						
North Hailsham urban extension (SD3)																					700
Crowborough - urban area (SD8 - SD9)										140											
South East Crowborough urban extension (SD10)																			160		
Land at South Polegate and East Willingdon (SD4)																					700
Stone Cross urban extensions (SD6 - SD7)																		650			
Heathfield urban extension (SD11)										160											
Tunbridge Wells urban extension (within Frant Parish SD12)																				120	
Villages																					455

- Development at land west of Uckfield (SD1) will require significant preparation work for infrastructure purposes and in order to allow the market to deliver on the large single site housing will be built out over the long term.
- Development will commence early in the Plan period at strategic allocations at Stone Cross, but will be phased to provide a steady supply of housing, to ensure integration in this relatively small community and allow for provision of necessary transport infrastructure enhancements in south Wealden.
- Development of SD2 to the east of Hailsham will be phased to commence from 2017. This will enable studies to be carried out concerning potential odour control issues at the wastewater treatment works at east Hailsham and also ensure that highway infrastructure issues can be resolved. Development of land at north Hailsham (SD3) will be phased to commence from 2021 to enable highway infrastructure capacity issues to be resolved.
- Development at south Polegate and east Willingdon (SD4) will be phased to commence from 2019 to enable integration of development in relation to transport infrastructure requirements and interventions in south Wealden.
- Development at Heathfield (SD11) will be phased for early in the plan period, and this will enable much needed social housing to be provided.
- Development on land within Frant Parish adjacent to the boundary with Tunbridge Wells (SD12) will be phased to commence from 2026. This will enable resolution of infrastructure capacity issues, in particular waste water treatment capacity at Tunbridge Wells.
- Development of south east Crowborough (SD10) will be phased to commence from 2024. This will enable highway issues to be addressed at Western Road. In the event of these issues not being resolved then a contingency site to the north of the town west of the A26 will be brought forward.
- New housing growth is being proposed at 13 villages throughout the District and amount to 455 dwellings. For the purposes of the housing trajectory it is assumed that these developments will take place at an even rate throughout the Plan period. In reality development is unlikely to be at an even rate and some developments may come forward earlier in the plan period.
- In order to deliver affordable housing, a key infrastructure requirement within Wealden, the Council will consider bringing forward sites identified in the Core Strategy that meet the affordable housing criteria in advance of sites phased earlier in the plan period, where developers indicate they are not able to achieve stated requirements.

5.17 The Council will, through its implementation and delivery framework and monitoring arrangements, ensure that delivery of its strategy and the overall provision of appropriate levels of growth is not prejudiced by windfalls. Further details of the management and phasing of delivery is contained within our Background Paper 2: Managing the Delivery of Housing.

Contingency

5.18 The housing trajectory is compiled from a detailed assessment of capacities and constraints at the broad locations chosen for growth and is based on reasonable assumptions about the deliverability of housing and infrastructure over the plan period.

5.19 Because of potential unforeseen infrastructure constraints which may prevent housing being delivered, this plan contains contingency arrangements in the towns in the event of housing delivery substantially falling behind the trajectory.

5.20 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) provides information as to when infrastructure is required and the risks associated from non-delivery. If infrastructure is critical to delivery of any proposed growth and is not able to be delivered this will have an impact on the delivery of growth. In such cases monitoring through the IDP, will necessitate a review of the Core Strategy.

WCS5 Managing the Release of Housing Land

The release of land for housing will be managed so that it will deliver the level and broad distribution of development set out in Policy WCS2 and at the rate set out in the housing trajectory. The release of land will be dependant on the timely provision of infrastructure necessary to deliver housing, including affordable housing. The adequacy of housing land supply will be assessed regularly through reviews of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and through regular housing land availability monitoring. Depending on the results of monitoring, it may be necessary to adjust the pace of housing delivery by encouraging, or holding back, new development.

5 Spatial Strategy Policies

6 Local Spatial Implications of the Strategy

6.1 This section focuses on the strategy for development of our towns, which have been identified on the key diagram in terms of broad locations for growth. The detailed site allocation proposals for each town, infrastructure requirements and delivery mechanisms, will be set out in the Site Allocation DPDs.

6.2 The Council is not responsible alone for the delivery of the strategy proposals. This will ultimately depend on a range of agencies and interests, including landowners and developers. Continued partnership working between the Council and local Town and Parish councils will be an essential part of the process to foster community-led planning.

Uckfield area strategy

6.3 Uckfield is a country market town in an attractive setting within rolling countryside along the River Uck. Because of its location in the middle of the District situated along the A22/ A26 corridor it acts as a hub and service centre for a wide catchment of surrounding villages and settlements.

6.4 Unlike other areas of Wealden Uckfield has a relatively younger population profile, with 285 households on the housing register in June 2010. The town has two successful and fully occupied business areas. There are capacity issues in secondary school provision and growth may require the separation of the sixth form college from the main school.

6.5 The town has a number of attractive open spaces around its edges, which contribute to its character, but there is unfulfilled potential for creation of a network of green spaces connecting around the urban area, and linking through to the town centre.

6.6 The town suffered major flooding in 2000 and flood risk remains a major constraint on future proposals. There is significant traffic congestion in the town centre at the junction of the B2102/ Lower High Street and at the Bell Lane roundabout. The Highway Authority is currently modelling design solutions for delivery of a traffic management scheme in the town centre aimed at addressing these issues.

6.7 Uckfield benefits from a rail link to London, and it is intended to continue to safeguard the potential extension to Lewes where it could connect to another part of the national network. Whilst recent studies have confirmed that there is no current operational or business case to reinstate the line to Lewes, it is considered that circumstances and criteria for assessment of any business case may change in the future and the Council continues to support the principle. A centrally located bus station, adjacent to the railway station, provides a transport hub with a wide range of services to neighbouring towns and villages.

6.8 The town centre has a good range and variety of shopping, and there is scope for further expansion and improvement of facilities and public spaces. The Council is working actively with the Town Council, East Sussex County Council and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, principal land owners in the town, to prepare a master plan approach to help guide the future regeneration of the town centre. This has already gained considerable

momentum and the partners are committed to taking the concept of a joint, multi-agency framework forward in conjunction with the LDF. It is recognised that funding the required infrastructure and town centre improvements will require significant additional housing development to help pay for them.

6.9 The SHLAA revealed a number of potential sites at the fringes of the urban area, although many were considered unsuitable due to a combination of access, landscape and topographical issues. The most significant brownfield opportunity lies within the town centre in association with the comprehensive redevelopment of that area; all other significant available land is greenfield. In order to limit the impact of new housing development on the conservation interests of the Ashdown Forest, development will need to make provision for areas of suitable alternative natural green space as part of strategic development in the town, contribute to management measures on the Ashdown Forest and increase self sufficiency of Uckfield itself in order to reduce the reliance on the private motor car and reduce the potential impact of growth on Ashdown Forest through nitrogen emissions. This will include consideration of initiatives to discourage the use of the car.

6.10 The Council proposes significant further housing growth in Uckfield as part of its strategy for the town. In support of this it wishes to ensure that the town reaches its full potential to provide the essential range of services and facilities required, in an attractive environment that is easily accessible. Improving the vitality and attractiveness of the town centre is key to delivering sustainable development and improving the quality of life of residents. Widening the choice and variety of jobs and services available will help reduce the need for longer distance travel. The following strategy reflects our commitment to a pro-active approach to town centre development and change, supported by a joint, multi-agency framework (comprising the District Council, Town Council, County Council and their partners) which is essential if levels of housebuilding are to be sustainably accommodated. The aim is to provide the support and infrastructure needed to plan, manage and promote the town in a positive way, and to ensure the aspirations of the local community can be realised.

6.11 The strategy seeks to enhance the role of Uckfield as a District Centre serving its local community and surrounding area (as shown on the key diagram inset) by:

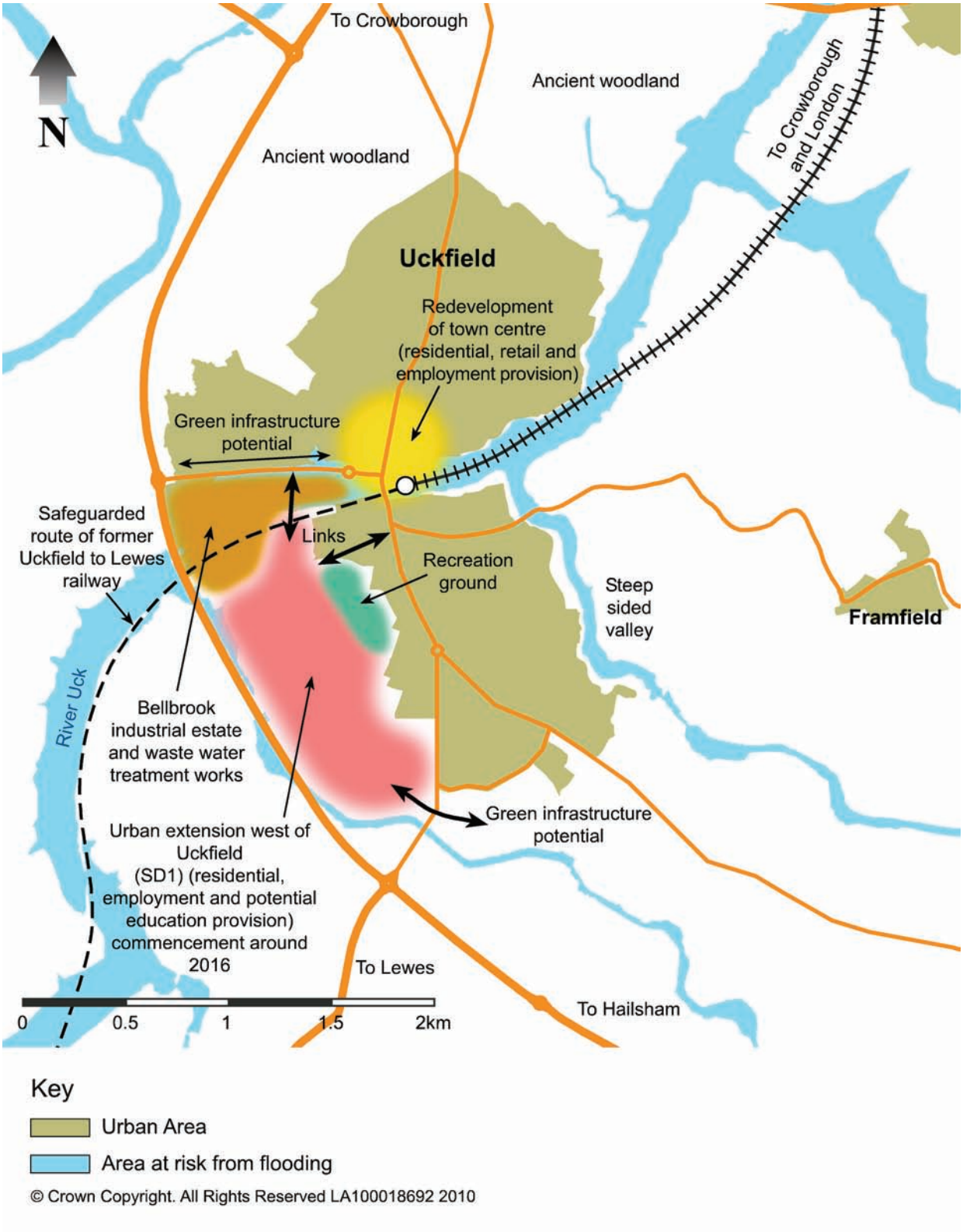
1. continuing to work with Uckfield Town Council and East Sussex County Council, and with local land owners and developers, to build on the Uckfield town master planning initiative, and to ensure that this is developed in conjunction with the Delivery and Site Allocations DPD as part of the Council's Local Development Framework;
2. supporting appropriate development within the built up area contained within the Uckfield development boundary, which will be reviewed as part of the Site Allocation DPDs;
3. continuing to meet the housing and community needs of the District and Uckfield by:

- allocating land for housing as part of comprehensive redevelopment of the retail centre; and
- allocating land for around 1,000 homes and some 12,650 sq. metres net employment floorspace and education provision as an extension to the urban area to the west of

New Town (SD1). The allocation of land is subject to the provision of a suitable access and a number of other factors to be addressed in the relevant Site Allocation DPDs which may increase the risk to delivery. If development has not commenced on this site by 2016 a review of the Core Strategy in relation to the Uckfield area will be required;

4. creating new open spaces and increasing the accessibility of existing open spaces to provide a greenspace network as part of the proposed town extension, and which provides opportunities for walkers, riders and cyclists. This will incorporate a green corridor to the west and south of the town which will link to existing recreational and landscape features and provide a suitable alternative natural green space to mitigate potential impacts of additional population growth on Ashdown Forest;
5. supporting the creation of additional amenity and open space along the river corridor;
6. supporting employment growth and increase the range of local job opportunities by encouraging the provision of office space and commercial premises around the town;
7. supporting the sensitive redevelopment and expansion of the town centre, including additional retail floorspace of around 10,707 sq. metres net retail floorspace as part of a comprehensive scheme of improvements which will increase the attractiveness of Uckfield and help create a vibrant and inclusive town centre;
8. providing through Site Allocation DPDs a detailed scheme to reduce traffic congestion;
9. supporting the enhancement of the pedestrian environment through environmental improvements and revitalisation of the public realm; and
10. ensuring appropriate mitigation and avoidance measures to ensure that future housing and employment is not subject to flood risk, and does not exacerbate flood risk elsewhere.

Figure 6 Uckfield Area Strategy



Hailsham/Hellingly area strategy

6.12 Hailsham is a traditional market town dating back to Medieval times, and is particularly proud of its market function. It is one of Wealden's largest towns and is located some 10km north of Eastbourne on the A22. The town sits on a low ridge above the Pevensey Levels and commands wide panoramic views eastwards. Hellingly Parish lies immediately to the north, centred on Hellingly village and Hellingly Hospital, a former institutional site, where a substantial residential development scheme is currently under construction.

6.13 The town has seen fairly rapid growth since the 1970s and although much of the town centre has retained its original architecture there is scope for much needed redevelopment. The town offers a reasonable range of choice for shoppers and the recent opening of a new Tescos store has strengthened the town's convenience shopping role. However, overall the centre lacks vibrancy and has a high level of vacant units.

6.14 Residential development has previously taken place to the south and west of the town, and housing development is currently underway on a number of sites allocated in previous local plans, principally between the urban area and the A22 and at the Hellingly Hospital site. Some further 255 deliverable/ developable dwellings on land allocated in the Non Statutory Wealden Local Plan are anticipated to be delivered as part of the overall housing commitment. The SHLAA has revealed a range of potential housing sites although there are various constraints associated with environmental, landscape and topographical features as well as the availability of sewage treatment and highways capacity.

6.15 Traffic congestion creates problems in Hailsham town centre and any additional traffic generated by development will require interventions through demand management techniques and alterations to the transport network. Opportunities to increase connectivity, particularly for pedestrians and public transport will also increase the potential regenerative benefits. The A271 to the north of the town also has poor alignment, tight bends and a proliferation of access points into individual properties which create traffic safety concerns. Congestion issues, created by additional development, at junctions between the town and the A22 including at the Boship roundabout, Ersham Road roundabout and Diplocks Way roundabout will need to be addressed.

6.16 Development in Hailsham and Hellingly is constrained by the capacity of the waste water treatment works to discharge treated waste water. Of particular concern is the impact of the treated effluent on the conservation objectives of the Pevensey levels, and as a result the Environment Agency has capped the amount of effluent that can be discharged. The growth strategy reflects this constraint and therefore development will only be allowed if it can be accommodated by the existing works, unless an alternative location for the treatment and discharge of waste water is implemented.

6.17 Hailsham is an important employment centre with a range of jobs in manufacturing and services. The Council has also resolved to transfer its staff from its Crowborough offices and to consolidate operations at its Hailsham complex. However, incomes in the south of Wealden are generally below the District average and there are significant pockets of deprivation in the town. Opportunities to increase the range of jobs on offer and help

develop work skills are priorities in our strategy. Stimulating economic regeneration and investment will be important drivers of our approach. Affordable housing need is significant in Hailsham with 512 households on the housing register.

6.18 The Council proposes substantial further population growth in Hailsham as part of its strategy for the town. In support of this it wishes to ensure that the town reaches its full potential to provide the essential range of services and facilities required, in an attractive environment that is easily accessible by the local community. Improving the vitality and attractiveness of the town centre is key to delivering sustainable development and improving the quality of life of residents. Widening the choice and variety of jobs, services and facilities will help reduce the need for longer distance travel. The following strategy reflects a commitment to a pro-active approach to town centre development and change, supported by a joint, multi-agency framework which is essential if such levels of growth are to be sustainably accommodated and supported by necessary infrastructure. The aim of this plan is to provide the support needed to plan, manage and promote the town in a positive way and to help ensure that the aspirations of the Hellingly Parish Council/ Hailsham Town Council Masterplan and the local community can be realised.

6.19 The strategy seeks to enhance the role of Hailsham as a District Centre serving its local community and surrounding area (as shown on the key diagram inset) by:

1. continuing to work with Hailsham Town Council and Hellingly Parish Council to build on their town master planning and retail consultancy reports, and with local land owners and developers, and to ensure that these are developed in conjunction with the Site Allocation DPDs as part of the Council's Local Development Framework;
2. supporting appropriate development within the built up area contained within the Hailsham development boundary, which will be reviewed as part of the Site Allocation DPDs;
3. continuing to meet the housing and community needs of Hailsham by allocating a range of deliverable housing sites for around 1300 dwellings. Sites for development will be identified and phased through the site allocation DPDs within the following broad locations:

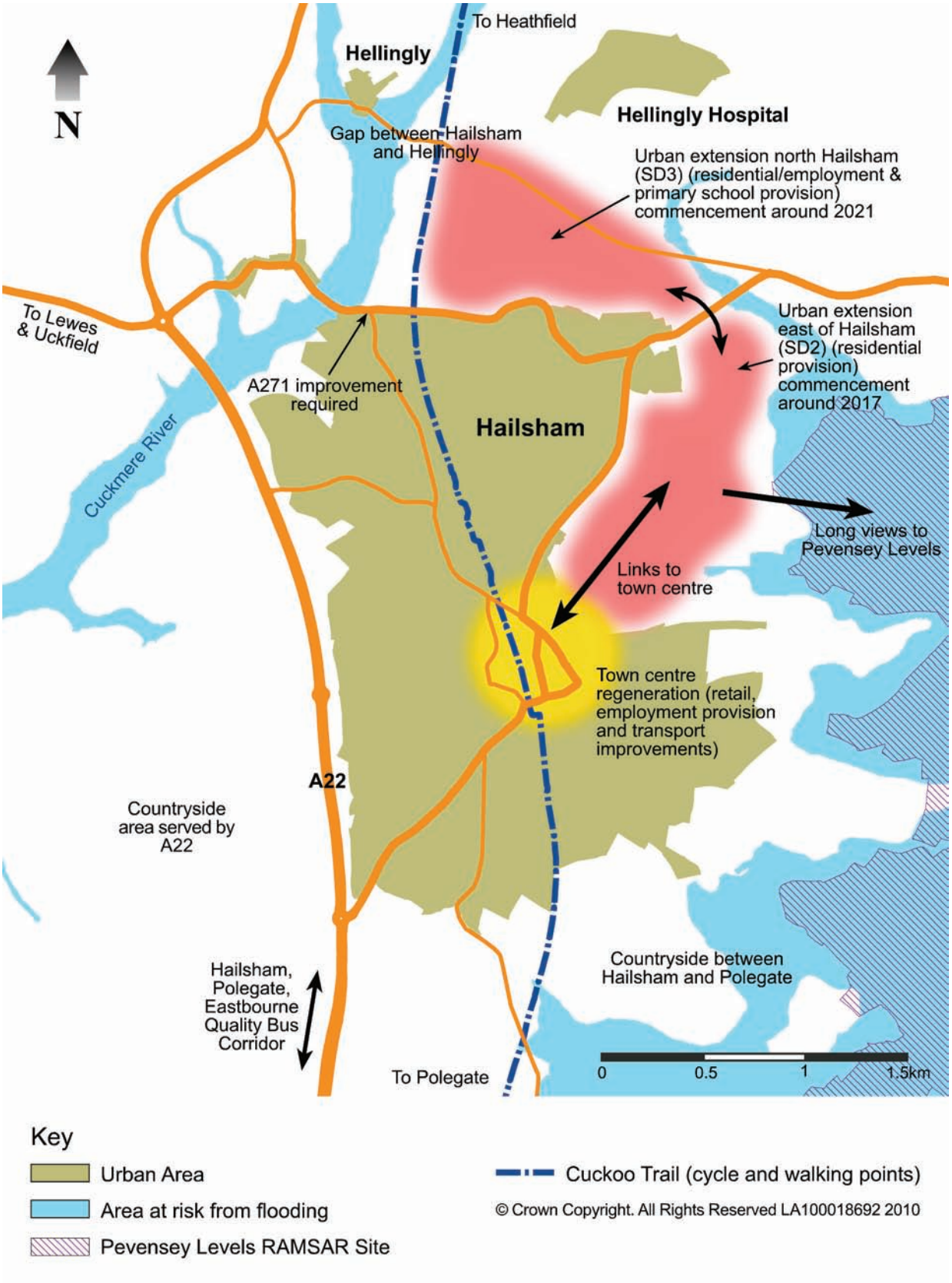
- around 600 homes within an extension to the urban area to the east of Hailsham on land to the north of Vicarage Lane (SD2), subject to consideration of an odour control study and highway infrastructure requirements;
- around 700 homes, 8650 sq. metres net employment floorspace, 300 sq.metres retail floorspace and education provision within an extension to the urban area north of Hailsham in Hellingly (SD3) only when highways infrastructure capacity is improved and sufficient to support this level of growth, and ensuring adequate landscape gaps are maintained between the urban extension of Hailsham and the village of Hellingly, and between Hailsham and development at Hellingly Hospital;

4. creating new parks and increasing the provision and accessibility of open space links to provide a greenspace network as part of the proposed town extensions, and creating better connectivity with the Cuckoo Trail and existing town open spaces;

5. encouraging employment growth and increasing the range of local job opportunities by supporting the provision of office space and commercial premises around the town;
6. supporting the continuation of a livestock market in the vicinity of the town to assist in supporting the agricultural economy and local producers;
7. allocating land for some additional 5930 sq. metres of retail floorspace as part of a comprehensive redevelopment scheme in Hailsham Town Centre which will increase the retail attractiveness of Hailsham and help create a vibrant and inclusive town centre that is a mixed use hub for retail, commercial, leisure, civic and residential activities and which can offer a diversity of choice for residents and visitors;
8. supporting the improvement of linkages between the shopping core and other areas of the town, and improving accessibility to the town centre, particularly by public transport;
9. supporting and enhancing public transport connections with neighbouring settlements, in particular by promoting the Eastbourne/Hailsham Quality Bus Corridor and a more integrated approach to the provision of bus services;
10. supporting measures which reduce the impact of vehicular traffic on the town centre and improve the pedestrian and cyclist environments; and
11. ensuring the protection of the Pevensey Levels through appropriate mitigation measures as part of the Habitat Regulations Assessment, including limiting development to the waste water discharge capacity until such time as new infrastructure is in place to treat additional waste water.

6.20 The infrastructure requirements for the delivery of development and growth in Hailsham provides an element of risk for the delivery of the spatial strategy. Infrastructure delivery will be monitored, and if necessary the spatial strategy will be reviewed in accordance with monitoring arrangements.

Figure 7 Hailsham and Hellingly Area Strategy



Polegate and Willingdon and Stone Cross area strategy

6.21 Polegate and Willingdon are settlements close to Eastbourne and adjoin the South Downs National Park. Stone Cross is also on the fringe of Eastbourne. It is a considerably enlarged village, which has grown rapidly in recent years as a result of being identified for housing development in previous Wealden Local Plans. It has a neighbourhood centre and a range of community facilities. It has particularly good public transport connections with Eastbourne and is well located to use the facilities at nearby Langney, helping to facilitate regeneration in the Langney area and reinforcing the economic regeneration relationship between south Wealden and Eastbourne.

6.22 Both Polegate and Willingdon have a high proportion of elderly residents and because of their location and the limited range of facilities available locally, the areas rely heavily on Eastbourne for their employment and shopping requirements. A new GP surgery and medical centre has recently been granted planning consent in Willingdon. Average incomes in Polegate are substantially below the rest of the District, and the area also has the lowest average house prices.

6.23 Polegate is strategically well located on the A22/A27 primary and trunk routes, and has good public transport links, including by rail, to nearby settlements. The town was by passed ten years ago but the A2270 running through the urban area is still heavily congested and traffic flows on the strategic road network are very high. Proposals have been considered previously for a link road connecting the Cophall roundabout to the north of Polegate with the A27 and effectively completing the Polegate bypass configuration known as the "Folkington Link". However, this scheme is not in any current regional programme. Development in Polegate/ Willingdon, combined with that in Stone Cross, Hailsham and Eastbourne may necessitate highway improvements to Cophall roundabout, the junctions at Jubilee Way and Hailsham Road/ Dittons Road at Stone Cross and local road considerations around Willingdon together with the enhanced provision of a Quality Bus Corridor for Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne.

6.24 Polegate has a number of popular employment areas and planning permission has recently been given for a sizeable mixed residential and business development at Dittons Road. There is a need to improve the quality and range of housing available, particularly to make the area more attractive to those considering a move into the area to work and to provide for family sized homes within south Wealden to complement the provision of smaller units within the Eastbourne area.

6.25 Despite the popularity of the area for employment provision, Polegate has a limited range of shopping and the town centre is affected by the frequent barrier closures on the level crossing. Physical expansion for retail and other employment opportunities within the centre are very limited. The availability of rail services to London and Eastbourne provides a draw to the station and provides a sustainable link to employment sites, as well as the National Park, however parking issues have arisen around the station. Our studies show that the town also lacks certain key infrastructure and facilities including sports and play facilities, an indoor sports hall and swimming pool.

6.26 The surrounding landscape is dominated by the chalk uplands of the South Downs National Park to the south west, forming a backdrop to Polegate and Willingdon. Panoramic views from the Downs limits urban expansion opportunities particularly against the rural backdrop to the north and west of Polegate. The existing main road transport corridors provide firm limits to the outward extension of the town in these directions.

6.27 A site was allocated in the 2005 Non Statutory Wealden Local Plan for an urban extension to the north west of Polegate, in the vicinity of Honey Farm. However, this proposal was dependent upon the provision of the Folkington Link and other community infrastructure to enable the integration of development into the town. No such infrastructure has been provided or is known to be planned. Since this allocation the South Downs has achieved National Park status. This site has been re-assessed as part of SHLAA and is no longer considered suitable for housing.

6.28 Development in Polegate, Willingdon and Stone Cross is constrained by the capacity of the waste water treatment works to discharge treated waste water. Of particular concern is the impact of the treated effluent on the conservation objectives of the Pevensey levels and as a result the Environment Agency has capped the amount of effluent that can be discharged. The strategy reflects this constraint and therefore development will only be allowed if it can be accommodated by the existing works, unless an alternative location for the treatment and discharge of waste water is implemented.

6.29 The provision of housing and employment in Polegate, Willingdon and Stone Cross will help provide for the economic needs within south Wealden, as well as addressing the need to provide a range of housing in the south Wealden and Eastbourne area. It will also allow for opportunities to maximise the potential for shopping provision within the town centre of Polegate.

6.30 Our SHLAA identified a wide range of opportunities around Polegate, Willingdon and Stone Cross. Two broad housing locations have been identified in the Polegate/ Willingdon area, one to the north of Polegate and the other to the south of Polegate and east of Willingdon. The Sustainability Appraisal of broad locations favoured land south of Polegate and east of Willingdon, and subsequent transport modelling through the South Wealden and Eastbourne Transport Study showed that development of 700 dwellings and employment could be accommodated with necessary additional transport infrastructure in the Polegate area on both the strategic and local highway network.

6.31 The strategy seeks to enhance the role of Polegate and Stone Cross as service centres serving the local community and surrounding area and supporting the wider economic growth and regeneration of the south Wealden and Eastbourne area (as shown on the key diagram inset) by:

1. continuing to work with Polegate Town Council, Willingdon and Jevington Parish Council and other partners, to build on their visioning plan, and to ensure this is developed in conjunction with the Delivery and Site Allocations DPD as part of the Council's Local Development Framework;

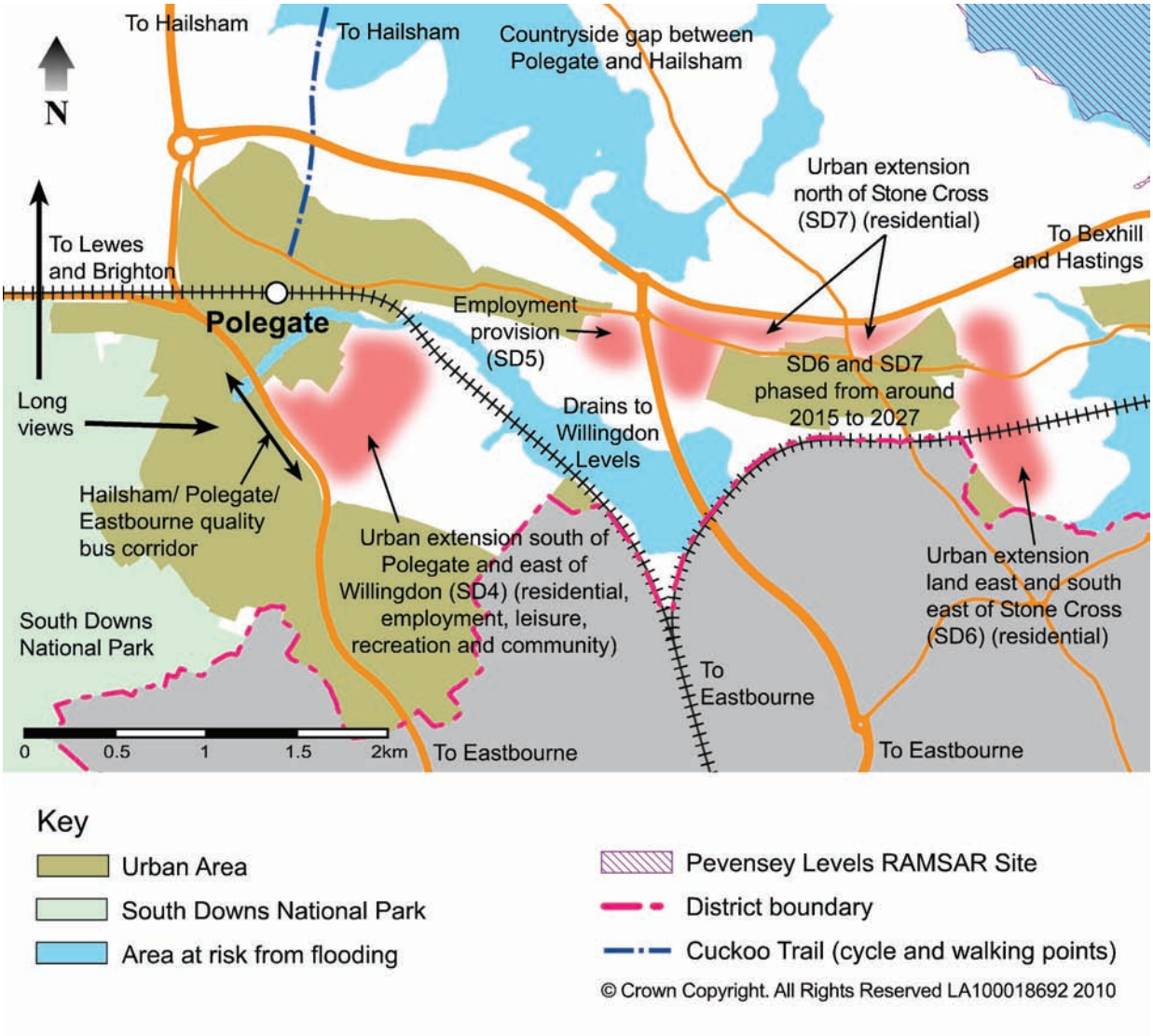
2. supporting appropriate development within the built up area contained within the development boundaries of Stone Cross and Polegate and Willingdon, which will be reviewed as part of the Site Allocation DPDs;
3. allocating a range of deliverable housing sites for up to 700 dwellings, and leisure, recreation and community facilities in Polegate and Willingdon, around 650 dwellings in Stone Cross, with some 16,890 sq. metres employment floorspace in the Polegate and Willingdon area. Sites for development will be identified and phased through the Site Allocation DPDs including:

- provision of around 700 dwellings, 8600 sq. metres of employment floorspace and leisure, recreation and community facilities on land South of Polegate and East of Willingdon (SD4), subject to the delivery on transport infrastructure required in the Polegate area;
- provision of around 8,290 sq. metres employment floorspace on land south of Dittons Road (SD5);
- provision of around 220 homes within an extension to the urban area of Stone Cross to the east and south east (SD6), with flexibility between SD6 and SD7, subject to highway improvements;
- provision of around 430 homes within an extension to the urban area of Stone Cross to the north (SD7), with flexibility between SD6 and SD7, subject to highway improvements;

4. encouraging appropriate development which supports the range and quality of services and facilities available to its local community and improving the town centre environment and choice of shops in Polegate town centre;
5. supporting public transport connections with neighbouring settlements, in particular by promoting the Eastbourne/Hailsham Quality Bus Corridor and a more integrated approach to the provision of rail/bus services;
6. ensuring the protection of the Pevensey Levels through appropriate mitigation measures as part of the Habitat Regulations Assessment, including limiting development to the waste water discharge capacity until such time as new infrastructure is in place to treat additional waste water; and
7. ensuring appropriate mitigation measures that protect the hydrology of the Willingdon and Eastbourne Levels.

6.32 The risk to delivery of this strategy relates to the highways infrastructure required for the south Wealden area, in order to mitigate the impact on the strategic routes and more localised junctions. Infrastructure delivery will be monitored, and if necessary the spatial strategy will be reviewed in accordance with monitoring arrangements.

Figure 8 Polegate and Willingdon and Stone Cross Area Strategy



Crowborough area strategy

6.33 Crowborough is the most northern town in the District, and the role and function of Crowborough is greatly influenced by its proximity to Tunbridge Wells. This affects Crowborough's attraction as a retail and employment centre. Whilst Crowborough is one of the largest of Wealden District's towns in terms of population, the percentage of people living and working in Crowborough is low, with a railway station located some distance away from the town centre providing access to London. Employment centres have grown to the east of the town, however there is significant out commuting from Crowborough for (often higher paid) employment to Tunbridge Wells, East Grinstead and Uckfield. The employment centres in the town attract vehicles along unsuitable restricted residential roads. There are pockets of unemployment within Crowborough necessitating employment provision, and a need for affordable housing with some 305 households on the housing register in June 2010.

6.34 The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty encircles the town and restricts opportunities for significant growth, particularly to the north, west and south. Ashdown Forest is also a major visitor destination in its own right and there is an opportunity to enhance the attractions of the town to visitors. However, Ashdown Forest is an area of international importance for wildlife habitat which reinforces the constraints on further expansion in the town. Any land allocation potential will be restricted by the Habitat Regulations Assessment and mitigation measures, through the provision of suitable alternative natural green spaces and management measures on the Ashdown Forest, will be required.

6.35 The Council currently locates one of its offices at a central strategically located site at Pine Grove, shared with the County Library Service. A decision has been made to transfer staff to its Hailsham campus. This is likely to take place within the first five years of the plan. No decision has been taken about the future use of the vacated buildings and site but they clearly offer considerable development potential for a mix of sustainable town centre uses. No other suitable employment land has been identified within the Crowborough area.

6.36 The SHLAA revealed a range of potential housing sites around the town but many of these are within the AONB, or are at locations which did not perform well at Sustainability Appraisal. The Council-owned site referred to above provides the most significant brownfield opportunity and provides potential for high density housing in a central and sustainable location, with a mixture of other appropriate uses. The most suitable greenfield locations lie to the south and east of the town although it is recognised that development could potentially add to traffic and congestion problems on the local road network and will need to be subject to a full transport assessment. A reserve location for housing, which performed well in Sustainability Appraisal, is to the north and west of the A26, although this area is within the AONB and detailed landscape and need assessments would be required.

6.37 Crowborough Town Council have produced a visioning document entitled "Top of the Weald" which seeks to promote tourism, business, integrated transport, the natural and built environment and affordable housing.

6.38 The strategy supports this work and seeks to continue the role of Crowborough as a District Centre serving its local community and surrounding area (as shown on the key diagram) by:

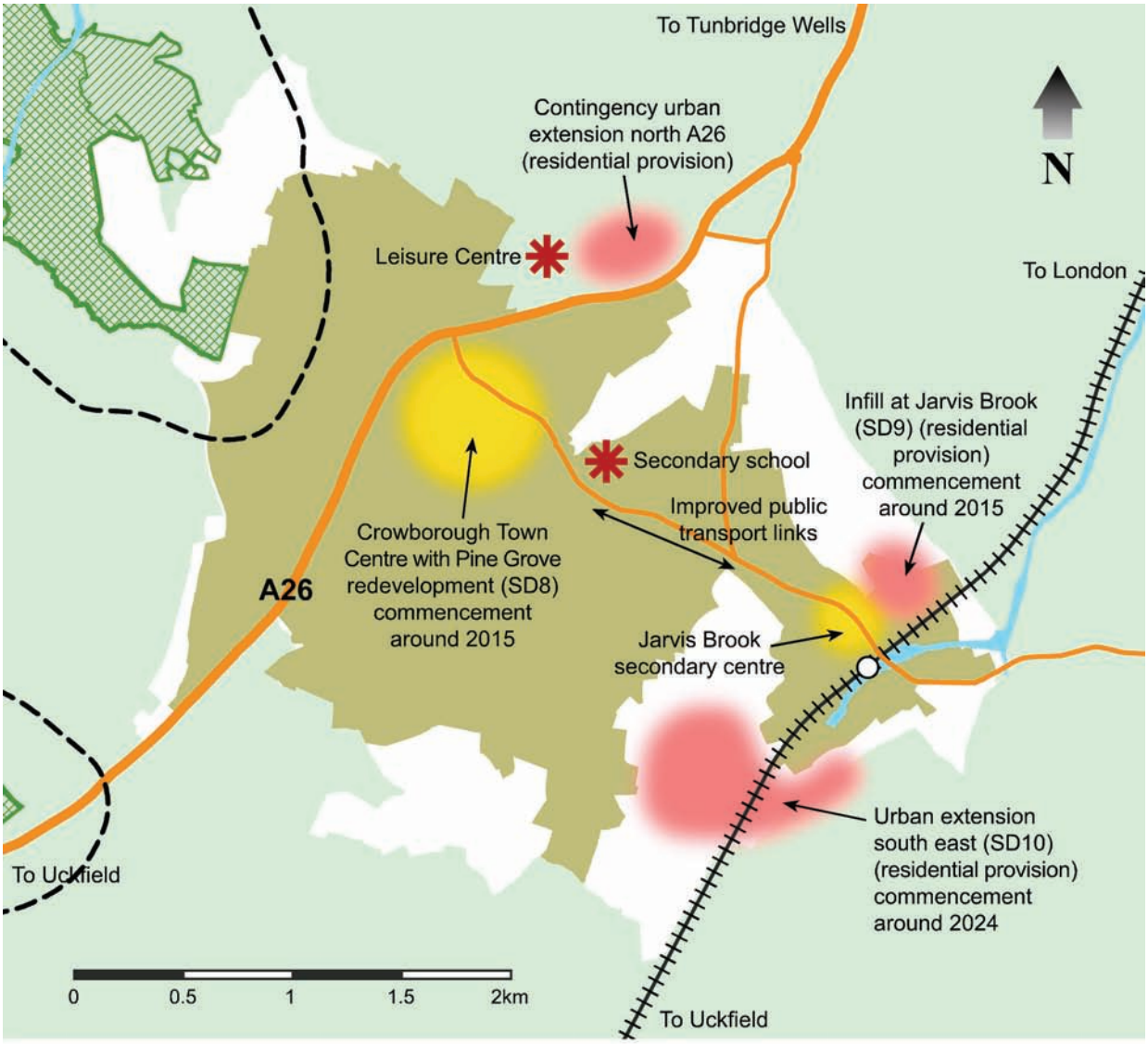
1. supporting improvements to the range and diversity of social, community and cultural services and facilities, including the provision of a new multi-purpose community building within the town centre at the Pine Grove site, whilst seeking to retain employment provision;
2. continuing to work with Crowborough Town Council to build on their town visioning work and to ensure that this is developed in conjunction with the Delivery and Site Allocations DPD;

3. supporting appropriate development within the built up area contained within the Crowborough development boundary, which will be reviewed as part of the Site Allocation DPDs;
4. providing for housing demand and need by allocating a range of deliverable housing sites for around 300 homes. Sites for housing development will be identified and phased through the Site Allocation DPDs within the following broad locations and priority order (subject to regular monitoring of housing delivery):

- Around 140 homes within the urban area, including land in the town centre and at Pine Grove (SD8) and Jarvis Brook (SD9);
- Around 160 homes within the extension to the urban area to south east of Crowborough (SD10);
- Potentially, if required, provision of dwellings within the extension to the north of the A26 (reserve site, within AONB, which may be required subject to the deliverability of housing at the preferred locations. It will not be required if the capacity is met at the broad locations listed above);

5. encouraging employment growth to increase the range of local job opportunities by supporting the provision of office space and commercial premises within the town in appropriate locations;
6. supporting an increase or the improvement in retail floorspace offer in the town centre to increase the retail attractiveness of Crowborough and to help consolidate the primary retail core of the town;
7. improving linkages between the primary shopping core and other areas of the town, including public transport;
8. supporting measures which help reduce the impact of vehicular traffic on the town centre and improve the pedestrian and cyclist environments;
9. encouraging tourist opportunities for visitors, by supporting additional visitor accommodation, interpretation facilities and other attractions and helping establish the farmers' market as a central feature of the town's offer;
10. ensuring relevant developments make an appropriate contribution to the planned and timely provision of suitable alternative natural green space, which will provide an alternative recreational destination for local people, and other mitigation measures on the Ashdown Forest; and
11. defining a 400m exclusion zone around the Special Protection Area within which net additional dwellings will not be permitted.

Figure 9 Crowborough Area Strategy



Key

- Urban Area
- High Weald AONB
- Area at risk from flooding
- Special Area of Conservation
- Special Protection Area
- 400m exclusion zone around Special Protection Area

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Heathfield area strategy

6.39 Heathfield is located on a series of ridges in a prominent position and is surrounded by the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is a small town and acts as a

service centre to a wide rural catchment of a number of small villages and hamlets. It has a number of firms established in several business areas and the town centre has recently undergone environmental improvements within the main shopping street. The town has a leisure centre and multi-purpose community building but lacks a swimming pool. The Parish Council has recently produced visioning plans for the town and there is an active Heathfield Partnership which promotes the area for business growth.

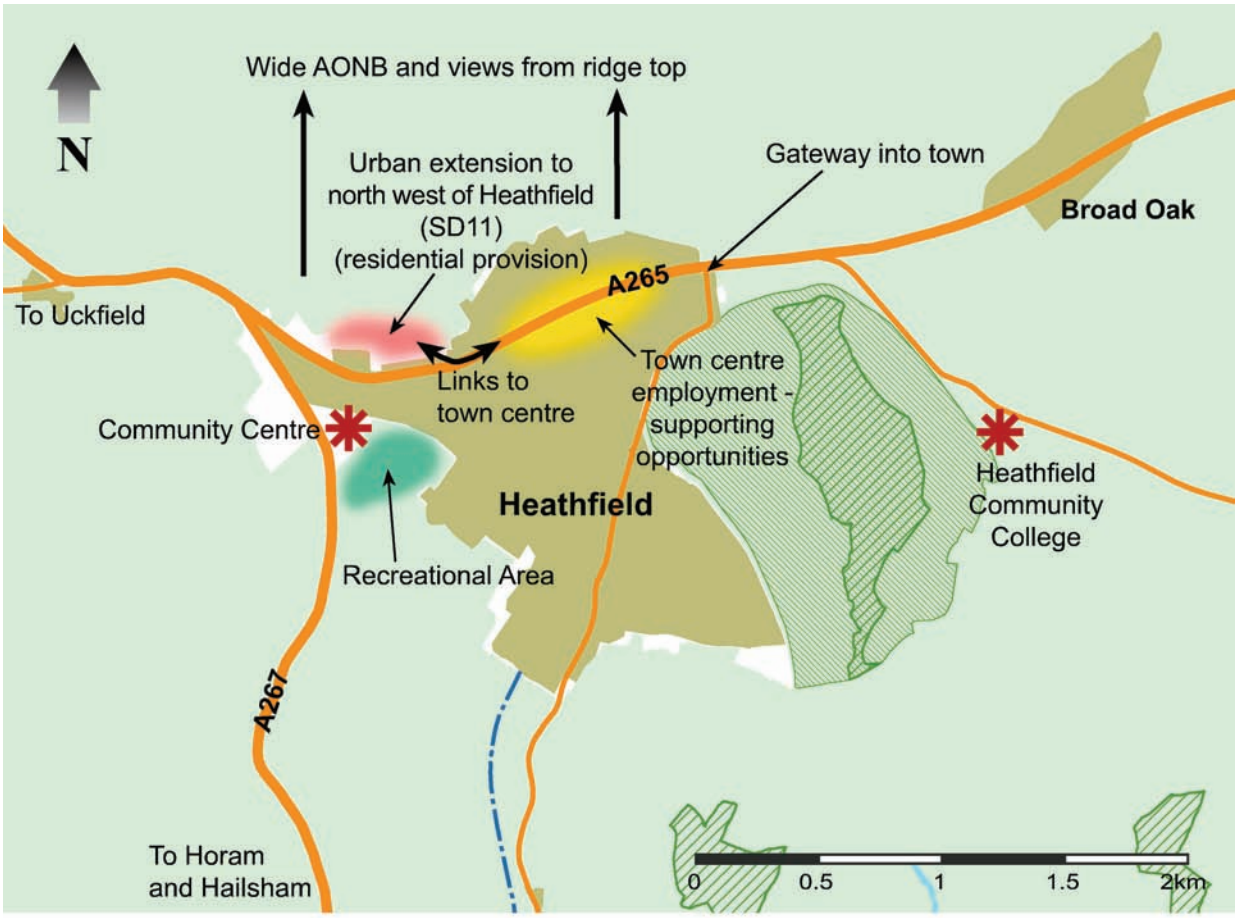
6.40 Topographical and landscape constraints severely restrict the opportunities for further housing development, although potential sites have been identified through the SHLAA. The town is bisected by the A265 and many of the roads around the periphery of the town are B roads or narrow country lanes creating access difficulties. The town's poor transport links, restricted bus service, lack of deliverable employment land and its AONB location, suggest that the town is not suitable for strategic growth on any significant scale. However there is a current need for affordable housing with 112 households on the housing register and a suitable quantity of affordable housing is sought to meet local needs notwithstanding the town's AONB location.

6.41 The most suitable location for housing lies to the north west of the town where access to the town centre is good and bus routes exist. The location is within the AONB but could be developed without strategic adverse impact on the landscape. The release is justified to meet local needs and as no suitable alternative non-AONB location exists. The risk of non-delivery in this location is low and as no suitable alternative contingency land is available it is not proposed to consider an alternative contingency location as part of the strategy.

6.42 The strategy seeks to continue the role of Heathfield as a Service Centre serving its local community and surrounding area (as shown on the key diagram) by:

1. continuing to work with Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council, and other partners, to build on their visioning reports, and to ensure that this is developed in conjunction with the Delivery and Site Allocations DPD;
2. supporting appropriate development within the built up area contained within the Heathfield development boundary, which will be part of the review of development boundaries in the Site Allocation DPDs;
3. meeting the housing and community needs of Heathfield by allocating deliverable housing sites for around 160 homes on land adjacent to the urban area to the north west of Heathfield (SD11). Sites for housing development within this broad location will be identified and phased through the Site Allocation DPDs;
4. encouraging opportunities to enhance recreational facilities by supporting the development of a swimming pool in an appropriate and sustainable location;
5. supporting employment growth and increasing the range of local job opportunities by encouraging small-scale new employment development around the town and improving and intensifying the use of existing employment areas and, where appropriate, expanding them;
6. supporting an increase or the improvement in retail floorspace offer in the town centre; and
7. supporting improved public transport connections with neighbouring settlements.

Figure 10 Heathfield Area Strategy



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Rural areas strategy

6.43 The rural areas outside of the main urban areas cover almost 93% of Wealden District, and contain around 50% of its population. The majority of this area is undeveloped countryside, much of which forms part of the High Weald AONB or South Downs National Park. Within this area is a large and diverse range of villages, hamlets and scattered development, as well as some larger developed sites, for example where brownfield land has been developed for housing.

6.44 Our settlement classification establishes the role and function of the various categories of settlement, and settlements will retain their role within the hierarchy. However, it does not necessarily follow that rural settlements further up the hierarchy will be allocated more growth. Each settlement is considered on its merits and against constraints and opportunities, including land availability and Sustainability Appraisal. The overall strategy however is to ensure appropriate development which protects, supports and increases the range and quality of facilities and services available to the rural areas and which helps sustain rural living, reinforces the accessibility of settlements, whilst meeting needs and community aspirations.

6.45 Outside the towns and the rural settlements identified for growth development will be restricted primarily to that required to meet an essential rural need, support rural diversification and sustainability of the countryside, promote tourism or enhance the countryside. More detailed development management policies and proposals will be contained in the Delivery and Site Allocations DPD in relation to development in the countryside. In the meantime the Council will use national policy and retained Local Plan policies to support development management decisions.

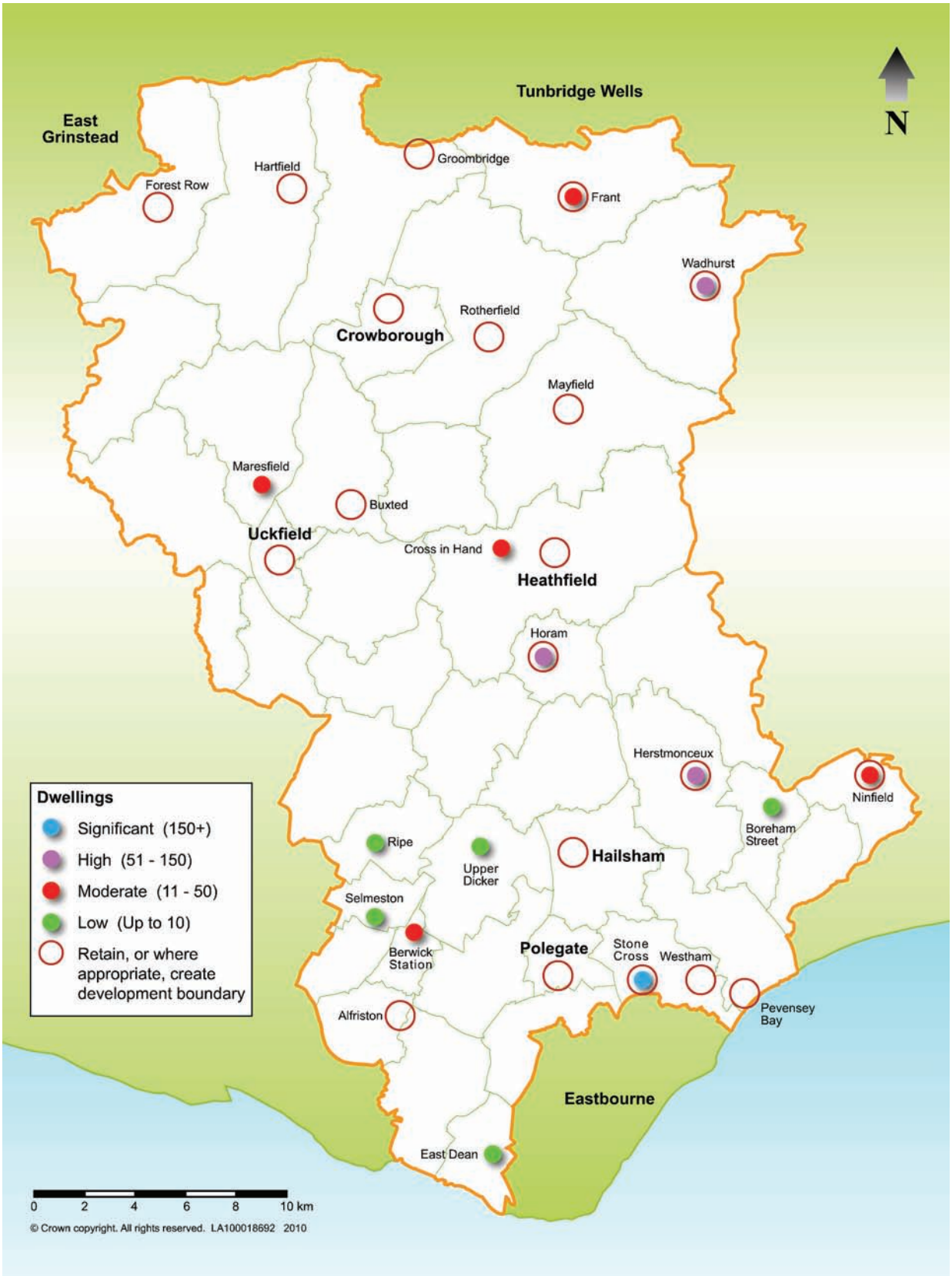
6.46 The following policy confirms the overall levels of housing and employment development (based on the previous overall settlement Policy WCS2) which will be provided for in the rural areas of Wealden and develops the approach to its provision. Following Sustainability Appraisal and assessment of the evidence collected and the consultation responses we have received, the following policy confirms the levels of development that we envisage in key settlements within the rural areas.

6.47 It is not the function of the Core Strategy to allocate precisely where this development will take place. This will be the function of the Delivery and Site Allocations DPD. This more limited scale of development envisaged at rural settlements does not require broad locations to be shown on the Key Diagram.

6.48 Development boundaries enable a clear distinction to be made between settlements (towns and villages) where certain forms of development may be appropriate or encouraged, and the smaller settlements and rural areas where protection of the countryside would usually take precedence. In order to sustain our larger, and more sustainable, villages the retention of development boundaries will allow a flexible approach in the provision of employment and other services and facilities. The role of development boundaries is to enable the market to deliver investment, regeneration, employment and growth subject to the detailed control of design and other matters through the development management process. However, within the development boundaries the principle of development is acceptable. Therefore, in addition to the towns the strategy seeks to retain development boundaries in those centres classified as a District Centre, Service Centre and Local Service Centre in order to ensure sustainable settlements in the future and provide for vital villages supporting the rural area. Each rural settlement will be considered on its own merit in following Development Plan Documents and, if appropriate, the development boundary reviewed and adjusted to meet the needs and characteristics of the area.

6.49 A limited amount of change has been proposed within the South Downs National Park, and it is acknowledged that in 2011 the South Downs National Park will become the planning authority for this particular area.

Figure 11 Growth potential of rural settlements and where development boundaries will be retained



WCS6 Rural Areas Strategy

The rural areas comprise the following categories of settlement:

Service Centre
Local Service Centre
Neighbourhood Centre
Unclassified settlements

Within Service Centres, Local Centres and Neighbourhood Centres (excluding Stone Cross, Polegate and Willingdon and Heathfield) provision will be made for at least 455 new dwellings.

The Delivery and Site Allocations DPD will allocate sites for development sufficient to ensure that the requirements above can be met. Development boundaries will not be retained for settlements classified as a neighbourhood centre or unclassified settlement. Development boundaries will be retained or provided at:

Forest Row, Hartfield, Groombridge, Wadhurst, Mayfield, Frant, Buxted, Herstmonceux, Ninfield, Pevensey Bay, Horam, Alfriston, Westham and Rotherfield.

Development boundaries as shown in the adopted Wealden Local Plan are removed from:

Berwick Station, Blackboys, Broad Oak, Cross-in-Hand, East Dean and Friston, East Hoathly, Fairwarp, Five Ash Down, Five Ashes, Framfield, Hadlow Down, Halland, Hooe Common, Isfield, Lower Dicker, Lower Horsebridge, Maresfield, Mark Cross, Maynards Green, Nutley, Pevensey, Punnetts Town, Upper Dicker, Vines Cross and Windmill Hill.

Retained or new development boundaries will be reviewed as part of the Strategic Sites and Delivery and Site Allocations DPDs as appropriate.

The following are settlements classified as Service Centres, Local Service Centres and Neigbourhood Centres within rural areas. The table indicates the proposed scale of additional housing development to be allocated up until 2030:

Name	**New Allocations (Net Additional Dwellings)**
Wadhurst	70
Frant[6]	20
Herstmonceux	70
Ninfield	50

6 Housing in Frant Village is in addition to the urban extension adjacent to Tunbridge Wells situated within the Parish of Frant

Horam	100
Maresfield	50
East Dean	10
Berwick Station	20
Cross-in-Hand	25
Boreham Street	10
Ripe	10
Selmeston	10
Upper Dicker	10

7 Core Delivery Policies

7.1 In addition to policies relating to the spatial strategy, the Core Strategy provides a limited suite of policies, which should be read in conjunction with saved Local Plan policies, until such time as saved polices are succeeded by Development Plan Documents. These are in addition to national guidance as set out in Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance and are considered to reflect local circumstances. In time, additional and complementary policies will be provided through subsequent DPDs.

Infrastructure

7.2 Ensuring infrastructure provision keeps pace with new development is an essential part of delivering our approach to developing sustainable growth within the communities we have set out in the area strategies above. Having the right infrastructure is critical to making a place somewhere that people want to be – either to work, live or visit. The fundamental principle is that development that generates a need for infrastructure or enhancements to existing infrastructure will only be permitted if the necessary infrastructure to support it is either already in place, or there is a reliable mechanism to ensure that it will be provided at the right time, when it is needed.

7.3 The Council has good working relationships with the principal infrastructure suppliers and will continue to work with them to ensure delivery of what is needed to support existing and proposed developments in Wealden. The Local Strategic Partnership will play an important role in coordinating the plans of key agencies to assist spatial planning in the District, and in helping integrate the existing structures for delivery.

7.4 Where infrastructure deficiencies exist the Council will seek a consistent and coordinated approach to meeting these needs through partnership working. Throughout this process it will be important to be able to demonstrate that development makes the most effective use of existing infrastructure, and that there are reliable mechanisms in place to ensure that any new infrastructure is provided, maintained and will continue to serve its purpose in the future. Developers who are required to provide or contribute to infrastructure will need to engage with the Council and with the range of delivery agencies, to ensure compliance with the approach in this strategy.

7.5 In 2009 Wealden joined a national pilot project sponsored by the Planning Advisory Service to develop its Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) approach. The IDP defines infrastructure and has provided the evidence which confirms the main elements of infrastructure needed to support this strategy. This covers the means, broad cost and timing of provision in relation to development and identifies the delivery agencies. It should be recognised that this table covers the provision of infrastructure at a relatively high level and within each principal phase of the plan further detail will be provided. In addition the potential of a tariff approach to infrastructure provision (to replace the Community Infrastructure Levy) or other appropriate mechanism will be explored as part of the preparation of the Site Allocation DPDs in consultation with East Sussex County Council.

7.6 We will seek through policies contained within the Delivery and Site Allocations DPD to identify and protect appropriate essential community services/facilities to ensure

the delivery of the spatial strategy. The key infrastructure for the delivery of the Core strategy is shown on the key diagram.

WCS7 Effective Provision of Infrastructure

The release of land for development will be conditional upon there being sufficient capacity in the existing local infrastructure to meet the requirements generated by the proposed development. Where development would create the need to provide additional or improved community facilities, services and infrastructure to mitigate its impact, a programme of delivery must be agreed with the relevant infrastructure providers which will ensure that these improvements are provided at the time they are needed. These may involve coordinating contributions from the development with other investment streams. This approach will ensure that the necessary improvements can be completed in a timely manner to support growth.

Arrangements for the provision or improvement of infrastructure to the required standard will be secured by planning agreement/ obligation, or by condition attached to the planning consent or by any other appropriate mechanism.

The adequacy of infrastructure provision in Wealden will be the subject of regular review with infrastructure providers as part of the ongoing work on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This will include health, transport, utility services, and education providers and will be reported as part of the LDF monitoring arrangements in the Annual Monitoring Report.

Housing

Housing type and size

7.7 Although the new homes proposed to be allocated under our Core Strategy will represent a relatively small proportion of the total housing stock in Wealden it is important to ensure that the types and sizes of new dwellings match as far as possible what is needed locally. We wish to give clear guidance to house builders so that provision can meet our objective to ensure that new homes provided address the needs of local people and of those moving to the area, particularly people of working age. It is important for developers to appreciate the purpose of housing development in a particular area so that the best fit can be achieved with what is needed locally. It will also be necessary through subsequent DPDs to provide policies to protect our overall housing stock and allow changes to existing housing stock, including the loss of dwellings and change in types and size of dwellings where appropriate.

7.8 We have identified local needs by examining demographic trends and by using the results of the Wealden Housing Market Assessment. Projections[7] show that across

7 East Sussex County Council demographic projections

Wealden there will be a growth in numbers in the older age groups (from age 50 and above) and in the number of single-person households. The relationship between household size and the type and size of dwelling is not a straightforward one. For those single or couple households that can afford to buy their own home it should not be assumed that they will want a small flat or house. Overall, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment suggests that there should be an emphasis on the provision of larger but modest family properties in south Wealden, and a range of smaller units in north Wealden, on a number of different sites, to improve both affordability and choice. In south Wealden a focus on semi-detached and detached housing is appropriate and will help broaden the area's housing stock, making it generally more attractive to working age families moving from elsewhere. Further information is provided in Background Paper 2.

7.9 The Strategic Sites and Delivery and Site Allocations DPDs will provide detailed policies regarding housing mix and design, densities and standards of design including lifetime homes, accessibility for wheelchair users and parking standards.

Affordable housing

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

7.11 In 2009, the Council commissioned a housing needs survey concerning the nature and extent of our local housing need. This has confirmed an annual affordable housing need of 812 dwellings. Even when re-lets and alternative mechanisms of meeting housing need are taken into account this figure is substantial, and is not deliverable or sustainable in the context of planned housing delivery rates. However, this mismatch nevertheless highlights the importance of delivering the maximum number of affordable dwellings from new housing growth that will take place over the plan period.

7.12 We have also commissioned specialist research which has looked at the viability of affordable housing provision within Wealden. This has demonstrated that although it is not viable for all new housing developments to accommodate affordable homes, there is potential to provide an element of affordable housing. That evidence also confirmed that the potential viability of housing sites in the central and northern parts of the District could support a higher proportion of affordable housing than most locations in the south of Wealden. In this respect, sites allocated in Site Allocation DPDs will normally have a requirement for a higher proportion of affordable housing than the overall District target, in accordance with the Wealden Affordable Housing Viability Assessment, where these sites are located in the central and northern parts of the District.

7.13 The Council has identified that the provision of affordable housing is a high priority policy objective. However, we recognise that site and market conditions can vary both between sites and in certain circumstances, particularly where abnormal costs or other circumstances apply, it is possible that there may be viability issues on specific sites.

Where we have a proven five year housing land supply of deliverable sites, and applications come forward for sites that are allocated in the overall land supply, but which are not yet in the up-to-date five year supply, we would consider whether granting permission would undermine achievement of policy objectives. This includes the provision of affordable housing at the requirements stated in policy WCS 8 or any site specific policy contained within the following Site Allocation DPDs. In doing so the Council will consider bringing forward sites identified in the Core Strategy that meet the affordable housing criteria in advance of sites phased earlier in the plan period and therefore defer in our phasing programme sites where developers indicate they are not able to achieve stated requirements. When considering windfalls more local policy objectives for example regeneration would have to be considered and balanced at this stage of decision making.

7.14 However, in circumstances where deliverable sites are required to maintain our five year housing land supply and it can be proven that affordable housing cannot be achieved, due to economic viability, we would require flexibility in terms of meeting stated targets. In such exceptional circumstances, it will be the responsibility of the developer to provide substantial and verifiable evidence to demonstrate that the requirements of Policy WCS8 cannot be met. This will need to be tested by means of a rigorous site specific economic viability assessment based on an "open book" approach and used to determine a revised appropriate level of provision.

WCS8 Affordable Housing

New housing developments will be expected to provide for a mix of dwelling size, type and tenure that meet the identified housing needs of the community.

The Council will require affordable housing on sites of 5 or more dwellings (net) or on sites of 0.2 hectares or more. Affordable housing will be required at a level of 35% of the number of dwellings in any scheme. Where sites are allocated in a site allocations Development Plan Document, that document may specify a different, and potentially higher, housing target, having regards to the findings of the Wealden Housing Viability Assessment and any site specific considerations.

Affordable housing provision should incorporate a mix of tenures. The Council will negotiate the exact tenure split on each site. However, the presumption is that around 80% of the total number of affordable homes provided will be for social rented accommodation with the remainder being for intermediate accommodation.

The affordable housing will be integrated into the development and be indistinguishable in design terms from the market housing on the site.

Affordable housing should be delivered on site, however, in exceptional circumstances Wealden District Council will accept a commuted sum or free serviced land in lieu of on site provision. These circumstances may include provision where a Registered Provider finds it uneconomic or impractical to provide the units in the scale or form agreed. Any financial contributions will be pooled and used to enable affordable housing provision within Wealden District.

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

Rural exceptions

7.16 Due to the rural nature of the District, and the reduction in the number of development boundaries in the smaller rural settlements, it is necessary to provide a rural exception sites policy to encourage provision of affordable housing in settlements where new housing development will not normally be permitted. It will be necessary to ensure that such housing will remain as affordable housing in perpetuity.

WCS9 Rural Exception Affordable Housing

In exceptional circumstances, planning permission may be granted for small scale affordable 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.

Suitable sites will be located within or be well-related to a settlement which either provides reasonable access to local services and facilities, or has good accessibility to larger settlements nearby which provide a range of services and facilities. The scale of the proposed affordable housing development should be appropriate in relation to the size of the settlement and sites should not be isolated or intrusive within the landscape. Sites developed under this policy will be subject to controls on the occupancy of the housing to ensure it continues to provide affordable homes which address local housing needs in perpetuity. The affordable homes will be managed by an approved Registered Provider.

7.17 In addition to rural exception sites affordable housing initiatives such as Community Land Trusts, the Governments proposed Community Right to Build, or similar, will be supported as and when detailed legislation is put in place in order to deliver such initiatives.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

7.18 There is an established need to provide for Gypsies and Travellers within the District. As a result of work carried out for the Partial Review of the South East Plan, the clarification provided by subsequent Government guidance and additional work with authorities within East Sussex it has been identified that between 2006 and 2016 there is a need for an additional 32 Gypsy and Traveller permanent pitches. Of this need 9 pitches have already been provided or committed at April 2010 and therefore as part of the Site Allocation DPDs a further 23 pitches will need to be allocated. A site can contain a number of pitches and therefore it is likely that the number of sites will be substantially less than the number of pitches required. The Council wishes to support sites which provide the opportunity for an integrated co-existence with the local settled community. Policy WCS 11 sets out the criteria that will be used to define sites to meet that specific

site requirement and to provide a basis for dealing with planning applications for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

7.19 A further review of needs (Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment) will determine any need beyond 2016 and a partial review of the Core Strategy will be required in order to inform provision post 2016.

WCS10 The Travelling Community - Provision for Gypsies and Travellers

To meet the identified need for Gypsies and Travellers within the District for the period 2006 to 2016, 32 pitches will be provided for (an additional 23 pitches). Sites will be allocated within the Delivery and Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) to make up any shortfall.

WCS11 The Travelling Community- Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople: Site Criteria

In assessing the suitability of sites for allocation for permanent residential sites for Gypsies and Travellers, and for the purposes of considering planning applications for sites for Gypsies and Travellers and for Travelling Showpeople, proposals will be supported where the following criteria are met:

- Well related to existing settlements with local services and facilities. Sites should either be within or close to such settlements or close to major roads and/or public transport thus affording good access to local services;
- Have safe and convenient vehicular access, be suitable in terms of topography and be in a location where the necessary infrastructure already exists or can reasonably be provided;
- Be able to achieve a reasonable level of visual and acoustic privacy for both people living on the site and for those living nearby, and not lead to a reduction in the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings;
- Not compromise the essential features of designated areas of landscape, historical or nature conservation protection, including the South Downs National Park and High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area, and the Pevensey Levels Ramsar site should be avoided as potential locations; and
- Avoid locations where there is a risk of flooding, or which are adjacent to incompatible uses such as a refuse tip, sewage treatment works or significantly contaminated land.

In the case of sites for Travelling Showpeople, proposals will be assessed upon the basis of established need. Site suitability assessment will also take account of the nature and scale of the Showpeople's business in terms of the land required for storage and/or the exercising of animals.

Environment

Biodiversity

7.20 Wealden has a significant biodiversity and geodiversity interest which is sustained through our unique land and water environment, and is reflected in the designation of international, national and local sites within Wealden. Further information can be found in the Habitat Regulations Assessment and our Biodiversity Background Paper 5. Biodiversity Opportunity Areas have been identified by the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership in consultation with local authorities, statutory agencies and conservation organisations, and provide the regional, and therefore strategic, priority areas. These are areas where targeted conservation action will have the greatest benefit to wildlife.

7.21 Planning Policy Statement 9 "Biodiversity and Geological Conservation" identifies that biodiversity and geological conservation interests should be maintained, enhanced, restored or increased, and that appropriate weight is attached to designated sites of international, national and local importance; protected species; and to biodiversity and geological interests. Certain identified species are protected by law and Natural England provide up to date standing advice to aid the assessment of the effect of development in relation to these species. The Council acknowledge the importance of protected species and species of principal importance and its role in seeking to enhance and promote their wellbeing through the protection, enhancement, restoration and creation of their associated habitats. For this reason, development proposals must be informed by up to date information about biodiversity that may be affected. Furthermore, guidance requires an approach of seeking to avoid significant harm to biodiversity and geological interests before considering adequate mitigation measures or lastly seeking appropriate compensation measures.

7.22 PPS 9 outlines the required approach in relation to internationally and nationally designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites and ancient woodlands. In accordance with PPS9 a criteria based policy for regional and local sites will be developed in later DPDs as well as policies seeking to address proposed avoidance and mitigation measures in respect of the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, Lewes Downs SAC and Pevensey Levels Ramsar site and now proposed candidate SAC. Policies will also address the fragmentation of natural habitats, which will be part of a comprehensive integrated green network strategy. Allocations will also take into account the objectives of the Water Framework Directive.

WCS12 Biodiversity

In order to contribute to the biodiversity targets provided in the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan the Council will prevent a net loss of biodiversity, ensure a comprehensive network of habitats, and work with partners to maximise opportunities to ensure habitats, biodiversity features and ecological networks are maintained, restored, enhanced and where possible created to achieve a net gain in biodiversity and sustain wildlife in both rural and urban areas. This will be achieved through the development and implementation of an integrated green network strategy.

In accordance with Planning Policy Statement 9 there may be exceptional circumstances when compensatory measures for a net loss of biodiversity is required. Appropriate compensatory measures will be required to contribute to Wealden's overall biodiversity resource, and may include enhancement of Wealden's Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and other relevant Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, so that there is overall no net loss of biodiversity.

Green infrastructure

7.23 Green infrastructure includes all forms of recreational open space and areas of particular importance or potential for wildlife. The network of green infrastructure is therefore of importance for wildlife and eco-systems, and for meeting a wide range of social, environmental and economic needs and functions. It covers both rural and urban areas of the District and guidance recognises that it is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities. In order to maximise the benefits, policy places emphasis on the creation and maintenance of linkages between green spaces.

7.24 There is a wide range of sports, civic amenity and recreational open spaces available for both public and private use within Wealden and its neighbouring authorities. However deficiencies exist in many categories of open space and other facilities within Wealden. These are covered in more detail in our settlement strategies and will form the basis of detailed polices within the Site Allocation DPDs. Further detail is contained in our PPG17 study and the Background Paper 6 Green Infrastructure.

7.25 Sports provision is an important part of infrastructure and has strong linkages with health provision. The Council currently has four leisure centres in Hailsham, Crowborough, Uckfield and Heathfield, which are managed by a leisure contractor. In 2009 a Leisure Options Appraisal was undertaken on behalf of the Council, and the Council decided to support the retention of the Leisure Centres. The Council will also investigate how a new leisure centre located in the centre of the District may be provided within a 10 year time scale which would lead to the withdrawal of the Council's support to the Heathfield and Uckfield leisure centres.

7.26 The Council will continue to work in partnership with the County Council, Parish and Town Councils, private and state schools and other stakeholders, to support the

development of local leisure resources including Multi Use Games Areas, play areas and sports pitches across the district. The Council will develop a leisure strategy encouraging greater use of the District's natural resources, which will be informed by the Local Development Framework.

7.27 In order to meet the following objectives a Green Infrastructure Strategy will be developed alongside the IDP, as part of the Site Allocation DPDs to identify on a site by site basis where improvements are required and overall how development can be delivered to contribute to the green infrastructure networks to:

- protect, improve and enhance Wealden's existing green infrastructure network;
- provide additional green infrastructure to meet the needs of Wealden's existing and future population;
- improve the connectivity of Wealden's existing green infrastructure network;
- improve Wealden's urban and rural landscape;
- improve accessibility to green infrastructure to benefit local communities and visitors to the District;
- increase the opportunities for healthy living within the District;
- maximise the provision of green infrastructure to contribute to biodiversity, healthy ecosystems and to address climate change; and
- protect and improve the setting of Wealden's cultural heritage and improve provision of information relating to key features available to both residents and visitors.

WCS13 Green Infrastructure

The District's existing network of green infrastructure will be protected, improved and enhanced by the implementation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy, ensuring a multifunctional, accessible network which maintains and improves biodiversity and landscape character, increases opportunities for healthy living and contributes to healthy ecosystems and climate change objectives.

Development proposals will not be permitted which would result in the loss of existing open space or harm to Wealden's network of green spaces unless measures are incorporated within the development that will either mitigate the effects of development or alternative and suitable provision is made that is accessible, of good quality and value to its users, in an appropriate location, at an appropriate scale and nature and would positively contribute to the overall network of green space.

All new residential development will be required to contribute to the green infrastructure network and make provision for new open space. Where the scale of development would be too small to make on-site provision, the Council will seek developer contributions either towards the improvement of existing open spaces or towards the provision of open space elsewhere.

7.28 Green infrastructure relates to a number of issues including Biodiversity, flood risk, historic buildings and landscape. Development management policies concerning the historic environment are contained within Planning Policy Statement 5 and therefore will not be duplicated in the Core Strategy or any other Development Plan Document. Although landscape issues have been considered as part of the spatial strategy, our landscape classification and specific measures for protection and enhancement will be contained in the Delivery and Site Allocations DPD with particular regard to the South Downs National Park, the High Weald AONB and the Low Weald, as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12 Wealden's Landscape Areas



Climate change and sustainable construction

7.29 In order to set targets for sustainable construction techniques it is necessary to justify the need for any local targets and not duplicate targets provided in other legislation. Work has been undertaken in relation to setting a carbon emission target in both residential and commercial properties and is set out in the Wealden Renewable Energy Study. However, it is proposed that through revisions to Part L of the Building Regulations that national requirements for carbon emission reductions will be introduced (for both domestic and non-domestic buildings). Therefore it will not be necessary to duplicate a similar provision, albeit more rapidly implemented, in the Core Strategy. However, if opportunities arise for decentralised renewable energy in sites allocated in the Strategic Sites or Delivery and Site Allocations DPDs this can be detailed in these documents, and if changes in Building Regulations do not occur further consideration will be made as to the need to implement carbon reduction targets. Criteria for the siting of renewable and or low carbon energy sources will be provided in the Delivery and Site Allocations DPD.

7.30 It is acknowledged that Wealden is located in a water stress area, however, compulsory water metering and changes in Building Regulations requiring measures to restrict water usage will assist in demand management and it is considered any imposition of targets would duplicate other legislation.

7.31 The Code for Sustainable Homes is a rating system which considers a number of factors in relation to residential dwellings ranging from carbon efficiency and lifetime homes to bin storage facilities. A number of matters including biodiversity, flood risk and surface water run off are already considered in other parts of the strategy and provide for local circumstances. Further detailed design requirements will be included as part of the Delivery and Site Allocations DPD, which will seek to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. Guidance regarding development in flood risk areas is contained within Planning Policy Statement 25 and will not be duplicated in the Core Strategy or any other DPD. It is considered all relevant justifiable requirements are already considered as part of the strategy and therefore imposition of a code level is not considered necessary. Further guidance is available in the Council's formally adopted Supplementary Planning Document Wealden Design Guide based upon saved polices in the adopted Wealden Local Plan.

8 Delivering the Core Strategy

8.1 The delivery of the Core Strategy, and our subsequent DPDs, requires a partnership approach to the implementation of policies and proposals. The Council cannot implement the strategy alone. It depends upon the involvement of a range of public, private and voluntary organisations that operate in Wealden, and the integration of their resources and priorities. The practicalities of delivering the overall level of growth in this plan, and housing and business development at the broad locations identified, will require strong and committed working arrangements both within the Council and between Wealden and its partners, including landowners and developers.

8.2 Partnership working has already played an important part in the preparation of this Core Strategy and the collection of the evidence on which it is based. The Council wishes to strengthen these existing arrangements and build on the work that has already been done. Our aim is to assist the better integration and alignment of the priorities and programmes of other partners with the priorities set out in the Core Strategy. This way we can ensure that we maximise the use of resources in delivering growth and change in Wealden. This is why we have developed an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) in parallel with our Core Strategy. It is critical that the necessary infrastructure can be planned, funded and provided alongside the proposed development of the District.

8.3 The Core Strategy must also be able to respond to changing circumstances, both locally and nationally, over the long term. Sufficient flexibility is built into the plan, and appropriate contingency measures included, to ensure that the levels of growth identified in the strategy can be delivered. Monitoring how well we are performing against the plan's objectives and targets will be an essential element of this. In particular it will provide the context for reviewing housing delivery against the Council's housing trajectory set out earlier. We will develop a series of indicators to provide a consistent basis for monitoring the performance of the strategy against the strategic objectives identified in Part 4 of this Core Strategy.

Implementation and delivery

8.4 An Implementation and Monitoring Framework has been developed alongside and draws upon the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Housing Implementation Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal for the Core Strategy. It has been prepared for submission and focuses on the strategic issues and activities that are essential for the delivery of the Core Strategy. More detailed delivery plans will be prepared as part of the Site Allocations DPDs when specific sites are identified.

8.5 The Council will use the Annual Monitoring Report process to identify the need to review any elements of the Core Strategy where monitoring has identified a sustained failure to meet targets set or which are necessary to meet changes in national policy. It will also include an update of the housing trajectory should this be necessary to show how policies will deliver housing over the plan period.

8.6 A risk assessment has been incorporated into the IDP. Where there is a medium or high risk of non-delivery, an analysis has been carried out which identifies the impact

of non-delivery and describes the measures that will be taken to mitigate or manage the risk. This risk analysis will be reviewed each year as part of our Annual Monitoring Report.

Wealden/East Sussex Local Area Agreement

8.7 This agreement between local and national government translates the East Sussex Sustainable Community Strategy (Pride of Place) priorities into targets which aim at securing improvements in public service delivery and in the quality of life of local people. In order to ensure consistency in delivery and monitoring we have included relevant LAA targets in our monitoring framework.

9 Saved Polices

9.1 The following adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998) saved policies have been superseded by the Core Strategy

HG2	Affordable housing on new development
HG3	Affordable housing exceptions policy

9.2 Development boundaries are removed from the following settlements shown on the inset maps to the Proposals Map of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998

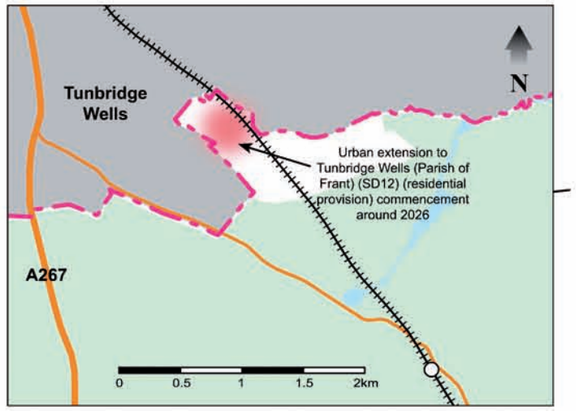
Revoked Development Boundaries	**Inset Map Number**
Berwick Station	3
Blackboys	4
Broad Oak	5
Cross-in-Hand	8
East Dean and Friston	11
East Hoathly	12
Fairwarp	13
Five Ash Down	14
Five Ashes	15
Framfield	18
Hadlow Down	21
Halland	24
Hooe Common	31
Isfield	33
Lower Dicker	37
Lower Horsebridge	38
Maresfield	39
Mark Cross	40
Maynards Green	42

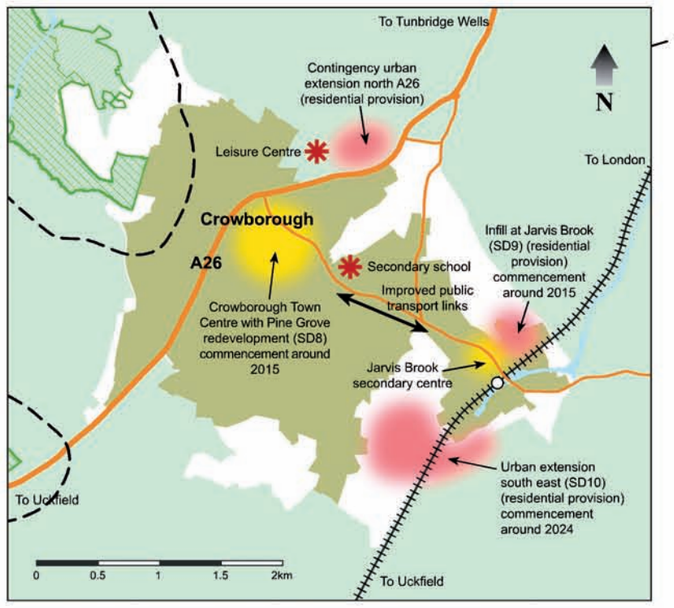
Nutley	44
Pevensey	45
Punnetts Town	48
Upper Dicker	55
Vines Cross	56
Windmill Hill	61

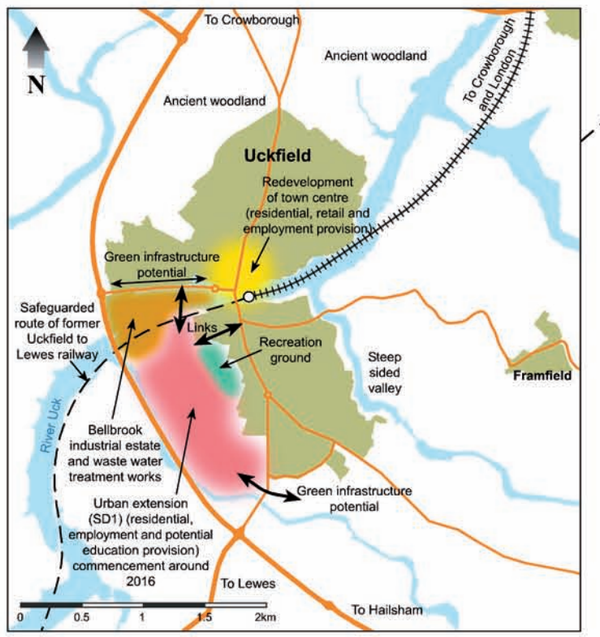
10 Key Diagram

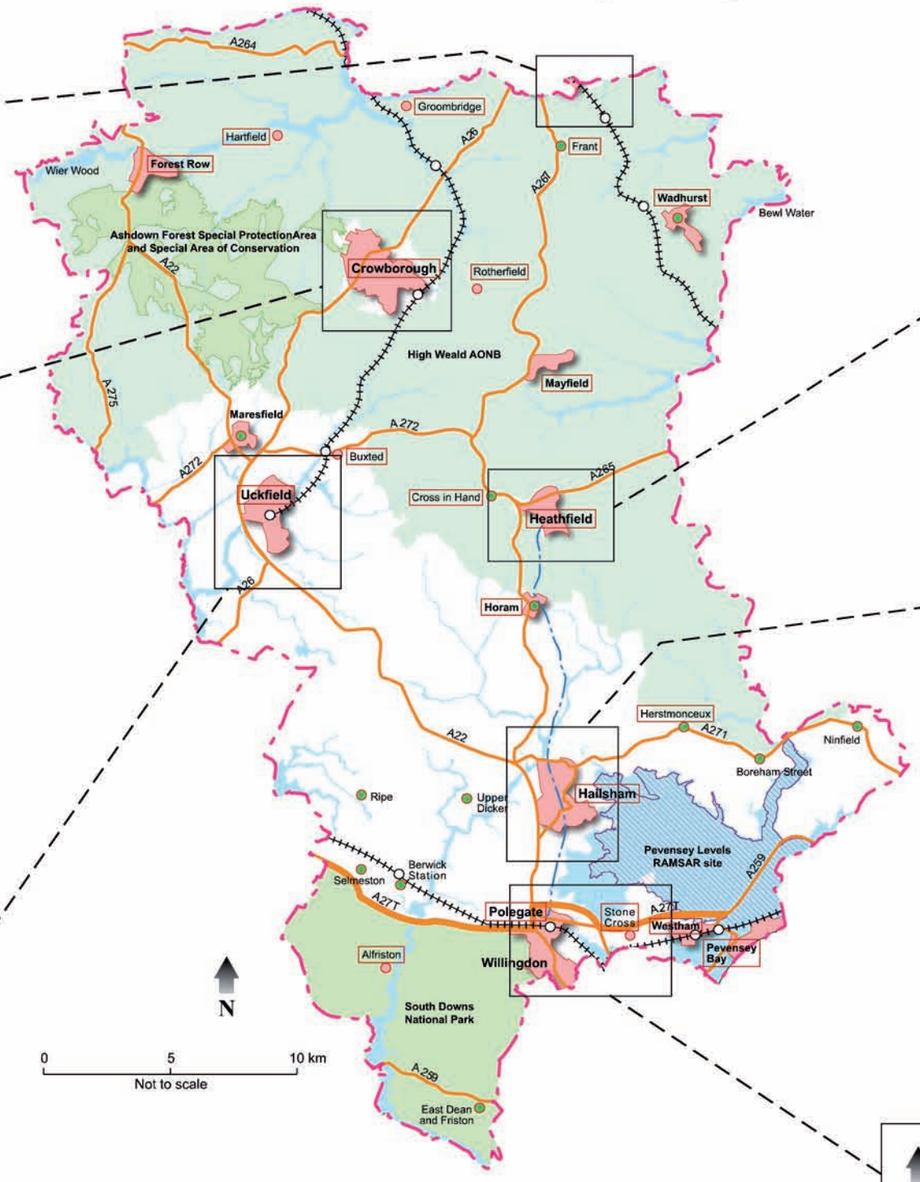
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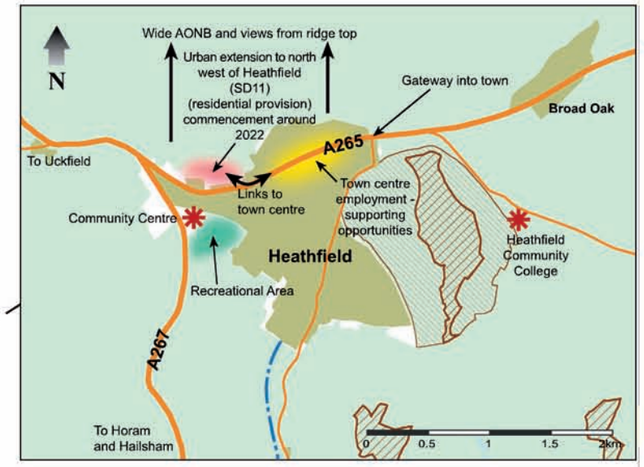
Key Diagram

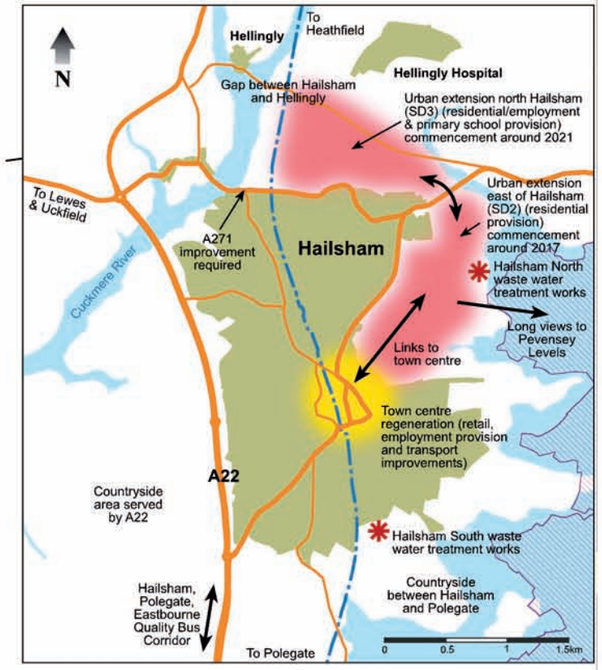


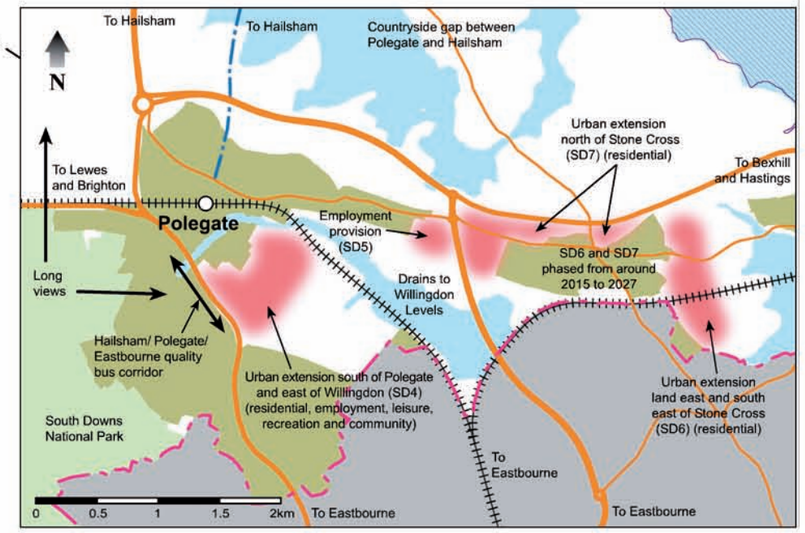








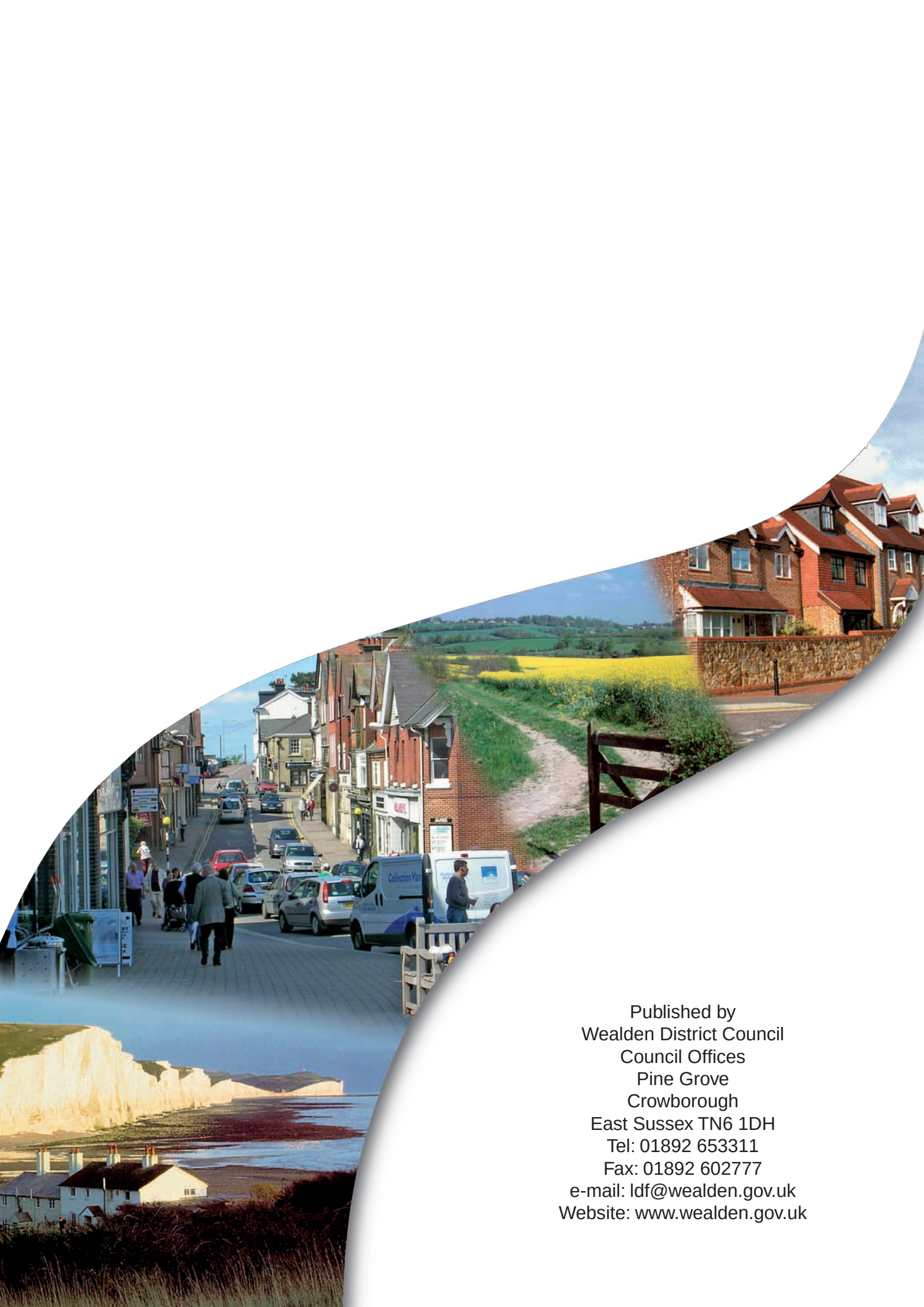




Key

- Urban Area
- Settlement
- Name — Development boundary retained
- Rural growth area
- High Weald AONB
- South Downs National Park
- Area at risk from flooding
- Pevensey Levels RAMSAR site
- Special Area of Conservation
- Heathfield Park Historic Park and Garden
- Special Protection Area
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- 400m exclusion zone around Special Protection Area
- Cuckoo Trail (cycle and walking points)
- Roads
- Railways
- District Boundary

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