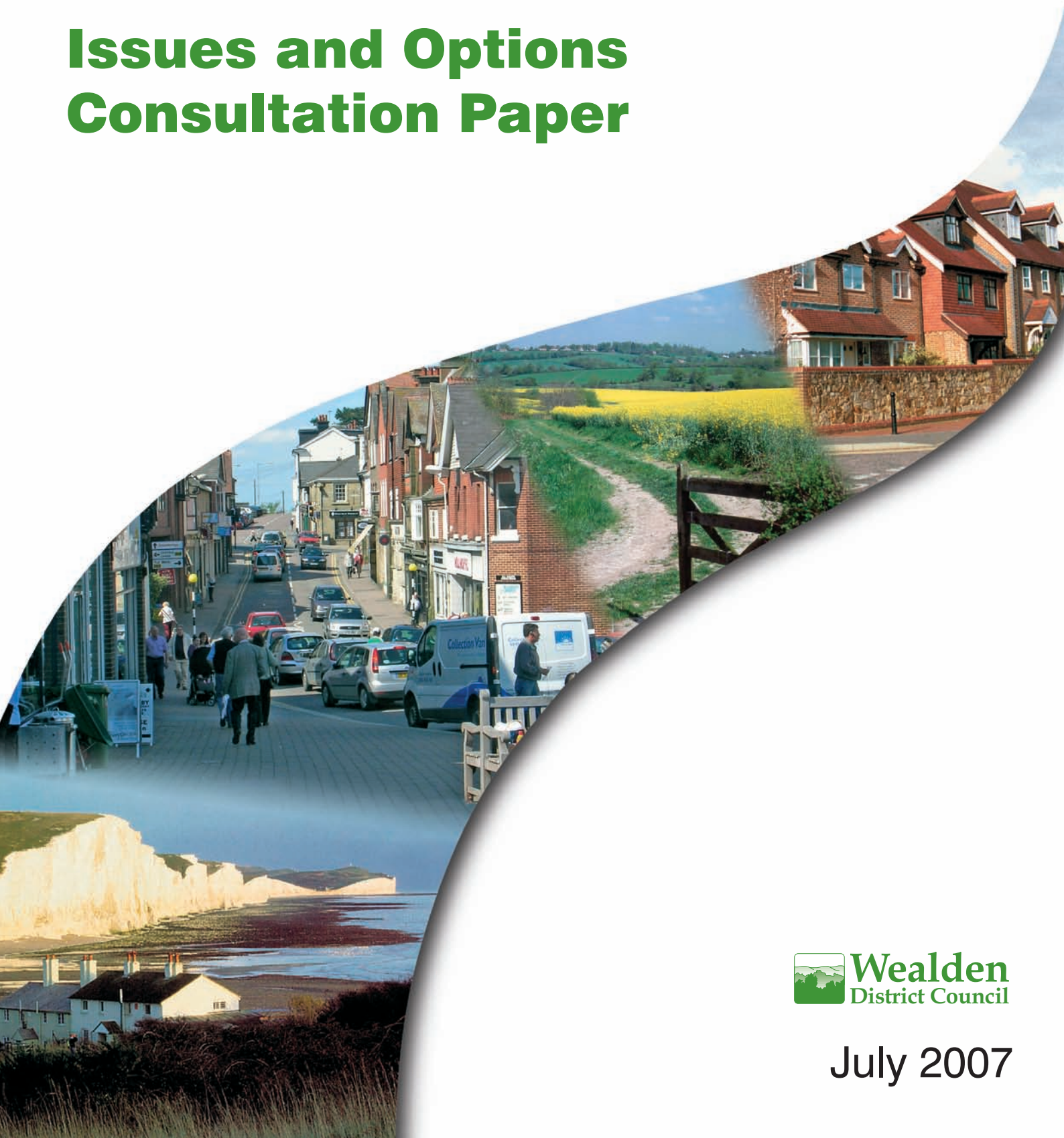


Wealden District Council Local Development Framework

Core Strategy

Issues and Options Consultation Paper



How to Contact Us

Head of Planning and Environmental Policy

Wealden District Council

Council Offices, Pine Grove, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1DH

Telephone 01892 602007

Email Idf@wealden.gov.uk

Website www.wealden.gov.uk

Office hours Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm

Wealden District Council

Council Offices, Vicarage Lane, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 2AX

Telephone 01323 443322

Website www.wealden.gov.uk

Office hours Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm

Representations must be received by Wealden District Council by 5.30 p.m. Monday 13th August 2007

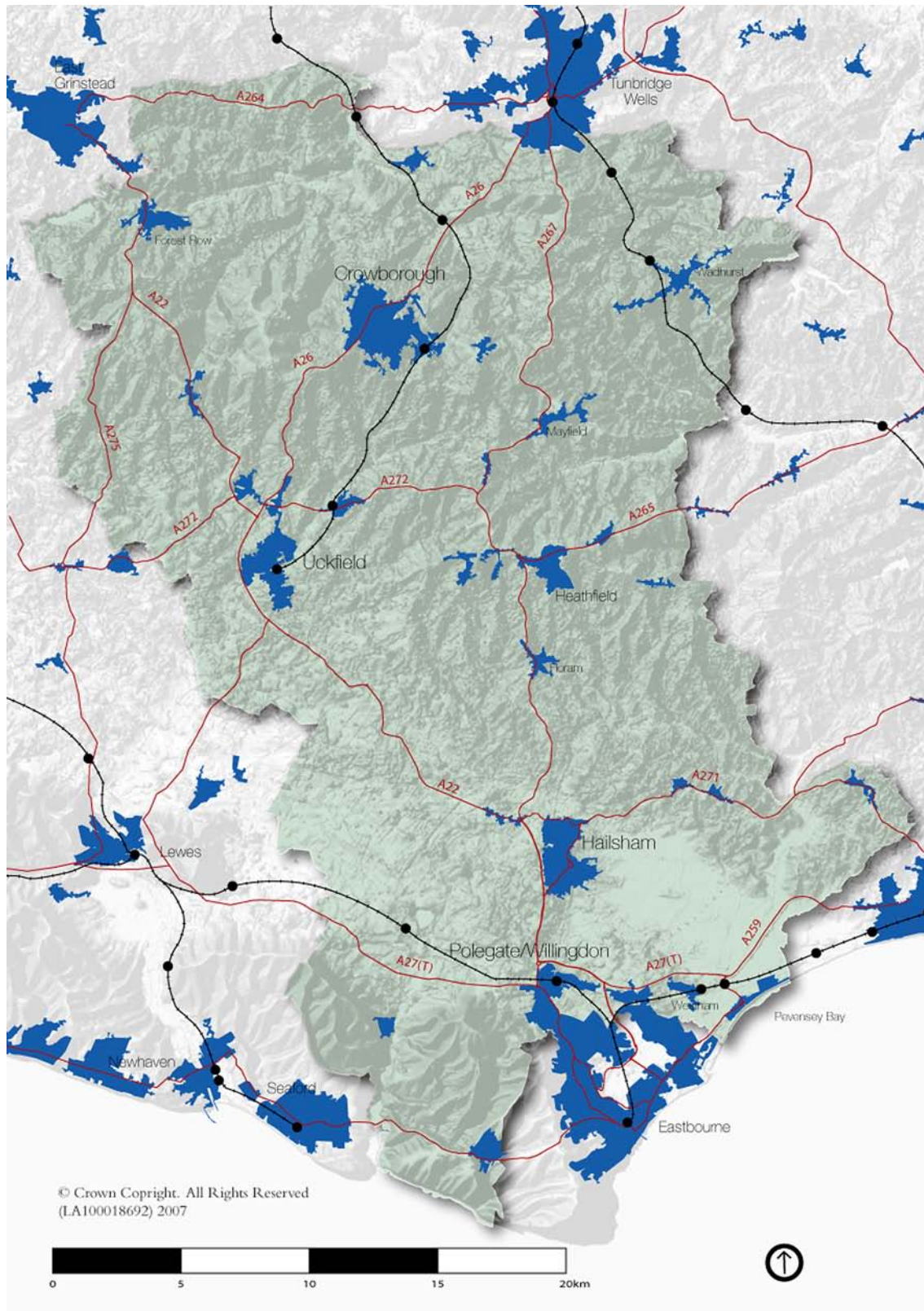
If you, or somebody you know, would like the information contained in this document in large print, Braille, tape/CD or in another language please contact Wealden District Council on 01323 443322 or info@wealden.gov.uk

£15

 Recycled Paper

Location Plan

Figure 1 Wealden District



Location Plan

Foreword

As part of our Local Development Framework Wealden District Council is working on a programme that will result in the publication of a document called the Core Strategy. This strategy will determine how Wealden develops over the next 15-20 years and will also be the document to show how we intend to meet the housing growth that is required of us by the South East Plan. The first stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy is the publication of this Issues and Options consultation paper. This sets out those key issues and challenges that will need to be addressed in planning for the future needs of Wealden. It is a document that affects all of us as it will help shape the policies and proposals for the future planning of the District.

In the consultation paper we try to identify what makes Wealden special and to highlight what are the key issues and needs of the District. Following initial consultation we now set down what we consider matters most to our communities and what in particular we should be doing to ensure a better and more sustainable future for everyone by balancing development needs with the protection of our high quality environment. This document is not just about finding land for housing – it is about the future needs of Wealden - for people, for services, schools, transport, and jobs to support this growth.

This Issues and Options paper has already been the subject of some discussions with our Town and Parish Councils, through parish planning conferences and through workshops and also with the Local Strategic Partnership. However, I would emphasise this is very much a first stage document and much evidence is still being gathered. **Whilst there is no formal requirement to consult at this stage in the process, I consider it vital that the earliest opportunity is given to everyone to tell us their views in order that we may consider these before we begin to do further work on preferred options to take forward to the next stage.**

Some of the ideas put forward in the document may be controversial but they are put forward for initial views and testing – including against the requirements of infrastructure bodies. The document is divided into various sections and poses a number of specific questions and broad possible options for the distribution of development. Please do take the time to read the document and send us your comments or responses to those parts that are of particular interest to you. Remember, no decisions have yet been made and your early views are important in helping us decide which ideas to take forward.

Councillor Keith Whitehead

Portfolio Member for Planning and Development

1	Context	1
	The Purpose of this Consultation Paper	1
	Why do we Need a Local Development Framework?	1
	What are the Regional Requirements the Local Development Framework Must Meet?	5
	What Makes Wealden Distinct? - A Spatial Portrait	8
	Key Facts that Set Challenges for Wealden	9
	What Principles Might the New Plan Adopt to Meet These Challenges?	11
2	Wealden's Landscape	13
	Landscape Shaping Development	13
	Wealden's Landscape Character	13
	Wealden's Biodiversity	19
	Wealden's Water Cycle	19
	Managing Small Scale Changes To Wealden's Character	23
	Wealden's Heritage	24
	Wealden's Renewable and Low Carbon Potential	25
3	Wealden's Working Patterns	27
	The Shift Away from Farming	27
	Travel to Work	28
	Wealden's Economic Challenges	28
	The Sussex Coast Economy	31
	Tourism	33
4	Wealden's Settlement Pattern	34
	Settlement Boundaries	34
	Classifying Towns	36
	Development In and On the Edge of Towns	38
	Options for the Urban/Rural Split	39
	Classifying Villages	41
	Options for the Sussex Coast Policy Area	48
	Options for the Rest of Wealden	49
	The Overall Level of Housing	50
5	Wealden's Places	51
	Shaping Places	51
	Why Have Certain Broad Search Areas for New Development been Included or Excluded at this First Stage?	51
	Towns - Potential Priorities and Options	55
	Potential for a New Settlement or Concentrated Growth	94
	Village Strategy and Broad Locations	102

6	Wealden's Communities	119
	Education Needs	119
	Health Needs	119
	Housing Needs - Dwelling Mix and Density	120
	Housing Needs - Affordable Housing	122
	Affordable Rural Housing Needs	122
	Gypsies and Travellers Needs	125
	Transport Needs	128
	Open Space and Leisure Needs	132
	Minerals and Waste	133
7	Making it Happen - Implementation	134
	Infrastructure and Phasing	134
	Delivery	135
8	Developing a Spatial Vision for Wealden	142
	Where We Want to get to	142
	Possible Spatial Objectives for Wealden	144
9	What Happens Next?	146
10	Details of How to Comment	147
	Glossary	148

■ List of Figures	
Figure 1 - Wealden District	1
Figure 2 - Wealden in Sussex and the South East	4
Figure 3 - The Division of Wealden District for Housing Provision Purposes and for Sub - Regional Planning (Source: Draft South East Plan & New Homes for East Sussex - East Sussex County Council)	7
Figure 4 - Population Density: People / Sq. Km (Census 2001)	9
Figure 5 - Employment by Sector (Source: Nomisweb, Labour Force survey 2004)	10
Figure 6 - Landscape Character Areas (Source: Natural England)	16
Figure 7 - Wealden's River Catchments and Water Cycle Issues (Source: Environment Agency)	22
Figure 8 - The Eastbourne - Hailsham Triangle	31
Figure 9 - Cross in Hand is a good example of the principles that have been used to define 'tight' settlement boundaries	35
Figure 10 - Completions by Land Type	38
Figure 11 - Suggested Settlement Classification	42
Figure 12 - Suggested Village Growth Potential	45
Figure 13 - Suggested Settlement Strategy	46
Figure 14 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Crowborough	56
Figure 15 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Heathfield	62
Figure 16 - Main Option for Development on the Fringe of Tunbridge Wells	66
Figure 17 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Uckfield	70
Figure 18 - Main options and alternatives for development in and around Hailsham	78
Figure 19 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Polegate, Willingdon and Stone Cross	86
Figure 20 - New Settlement Options - Area of Search	96
Figure 21 - Villages around the Ashdown Forest	103
Figure 22 - The Heart of the High Weald Villages	107
Figure 23 - Villages around Uckfield	110
Figure 24 - Villages around Heathfield	113
Figure 25 - Villages in the Sussex Coast Policy Area	116
Figure 26 - Number of Unauthorised Caravans in East Sussex	126
Figure 27 - Wealden Local Development Framework - Documents	146

■	List of Tables	
	Table 1 - Draft South East Plan Housing Provision Levels - Number of Additional Homes Required	6
	Table 2 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Crowborough	57
	Table 3 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Heathfield	63
	Table 4 - Main Option for Development on the Fringe of Tunbridge Wells	67
	Table 5 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Uckfield	71
	Table 6 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Hailsham	78
	Table 7 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Polegate/Willingdon	87
	Table 8 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Stone Cross	92
	Table 9 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development of a New Settlement	97
	Table 10 - Suggested Development Potential of Villages around the Ashdown Forest	104
	Table 11 - Suggested Development Potential of the Heart of the High Weald Villages	108
	Table 12 - Suggested Development Potential of Villages around Uckfield	111
	Table 13 - Suggested Development Potential of Villages around Heathfield	114
	Table 14 - Suggested Development Potential of Villages in the Sussex Coast Policy Area	116
	Table 15 - Potential Infrastructure Requirements	137

How to Comment

How to Comment

We would encourage you to send us your comments online, as this is the easiest and quickest way for you to do so. You will need to register on our consultation system, which will only take a few minutes of your time. You can register by going to our website www.wealden.gov.uk and following the link to the Local Development Framework pages. You will need to provide an email address in order to receive a password which will enable you to use the system.

If you do not have access to the Internet at home, you can visit your local library where you can log on to our website at the Internet points.

Please ensure that you submit your comments on the Issues and Options consultation paper to us by Monday 13 August at 5.30pm.

If you have any questions relating to this document or wish to discuss how to make your comments, please contact the Planning Policy team on 01892 602007 or email ldf@wealden.gov.uk.

Please note that due to legislative requirements, we are unable to accept anonymous responses.

Part 1 Context

The Purpose of this Consultation Paper

Note: Part 10 'Details of How to Comment' at the end of this paper gives details on how you can comment.

1.1 This consultation paper⁽¹⁾ aims to help focus discussion on the key planning issues and future choices for Wealden. It will help to prepare the new Wealden Plan, called the Local Development Framework. This consultation is part of a dialogue with the community and all those who have an interest in the area. It sets out a range of difficult planning **issues** and then **appraises** – that is tests and probes - a range of choices or **options**, for planning policy. This highlighting of issues is in no way a **decision** about what options for policy might eventually be taken forward. That depends upon the outcome of this consultation and how it informs the Council's decision making. If Wealden does not make these choices locally and democratically then they will be made for us centrally in an appeal driven process.

1.2 This consultation paper is an early but key opportunity to think about places and how they should be shaped in the future. It is about where you live or work and about areas you care about. It is important that the community has an opportunity to assess potential policy responses and development proposals at an early stage, and before any final decisions are taken.

1.3 As you go through this paper please do not think you are obliged to answer all of the questions. Some questions will be of more interest to specific organisations such as parish or town councils.

1.4 We also wish to hear from developers and landowners about areas they wish to bring forward for consideration. These will be

consulted on and appraised on the same basis in the future to ascertain the communities' views on which, if any, should be taken forward in the plan. We are not interested in dry arguments alone, the new system is based on a visionary approach, on community consultation, sustainability assessment and gathering evidence to support policies and proposals. Please make your representations in this light.

1.5 This paper is relatively long because the final plan needs to be concise. A concise plan needs to be backed up by sufficient and robust evidence and consultation to ensure that the submitted plan is considered to be sound. We intend to achieve this outcome by undertaking this consultation and appraisal of the main potential options.

1.6 Please do not read this paper as a draft plan, but as an initial key stage of its preparation. Wealden District Council has not yet decided on which of the strategic options it will take forward. We will listen to all views and take account of all responses made on technical assessments before doing so. We want to hear from you.

Why do we Need a Local Development Framework?

1.7 Wealden District Council is working on a new plan, called a Local Development Framework.

1.8 This plan will shape the future of development in the District over the next 15-20 years or so. It will replace current planning policy for the District, including the 1998 adopted Wealden Local Plan and the 2005 Non-Statutory Wealden Local Plan.

1.9 The District Council will be having appropriate regard to consultation carried out for previous plans. However as the new plan will be produced under new legislation and

will cover a longer period, it is necessary to carry out fresh consultation and appraisal and consider all results before making decisions. Many of the excellent ideas in town and parish plans have already fed directly into the production of this paper.

1.10 The new legal framework is procedurally complex and relies heavily on abbreviations and acronyms which this consultation paper tries to avoid - see the glossary. The Local Development Framework will be a portfolio of documents. The first document will be a core spatial strategy, also containing a few general policies used to determine planning applications. This document will be called 'The Core Strategy'. There will also be a document identifying specific smaller sites for development called 'Site Allocations Development Plan Document'. The Planning White Paper clarifies that strategic sites can be included in the Core Strategy. This consultation is an early opportunity to shape the Local Development Framework.

1.11 The Local Development Framework must do a number of things. It must:

- Contain a vision and a clear spatial strategy. The new system requires an initial focus on broad potential areas for development (in line with a vision for the District overall). Then in line with this to decide on detailed principles for individual sites;
- Meet minimum requirements set out at a regional level from the South East Plan – principally the provision of levels of new housing;
- Identify and allocate, over time, specific sites to meet strategic and local requirements for development of all kinds, including housing and for business;

- Provide a rational and consistent basis for making development control decisions;
- Identify, conserve and enhance environmental resources of international, national and local significance, providing a strategic framework within which more detailed land management decisions can be made;
- Focus on issues related to development, mindful that spatial planning is wider than simply what does or does not get planning permission. It is now also about the spatial strategies of stakeholders including public service and especially infrastructure providers, as well as of those that manage the landscape and natural resources, making sure that these are linked and complementary;
- Provide a framework for making infrastructure decisions and investments - with a realistic eye to the resources available;
- Have a focus on delivery of the development that is needed.

1.12 A key principle of the new statutory plan-making system is 'frontloading', that is early discussion to avoid important issues becoming problems late in the process. This involves participation by stakeholders such as public service providers, developers, parishes and community groups. This process provides an opportunity for all stakeholders to submit their visions and ideas. For example, Parish Councils may wish to submit revisions to their Parish Plans⁽²⁾ or Town Action Plans to inform the debate and help build consensus early on. Expectations need to be realistic. It would be impossible to include all of this detail in a short strategic document, especially when some proposals may not be compatible with each other or with the final chosen strategy. However the Local

Development Framework can provide a framework within which more specific strategies can operate.

1.13 The new style of plan will be shorter and more strategic in content than previous plans. Less a compendium of policies and more a series of flexible multipurpose tools. So this consultation paper concentrates mostly on the big picture issues impacting upon the District overall.

1.14 There are many other strategies relating to the Local Development Framework. It is neither desirable or possible to try and summarise them all here. However, where another strategy has particular bearing it is referred to. For the same reason this consultation paper does not attempt to summarise the South East Plan or national planning policy unless they are of direct relevance to the issue under consideration.

Working with other Organisations

The District does not work alone. There is ongoing close working with the Local Strategic Partnership (comprised of a range of local public service providers and Stakeholders). This has been particularly important in developing the evidence base for the plan and for consultation. We are working closely with infrastructure providers and utilities. Also there is increasingly close working with Eastbourne Borough, which Wealden District encloses on three sides, including commissioning of joint research. We are working with Mid Sussex District on the future of the A22; and with Tunbridge Wells Borough on issues concerning the setting of and growth options for the town.

Opportunities for further joint working with neighbouring authorities will also be welcomed.

Sustainable Development in Wealden

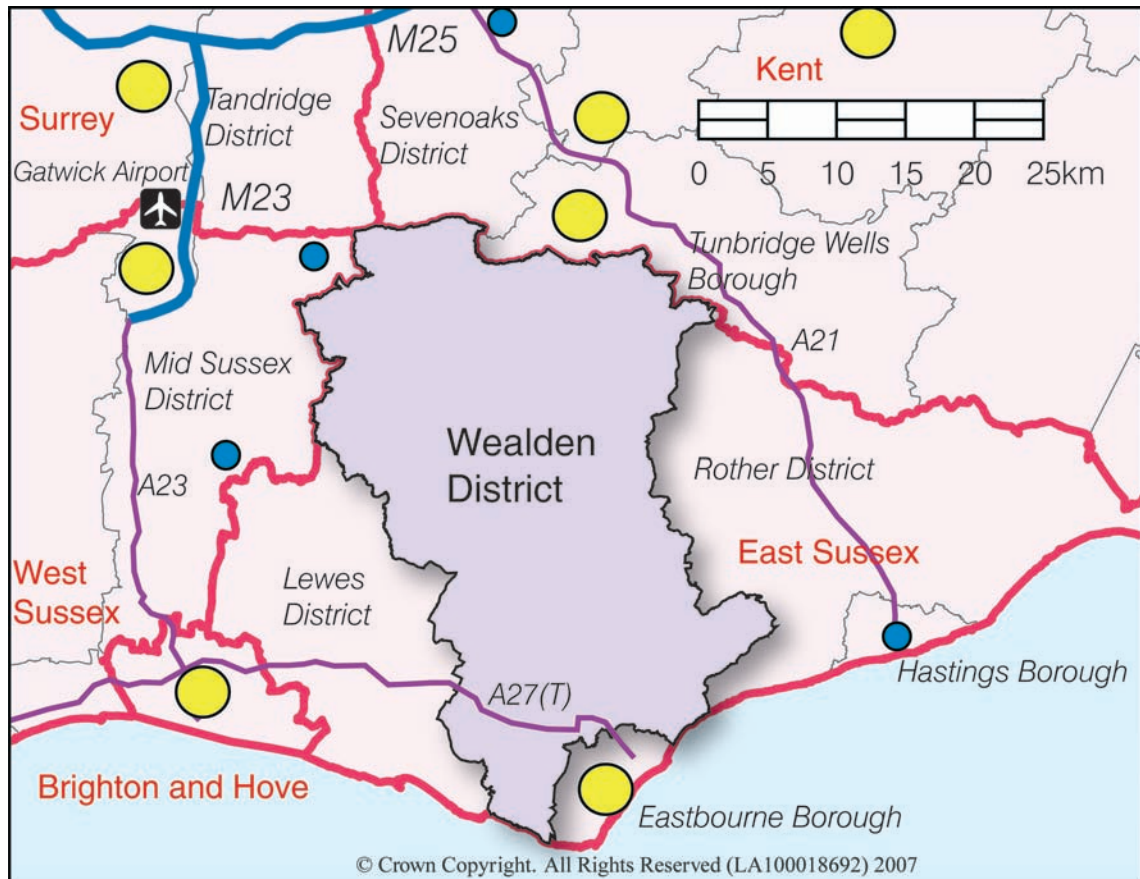
Wealden District Council is fully committed to the principles of sustainable development. As a consequence this is likely to be a constant theme running through the Local Development Framework.

This paper does not deal with sustainability, climate change, or the environment as a separate topic as the Government advises that these are dealt with as underlying and cross cutting issues that span and impact on every aspect of planning and planning policy.

The sustainability of the new plan's policies and proposals will be looked at in detail in the statutory Strategic Environmental Assessment/ Sustainability Appraisal which will be published in draft form at the next stage of the process. However, the principles of assessment, from a social, economic and environmental perspective, have been incorporated in the work carried out to date.

At the next stage of the process there will also be an 'Appropriate Assessment' of any impacts of development on European protected habitats.

Figure 2 Wealden in Sussex and the South East



Wealden's New Community Strategy

In 2002 The Wealden Local Strategic Partnership published its Community Strategy based on a number of themes: Environment, Health and Social Care, Learning, Housing, Prosperity and Community Safety, and sets out the community's aspirations in these areas.

Four years on there was clearly a need to take stock of progress, to refocus, update and/or re-validate the Community Strategy.

A recent Government consultation document 'Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their Future' (December 2005)³ promotes an 'evolution' of the Community Strategy requirement.

As a result and following on going consultation a revised version of the strategy has been published now with a focused set of actions. This issues paper looks to ways in which these actions can be implemented through spatial planning and what kind of spatial vision, having regard to the community vision, might be developed.

Across East Sussex an Integrated Sustainable Community Strategy will be developed with both county wide and district level components and the issues and options consultation will feed directly into this.

1.15 The revised Community Strategy and a summary of findings of consultation so far can be viewed at the link in the footnote.⁽⁴⁾

What you have already told us

Consultation so far on the Core Strategy⁽⁵⁾ and the revised Community Strategy has revealed the following as clear themes:

- Protecting the quality and unique character of the area is a key concern.
- Importance of wildlife conservation
- Ensuring adequate infrastructure is in place for new housing.
- Achieving high standards of design.
- Sustainability as a key objective in all development.
- Need for some development in and on the edge of villages (including in designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to sustain vitality) particularly for affordable housing.
- Increasing affordable housing.
- Need for employment development and mixed uses, not just housing.
- Need to consider the needs of an ageing population - and allow some annexes for elderly relatives.
- Need for a sympathetic approach towards the use of farm buildings for business purposes.
- Public transport, and parking around rail stations, needs improvement.

What are the Regional Requirements the Local Development Framework Must Meet?

1.16 The South East Plan⁽⁶⁾ sets the context for the Local Development Framework for Wealden. These documents, together with a County wide waste and minerals plan, will when finalised, form the 'Development Plan' for the area. These will replace the current East Sussex Structure Plan and the adopted Wealden Local Plan. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless there are good reasons not to.

1.17 Legally the Local Development Framework for Wealden must be in 'general conformity' with the South East Plan, produced by the South East England Regional Assembly but finally approved by ministers. This is very important as it means that the Core Strategy must meet various requirements and targets set out in the South East Plan, such as providing for additional housing.

1.18 So whilst preventing change is not an option, it is the District Council's role, in consultation with the community, to make a case for how strategic policy should be applied to the local circumstances of our area.

1.19 The key requirement concerns housing provision. The draft South East Plan, unlike previous plans, splits housing requirements for the District geographically in two. The new approach is informed by 'identification of Housing Market Areas' which do not fit neatly into local authority boundaries. Consequently the District is working with Eastbourne Borough Council to better understand these markets locally.

4 [http://www.wealden.gov.uk/moderngov/Published/C00000292/M00001917/AI00014345/\\$CommunityStrategyRefreshAppx2.docA.ps.pdf](http://www.wealden.gov.uk/moderngov/Published/C00000292/M00001917/AI00014345/$CommunityStrategyRefreshAppx2.docA.ps.pdf) for the Government advice see http://www.communities.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?id=1162326

5 http://www.wealden.gov.uk/planning_and_building_control/Local_Plan/CoreStrategy.aspx

6 The South East Plan is currently in draft form and undergoing independent examination. The final version will be approved by the Secretary of State in Spring 2008.

1.20 The South East Plan assigns two housing provision levels (that is the amount of housing to be built) for Wealden, one covering part of the District which forms part of a broader area covering the Sussex coastal towns and their surrounds and one for the rest of Wealden (See following table and figure 3).

Table 1 Draft South East Plan Housing Provision Levels - Number of Additional Homes Required

	Annualised Mean Requirement 2006 - 2026	Total Requirement 2006 - 2026
Wealden within the South Coast Policy Area	230	4,600
Rest of Wealden	170	3,400
Wealden Total	400	8000

1.21 The South East Plan allows some flexibility to vary provision levels between the two policy areas if this can be demonstrated as being more locally appropriate, providing it meets the overall minimum total. Evidence (as shown in the following chapters) is showing that infrastructure and delivery is more of a problem in the South than in the North of the District.

1.22 In addition the South East Plan requires any delivery shortfall from the Structure Plan to be carried forward - and in Wealden's case this is significant. The Secretary of State for Communities has also put forward data to the recent examination in public to the South East Plan which would imply an increase in housing provision levels of around 30% higher than these overall draft South East Plan figures. So the final approved figure could be higher than those shown.

Figure 3 The Division of Wealden District for Housing Provision Purposes and for Sub - Regional Planning (Source: Draft South East Plan & New Homes for East Sussex - East Sussex County Council)



1.23 The housing requirements are driven by several key factors including household projections, demographic characteristics, infrastructure and environmental constraints. Economic regeneration and growth and identification/ release of urban potential are also major drivers. Influences on demographic characteristics include factors such as reductions in household size and increased life expectancy. An increase in the instances of 'concealed households' (where people are forced to share or to stay with parents due to affordability) also impacts on overall housing requirements.

1.24 Whilst the South East Plan requires a certain level of housing it is open to the Council, if it wishes, to justify a higher level of housing. Issues about whether this would be prudent in Wealden's case depend on evidence as to what extent additional housing might be capable of increasing affordability, as well as evidence on whether a higher level of housing would be sustainable or deliverable, in terms of infrastructure requirements, environmental issues and any wider advantages or disadvantages. Such issues are dealt with in Part 4 'Wealden's Settlement Pattern' of this paper. The draft South East Plan has a requirement for Wealden to provide 8,000 dwellings over the period 2006-2026 and there is a small residual to carry over from the East Sussex Structure Plan. The Non-Statutory Wealden Local Plan identifies sites for approximately 3,000 dwellings and there will also be some windfall development. The Core Strategy will need to make provision to accommodate any consequential shortfall. The South East Plan also sets out other economic and regeneration requirements covered in Part 3 'Wealden's Working Patterns' in detail, in particular the Sussex Coast Policy area is prioritised for economic development.

What Makes Wealden Distinct? - A Spatial Portrait

1.25 Wealden is a large and very rural district in East Sussex. Its northern boundary lies between Tunbridge Wells and East Grinstead. These authorities contain the outer edge of the London Green Belt creating considerable development pressures in areas outside the boundary including in Wealden. To the South the District borders Eastbourne Borough. Wealden has an area of 836 sq km. making it the largest district in East Sussex and the third largest in the South East of England. It has a population (2006 estimate⁷) of around 143,000. The proximity of large towns outside the District has a major impact on the area. Many local residents travel to work or shop outside the District.

1.26 The District has five small market towns – Crowborough, Uckfield, Heathfield, Hailsham and Polegate/Willingdon. Each town is different and performs differing roles depending on their location within the District. For example, residents of Crowborough often look north towards Tunbridge Wells for services; Uckfield is more self contained and has more industry and shops, whilst Hailsham and Polegate and Willingdon are closely linked to the economy and housing markets of Eastbourne. Part 5 'Wealden's Places' explores these distinctions in more detail.

1.27 The District also has many villages, some of which are classified as picturesque and popular with tourists (such as Mayfield, Alfriston, Fletching and Hartfield). A few villages are large (defined by the Government as having a population of over 3,000) but most are small in scale. Half of the District's population live in rural areas (Source 2001 Census), often remote from services. This dispersed settlement pattern poses particular challenges for local service provision, but helps give the District its spatial character.

1.28 One of Wealden's major assets is the quality of its environment. This is reflected in the high proportion of the District which is nationally designated and protected for its landscape importance: namely the High Weald and the Sussex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There is also a very high coverage of environmentally significant areas including the internationally important areas of Ashdown Forest and the Pevensy Levels. This also has implications for development, as possible areas for growth are limited by their potential impact on these designated areas. There is also a limited legacy of 'brownfield' land, which means that a significant amount of new development will have to occur on 'greenfield' sites.

1.29 The District has considerable heritage and historical importance, being the starting point for both Saxon (by legend) and Norman (by history) 'invasions' of England. It has considerable literary associations e.g. with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, A.A. Milne and the Bloomsbury Group being prime examples. This greatly enhances the tourism potential of the District.

1.30 The District's high quality of life, and its proximity to London and the Gatwick area, creates a high demand for housing, especially in the North of the District. This has exerted considerable upward pressure on house prices, and has caused a widening gulf between local income and market prices - an affordability gap.

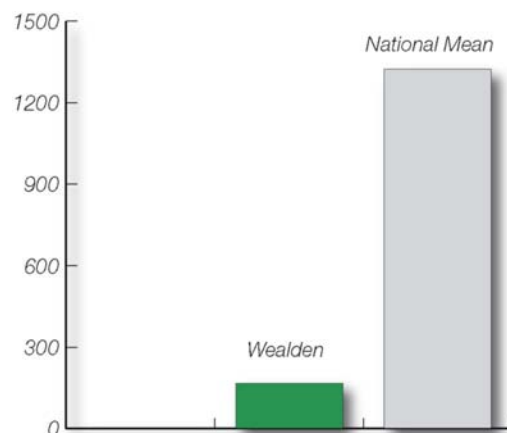
1.31 The District's economy is heavily dependent on the service sector. Whilst this has helped to generate high levels of employment, median salaries in the District are relatively low. Again this is contributing to the high levels of out-commuting. Additionally, the economy is dominated by small businesses, with only a few larger employers. 75% of small businesses in the District are farm based, often in former agricultural buildings converted to business spaces (Source Vail Williams 2004).

1.32 The scattered settlement pattern also makes an efficient and viable public transport system difficult to provide. Existing networks of main roads and railways within the District are limited, with networks focusing on routes to London and large towns outside the District, rather than between the towns themselves. This has impacted on investment in the local economy and access to employment and leisure opportunities.

Key Facts that Set Challenges for Wealden

1.33 A recent MORI social research institute report on the best places to live (Physical Capital - Liveability in 2005), placed Wealden as the number one district in the South of England and second in the country.

Figure 4 Population Density: People / Sq. Km (Census 2001)



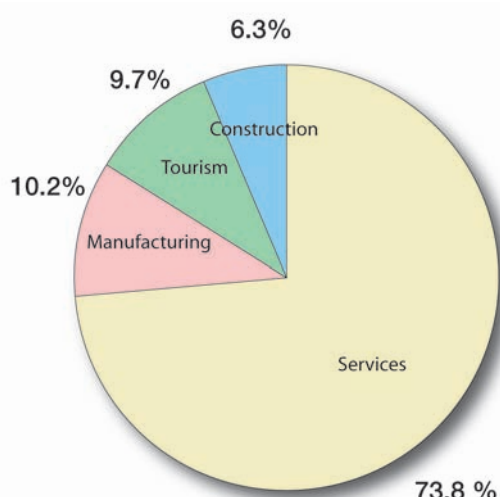
1.34 61% of the District is designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

1.35 93% of the District is classified as rural, and only 50% of the population live within urban settlements (as compared to the national mean of 72.2%). Additionally, 32% of the population live in villages, hamlets or isolated settlements (as compared to the national mean of 13.6%) and 18% in town fringe settlements (14.2% nationally) (Source ONS).

1.36 Wealden's population lives in 62,700 households. 98.3% of the population is white, with the rest coming from a diverse range of ethnic groups. The age structure has a much smaller proportion of the population aged 20-40 than the national average with more in the older groups. East Sussex overall has the highest proportion of people aged 85 and older in the country⁽⁸⁾ (Census 2001).

1.37 Wealden has the largest amount of Ancient Woodland of any authority in England, 3% of the total amount in England as well as 2% of all lowland heathland (source: Natural England).

Figure 5 Employment by Sector (Source: Nomisweb, Labour Force survey 2004)



1.38 Approximately 40,000 people work in the District. As shown in figure 5, employment is primarily in the service sector - retailing, hotels and catering, public services and banking. Nearly 90% of Wealden businesses employ less than 10 people and 57% of employed residents work locally. Employment in agriculture continues a long-term decline. Home working levels are higher than the national average (Sources: Census 2001, Nomisweb 2004).

1.39 Wealden is the most affluent district in East Sussex, and also has 39% of all businesses in the County being registered to

Wealden addresses. It is forecast to grow faster than the rest of East Sussex over the next few years. Just over one quarter of East Sussex's Gross Value Added is generated by Wealden. This is forecast to grow to 29.6% by 2011 (Experian 2005).

1.40 The 2001 census shows that 43% of the workforce travel outside the District to work and a significant proportion are classed as managers or senior officials (SEER Consulting forecasting model 2004).

1.41 There is a sharp contrast between high and low incomes. Wealden has the highest mean household income in East Sussex at £35,000, but is still below the South East mean of £36,500 (source East Sussex in Figures 2006). 58.5% of households in the District have incomes below £27,300, meaning low income levels are well above the UK mean of 27% (source: Wealden Housing Needs Survey 2005). There are strong geographical disparities, mean incomes being over £40,000 around Tunbridge Wells and around £25,000 at Hailsham and Polegate. (source Paycheck 2006). The District contains pockets of deprivation at Hailsham South and East Wards (Source: Index of Multiple Deprivation ODPM 2004).

1.42 Wealden has a very low population density for the South East with 167 people per sq. km. compared with a national mean of 1,323 (Source Census 2001).

1.43 Crime levels are less than half the national median, 48 per 1,000 as opposed to 113 crimes per 1,000 nationally (Source National Crime Survey 2004).

1.44 Wealden has the highest car ownership levels in East Sussex 86% of households owning a car, well above the national mean of 72%.

What Principles Might the New Plan Adopt to Meet These Challenges?

1.45 A key difference from the old planning system is that the decisions on what development goes where must be made according to a clear spatial strategy backed up by evidence and assessment. The spatial strategy must be based on delivering a spatial vision and a number of objectives that derive from this - such as delivering housing and employment and protecting key environmental assets.

1.46 Wealden's Core Strategy will need to be a simple suite of policies applying general locational principles in the context of Wealden's specific distinctive characteristics. It will need to set out what will go where, when and how, and in certain cases, delivered by whom. Alongside these there will need to be a suite of policies for assessing individual schemes against specific development management criteria, such as design, impact on amenity etc. Plans are now required to be short and must not repeat national or regional policy. The new plan will only need to say something once and say it well. It cannot be an encyclopedia.

1.47 What these principles might be in terms of matters such as landscape, accessibility, constraints (such as flood risk etc.) are mostly self evident. The new plan cannot be a mere list of general principles. What matters is how these factors come together in particular locations, and how a strategy can create opportunities out of what have been considered constraints and problems. This process is known as 'Place Shaping'.

1.48 This paper considers the challenges posed by different aspects of Wealden's geography - its places - and how they are changing. This is prior to considering the matter of what the spatial vision and objectives for the District might be - as it is necessary to know what is possible first. Then it sets out a series of issues - considering how some might be tackled jointly in a place

and through spatial strategy. It looks at how Wealden's landscape - considered in the broadest sense, provides the context and setting for Wealden's settlements. Then it considers those settlements, their needs and opportunities.

1.49 Part 5 'Wealden's Places' of the paper also looks at the scope for urban design led solutions deriving from the character, form and histories of places, and the potential to create new and high quality places (a key part of 'place shaping') and improve them rather than simply add more of the same type of development in increments. Then the paper considers what general principles might be applied to determining the amount of development in different broad locations.



1.50 For different towns and villages this consultation paper takes an options appraisal approach towards looking at what broad locations for development might be appropriate and the specific issues these raise.

1.51 The methodology being used to identify broad areas for development and options for the distribution of growth makes no assumptions about what the overall requirement will be. It is being used for early assessment of broad areas and broad geographical distributions. It will enable the

Part 1 Context

District's stakeholders to get on with assessing the potential of certain options, and when the final South East Plan Housing Provision levels are known the practicality of certain strategic options will be much clearer. 'Bottom up' information on the potential, suitability, availability and deliverability of potential broad areas for development will come together with 'top down' evidence on the best geographical and settlement strategy.

1.52 Finally this consultation paper looks at how the broad range of issues arising from the Community Strategy consultation might be tackled through incentives and controls on development. These factors are then brought together to look at what kind of spatial vision for the District and spatial objectives might be deliverable and how infrastructure needed as part of that vision might come about.

Part 2 Wealden's Landscape

The Spatial Challenge:

Wealden is a beautiful district with diverse landscapes. A key challenge is how we meet the need for development and ensure these landscapes are managed, conserved and enhanced.

Landscape Shaping Development

2.1 Before considering the broad potential areas for the strategic location of new development it is useful to consider ways in which the landscape might shape these choices. Whilst in some regards these will act as a constraint, in others they may also act as an opportunity.

2.2 Landscape here is meant in the broadest sense. Landscape is about the relationship between people and place and provides the setting for our day to day lives. It results from the way that different components of our natural environment (the influences of geology, soils, climate, flora and fauna) and cultural environment (the historical and social impact of land-use, settlement, enclosure and other human interventions) interact, and how they are perceived by us ⁽¹⁾.

2.3 Issues such as landscape conservation, biodiversity, dealing with the impacts of climate change and coastal management are intricately related and locally distinctive. A possible approach for the new plan would be to adopt this integrated cross-cutting approach towards the management of different landscapes, urban and rural, natural and built.

Wealden's Landscape Character

2.4 The current Structure Plan and Local Plan are based on a broad categorisation of the Sussex landscape between the High Weald in the North of the area, the Coastal Levels, the South Downs, and the area between the South Downs and the High Weald, known as the Low Weald.

2.5 The South Downs and The High Weald are nationally protected landscapes and are designated as 'Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB). Wealden contains more of the total High Weald AONB area than any other district. The South Downs has also been put forward by the Secretary of State for designation as a national park, although this process has now been paused due to a successful related legal challenge ⁽²⁾.

2.6 The basic national policy protecting AONBs and National Parks are the same, (National Policy [PPS7](#)) and give priority to protecting the landscape, yet allows for small scale development to meet local needs. Major development is inappropriate unless it is proven to be necessary in the national interest and there is no alternative location.

2.7 National parks have an additional layer of protection, in the form of principles of conservation of natural beauty and recreation, and that where this conflict is unresolvable, then conservation should prevail. Given that the earliest possible date for a National Park may be five or more years away, after most South Downs authorities have completed their new plans, it is important to ensure that they have proper policy protection in the interim - embodying this principle. ⁽³⁾

1 Taken from Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (CAX 54), Countryside Agency & Scottish Natural Heritage, April 2002

2 See <http://www.easthants.gov.uk/ehdc/nationalpark.nsf/webpages/National+Park+on+Hold> for challenge see <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/issues/landscap/natparks/sdowns/meyrick060210.pdf>

3 In Wealden the boundaries of the proposed National Park and the Sussex Downs AONB are very similar so all references to the South Downs or the proposed South Downs National Park in this paper also refer to the Sussex Downs AONB.

Part 2 Wealden's Landscape



2.8 The current Structure Plan embodies this principle and extends it to the Ashdown Forest with a policy protecting the openness of areas of open downland and the area within the 'medieval pale' (a pale is a raised ditch to control grazing) of the Ashdown Forest. As a result no development is allowed other than that which provides for the needs of quiet recreation, or which specifically enhances the landscape. The Core Strategy could embody such an approach in its landscape policy.

2.9 Local policy must no longer repeat national policy, it must only reflect locally distinctive and necessary issues. This could include what is distinctive and important about Wealden's landscape. Another significant local issue concerns options for the expansion or strict containment of settlements within the AONBs (see Part 5 'Wealden's Places'). These spatial choices need to be informed in this way rather than simply cataloging such national designations.

2.10 In Wealden's context the Low Weald and the Coastal Levels (see figure 6), are also valued and important landscapes. All such areas have great biodiversity and historic landscape value. The setting and views of the Downs and High Weald, and the High Weald southern edge including the retreated coastline around Pevensey Bay are very important. The contrasts and diversity of the landscape is important in itself.

2.11 National policy ([PPS7](#)) requires a landscape character approach to the whole landscape. In Wealden the landscape character areas are well documented and understood (see figure 6).

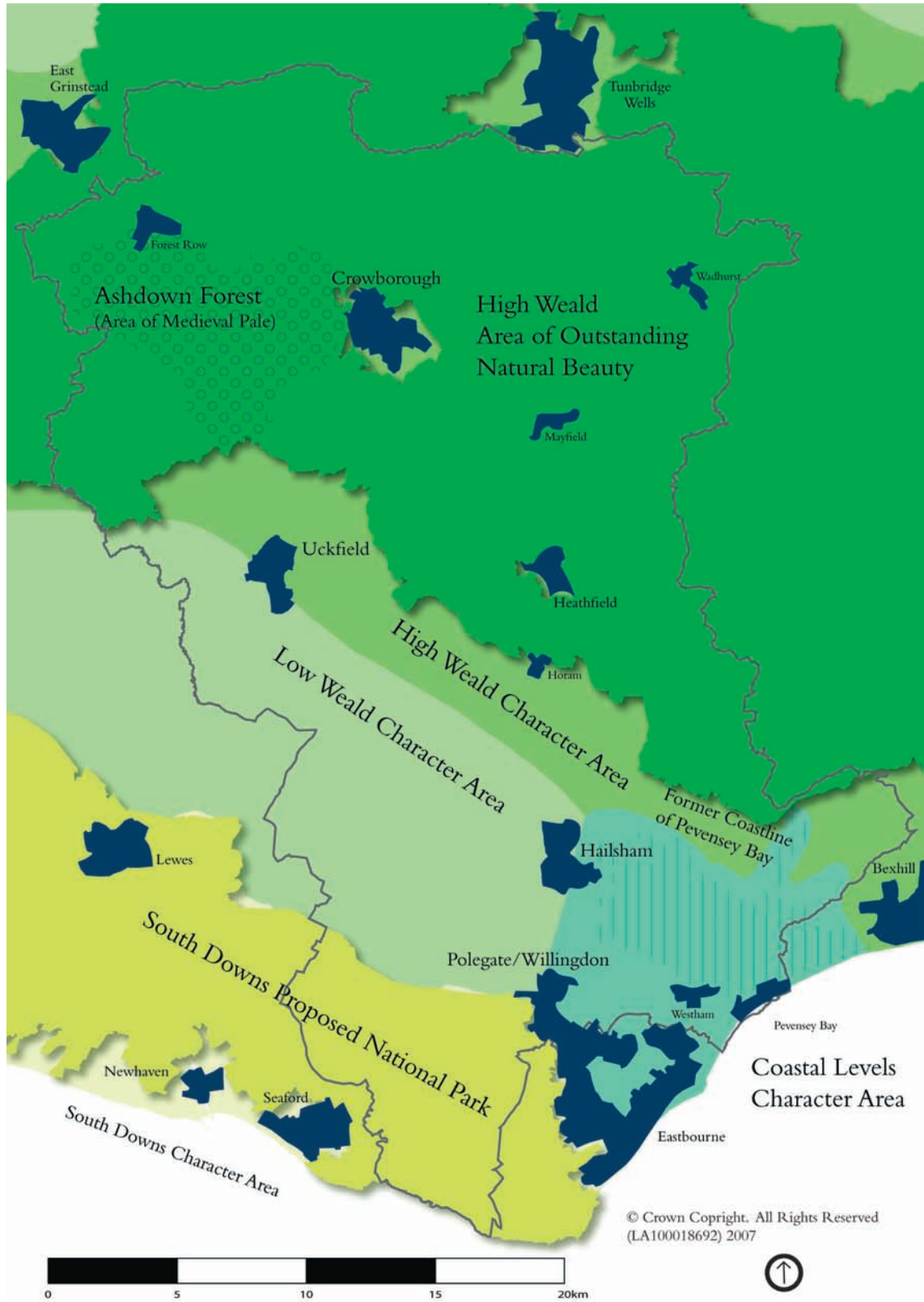
2.12 What this appears to suggest is a broad policy approach in the new plan for the whole District, which reflects this and the four main landscape character areas. It will need to encapsulate and protect the local distinctiveness of each character area as it impacts upon where development should be

located; in particular the impact of development on the fundamental component of the natural beauty of each AONB (which the AONB units consider is more severe or damaging than the impact on development on the wider landscape) (see box one and box two).

2.13 Within these broad landscape character areas are the highly distinct sub-areas of the Ashdown Forest and the Pevensey Levels which are covered by international nature conservation designations and their own management regimes and issues which the new plan must have regard to.

2.14 The AONBs are very sensitive to cumulative and small scale changes and threats of creeping suburbanisation. The District is required by law to have regard to the purposes of AONBs and to prepare statutory management plans for them⁽⁶⁾; this has been done jointly with other authorities.

Figure 6 Landscape Character Areas (Source: Natural England)



2.15 The prime purpose of an AONB designation is to protect the landscape rather than to control expansion of settlements. Some expansion of settlements within the AONB is permitted providing it meets strict national policy tests. Clearly the two AONBs are very different, with the steep topography of the South Downs which also creates a setting around many villages in the AONB being very sensitive to change. With regards to the High Weald AONB, the AONB boundary was drawn around the towns with some limited gaps between the edge of the built up area and the edge of the AONB, although the boundaries in some cases do not always reflect the edges of the most sensitive and beautiful landscapes.

Question One

Settlements in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree that some development should be allowed in the AONB to meet housing needs?

Box One South Downs

The 'blunt, bow-headed, whale backed Downs' (Kipling) is the most well known landscape of Sussex, with the South Downs rising to summits, and bisected by the Cuckmere Valley, the last unspoiled river estuary in the South East, near the famous cliffs of the Seven Sisters. Small flint-walled villages hug the valley bottoms with sheep pastures on the downlands.

Draft Management Plan Objectives⁽⁵⁾

- An unspoiled landscape of the highest quality and diversity reflecting its historic evolution
- An historic and cultural heritage conserved for posterity as an essential component of local distinctiveness
- A serene and peaceful landscape with extensive dark night skies
- A landscape rich in wildlife with extensive swathes of interlinking habitat managed to maximise benefits for nature
- Pure unpolluted air, soil and water to allow the landscape and wildlife of the South Downs to be maintained
- Sustainable Management of the Land Supported by the necessary Skills and Expertise
- A buoyant local economy supported by and directly contributing to the management of natural beauty and its enjoyment
- Wide ranging opportunities for countryside recreation and access respecting the natural beauty of the South Downs and avoiding conflicts with other uses

Box Two The High Weald

Is formed of alternate bands of sandstone and clay, interrupted by fast flowing rivers in steep valleys known as 'ghylls'. The poor soils and steep hilly landscape led to it being developed as a series of pastures surrounded by small woods and tree lines (shaws) with deeply indented wooded lanes for livestock movements (drove ways). This essentially medieval landscape, now very rare in England, survives remarkably well. The settlement pattern is scattered with many villages occupying the tops of ridges and enjoying superb views. It was the first industrial area in England but the collapse of the Weald iron industry in the industrial revolution, together with the poor soils, led to a depression which ironically left the landscape and villages in such a well preserved state. Later the area became popular as a recreational area from Late Victorian times.

Management Plan Objectives⁽⁶⁾

- To restore the natural function of river catchments
- To protect sandstone outcrops
- To reconnect settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside
- To protect the historic pattern of settlement
- To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald
- To enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale
- To maintain the historic pattern and features of routeways
- To enhance the ecological function of routeways

- To maintain existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland
- To protect the archaeology of woodlands
- To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets
- To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald AONB, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management
- To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands
- To enhance the environmental function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats
- To protect the historic features of field and heath
- To increase opportunities for education and celebration of the character of the AONB
- To increase the contribution of individuals to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB
- To increase community involvement in conservation and enhancement of the AONB
- Integrated management of the resources for informal open-air recreation to facilitate 'green' use by residents and visitors

Wealden's Biodiversity

2.16 The District is especially important for nature conservation with 44 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, two National Nature Reserves, 97 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance; six Local Nature Reserves; as well as the two internationally designated sites, 3% of all of the ancient woodland in the whole of England and the greatest amount of lowland heathland in the South East of England. This means that Wealden is not a good choice for locating development of strategic (sub-regional) scale in the South East.

2.17 Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity is not just about the traditional approach of protecting isolated habitats, but also includes ensuring a healthy diversity of species across a landscape and habitat connectivity. Sites and areas being promoted for development will require ecological surveys so the potential impact and ways in which this impact might be mitigated can be assessed as part of the plan making process. Those promoting areas will be required to submit these.

2.18 National policy and policy in the South East Plan on this subject are comprehensive, and the Core Strategy must not repeat them. The District also has a new statutory duty to promote nature conservation⁽⁷⁾. Two locally distinctive issues are apparent. Firstly the importance of the two internationally designated sites and secondly the need to consider local impacts on biodiversity from development and land management. Although the District has a large number of protected habitats they are mostly small and fragmented. New development and associated infrastructure could present risks in further fragmenting habitats, but also opportunities from sensitively located, landscaped and designed development could help meet targets in the East Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan. This could include

enhancing 'interconnectivity' between existing habitats by appropriate landscape scale design and habitat creation and the protection and enhancement of wildlife corridors, as well as the restoration of key lost habitats such as heathland lost to coniferous forestry, reedbeds, and water meadows.

Wealden's Water Cycle

2.19 Use of water is part of a continuous cycle; consequently the needs of the water environment (its environmental capacity) and the provision of each of the elements of water service infrastructure including watercourses, aquifers and reservoirs should be considered together. This process is commonly referred to as the 'Water Cycle'⁽⁸⁾.

2.20 Wealden's landscape makes it vulnerable in parts to flooding with poorly drained wealden clay soils and steep sided valleys including the river valleys of the Uck, Cuckmere, Rother and Medway. Uckfield and other parts of the District experienced severe flooding in Autumn 2000⁽⁹⁾. In addition, parts of the coastal plain, including the Pevensey Levels, are at risk from tidal flooding in the event of a breach or overtopping of sea defences. This is a particular issue at Pevensey and Pevensey Bay where beach replenishment has been necessary.

2.21 Wealden is currently commissioning a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the North of the District, with a joint assessment with Eastbourne which covers the Southern part of the District.

2.22 The issues vary radically within different parts of river catchments throughout the District. The High Weald has many small streams formed in deep and often heavily wooded ghylls. The impermeable clays are susceptible to highly seasonal flows which

7 Section 40 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

8 http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/GEAN0107BLLN-e-e.pdf?lang=_e

9 For more details on this issue see The Draft Cuckmere and Sussex Havens Catchments Flood Management Plan (CFMP) 2006

respond quickly to heavy rainfall and support the ghyll woodland ecosystems that reduce downstream flooding.

2.23 The Low Weald has fewer but larger and more sluggish watercourses, which generally flow through more open countryside.

2.24 In the South of the District are a number of small chalk streams which flow directly into main rivers (including the Cuckmere) or through the built-up areas of Polegate and Eastbourne. Polegate has experienced a number of flooding issues related to the reduced capacity of drains. Surface water drains in the coastal towns can be overloaded when high tides prevent them from draining water effectively. This places extra pressure on the Willingdon Levels (Eastbourne Park) drainage system where a new larger capacity sea outfall for surface water drainage is likely to be required, including from development related needs.



2.25 At the Pevensey Levels the land is drained by a large number of heavily modified river channels and many interconnected artificial drainage channels. Water movement is managed by a system of pumps and sluices.

2.26 Southern Water is currently undertaking a Water Cycle Study to determine what new waste water treatment facilities are required to accommodate proposed housing numbers as outlined in the Draft South East Plan. This is particularly pertinent with respect to Hailsham and Polegate as the Environment Agency has indicated that they would not wish to see increased volumes of treated effluent being discharged into the Pevensey Levels (Ramsar Site) from the two treatment works serving Hailsham and Polegate.

2.27 It is understood from the Environment Agency that technology will not be able to resolve the issue at the Hailsham North Waste Water Treatment Works, which serves Hailsham. On 1st January 2006 there was spare capacity for 2,800 new dwellings at the waste water treatment works whilst the Hailsham South treatment works, which serves the Polegate area, had a maximum spare capacity on 1st January 2006 of 1,900 dwellings⁽¹⁰⁾. Ongoing studies may further reduce these 'headways'. The Southern Water 'Water Cycle Study' is examining the options for further waste water treatment infrastructure, which may include either draining into the Cuckmere Catchment or a new long sea outfall. The timescale for these infrastructure works, of 15 years, could severely prejudice the strategy of the South East Plan to focus growth in Wealden in the Sussex Coast Policy Area and is driven by short term OFWAT financial regulations which the Government has acknowledged will need to be changed⁽¹¹⁾.

10 Environment Agency Evidence to South East Plan
11 http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/commondata/103599/minutes_170805_1234555.doc

2.28 Whilst it appears that there may be a technical solution the problem is a regulatory and organisational one. Firstly it is one of financial regulations (as outlined above) and secondly, waste water treatment is a County matter and the County development plan document for this will not be consulted on for some time. In other parts of the country, such as Corby, Basingstoke and Swindon, much more capital intensive water services infrastructure is being planned in phases alongside growth using innovative forward funding mechanisms and a proactive and joined up approach from the counties, regional assemblies and the government offices involved. The 2007 full budget report and the Planning White Paper, propose such a proactive approach to infrastructure planning with new plans at the forefront¹². It seems prudent then for the local authorities to take forward necessary infrastructure in their plans.

2.29 In terms of flooding, for the River Ouse Catchment (including the River Uck), the Environment Agency¹³ states that the main flood risk issues relate to the housing requirements of the South East Plan. Urban growth will increase surface water run-off rates and volumes if not properly controlled and a greater urban extent could exacerbate risks and rates of flooding. They advise that new development must meet strict targets for flood reduction. This will have implications for settling and drainage systems, and the amount of open greenspace required in developments in this catchment area.

2.30 In relation to flooding in Uckfield, rainwater runs off the steep catchments quickly and enters the River Uck where the channel is unable to assimilate the large quantities of rainwater. Water therefore can breach the banks where the river flows through a semi-artificial steep sided channel. The flood extent is relatively narrow as a result of the steep sided valleys either side of the river, however, the flood depths are

significant in places and a number of properties in and around the town are impacted upon.

2.31 Resolving the flooding problems in Uckfield is a significant issue for local residents. Following the severe floods in Autumn 2000 a Sussex Flood Defence Committee decision was made to adopt a strategy to manage flood risk (July 2002), which included the settlement of Uckfield. During the development of the strategy, options for flood alleviation of Uckfield included possible upstream flood storage at Buxted Park, and a combination of flood storage and increased conveyance and reinstatement of the flood plain through the Town. The recommended strategy concluded that *"there is no free standing economic case to provide a major new flood alleviation scheme for Uckfield but proposals for redevelopment could materially affect this position"*. The River Ouse Catchment Flood Management Plan is now looking at relatively low cost, but partial in terms of flood relief, options for Uckfield focused around relieving the blockage caused by the High Street bridge. Part 5 'Wealden's Places' looks at development options that could help support a more comprehensive solution.

12 http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/669/PlanningforaSustainableFutureWhitePaper_id1510669.pdf

13 Scoping report for the River Ouse CFMP, which covers a significant area to the north of the District, including the Uckfield area.

Figure 7 Wealden's River Catchments and Water Cycle Issues (Source: Environment Agency)



2.32 Several parts of the District, notably above Jevington/East Dean and Alfriston, are aquifer source protection zones where the quality of groundwater needs to be protected.

2.33 An appropriate response in the new plan in relation to the above work suggests a tailored approach to the different issues in the different catchments, with a policy that sets out short specific requirements for each catchment and does not duplicate national policy. The completion of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessments will help inform what might be achievable, and how these matters impact upon development options in different catchments. So it will be more appropriate to consult on this in more detail at the next 'preferred options' stage.

2.34 The District has a number of reservoirs. The water companies are examining expansion at Bewl Water to help meet demands over the next 20 years or so, and a new reservoir just over the district boundary at Clay Hill (in Lewes District). The draft South East Plan would allow some expansion of reservoirs providing it is carried out in parallel with measures to reduce leakages and to increase water efficiency in existing homes and new ones (as now proposed in the Government's Code for Sustainable Homes) and improving sustainable drainage. A Core Strategy policy on this issue would be therefore be unnecessary as it would cause duplication. The Environment Agency and local water companies are confident that these measures will be sufficient to deal with water demands from population increases and new development in the future⁽¹⁴⁾.

2.35 The District's coast is under continuous pressure from wave action. Shingle beaches at the mouth of the Cuckmere River and at the Pevensey Levels require continuous replenishment. Remaining coastline consisting of natural cliffs is retreating at a mean rate of 0.3 to 0.4m per year, and the coastal management strategy at areas such

as Birling Gap is one of managed retreat. The Environment Agency has an aspiration at Cuckmere Haven to allow one of these levels to erode. The Environment Agency will shortly be consulting on whether to continue with defences at Pevensey Bay or to allow erosion 'back to the railway' implying some very long term gradual loss of property.

2.36 The Core Strategy must have regard to existing shore management plans as currently these are separate from spatial plans – radical departure would be hard to uphold. However a forthcoming European directive and the proposed Marine Bill are likely to require an integrated approach (see draft South East Plan). For example some development at Pevensey Bay may provide a cost-benefit case for improved defences - although flood risk may rule out many kinds of new development such as housing.

Managing Small Scale Changes To Wealden's Character

2.37 Managing the design and impact of new development and ensuring that, where possible, it improves the local built and natural environment are just as important as deciding how much development of what type goes where and when.

2.38 As well as a 'Core Strategy' on the location of development the Local Development Framework will require a limited number of generic policies on managing such development, backed up by a more detailed 'Wealden Design Guide' (which will be consulted on separately). The draft Design Guide has been developed following widespread stakeholder involvement, demonstrating how development can meet policies on design, conservation and sustainability.

2.39 The 'generic' policies in the new plan might cover matters such as:

- Key urban design principles as they apply to Wealden's settlements and landscape - including community safety & inclusive design;
- Enhancing local distinctiveness and Conservation of Wealden's Historic Environment;
- Visual/ landscape impact;
- Amenity, noise, daylight and sunlight;
- Access, and transport impact;
- Mixed uses;
- Residential change of use and redevelopment in the countryside;
- Change of use in town centres;
- Employment - small scale changes of use and new development within settlement boundaries;
- Employment and agricultural Change in the countryside;
- Recreation and tourism in the countryside;
- Protection of local services; As well as an overall framework for planning obligations (see Part 7 'Making it Happen - Implementation').

2.40 By having a smaller number of policies that can be used to assess a wide variety of proposals (often unpredictable) the plan can be simplified from an ever growing list of policies. For example, policies on highly specific uses, as appeared in the 'old style' local plan (such as angling, fishing, paintball, four wheel sports etc) will not be needed. This is a Government requirement.

Wealden's Heritage

2.41 There are 34 conservation areas in Wealden and the District has over 2,100 entries on the register of listed buildings. Despite this considerable heritage the statutory list is considered to be in need of review. In some cases the boundaries of conservation areas have been drawn too

tightly. There may also be instances of areas which would fulfil the criteria for designation but where designation has not yet been considered. Many conservation area boundaries currently exclude areas which would warrant conservation area status having regard to current best practice and are therefore due for review. For example, the contribution of designs from our more recent past to our historic heritage is now better appreciated than when conservation areas were first designated. It may also be the case that within the AONB the perception has been that a degree of protection was already afforded to some dwellings and small settlements. The Council has a programme for the review of conservation areas which takes into account the resources available and those areas considered to be a priority for review.

2.42 Under the new planning system English Heritage recommends⁽¹⁵⁾ less detailed policies relating to conservation in local development documents, with greater emphasis put on reference to national policies. At a local level more detailed conservation and design matters should be included as supplementary planning documents. This approach is being adopted through the Wealden Design Guide. It also means that the new plan will need to have regard through a number of criteria to the character and qualities of places, especially villages, hamlets and historic parks and estates. Some villages where conservation area status has not been considered appropriate do however have historic and vernacular buildings, open spaces and other features which contribute to local character, all of which the new plan will need to take account of. Village Design Statements can also be of considerable help in maintaining local distinctiveness and other aspects of the environment considered to be of particular importance to local character. Several parishes have produced extremely informative statements identifying what is seen as important within their village.

2.43 Wealden has a number of Historic Parks & Gardens but some of these are not yet included on the national register in whole or part. The new plan can provide a process for recognising locally important parks and gardens. They are important as a visual and in some cases recreational resource but the locations of some Historic Parks near towns (such as Heathfield Park and Buxted Park) restrict town extension options.

2.44 Wealden's heritage and landscape are intricately related - its beauty derives in good part from an exceptionally well preserved historic landscape; which goes well beyond formally designated archaeological features. For example medieval field patterns and landscape features surround all of the Districts towns. This means that any new plan will have to take account of this issue, but in an appropriate way recognising the comparative national and local importance of features and to what extent they can be maintained.

2.45 The historic environment within Wealden is currently protected by several types of designation. The Government's Heritage White Paper proposes merging separate designations into a single register of heritage assets with common consent regimes. They also propose statutory protection. Support is also given for the preparation of lists of 'locally' important buildings so that their social, historic and architectural values to local communities can be better understood and protected.⁽¹⁶⁾



Wealden's Renewable and Low Carbon Potential

2.46 The use of certain technologies may help the reduction of carbon emissions produced by new and existing development. These include wind, biomass, wave and water power and combined heat and power. The South East Plan sets down a broad framework for such development. It is supportive but recognises that development in some areas with greatest potential, such as on the tops of the Downs, may be inappropriate. There is a sub-regional framework for determining appropriate targets for renewable energy (for East and West Sussex together) in the South East Plan. Nationally only a minority of areas will be economically feasible for renewable energy projects, such as windy open upland areas, fast flowing streams, south facing slopes for passive solar gain and wooded/coppiced areas for biofuels/power. These assets that are plentiful in Wealden. The issue is how such development can be carefully integrated into a very sensitive landscape and be of an appropriate scale.

2.47 Local authorities can now ask for a proportion of energy generated by development to be obtained from 'microgeneration' of renewable sources, and the draft South East Plan proposes a quota of at least 10%. The Government target is for these technologies and greater insulation to make new housing 'carbon neutral' (that is generating as much energy from these sources as they consume) within 10 years.

2.48 There may be location specific opportunities for linking certain 'carbon neutral' technologies to housing and employment developments. Some technologies benefit from distributed locations, others require a very substantial block of development in one location. For example, biomass and small scale woodburning power (now being pioneered in the Weald and providing a new economic source for coppicing) and use of large scale combined heat and power/district heating if a 'large block' of housing is proposed in a single location near a proposed power source.

Question Two

Renewable Energy

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following options;

Option 2a

New development should meet the South East Plan requirement of generating at least 10% of its energy from renewable energy sources;

Option 2b

A higher target - such as 20% - should be set in light of Wealden's potential, if this is viable.

Part 3 Wealden's Working Patterns

The Spatial Challenge:

How can we best plan for patterns of work in Wealden given its highly dispersed patterns of commuting?

The Shift Away from Farming

3.1 Farms were originally the main centres of local employment. These land based activities have greatly reduced in recent years but surplus farm buildings themselves have become an increasing focus for small businesses. Conversions have been greater in the North of the District as many farms have been bought up as places of residence rather than as working farms (given poor/marginal soils and proximity to London). Owners have been keen to find alternative uses for former agricultural outbuildings for which there is a strong business demand. A farm based location is attractive to many businesses because of the environment, easy parking, lack of congestion and security. Recreational and tourism activities associated with farms also provide a significant employment base; for example, equestrian activity, farm shops, angling etc.



3.2 There have been anecdotal concerns from the farming and landowning community that local policy on this issue is too strict. Current policy approach encourages appropriate diversification and re-use of farm buildings for employment purposes but discourages scattered business activities away from centres of population. Given Wealden's highly scattered farmsteads and local population and the move away from traditional 'farming' activities they are seeking a more flexible approach.

3.3 'Diversification' may not be an appropriate term given its overly broad definition as anything non-agricultural, and when so many farms are no longer farms at all in the traditional sense, but former farmsteads used as houses with the other buildings used for other non-agricultural purposes. The landscape still requires an income stream to fund its maintenance and management and/or more low maintenance models which benefit wildlife. On the other hand as farm based businesses have grown so have the scale of deliveries to some types of enterprise down narrow and sometimes unsuitable lanes, and functional but often ugly post second world war buildings, often built as permitted development, have now come under pressure for conversion.

3.4 National policy in [PPS7](#) requires a positive approach towards alternative uses but gives priority to conversion of former agricultural outbuildings for employment use over residential conversion. This helps ensure that such buildings are available as low cost premises for small businesses as they do not attract residential valuations. On the other hand in totality such buildings could in theory accommodate a significant part of the District's housing requirement if conversion were allowed, albeit in a scattered form remote from local services.

3.5 Perhaps the principal issue is how this new rural economy is best managed to secure the management of the landscape for the future and generate wealth and employment sustainably. Sustainable wood based industries and forestry management are a particular priority given the District's extensive woodland coverage.

Travel to Work

3.6 Analysis of travel to work patterns from the 2001 Census (special workplace statistics) is important in plan-making as these show the main places of work, the sustainability of travel patterns and the factors which drive local housing markets.

3.7 The North of Wealden demonstrates a highly distributed pattern of movement whereas there is a more integrated pattern of movement across Eastbourne and the Southern part of Wealden.

3.8 There is a relatively weak pattern of movement between the North Wealden settlements of Uckfield, Heathfield, Horem and Crowborough. Tunbridge Wells receives a large number of travel to work trips from Crowborough, and there is a strong relationship between East Grinstead and the settlement of Forest Row.

3.9 The towns across North Wealden appear to have a restricted relationship with the South Wealden and Eastbourne labour market.

3.10 In terms of village journeys the pattern is similar within the North of the District with Tunbridge Wells and London being the major influences on commuting patterns. Crawley figures strongly in villages towards the North and West of the District such as Danehill, Fletching and Nutley. Towards the South, Eastbourne exerts more influence and is both a destination and source for commuters. Lewes features significantly in journey patterns for villages in the West, while in the East, Rother and Hastings are key sources/destinations.

3.11 Despite some general patterns created by the natural draw of larger towns outside of the District, many people work in places that bear no geographical relationship to where they live.

3.12 The data for out-commuting to London demonstrates some surprising results with no clear relationship between the presence of a station and commuting levels to London. This appears to suggest that commuters are either driving to stations to catch London-bound trains or that they are driving to London. Some train stations are currently being under-used because of poor levels of service.

3.13 The data also demonstrates significantly large numbers of journeys to work (in terms of both in-commuting and out-commuting) within Wealden District itself. Some villages have much higher levels of out commuting than incommuting, like East Dean, but many have very high levels of in-commuting, such as Forest Row and Framfield, which receive almost as many commuters as they supply. Many villages have levels of in-commuting of between 50-60% of the level of out-commuting. This demonstrates the complex and dispersed travel patterns in the District produced by its dispersed patterns of residences and workplaces.

Wealden's Economic Challenges

3.14 Wealden's economy is one of strong contrasts in performance and earnings (source Office of National Statistics Labour Market Summary for Wealden 2003).

3.15 The relatively strong existing performance of Wealden District as a whole is mainly due to the employment growth forecast in the financial and business services and other (mainly public) service sectors, which are expected to account for almost all of the employment growth in Wealden. Tourism is also expected to see above trend growth. (SEER Consulting forecasting model 2004). Wealden businesses consider

inadequate road infrastructure and traffic congestion to be their main concern (Sussex Annual Business Survey 2005) and limiting factors to future investment.

3.16 Wealden has the largest number of entrepreneurs in the County. Most of the businesses in the District employ less than 20 people and of these around a quarter are looking for space. This suggests that there is a core of “post start-up” and established businesses whose needs are not entirely satisfied and this could harm future prospects if supply of new space acts as a constraint (East Sussex County Council 2006).

3.17 According to a report by Vail Williams for East Sussex County Council in 2004 (Small Business Units and Employment Land Study 2004) only 11% of businesses required brand new space. Notably, 28% preferred “low cost/no frills” space. There was also a marked preference for freehold (68%). However, rentals do not appear to attract investment and Wealden is a low profile destination. Its towns are considered too small and/or too poorly connected for developers to risk building small unit schemes. A number of employment allocations in the Local Plan/ Non-Statutory Plan, notably at Ashdown Business Park, the proposed Polegate Business Park and at Hackhurst Lane, remain unimplemented.

3.18 The type of location where space is preferred is predominantly on the “edge of town” (40%), especially in Hailsham, although 36% wish to retain a rural location. In relation to “move on” premises for small and medium sized enterprises the introduction of more freehold (as opposed to lease) properties on the edge of towns and good quality second hand units of larger size are needed.

3.19 Business support agencies (East Sussex Enterprise Agency and East Sussex Enterprise Partnership) have indicated that the small units that are available are not meeting the market needs and are of a poor standard. The research established that there is a market with the potential to expand for

small business property suitable for freehold ownership so that they can assist them to build a capital base. The Vail Williams study showed that over two thirds of the demand is for this type of tenure. Micro-businesses however, favour property lets on an easy in/easy out basis.

3.20 This evidence base may at first sight seem to send conflicting messages but can partly be explained by the contrasts between different segments of the local population and local business, and the different economic strengths of the North and South of the District. There are also marked differences between high earners and low earners, and between price sensitive low value added firms seeking no-frills stock, and growing small and medium sized businesses seeking quality freehold stock. In a challenge to past assumptions about economic development there appears to be little or no developer interest in new leasehold industrial estates and no developer interest or demand for high amenity business parks, whereas the demand for farm based premises is very high. There is also high demand for basic general industrial stock (which often causes enforcement problems) but there is limited stock to move businesses to.

3.21 At the same time the South of the District, especially when considered in conjunction with the adjoining Eastbourne Borough shows aspects of marked under performance, and lack of growth of small firms.

3.22 Forecasts of job growth (labour demand) and workforce growth (labour supply) by SEERA and East Sussex County Council for the South East Plan imply that labour will be a significant constraint on economic development in the North of the District. With an ageing population and falling household sizes, lack of an available labour force will require higher wages and increased workforce immigration. Without an increased labour pool from new housing wages would have to rise harming the prospect for small rural businesses reliant on lower paid labour.

3.23 'Live/work' units have been suggested as a means of providing more local employment. However, the evidence base for this points to them leading to a loss of affordable housing and employment space (especially on designated employment areas) if not properly controlled. Also controls are very difficult to enforce⁽¹⁾. Evidence from London Residential Research and others suggest very low occupation of such units by actual registered businesses. It must be remembered that many small businesses can be run from home without planning permission. Perhaps the real issue is addition of or design of homes to accommodate ancillary working and business expansion, given the very high level of home working in the District.

3.24 There is a particular issue around the Ashdown Forest area where small businesses in sectors such as creative industries and health have been flourishing, but where there is a lack of farm buildings to convert creating a shortage of work space.

Question Three

Employment Land

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following options:

Option 3a

'Land allocated for employment purposes but which is undeveloped should be considered for mixed use or possibly other uses if there is no realistic prospect of employment development coming forward.'

Option 3b

'Existing employment premises should be protected from redevelopment where there is evidence of market need.'

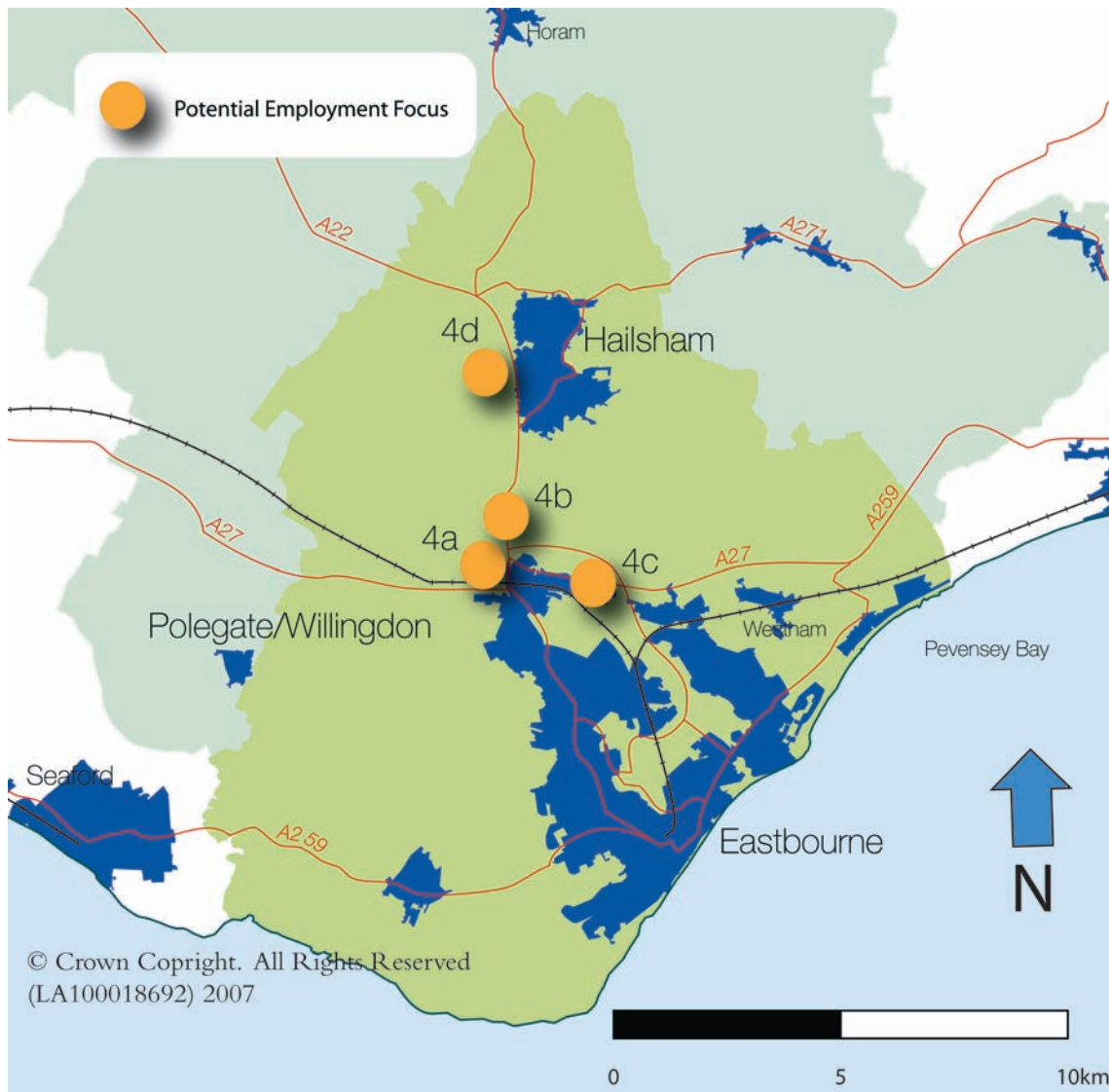
Option 3c

'For new business development the focus should be on securing small/medium sized business space and general industrial premises in suitable locations.'

Option 3d

'New housing development should be balanced with an appropriate level of new business development.'

Figure 8 The Eastbourne - Hailsham Triangle



The Sussex Coast Economy

3.25 The Southern part of the District around Hailsham and Polegate together with the adjoining Borough of Eastbourne is economically different from the rest of Wealden. The area has been termed the Eastbourne/Hailsham triangle and has been subject to recent research supported by the District Council. It is recognised as lagging in terms of economic performance at a regional scale with housing growth not being matched by job growth. In contrast to Wealden as a whole it has low rates of entrepreneurial activity and two thirds of those who live in the

area work within 5km of home (source Census 2001). The area has an older age profile and lower skills profile than that typical of the country as a whole. Few of the small businesses in the area have developed into significant employers. Additionally it is under represented in high growth knowledge based sectors.

3.26 It has long been an ambition to boost economic performance in the area – now recognised in the South East Plan - with the Polegate and Hailsham areas having opportunities which could also benefit the wider economy. In partnership with a range of bodies including Eastbourne, Wealden has

agreed an action plan for this 'triangle' area. It has a vision of being a dynamic, attractive and connected sub-region with the A27/A22 as its development spine. It sees attracting inward investment as key to broadening the local economy and there needs to be a concerted effort to bring sites forward especially at Hailsham and Polegate, and improve infrastructure which has been holding up the development of sites.

3.27 Realising this vision may require intervention given the hesitancy of the market to bring forward new stock. The report for Locate in East Sussex 'Options for a Strategic Business Park in East Sussex' found that the scope for a large scale office led scheme was limited due to market considerations, however there may be scope to encourage a new 'public service village' (GVA Grimley 2006). Of all potential locations Ashdown Business Park (Maresfield) and Polegate were preferred. There is a tension between the economic development requirements of local businesses and the need to bridge the large 'employment gap' in the triangle area. There is also a tension between the desire to see local road improvements, (such as dualling the A27(T)) and national policy which is against major road schemes impacting upon AONB and national parks. There may be a more innovative and environmentally friendly solution to the A27(T) issue (see Part 7 'Making it Happen - Implementation'). All of these options are related closely to what sub-regional options are chosen for the South of Wealden/Eastbourne area.

3.28 There are a number of potential areas which as required by the South East Plan could become '*strategically accessible and sustainable locations along the A22 for employment space and associated housing*'. The idea of a new East Sussex County Council Headquarters, if of appropriate quality, could act as an important driver and anchor for this project. Ongoing studies will further inform the potential locations and range of uses in light of the regeneration focus of the South East Plan. These options include one identified through the

Non-Statutory Local Plan and two other potential locations that have come forward (see figure 8).

Question Four

Hailsham/Eastbourne Triangle

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following options for additional new employment/ business developments:

Option 4a

Land to the North West of Polegate by the A27(T)

Option 4b

Area to the North of Polegate around the A22 Cophall roundabout

Option 4c

Area to the north east of Polegate South of the A27(T)

Option 4d

Area around the A22 in Hailsham

Question 4e

If there are any other locations you wish us to consider, please tell us where and why they should be included.

Tourism

3.29 Tourism, hotels and catering are the main employment sectors in the District. There are a number of small-medium scale tourist attractions in the District, such as Pooh Corner, Drusillas and Michelham Priory, but the tourist potential of some assets (such as Herstmonceux Castle) are relatively unexploited. The District is also a centre for quiet informal countryside recreation and sustainable tourism, making use of its high quality countryside and attractive villages. The South Downs attracts large numbers of day visitors, and the Ashdown Forest, in the North of the District is also popular as a tourist destination.

Part 4 Wealden's Settlement Pattern

The Spatial Challenge:

Wealden has a dispersed development pattern with five towns and many villages. The challenge is to ensure that development is located in the right place and meets each settlement's needs.

4.1 Wealden has a wide variety of different villages, hamlets and towns. The Local Development Framework must have a strategy for the role of these different types of settlements in terms of their needs and the amount and type of development appropriate for each.

Settlement Boundaries

4.2 All towns and many villages currently have settlement boundaries (previously referred to as development boundaries). These were set originally by an old structure plan and have since been carried forward into the Local Plan. Outside of these only development suitable for the open countryside is permitted, and this includes the more open and sensitive villages or parts of villages without such boundaries. This is well established and enables framing of simple policies, however it also has its disadvantages. A concern expressed during community plan consultation and during the parish planning consultation events was that some boundaries were drawn too tightly and are preventing small scale housing from being built for local needs.

4.3 National policy ([PPS12 para A2](#)) allows settlement boundaries to be redrawn as part of the Core Strategy where they are for large scale development such as urban extensions. Additionally, allocation of sites for housing under national housing policy ([PPS3](#)) now takes place over five and ten years whilst the broad locations for housing are set over 15 years or more. However, as allocations must

be in conformity with the Core Strategy this means that some settlement boundaries may have to be drawn more widely than the first 10 years of allocations (e.g. to 2021). This will require strict policies for phased and managed release of housing within that boundary and the remainder of land protected as a 'strategic reserve' (also referred to as 'white land').

4.4 There is a strong planning case for retaining village boundaries. Removing settlement boundaries altogether could create a 'free for all', make provision of affordable housing more difficult, conflict with the structure plan and make application of national policy [PPS7](#) on protection of the countryside problematic. It also would make it difficult and possibly contentious at appeal as to whether national policies restricting the uses appropriate to the 'open countryside' should be applied.

4.5 Boundaries could be amended to be drawn more broadly to include scope for new development in those settlements considered suitable for some growth. Although it would be possible to extend every village settlement boundary where every acceptable amount of growth is required, this could extend the public examination. A criteria based policy could apply, allowing some small scale peripheral growth. This is risky and would need carefully worded policies on phasing and monitoring to prevent too much rural land coming forward at once and to ensure that the least sensitive areas around villages were prioritised for development. There would be risks that affordable 'Rural Exceptions' sites would diminish.

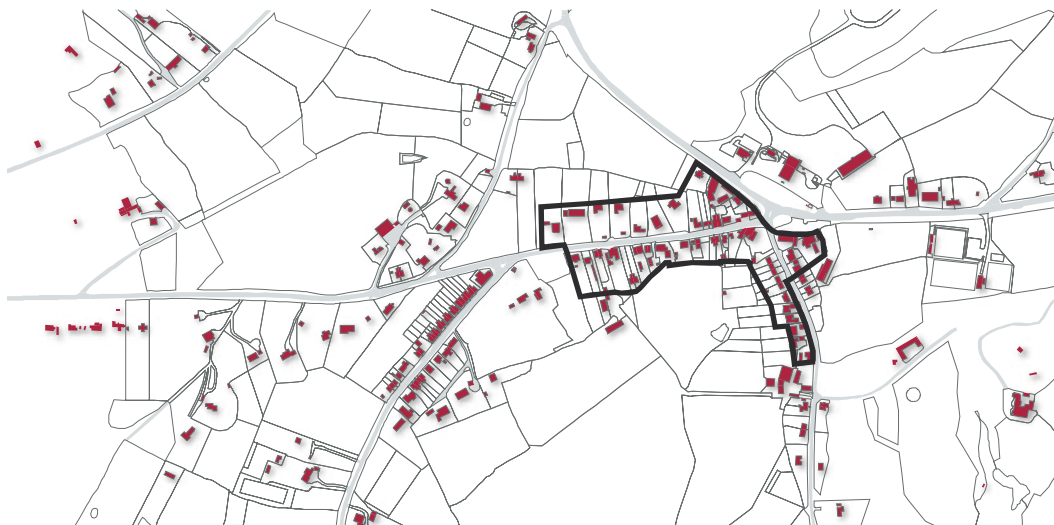
4.6 The suggested criteria for defining boundaries, particularly around villages, include whether a village has a well defined, broadly contiguous, coherent and enclosed form so as to be of a character and size (including any adjoining previously developed sites) distinct from the open countryside and be perceived as a village and not a hamlet.

Typically boundaries are drawn to exclude areas of more open character including large rear gardens to prevent backland development encroaching on the character of the open countryside. This is a separate but related issue from what degree of services a village offers and whether or not it is suitable for growth.

4.7 Which specific villages have settlement boundaries needs to be consistent and be reviewed. Some clearly defined villages may require boundaries, whereas some more 'strung out' or dispersed villages, very small villages/hamlets, or villages with a very open character may not require them. Some boundaries may also be out of date in terms of development that has taken place and could benefit from review.

4.8 Also where villages might expand is important in relationship to their form and topography, for example if High Weald ridgetop villages expand the visual impact will vary depending upon whether it is on the ridgetops, down the sides of valleys or near the valley bottoms.

Figure 9 Cross in Hand is a good example of the principles that have been used to define 'tight' settlement boundaries



Question Five**Settlement Boundaries**

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following policy options:

Option 5a

Settlement boundaries should be maintained, but should be expanded where needed to allow for necessary growth.

Option 5b

There should be a policy which allows for some small scale development to take place outside settlement boundaries subject to strict criteria.

Question 5c

If you have any further brief comments (including any changes to boundaries you would make) please tell us.

Classifying Towns

4.9 The five towns each have different issues and different potential for development. The proposed approach is derived from census definitions⁽¹⁾, which categorises settlements with a population of 10,000 or more being 'urban'⁽²⁾. This may not be appropriate in Wealden's context of small towns and large villages. The smallest settlement traditionally regarded as a town, Heathfield has a population of around 7,500. This is more than twice the estimated population of the largest village of Forest Row and Wadhurst (around 3,500). Therefore

7,000 is used as the suggested cut off point in the Wealden context, together with a range of other service based criteria derived from census definitions.

4.10 One important way the Core Strategy will need to classify the towns is in terms of a retail network and hierarchy. Each town serves a very different catchment and the extent and quality of retailing currently appears to bear little relationship to the towns' populations.

4.11 A number of supermarkets have been granted permission in the District in recent years, notably at Crowborough, Hailsham and Uckfield. There is also a long-standing community aspiration for a major supermarket at Polegate. There has been a notable lack of investment in comparison retailing (goods such as clothes and electricals) with reliance on nearby larger towns such as Eastbourne and Tunbridge Wells. Whilst the District's small towns are not able to compete on the same scale with these larger towns there is little doubt that there is scope for additional retail investment which could lead to less expenditure 'leaking' out and a reduction in shopping related journey lengths. Significant town centre development opportunities exist in Crowborough, Hailsham, Uckfield, and to a lesser extent in Polegate, and small scale opportunities in Heathfield. The District Council will shortly be undertaking a retail study to inform policy in this field. The extensive healthchecks carried out by some of the town partnerships (see Part 5 'Wealden's Places'), provide an extremely helpful insight into the overall health and aspirations of the principal towns. Extending this method to include information on retail 'benchmarking' (as pioneered by Action for Market Towns) would be most useful⁽³⁾.

4.12 It is considered of little value at this early stage to rank towns in terms of a composite index of how sustainable each is, and then use this as the basis for prioritising

1 http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/pdfs/urban_area_defn.pdf

2 <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/nrudp.asp>

3 Benchmarking for Small Towns - Action for Market Towns 1999

which town should be allocated growth. Housing, employment and retailing each have their own locational requirements which are not always linked to the level of services. Some locations in and around towns are poorly linked to the services in parts of that town. In Wealden's case in terms of travel patterns impacting upon sustainability, how towns function in relation to larger towns and places of employment/services and as part of wider housing market areas is more important. This has been one of the reasons why government research has questioned the merits of such composite indexes in determining appropriate locations for new development.⁽⁴⁾

4.13 The District Council is examining Wealden's settlement structure in relation to the function and development potential of each - it will then be possible to combine this 'top down' approach with two interrelated factors which may help inform the appropriate amount of development for each place. Firstly, a 'bottom up' assessment of the potential of broad areas around settlements and potential new settlements. Secondly, a series of strategic choices as to the principle impacts of different approaches towards dividing the total amount of growth between, for example, towns/and/or new settlements within each of the two policy areas for Wealden (see figure 3) and between settlements of different sizes. This approach is used in the following sections to help frame questions on the appropriate choices for development locations.

4 <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1145513>

Development In and On the Edge of Towns

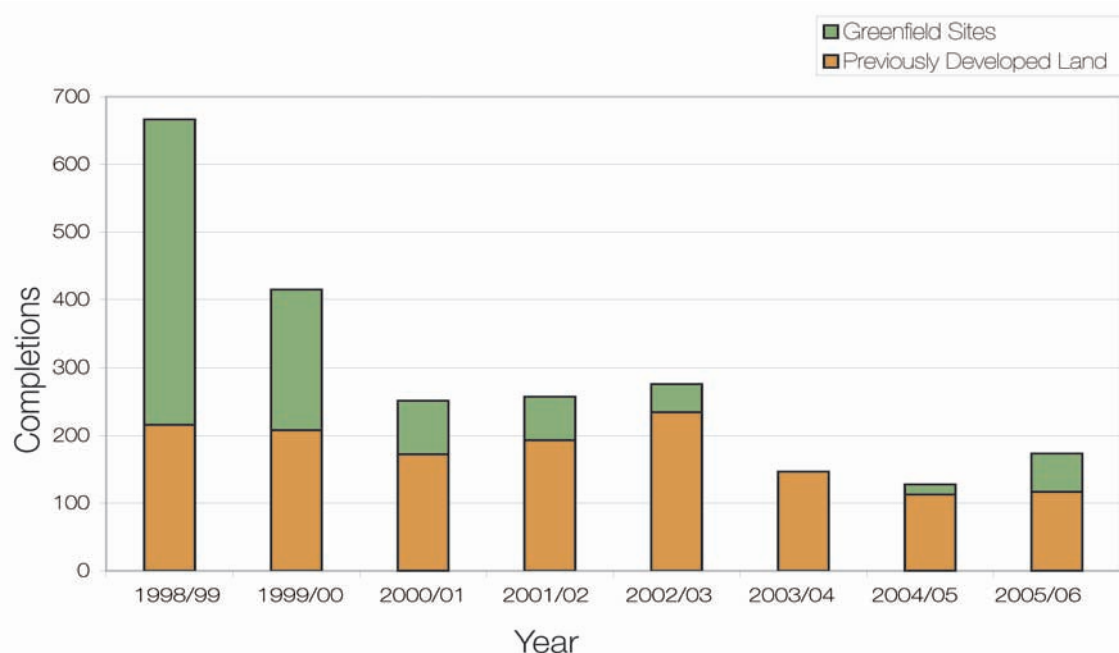
4.14 The amount of previously developed (brownfield land) in Wealden is limited, as it is mostly a rural district with a small recent industrial legacy. The main brownfield site is Hellingly Hospital (which now has planning permission), with other significant brownfield sites in rural locations. Previous urban capacity studies for the Local Plan have identified very few non-existing housing sites in the towns, some of which have now been developed, whilst others seem unlikely to come forward. A more proactive approach to identifying potential that can be realised through good urban design may see some additional brownfield regeneration sites coming forward, especially in and around town centres.

4.15 The Structure Plan proposed a doubled rate of house building in Wealden between 2006-2011, principally on greenfield sites. This strategy for Wealden was to compensate for a number of large and mainly brownfield sites being developed and then running out

elsewhere in East Sussex such as Sovereign Harbour, with a proposed dip overall in house building provision at county level.

4.16 In the last few years there has been an upturn in the proportion of new housing in the District being built on brownfield sites (69.4% in 2005/2006). The primary reason for this is that the adopted local plan greenfield site allocations have been built. There was a period from 1992-1999 during which sites were being built more rapidly than structure plan targets. Developers have since turned their attention to infill and redevelopment within towns, including redevelopment of existing residential properties and gardens; which is very similar to trends in the South East overall. Whilst the proportion of such sites - which are technically classified as 'brownfield' has increased, the number overall has been lower (see figure 10). Development of some suitable larger sites in Wealden has been postponed because of problems of upgrading transport and other infrastructure. This creates a significant problem in terms of low housing delivery.

Figure 10 Completions by Land Type



4.17 In 'New Homes for East Sussex 2005' - which formed the basis of consultation proposals for the South East Plan - the County Council assumed that although there would be a need for a significant extra allocation in the Sussex Coast Area, the availability of brownfield sites in Wealden and past trends in rural 'windfall' sites would obviate the need for substantial additional greenfield allocations in the Rest of Wealden over and above what was then proposed. Over the past five years a mean of 112 dwellings on previously developed land in the Rest of Wealden have come forward - if this trend carries forward then around 88% of the target for the Rest of Wealden will come from brownfield sites. In contrast 46 dwellings per year in the Sussex Coast Policy Area in the same period were on previously developed land, and if continued then a brownfield target here of only 25% or so would be achievable. This has implications on how much of the land 'allocated' in the new plan will be built out over the plan period in different parts of the District, rather than held as a future contingency. Government guidance does not allow 'windfall' sites to be counted towards the first ten years of future supply.

4.18 Over the next few years the coming on stream of development at the Hellingly Hospital site will see a temporary uplift in the brownfield proportion. This cannot be sustained. Also some brownfield sites are important employment sites; the loss of which might require future greenfield employment allocations. Any target will be driven by the availability of sites, not vice versa.

4.19 The South East Plan is clear that new greenfield housing allocations will be necessary in Wealden. The South East Plan and national policy ([PPS3](#), [PPS1](#) and annex, [PPS12](#), [PPG13](#)) are also clear that urban/urban edge locations with a choice of means of transport should be the main focus of new development within plans.

4.20 The South East Plan does not promote new settlements, but neither it nor national policy expressly restricts consideration of

such an option, leaving the choice of development patterns to local assessment of what is most sustainable. National policy strictly controls new house building in the countryside, away from established settlements without services, and together with the urban focus of the South East plan any proposal for a new settlement option would need careful and powerful justification. Potential locations within a Low Weald Area of Search - outside nationally designated landscapes such as AONB, are considered in the following chapter: Part 5 'Wealden's Places'.

4.21 One argument for focusing development in a limited number of locations - particularly in the Sussex Coast Policy Area where development patterns and infrastructure are less dispersed, is to reap the potential sustainability benefits of locating a large amount of new development in one place - in terms of possible application of low carbon technology and shorter travel patterns. (see 'Village Strategy and Broad Locations').

Options for the Urban/Rural Split

4.22 The new plan will need to take a broad stance on what amount of growth is allocated to towns and what is allocated to villages. The proportion of housing in Wealden being built in urban (inside-adjointing town development boundaries) as opposed to rural areas has risen fairly steadily from 50% to 70% between 2002/3 and 2005/6. It should be noted that this figure includes windfalls (that is sites not expressly identified), so in a very rural district such as Wealden the proportion of housing being built in rural areas is always likely to be greater than the proportion allocated. For the new plan we need to decide how much land is allocated in rural areas - that is shown on the proposals map - as part of the overall housing requirement.

4.23 The following are suggested as very broad possible strategy options for this distribution, designed to accord with the National policy focuses on growth in the most

accessible locations such as towns but which does also state that rural areas need to grow as well. A higher proportion (than 30%) of rural housing would be unlikely to be compatible with the draft settlement strategy as it would require significant development at remote and smaller villages with few services and could be considered to be contrary to national policy.

4.24 The distributions reflect whether the potential for village housing locations in accordance with the draft settlement strategy assessed as part of this paper would be developed only in part or more fully. Of course the approach adopted may need to vary between the two parts of the District. For example the South East Plan requires for the Sussex Coast Policy areas that *'Most of the development should be focused on existing towns by optimising the use of previously-developed land and, where necessary, by making new land allocations as sustainable extensions of existing towns'*. So a distribution here heavily weighted towards village locations would probably be inappropriate.

Question Six

The Urban/Rural Split

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following possible urban/rural splits for planned growth:

Option 6a

About 80% should be focused in and around towns with the remainder distributed to villages

Option 6b

About 75% should be focused in and around towns with the remainder distributed to villages

Option 6c

About 70% should be focused in and around towns with the remainder distributed to villages

Question 6d

If there are any other options you wish us to consider (for example 60% focused in and around towns with the remainder distributed to the villages), please tell us what they are and your reasons for suggesting them.

4.25 On the other hand it may be difficult to achieve a full five year supply with an initial urban focus in the Sussex Coast Policy area. With this in mind the focus could shift over time towards urban locations, as these problems are resolved. The draft Housing Market Assessment points towards a more distributed strategy in the Rest of Wealden and more concentrated in the South.

4.26 A major consideration in these options between urban and rural might be what priority is given to relieving affordability issues in different areas, and perhaps whether some villages have less infrastructure problems (if growth occurred more widely in smaller packets) than around some towns. Also growth of some villages near towns might meet an 'urban' need rather than a rural one. The distributions in question six are based on assessments of what may theoretically and practically be possible around settlements of different categories (see Part 5 'Wealden's Places').



Classifying Villages

4.27 Wealden has a large number of villages that vary widely in their population and historical development, and this is an important component of the District's character. Some of the District's villages grew significantly in the 20th century, whilst other parishes do not appear to have grown at a similar rate. Settlement patterns also vary widely, with scattered, mostly small ridge top villages in the High Weald and the string of villages at the foot of the South Downs. There are villages which have grown organically, planned estate villages, shrunken medieval towns, squatter settlement villages and villages which have moved (or been moved) wholesale. This means that the planning requirements of villages vary radically and the New Plan needs to have regard to the character of each village/hamlet whether in

a conservation area or not, including the character of hamlets now captured within towns as they have grown.

4.28 With the acute problems of housing affordability in Wealden's rural areas there was a general acceptance at the 2007 Parish Planning Conference of the need for villages to accept some appropriate and gradual development. This was because of the need to support and reinvigorate local services and communities and make housing more affordable. Aging populations and shrinking household sizes contribute to the deterioration and loss of village amenities; appropriate development may counter this decline and provide opportunities for those who wish to stay in an area.

4.29 National policy ([PPS7](#)) requires certain villages to be classified as 'local service centres' with development focused on such centres. Local service centres are villages which have a range of services sufficient to service their surrounding rural communities and smaller villages. Typically they are the larger villages, however, villages in Wealden along A roads and villages in more isolated locations seem to offer a higher level of services relative to their size. Definition of a village as a local service centre however does not automatically mean that it is suitable for growth; conservation importance, lack of other infrastructure and/or a particularly sensitive landscape setting may mean in reality that a village is unsuitable for growth.

Figure 11 Suggested Settlement Classification

The Settlement Classification could be as follows:

Towns - A free-standing built-up area with a population of at least 7,500 and with a service core with a sufficient number and variety of shops and services to make it recognisably urban in character. It has administrative, commercial, & educational facilities (including a secondary school), social and civic functions (including a leisure centre. A local network of roads and other means of transport focus on the area, and it is a place that draws people for services and employment from surrounding areas;

Larger Village Local Service Centres – Villages with a population of 1,000 or more, or centre of a parish with a population of 2,000 or more, at least one pub, and with five or more A class (retail) uses, other than pubs – including at least one convenience store/post office or less A1 units if the convenience store is a small supermarket, a place of worship, public playing fields/open space, a primary school, some local employment (employing at least 20 persons), a village hall/community hall and other local services including a GP surgery; Where a village fails to meet one of these criteria it will still qualify if it shares services with another settlement within 5 minutes drive (5km -centre to centre) so that the other settlement fills the gap in service provision or if the major settlement is a town;

Smaller Village Local Service Centres – Villages with a population of 100 or more, or a centre within a parish with a population of 200 or more, and with at least one shop (A1) acting as a convenience store, a pub, a village hall/community hall, place of worship and a primary school. Where a village fails to meet one or two of these criteria it will still qualify if it shares services with another settlement within 5 minutes drive (5km -centre to centre) so that both would jointly qualify or if the major settlement is a town;

Other Smaller Villages and Hamlets - all other settlements

4.30 The traditional approach to classifying villages is to rank them according to a hierarchy depending on the level of services they offer and/or size of population. This approach is useful but recent thinking is that this does not tell the whole story and regard also must be had to what function a village serves in relation to other settlements⁽⁵⁾. For example some villages may look to a major town, rather than a nearby market town, in terms of many shopping and employment functions, whilst some more isolated villages may be more independent, and development here potentially more sustainable.

4.31 Villages close to towns and/or rail stations may be fairly sustainable, despite having a limited range of services, or even the lack of a shop, (perhaps due to competition from a nearby town), because of short overall journeys. This approach may be especially relevant in Wealden as some of the villages with the best range of facilities are also the most highly constrained in other senses.

4.32 The most common approach nationally is to relate the scale of development in/adjoining villages to how a village is classified according to its services and potential to accommodate development. Even where villages have limited growth potential, classification as local service centres could see such villages prioritised in terms of potential need for investment in new community facilities, especially for those villages where facilities in relation to current population are inadequate.

4.33 A detailed background paper outlining the methodology of the settlement classification is available on the Council's website⁽⁶⁾. This paper sets out availability of services, estimated populations and numbers of dwellings and examines travel and working patterns in settlements across the District. This work has developed from recent

stakeholder consultation at the 2007 Parish Planning and Local Strategic Partnership Conferences where the general thrust of the approach received support.

4.34 One potential change of policy would be to limit the percentage increase in population size in any one village over a fixed period⁽⁷⁾. Previous plans have led to large increases in some villages over a short period (an example being Stone Cross) altering their character. The problem though is that an across the board cap would be problematic - as there is not always a link between opportunities for the growth of villages and their locational potential and existing population.

4.35 Most but not all larger villages have sensitive locations and some have limited potential. Some smaller villages near towns have greater physical potential and of course are more accessible. This may mean having to vary the principle according to different circumstances.

4.36 Some villages near towns have potential development locations which may offer real urban design opportunities for improving their character and/or, for serving the town, especially if there are factors making it difficult for towns to grow but not that village. It is like squeezing a balloon - if some villages are constrained others with more growth potential must grow more quickly. If a cap of some form were placed it would as a consequence mean more villages having to take some growth. In particular some smaller villages in accessible locations close to a town, but with broad areas with potential for development, would be constrained by a percentage cap type approach.

4.37 Our initial classification, in figures 11 and 12 would result in the following, also mapped on figure 13: The classification is

5 <http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Landscape/PP/planning/ruralsettlements.asp>

6 http://www.wealden.gov.uk/planning_and_building_control/Local_Plan/CoreStrategy.aspx

7 Estimating small village populations with census data is statistically difficult and the district has developed its own methodology to do so.

primarily based on services rather than population, so there is not always a direct correlation between settlement population size and its classification.

Larger Local Service Centres; - Forest Row, Herstmonceux, Horam, Mayfield, Pevensey Bay, Rotherfield (including Town Row), Stone Cross, Wadhurst (including Durgates and Sparrows Green).

Smaller Local Service Centres; - Alfriston, Blackboys, Broad Oak, Buxted, Cross in Hand, Danehill, East Hoathly, Five Ash Down, Fletching, Framfield, Frant, Groombridge, Hartfield, Hellingly, Laughton, Lower Horsebridge, Maresfield, Ninfield, Nutley, Pevensey, Punnetts Town, Upper Dicker, Westham, Windmill Hill.

Figure 12 Suggested Village Growth Potential

The amount of Appropriate Development for a Village could hypothetically be as follows:

Villages with Growth Potential – Larger local service centres located either within 5 minutes drive/5km (all such distances measured centre to centre along routes) of a town or railway station, or having a weekday peak hour (7-9am) bus service. Smaller local services centres will also qualify if they meet two of these transport accessibility criteria. Centres must be suitable for some expansion, infill and redevelopment totalling 50 units or more according to the policy criteria of the new plan. Peripheral Growth should be appropriate to the character and opportunities of the village; in High Weald AONB development should be limited to that necessary to meet surrounding local needs- (only of if no suitable, available and less landscape quality/sensitivity AONB areas outside the AONB in or around the edge of a village). If the village is designated to help provide housing for a town by being within 5km of the town or 2.5km of a railway station, then total growth should be no more than 20% of a village's population, otherwise 15% of a village's population, both over any rolling 10 year period initially commencing at the plan start. Exceptionally this cap may be lifted where there are significant urban design-led opportunities which would enhance community services and the physical & natural environment, with close community involvement.

Villages with Intermediate Growth Potential – Other larger local services centres, and smaller local service centres having a weekday peak hour (7-9am) bus service. Villages must also meet the criteria for having defined settlement boundaries and be suitable for some expansion, infill and redevelopment totalling 30 units or more according to the policy criteria of the new plan. Peripheral Growth will be typically schemes of 15-50 units as appropriate to the character and opportunities of the village; in High Weald AONB development should be limited to that necessary to meet local needs (only of if no suitable, available and less landscape quality/sensitivity AONB areas outside the AONB in or around the edge of a village). Total growth should be no more than 15% of a village's population over any rolling 10 year period initially commencing at the plan start.

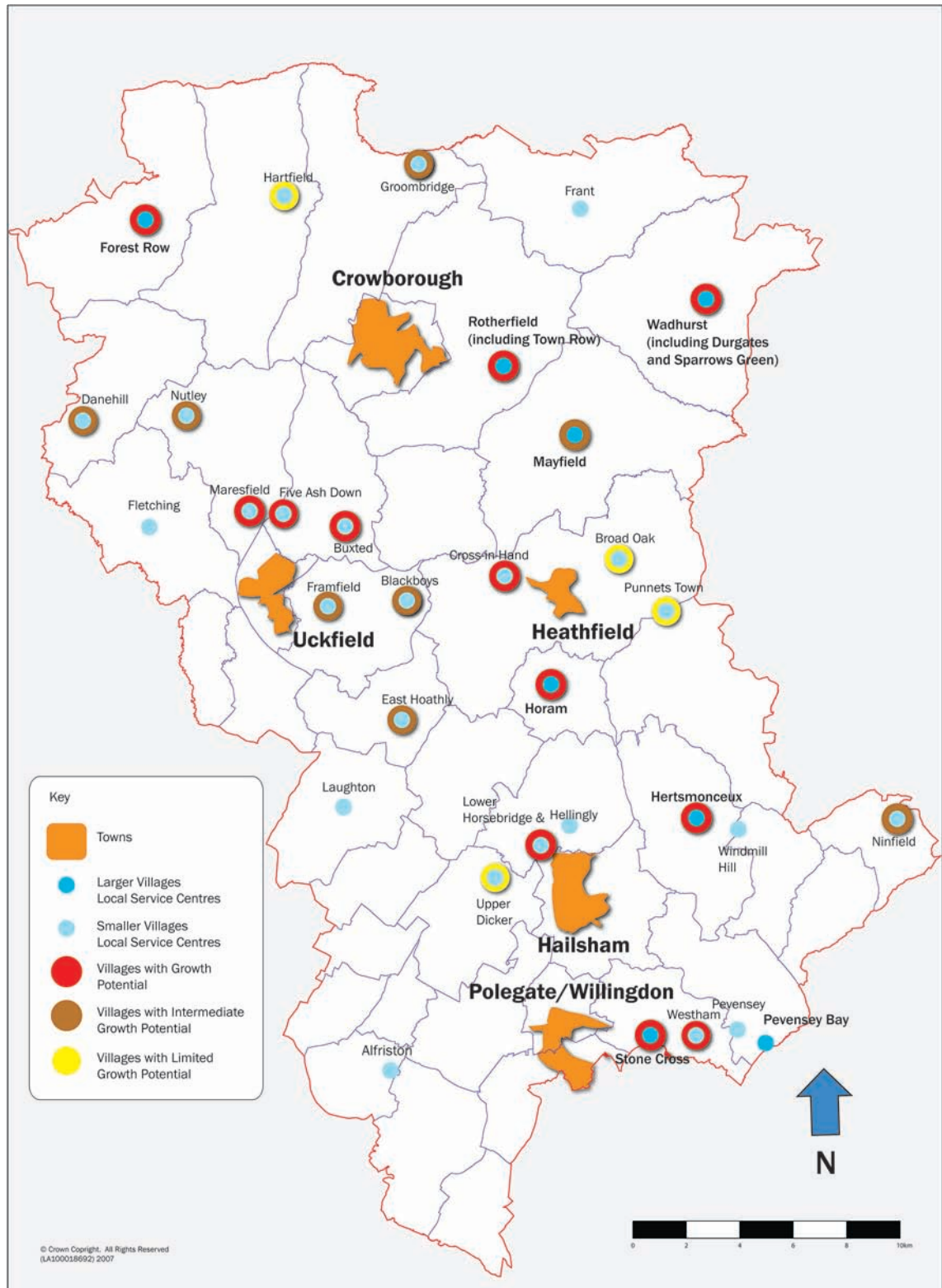
Villages with Limited Growth Potential – Smaller local service centres either located within 5km of a town or railway station or having a regular weekday bus service - or where there is a compelling local need for some growth to boost local services and/or because of a lack of available market and/or affordable housing (such as villages with small school rolls and or aging/declining population). Villages must also meet the criteria for having defined settlement boundaries and be suitable for some expansion, infill and redevelopment according to the policy criteria of the new plan totalling 15-29 units.

Peripheral Growth should be limited to meeting local needs – typically schemes of 5-20 units as appropriate to the character and opportunities of the village; in AONB should be limited to that necessary to meet local needs (only of if no suitable, available and less landscape quality/sensitivity AONB areas outside the AONB in or around the edge of a village) as appropriate to the character and opportunities of the village. Total growth should be no more than 10% of a village's population over any rolling 10 year period initially commencing at the plan start.

Other Villages and Hamlets – Growth limited to smaller infill schemes (typically 1-5 units depending on the character of the village or site and how development impacts on AONB) within development boundaries, or allocated sites for affordable housing on the edge of villages with or without settlement boundaries.

In all categories 'rural exceptions' and other development for affordable housing is permissible without these restrictions. Where a site is previously developed some increase in the site specific scale of development may be appropriate but the overall caps and/or phasing on growth of villages remain.

Figure 13 Suggested Settlement Strategy



Villages with Growth Potential;- Buxted, Cross in Hand, Five Ash Down, Forest Row, Herstmonceux, Horam, Lower Horsebridge, Maresfield, Rotherfield (with Town Row), Stone Cross, Wadhurst (including Durgates and Sparrows Green), Westham.

Villages with Intermediate Growth Potential;- Blackboys, Danehill, East Hoathly, Groombridge, Ninfield, Nutley, Mayfield.

Villages with Limited Growth Potential;- Broad Oak, Framfield, Hartfield, Punnetts Town, Upper Dicker.

4.38 The background paper (referred to earlier in this section) includes a matrix explaining how different villages qualify for different categories of growth potential. Cross in Hand, Lower Horsebridge, Maresfield, Five Ash Down and Westham have been assessed as having potential to meet some additional growth to serve nearby towns as it is considered that the landscape may be able to accommodate growth, accessibility to main roads/public transport is good and there is reasonable proximity to services in nearby towns. Therefore the 'cap' has been raised in relation to these five settlements (see Part Five). However, this is contingent on these being chosen as preferred locations around towns in the final strategy and are only indicated as options at this stage.

4.39 It may be appropriate to have a policy protecting these listed services in villages, including in smaller non-classified villages.

4.40 The geographical concentration of these villages is of interest with the majority of villages with growth potential being located in the historical settlement line on the transition from the low to the high weald, with the low weald side (often outside the AONB) sometimes being the most visually exposed.

Question Seven

Settlement Classification & Settlement Strategy

Option 7a

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the emerging approach for classifying settlements based on their services and accessibility.

Option 7b

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the emerging approach to classifying villages according to their growth potential, the criteria used, and the size limits on additional housing growth proposed.

Option 7c

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with a possible distribution of development which would see the large majority of planned village housing growth taking place in the villages with 'growth potential', and less in other categorised villages.

Option 7d

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with a policy restricting change of use from some local village services (e.g. shops, pubs etc).

Question 7e

If you have any further brief comments on the criteria and/or classification of any settlement(s) please tell us.

Options for the Sussex Coast Policy Area

4.41 Potential options for distributing growth between each of the two parts of the District can be simplified by a broad spatial split between different areas and towns. Whether one option is favoured over another will depend on an assessment of the suitability and availability of areas around different towns including potential availability of infrastructure, of housing markets and housing land availability and finally an assessment of relative accessibility and sustainability of different locations. The following options are for the Sussex Coast Policy Area. These options will all require close cooperation and a degree of joint planning with Eastbourne Borough Council.

4.42 Hailsham Focus; In this option the majority of growth would be focused on Hailsham, with less growth around Polegate / Willingdon. The argument for Hailsham would include the potential for carefully conceived and located development to help regenerate the town and greater strategic capacity and road capacity than Polegate (the A22 being less congested than the A27).

4.43 Polegate/Willingdon /Edge of Eastbourne Focus; In this option the majority of growth would be focused on Polegate/Willingdon and potentially the edge of Eastbourne with less growth around Hailsham. An argument to support growth at these places would be the good rail access, and shorter journeys to Eastbourne and its jobs and services.

4.44 Polegate/Hailsham Axis; in this option there would be a more even split between Polegate/Willingdon on the one hand and Hailsham on the other. An argument in support of this being both areas have potential, and a critical mass of development to the north of Polegate - in the form of a sustainable extension, townships or 'ecotown'⁽⁸⁾ would allow for more sustainable

patterns of development including better, and possibly dedicated, public transport links between Hailsham and Eastbourne, employment and its own services. This would result in some reduction of the gaps between the towns.

4.45 Focus on New Settlement or Settlements in a Low Weald area of search; In this option the main focus would be on one or more new settlement(s), which might include villages expanded to become local service centres, in an area of search focused on the location with the least statutory designations - part of the Low Weald. Issues relating to and potential broad locations within this area are shown in Figure 20 'New Settlement Options - Area of Search' and Table 9. If this option were chosen then depending upon the location of the 'new settlement' it could require redefinition of sub-regional housing allocation areas so that more growth is focused on the Low Weald.

Question Eight

Options for the Sussex Coast Policy Area

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following options for future development (please choose one only).

Option 8a

Hailsham Focus

Option 8b

Polegate/ Willingdon/ Edge of Eastbourne Focus

Option 8c

Polegate/Hailsham Axis

Option 8d

Focus on New Settlement(s) in a Low Weald area of search

Options for the Rest of Wealden

4.46 - Uckfield Focus; This would carry forward the strategy contained in the current structure plan and adopted Local Plan of focusing some development on the Lower Weald, mainly because it is less sensitive than the High Weald AONB. Although smaller than either Crowborough or Hailsham, Uckfield has the most services, greatest potential for town centre expansion and it can serve travel to work trips to both East Grinstead and the Sussex Coast. It has the youngest age profile which generates local housing pressures. The counter tension is that, as it is located further away from larger towns, it has a greater degree of potential self containment – including potential for increased employment, and with increased employment has greater potential for an increase of population towards the sizes of the larger district towns. Infrastructure problems, including flooding, and traffic congestion (the solution to which is currently blocking all significant development) need to be resolved. The costs and ability of solving these problems would count against this option, on the other hand other aspects of Uckfield's infrastructure have spare capacity and good scope for expansion.

4.47 - Uckfield/Crowborough Split; This would see a greater proportion of housing at Crowborough although as there are less available locations around Crowborough, perhaps not as much as Uckfield. The supporting argument is that Crowborough has significantly less infrastructure problems

than Uckfield, has greater school and primary healthcare capacity, and growth here is better able to absorb housing market pressures in the area around Tunbridge Wells. The counter argument to this is the tight ring of the High Weald AONB around most of Crowborough, and the possible consequence of development into the AONB.

4.48 - Uckfield/Crowborough/Heathfield Split; This would be similar to the option just outlined but would also see some additional housing at/around Heathfield to ensure a broader spread of housing opportunities. This might also require some development into the AONB. This kind of dispersed approach to the North of the District is recommended in the draft Housing Market Assessment because of the complex and dispersed travel to work patterns which drive local housing markets.

4.49 Only two of the potential new settlement options - considered in Part 5 "Wealden's Places" - are found in this area, both within the Low Weald Area of Search, so are best considered under the previous question, as if the new settlement option were chosen it might justify some redefinition/reallocation between the two housing policy areas to focus development on the Low Weald, rather than solely on the draft South East Plan's proposed North/South divide.

Question Nine

Options for the Rest of Wealden

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following options for future development (please choose one only):

Option 9a

Uckfield Focus

Option 9b

Uckfield /Crowborough Split

Option 9c

Uckfield /Crowborough/ Heathfield Split

The Overall Level of Housing

4.50 The South East Plan is currently in draft form, and the final figure for additional housing has yet to be approved by the Secretary of State. It will not be known until later in 2007/2008. As a result the Government is now recommending that local authorities do not rely solely on the draft South East Plan figures in preparing their new plans but also look at the potential for some additional housing, in part because the final South East Plan may be higher and in part if there is a local case in terms of housing needs and markets for some additional housing.

4.51 The final South East Plan figure will not automatically translate into the amount of housing to be 'allocated' on the proposals map. This is because if certain allocations have delivery risks associated with them

(risks whether they will come forward on time) then some contingency locations will need to be found - a 'plan b'.

4.52 The key assumption made in the draft South East Plan and by the County is that East Sussex's unique demographic characteristics, its poor transport infrastructure and tightening environmental constraints make it a poor candidate for major levels of new growth and hence the priority now should be given to promoting economic regeneration. The main policy drivers behind the Government's approach to housing policy (that in areas with vigorous housing markets, problems of affordability and a need to fund new infrastructure from development). Priority should be given to maintaining and increasing housebuilding rates.

4.53 The issues are very different between the Sussex Coast Policy Area and the Rest of Wealden. The Rest of Wealden has the highest house prices and most active housing market, and it appears that for here the scale of development proposed in the draft South East Plan housing targets is currently being exceeded by permissions being granted annually and with the majority of this coming from brownfield windfall sites.

Part 5 Wealden's Places

The Spatial Challenge:

The Spatial Challenge: How to choose the best broad locations for new development so that they add to, rather than detract from the best valued characteristics of individual towns and villages.

Shaping Places

5.1 This chapter is concerned with specific towns and villages. It asks for views on broad potential locations for development in terms of what the preferred options and directions for growth of each settlement might be. There are no easy options around any of the towns. Reasons could perhaps be found to reject every one, which is unrealistic given the strategic requirements the District must meet. Hence the approach taken also looks at opportunities to make certain places better. This is set within the context of what the priorities and development outcomes for the towns should be. The priorities chosen will help shape the type, amount and broad location of new development at each place. Priorities need to be realistic, as some might only be achievable with new development of a certain scale, for example, improving the amount of town centre shopping facilities available, redevelopment of outdated or unattractive facilities or paying for improvements such as a new park or other green infrastructure.

5.2 In framing these potential options the town health-checks, and action plans which flow from them, have proven invaluable. These will need to be read alongside the new plan - which as a short strategic document cannot simply incorporate them wholesale. The priorities and vision must be related to development and be distinctive to that place. If it proves unrealistic in terms of the eventual scale of development assigned to a

settlement in order to pay for certain place specific objectives then these may have to be dropped. Wealden is a series of distinct places, not a single place. Detailed action points, relating to, for example, tourism promotion or localised environmental improvements, are best left to local level action plans rather than the Core Strategy. Towns and parishes have an opportunity to review health checks and action plans, or prepare them where they have not yet been prepared.

5.3 A number of priorities may be common to all towns – such as improving bus services and links. These are not listed below specifically but are dealt with overall in Part 6 'Wealden's Communities'. Following the potential objectives for each town are listed a range of possible options for strategic locations for development.

Why Have Certain Broad Search Areas for New Development been Included or Excluded at this First Stage?

5.4 It must be stressed that there is little chance of all of the possible options for development/expansion going forward. They represent a long-list of potential options. The District must at an appropriate point in the next few months make choices sufficient to meet the South East Plan targets. It is not a matter of one option per town as some towns may need more than one to meet these area targets. Nor is it realistic to choose just one or two towns for all (as opposed to possibly most) of the growth, although there are clear options in terms of which towns should be the focus of growth. Having no growth at all in some towns would severely restrict local housing choices there - particularly for first time buyers on modest incomes and in respect of affordable housing. The new plan must also allocate sufficient land in both housing policy areas - and not just focus on one, although there is some flexibility in terms of the exact relative levels of each. Not all of

some broad locations may be appropriate in choosing options, some may only be suitable, deliverable and available in part only.

5.5 For many of the villages there will be limited possibility of all theoretical areas coming forward because of the suggested settlement strategy which would impose limits on the potential total amount of dwellings in the plan period.

5.6 Potential broad areas of search have been identified to form a long list of potential options for initial consultation identified around the circumference of each of the towns, as well as groups of villages with some growth potential and at potential locations for new settlements. Areas have been excluded at this stage where they would conflict with biodiversity designations, locations of historic parks and gardens, and public and private recreational areas. Other exclusions might be where the gradient of land is very steep or where there is no realistic means of provision of suitable access. If other areas were excluded the development community would likely promote them anyway and the District would simply have to undertake another round of consultation and appraisal on these options. The potential areas for each town/village are coded clockwise and not in any order of 'merit'. For some brownfield sites the owners have not stated any intention to vacate and these broad areas may be eliminated quickly if there is no developer and/or landowner interest arising from this paper or ability to deliver.

5.7 Once this process has taken place it will then be possible to frame strategic principles as to how towns should grow and what key landscape settings of towns and/or gaps/wildlife corridors between settlements should be protected and enhanced. This needs to be in the light of what is realistic in terms of the growth required in the area. Consequently it might be possible to define where extensions to town settlement boundaries might be made and possible 'Landscape Setting Protection Areas' around parts of their edge which should be protected

for the land's amenity and natural beauty value (including any associated biodiversity value) in the long term. In addition to the possible broad areas listed below there are a number of smaller potential locations e.g. around Heathfield and Crowborough outside the AONB. These might be best covered by the criteria based approach of the strategy in terms of landscape and biodiversity impact. Many potential areas will need strong green infrastructure (natural networks, screening, habitat buffer zones) and protection of that infrastructure through design, management and planning agreements.

5.8 In terms of broad areas for development this is not simply in relation to areas for housing development. Some of these may be more suited for employment purposes, or a mix of uses. The employment study will give a clearer idea of the scale of need and suitable locations. In the Sussex Coast Policy Area key decisions need to be made on where to locate development which may act as a key employment focus for the whole area - potentially including Eastbourne. Some town centres may be suitable for retail and mixed uses. We will know more about the need for retail and employment development as studies on these topics progress.

5.9 It is also important to consider the cumulative impact and potential of broad areas, additionally there is a need to assess whether key gaps between settlements should be protected and what the appropriate width of any such gaps might be. Protected gaps need to be reasonable - especially when settlements are some distance apart with little realistic prospect of coalescence.

5.10 There is a risk of the examination into site allocations becoming bogged down with hundreds of small site omission objections. It is suggested that the Core Strategy tasks itself (as suggested in the planning white paper) or any Site Allocations Development Plan Document to allocate only larger sites, using a series of criteria. Smaller sites (other than perhaps affordable only sites) might not be allocated on the proposals map but

considered through criteria based policies. Site thresholds could be 30+ units in or on the edge of towns and 15+ units in or on the edge of villages.

5.11 Where developers wish to promote broad areas or significant sites for development, dry technical reports, whilst important, are unlikely to be persuasive to the community of a 'vision' of how places can be improved. This is the opportunity to present quality proposals and collect the evidence needed to make these sound.

5.12 The Council will expect significant community engagement in 'design-led' exercises (such as use of 'enquiry by design' - see 'Why Have Certain Broad Search Areas for New Development been Included or Excluded at this First Stage?') to examine how ideas put forward can contribute to the proposed new plan philosophy of how places can be shaped and improved. Promoters will also need to show how their ideas can be backed up with the appropriate land options and the means to deliver both development, affordable housing and associated infrastructure in a timely fashion.

5.13 Where areas are identified which might only be acceptable for allocation for development on condition that certain buildings/landscape features etc. not afforded statutory protection remain, then landowners and developers should show good faith by submitting what are termed 'unilateral undertakings'. These can legally guarantee and protect these features, even in advance of planning applications, and be part of submissions on the new plan. Failure to do so will be a material planning consideration as the risk of loss remains.

Question Ten

Site Allocation Thresholds

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the suggested size thresholds for making housing allocations of 30+ dwellings in or on the edge of towns and 15+ dwellings in or on the edge of villages.

5.14 In the following sections the approximate potential scale of development for each broad area has been calculated using a potential density range of between 30 (the government minimum) & 50 dwellings per hectare (dph). For locations in or near town centres higher densities than 50 dph have been assumed. Very occasionally lower densities have been used, where local circumstances justify this. It is emphasised that the theoretical densities on new or expanded potential areas are for indicative purposes only. The potential development areas have been assessed to account for a preliminary assessment of matters such as existing tree cover and need for settling ponds etc. The size of the symbols is proportional to the assessed potential scale of growth (please remember that not all maps are to the same scale).

5.15 Some areas identified for development in the Non-Statutory Plan have not yet been implemented and it is Council policy that development is acceptable in these areas for the purposes indicated in the Non-Statutory Plan. Unless and until decisions are made on what areas to take forward there is no change in Council policy. Some potential new locations for development identified in this document are either adjacent to, or in close proximity to, areas identified for development in the Non-Statutory Local Plan. In such cases, this is noted within the tables. Where planning permission has not been granted for sites identified in the Non-Statutory Plan it will be necessary to reassess these areas as part of the Local

Development Framework process to see if they are still deliverable etc and that they meet new regulatory requirements on strategic environmental assessment.

5.16 For ease of reference, the following lists sites identified in the Non-Statutory Plan for housing development which do not currently have planning permission.

- Park Road Hall, Mill Crescent, Crowborough - Non-Statutory Plan reference: BS2
- Land off Cornford Close, Crowborough - Non-Statutory Plan reference: CR1(1)
- Blackness Road, Crowborough - Non-Statutory Plan reference: CR1(3)
- Land off Crowborough Hill - Non-Statutory Plan reference: CR1(4)
- Millbrook Road, Crowborough - Non-Statutory Plan reference: CR1(5)
- Land at Steel Cross, Crowborough - Non-Statutory Plan reference: CR2
- Heathview Farm (part) - Non-Statutory Plan reference: CR3
- Land at Alderbrook, Crowborough - Non-Statutory Plan reference: CR4
- Beacon Road, Mixed Use Area - Non-Statutory Plan reference: CR8
- The Drive and Parklands, Maresfield - Non-Statutory Plan reference: V1(2)
- Land South of The Mews, East Hoathly - Non-Statutory Plan reference: V2
- Church Road, Buxted - Non-Statutory Plan reference: V3
- Land to West of Church Marks Lane, East Hoathly - Non-Statutory Plan reference: V4
- West of Oakleigh, Five Ash Down - Non-Statutory Plan reference: V5
- Former Army Camp, Isfield - Non-Statutory Plan reference: V6
- Park Farm, Maresfield - Non-Statutory Plan reference: V7
- Land at Pound Lane, Laughton - Non-Statutory Plan reference: HG6
- North of Mallard Drive / South of Hospital - Non-Statutory Plan reference: UC1
- Land at Courthope Avenue, Wadhurst - Non-Statutory Plan reference: HG6
- Land off Cuckmere Gardens, Alfriston - Non-Statutory Plan reference: HG6
- Land adjacent to Grovelands School, Hailsham - Non-Statutory Plan reference: HA1
- South of Hempstead Lane, Hailsham - Non-Statutory Plan reference: HA5
- Arlington Road East - Non-Statutory Plan reference: HA6
- South of Howard Close, Hailsham - Non-Statutory Plan reference: HA8
- Land at Station Road, Hailsham - Non-Statutory Plan reference: HA9
- East of Battle Road, Hailsham - Non-Statutory Plan reference: HA12
- Land adjacent to Village Hall, Hertsmonceux - Non-Statutory Plan reference: HG6
- Land West of North Street, Lower Horsebridge - Non-Statutory Plan reference: HG6
- Land West of A22 (Pelham Homes) - Non-Statutory Plan reference: PW1
- Land East of Sheephams Lane - Non-Statutory Plan reference: PW2
- Land at Ghyll Road - Non-Statutory Plan reference: HE1

Towns - Potential Priorities and Options

Crowborough

5.17 Firstly, the High Weald Towns: **Crowborough** has a population of around 20,200 (Source ONS Key Settlement Statistics 2001). It occupies an elevated location 11 km south of Tunbridge Wells within the High Weald, and has hourly rail services to London. The town enjoys superb views and has many trees, giving it an arcadian character especially on its western and southern sides. The town expanded from a very small village in late Victorian times, growing in popularity as an outpost of Tunbridge Wells for the newly enriched middle classes, becoming a fresh air resort in the Edwardian era. It has consequently grown rapidly through the twentieth century but as a result is lacking in some of the facilities, such as cultural buildings and a wide choice of shops, enjoyed by more traditional market towns. The existing town centre has not changed much in size over this period of rapid growth.

5.18 Crowborough has the most spare infrastructure capacity in terms of education and health facilities of all of the Wealden towns but does lack a cultural facility/multi-purpose community hall (Wealden District Council has resolved to grant the town council land for such a centre), and a good range and amount of shops. These factors, and the potential relocation of the Council from Pine Grove, may come together to offer opportunities. The Town Council is encouraged to undertake the kind of community led design exercise recently undertaken at Uckfield to help develop ideas for realising the potential of this area.

5.19 The town is bisected by the A26 and the B2100, with congestion at the intersection and on the B2100 at peak periods, with limited opportunities to improve this. Many of the roads around the town are narrow with significant on-street parking. The focus of recent development in Crowborough has

been redevelopment of existing residential sites. There are limited opportunities for new good business sites, particularly with good access to the A26.

Possible Spatial Objectives for Crowborough

- Increasing the town's range of community facilities, including securing (partly via planning obligations linked to new development) provision of a multi-purpose community/cultural facility.
- Expanding the town's choice and quantity of shops – taking full opportunities for imaginative mixed use development in and around the town centre/Pine Grove.
- Putting Crowborough on the Tourist Map by improving its attractiveness as a tourist location and gateway to the Ashdown Forest and the High Weald.
- Improving business provision, ideally in locations with good access to the A26.
- Respecting and improving the town's character as one with a high tree cover and an arcadian character in parts, and its network of twittens
- Improving the gateway to the town at and around the station at Jarvis Brook, funded by associated development.

Figure 14 Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Crowborough

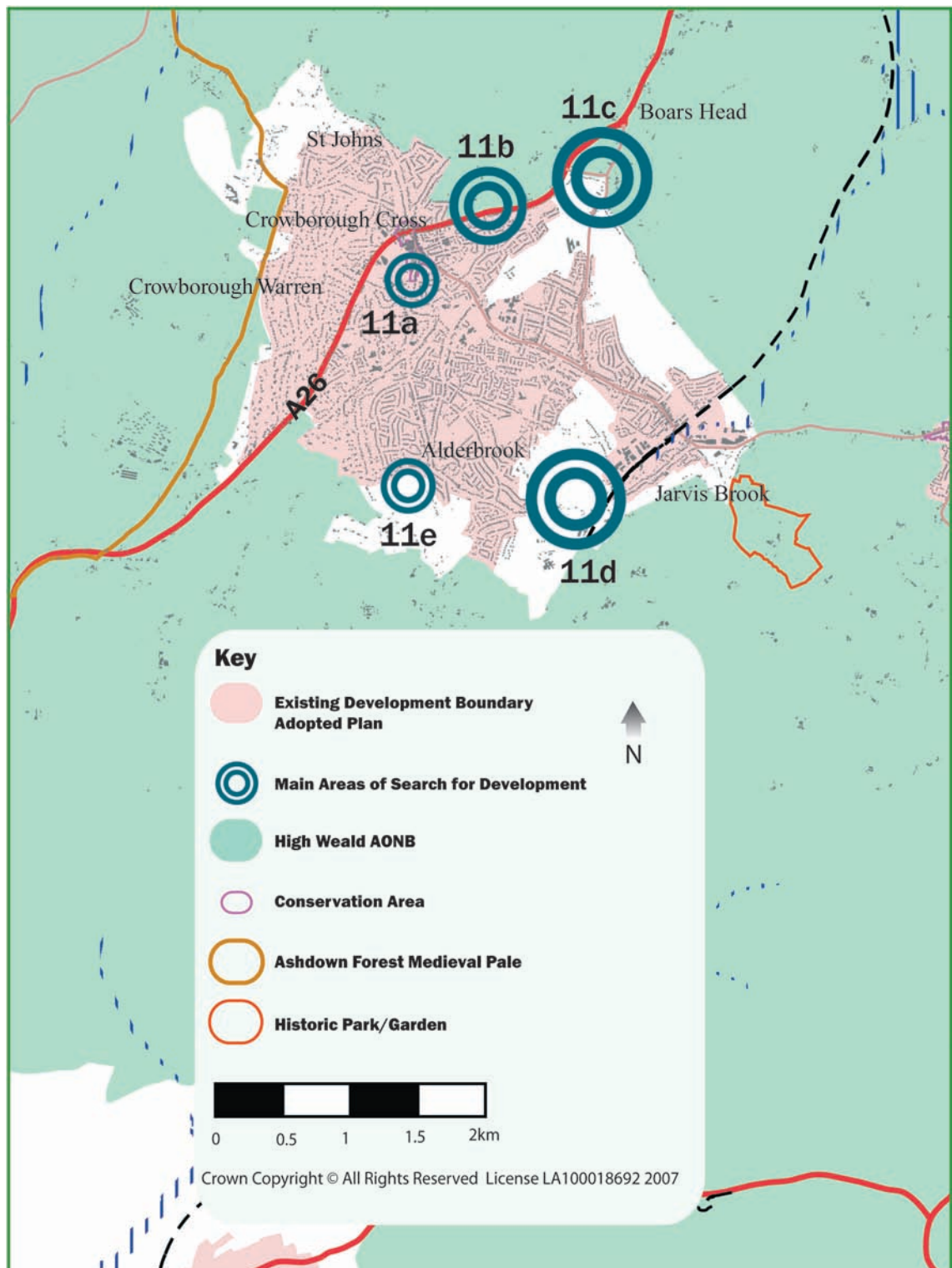


Table 2 Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Crowborough

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
11a - Pine Grove and Town Centre Opportunity Area Identified in Non-Statutory Plan for mixed use (no housing numbers given)	150-250 dwellings Potential for high proportion of housing and high density given centrality of area	-Adjoins town centre -Part wooded -Near top of hill	-Very good, town centre location	-Opportunity for mixed use scheme meeting local retail needs and shortages of local facilities
11b - Land North West of Crowborough and North of A26 Part of area identified in Non-Statutory Plan for recreation	200-320 dwellings	-Lies inside the High Weald AONB -Enclosed nature of land limits some views of area from outside Crowborough -Part of landscape setting of Crowborough	-Excellent accessibility to A26 and Town Centre	-Potential loss of existing recreational facilities that would need to be replaced/ relocated. -Potential to provide/ fund community facilities as part of scheme which are lacking in town centre.
11c - Area North of Crowborough at Steel Cross -Comprises different areas, including a triangle of land between A26 and Eridge Road, and land to the East (identified in Non-Statutory Plan for recreation, but which has not come forward)	520-820 Dwellings (assuming all three parts come forward)	-Triangle has some wooded areas on site -Site of former bloomery -Parts within High Weald AONB and of rural character -Relatively flat area within AONB between edge of town and Limekiln Forest	-Good access to A26 via Boars Head roundabout, with its bus routes, parts vary in accessibility to town centre, not ideal in furthest parts and any large scale scheme would require improved bus services.	- Open space/ playing fields need to form part of any scheme, given shortage of such facilities in Crowborough such as a buffer on its eastern edges, given flat nature of site and identified deficiencies. -Part of area may be suited for some

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
		-Less sensitive than some other areas due to nature of field enclosure/ neglected orchards. -Topography conceals some views of area- however there are views of part of the area from footpath along eastern edge within the High Weald AONB -Part of area adjoins ancient woodland		- employment due to good A26 access -Area of sufficient scale to accommodate a new school and playing fields if needed. -Need to assess impact on Ancient woodland
11d - Areas to the South East of Crowborough between Alderbrook and Jarvis Brook	650-1,050 dwellings (in two parts South and North of Walshes Road)	-Outside AONB -Northern Part hidden from views from outside town & contributes to local rural character of this part of town - fairly steep in parts. -Southern part impacts on views from Walshes Road and Public footpath through area. Good screening on Walshes Road could reduce impact.	-Less accessible to town centre but very close to Jarvis Brook local services and Rail Station -Roundabout on Walshes Road could service these areas, but major development would create significant traffic on Walshes Road and some adjoining roads, Highways Authority consider that this might limit scale of development.	-Good services in town and at Jarvis Brook -Area would be of sufficient scale to accommodate a new school and playing fields if needed. -Excludes identified flood risk areas on boundary.

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
			For both of these areas road capacity issues on Walshes Road/Manor Road and capacity and safety issues on Western road.	
11e - Area South of Whitehill and Alderbrook Adjacent area identified in Non-Statutory Plan (CCR4)	120-170 additional dwellings (including recreation ground)	-Outside AONB but steep ghyll in parts -Need to assess impact on the ancient ghyll woodland also good wet woodland. -Potential impact on setting of listed farm to South.	-Poor road access to eastern part, unless via recreation ground to east -Local lanes have unsuitable road widths and upgrading could harm character of area. -Not ideal in terms of town centre access, but close to bus route.	-If recreation ground included, would need replacement locally -Would need to exclude identified flood risk areas

Question Eleven

Crowborough Growth Options

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following broad areas of search in terms of development in and around Crowborough:

Option 11a

Pine Grove and Town Centre Opportunity Area.

Option 11b

Land North of Crowborough and North of A26.

Option 11c

Various Locations North West of Crowborough at Steel Cross.

Option 11d

Areas to the South East of Crowborough between Alderbrook and Jarvis Brook.

Option 11e

Land in area South of Whitehill and Alderbrook.

Question 11f

If you have any further brief comments please tell us.

Question 11g

Please also tell us whether you agree or disagree with the suggested spatial objectives for Crowborough.

Question 11h

If there are any other broad areas you wish us to consider please tell us where and why they should be included.

Heathfield

5.20 Heathfield to the South East of Crowborough is set on a series of ridges in a prominent position. It has a population of around 7,500. It acts as a service centre to a wide surrounding rural catchment of a number of villages and hamlets. It is very much a twentieth century town owing its existence to the (now closed) railway which was completed in 1880, giving the town centre in particular a Victorian and Edwardian character. It has some industry and the town centre has recently undergone some improvements. The town has a leisure centre but lacks a swimming pool.

5.21 The town's poor transport links, no railway and very limited bus services, make it a poor candidate for growth of a strategic scale - that is growth not serving local needs. The town is bisected by the A265. The roads around much of the periphery of the town are B roads or narrow country lanes creating access difficulties, less so to the West of the town which has bus routes. In addition current education and primary health care facilities are at near capacity, with spare school capacity only for around an extra 250 homes. There is limited primary health care capacity, except at Cross In Hand. Some of the objectives of the suggested strategy for Heathfield derive from the excellent plan produced by the Parish Council.

Possible Spatial Objectives for Heathfield

- Enhancing Heathfield's role as a service centre, regenerating and intensifying the northern part of the town centre and creating new job opportunities.
- Respecting Heathfield's prominent and attractive setting within the High Weald, including Heathfield Park.
- Extending National Cycle Route NCR21/Cuckoo Trail to the Town through the restored tunnel to the Millennium Green.
- Protecting Edwardian Landmark buildings and introduce new focal points and landmarks for the town and particularly the town centre.
- Creation of twittens from the Station Road East and West Car parks to the High Street.
- Provision of a multi-purpose community facility, freeing land of existing facilities for affordable housing.
- Provision of a new swimming pool, if funding (such as from development) is available.
- To make Heathfield a hub for local bus services with a central bus station.
- To alleviate the local shortage of small business and industrial space.

Figure 15 Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Heathfield

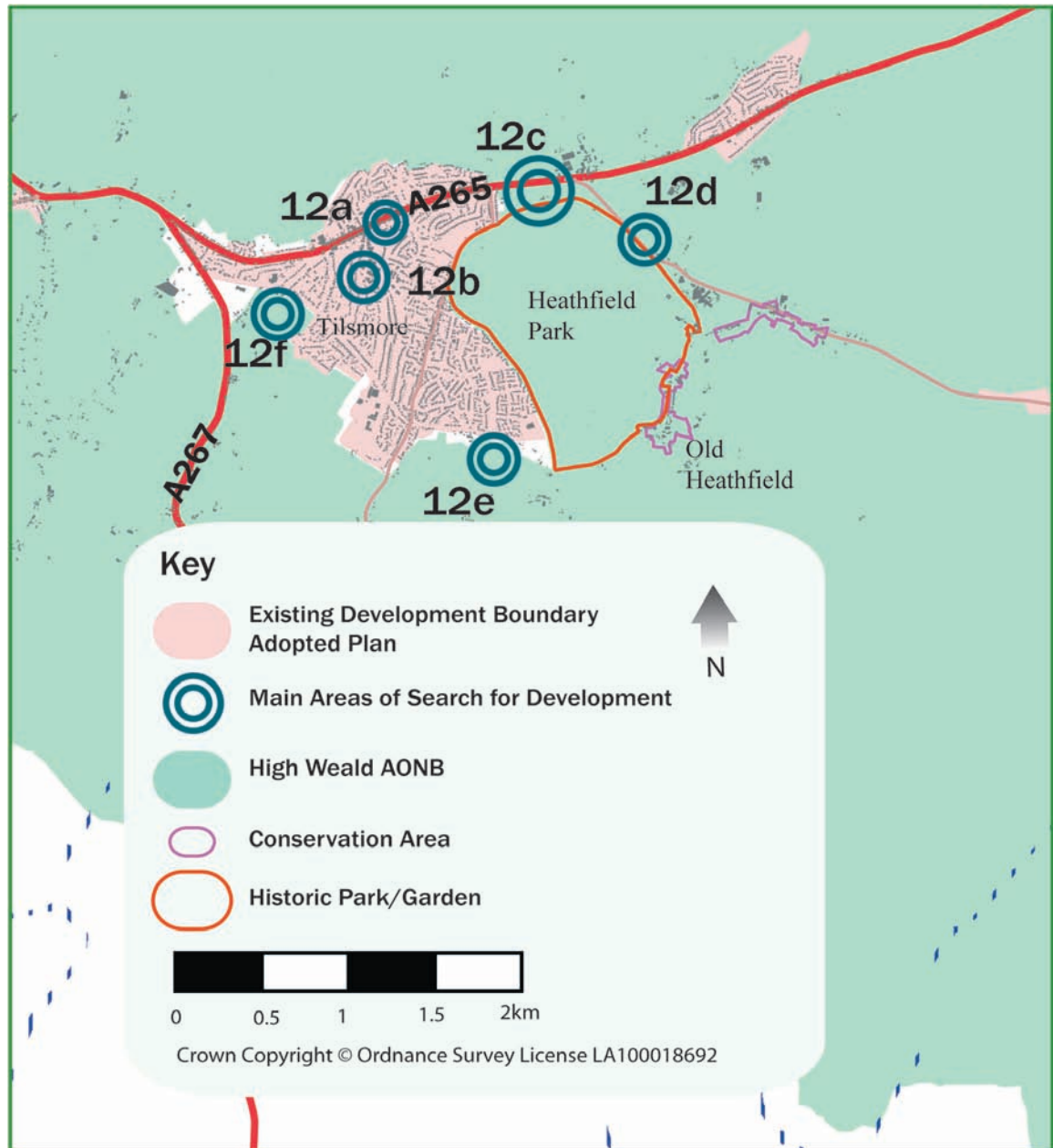


Table 3 Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Heathfield

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
12a - Heathfield Town Centre Opportunity Area	20-40 dwellings	-Could tidy up area of poor quality 1960s units	-Central to town	-Could meet local incentives for enhancing town centre
12b - Central Heathfield Commercial Area and employment area adjoining.	70-120 Dwellings	-Urban location of poor quality and fragmented character	-Central, current under use of land	-Loss of employment, known local demand and shortages of employment land
12c -Locations to the East of Heathfield along Burwash Road	150-230 dwellings	-Potential coalescence of development along Burwash Road -Potential visual impact if development North of Burwash Road encroached below the existing ridge line -Most of area within AONB -Slopes down to South of Burwash Road, fairly enclosed, along top of ridge, of limited landscape sensitivity	-Good access to town -Problem of multiplicity of access points on Burwash Road and safety issue at Mutton Hall Junction	-Potential to improve visual appearance of some urban fringe uses -Potential loss of employment space if extends further Eastwards -Setting of two listed buildings
12d - Area North of Heathfield College and Leisure Centre	50-90 dwellings: numbers adjusted reflect context and form of dwellings further East in conservation areas	-Whole area within AONB -Sensitive setting next to Heathfield Park	-Easily serviced and already part urbanised land with good potential access. -Potential for small well designed linear	-Good access to Leisure Centre and College

Part 5 Wealden's Places

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
			cluster of housing of Cade Street like form. -Remote from Town Centre	
12e - Area at Sandy Cross South - East of Heathfield	120-200 dwellings	-Part of area within AONB -Long distant views towards the South and South East, potential negative landscape impact.	-Accessibility to town centre is poor; as well as access to the area, which is limited due to the narrow lane passing along the site	-No significant issues
12f - South West of Heathfield - South of Tilsmore	80-135 Dwellings	-Area within AONB -Partially enclosed by housing on one side. -Excludes Parish Council's Jubilee park to North -Slopes North to South	-Good access between two main roads. -Good potential for the upgrading of existing small track on one side, making the site accessible to the A road. -Adequate accessibility to the town centre.	-No significant issues

Question Twelve

Heathfield Growth Options

Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following broad areas of search for new development in and around Heathfield:

Option 12a

Heathfield Town Centre Opportunity Area

Option 12b

Central Heathfield Commercial Area and employment area adjoining

Option 12c

Locations to the East of Heathfield along Burwash Road

Option 12d

Area North of Heathfield College and Leisure Centre

Option 12e

Area at Sandy Cross South-East of Heathfield

Option 12f

South West of Heathfield - South of Tilsmore

Question 12g

If you have any further brief comments please tell us.

Question 12h

Please also tell us whether you agree with the suggested spatial objectives for Heathfield.

Question 12i

If there are any other broad areas you wish us to consider please tell us where and why they should be included.

The Edge of Tunbridge Wells

5.22 Part of the District includes the fringes of Tunbridge Wells around the suburb of Hawkenbury. Ensuring that Tunbridge Wells maintains an attractive setting is a policy of the South East Plan. However there is a gap in the High Weald AONB boundary here and it is outside the Tunbridge Wells Green Belt which runs North of the District; but access problems, biodiversity and sensitivity of the setting of Tunbridge Wells rule out development on the Windmill Farm side of the railway. Issues on the land off Benhall Mill Road are more complex. This option might only be practical and desirable as part of a possible joint approach towards consideration for options for Tunbridge Wells with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and which employs the highest standards of urban and landscape design to enhance the town's setting.

Question Thirteen

The Edge of Tunbridge Wells Option

Option 13a

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree that consideration should be given to a small urban extension to the South East of Tunbridge Wells but outside the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Green Belt?

Question 13b

If you have any further brief comments please tell us.

Figure 16 Main Option for Development on the Fringe of Tunbridge Wells

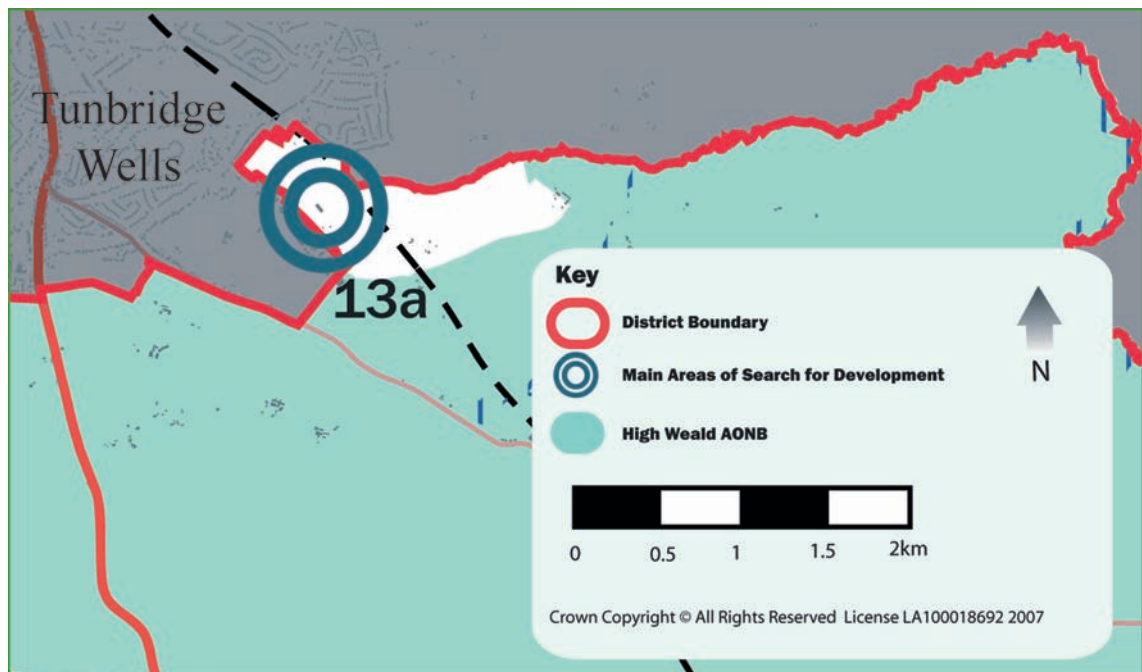


Table 4 Main Option for Development on the Fringe of Tunbridge Wells

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
13a South of Hawkenbury	-80-140 units on area at Northern part -200-350 units at Southern part	-Part of area was designated as a site of nature conservation importance in 1991. Central area is most important. Needs to be re-surveyed -Landscape impact limited in this area because of generally enclosed nature and lack of impact on key public views of setting of Tunbridge Wells	-Access would need to be off road to West in Tunbridge Wells Borough. Access via existing single storey employment use(s) is a possibility -To South narrow width may require access restrictions e.g. no left turn out	-Will impact on services in Tunbridge Wells. Response needed from Tunbridge Wells Borough and Kent County Council and other Kent service providers -Good potential access but large development may pose junction capacity issues -Was considered in local plan review and not taken forward into Non Statutory Local Plan

Uckfield

5.23 The main town serving the Low Weald is:

5.24 **Uckfield**, which has a population of around 13,500, situated 12 km South of Crowborough. It is a classic country market town, still retaining some of its medieval past, with an attractive setting within rolling countryside along the River Uck, just South of the High Weald. The town has grown significantly in the 1980s and 1990s being a major focus for growth in the county, although investment in infrastructure facilities and renewal of retailing in the town has not kept up with population rises. Unlike the rest of the District its age profile is younger than the national mean. The town suffered major flooding in Autumn 2000 and the uncertainties created by this have magnified the problem of under investment.

5.25 The town suffers from significant town centre congestion at the junction of the B2102/Lower High Street and at Bell Lane Roundabout. The town benefits from its rail link but there is uncertainty about its future and its considerably unfulfilled potential. The town has no more secondary school capacity and this would need to expand if the town is to grow. The town has two very successful business areas which are fully occupied.

5.26 The town has a number of attractive open spaces around its edge, which contribute to its character, but the town also has the unfulfilled potential for a network of open spaces connecting through to the central area.

5.27 The town has considerable potential for improvements which may help resolve some of these problems, and a recent design day run by the Town Council with the help of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) explored some of these. Taking this forward will require considerable investigation and difficult choices. It will be necessary to tackle issues such as traffic management, flooding, rail and development

potential holistically. For example, a riverside meadow/park could reduce flooding problems, but this would require relocation of industry and considerable housing development to pay for it. In addition retail and housing development would require relocation of some existing parking and open space as part of a wider scheme to regenerate the town. The District Council is keen to work with the Town Council on a special chapter in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document, although funding will be needed for the technical investigations into what might be possible and viable. Realism is needed, as funding these infrastructure and town centre developments would require additional housing allocations of some form to pay for them.

5.28 In order to fund any significant infrastructure works some kind of pooling of developer contributions across the Town will be required and the District Council will work with the County to develop a transparent methodology towards funding of these integrated ideas for improvement for transport, flooding and social infrastructure. Ideas for traffic relief projects and retail expansion will need to take place in the context of this process and not in a disconnected way.

5.29 The existing community college has limited capacity and is already too large for its site. Any significant development at Uckfield would require a separation of the 6th form college from the main school, requiring a minimum level of growth (if chosen) at Uckfield of 1,000 dwellings if this were to be feasible.

Possible Spatial Objectives for Uckfield

- Providing a viable way forward towards reducing flooding problems in the town
- creating riverside walkways and open space if possible - secured through planning obligations and development.
- Increasing the town's role as one of the main service centres of the Low Weald meeting the deficiency in the quality and range of local services, through developments and improvements focused on the Lower High Street and creation of landmark features and public spaces.
- Enhancing and protecting the contrasting and attractive characters of the original market town, the Victorian New Town and the old village of Ridgewood.
- Improving rail services and accessibility; if possible reinstating the rail link through to Lewes.
- Reducing traffic congestion and traffic dominance in the Lower High Street and the B2102.
- Protecting important aspects of the landscape setting of the town and linking them into an effective network including: the deep wooded ghyll areas within Downlands Farm, Lake Wood, Paygate Wood, Buxted Park, the Millennium Green, the sandstone ridge South of Ridgewood and the Uck Valley setting of the town visible from Framfield Road.



Figure 17 Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Uckfield

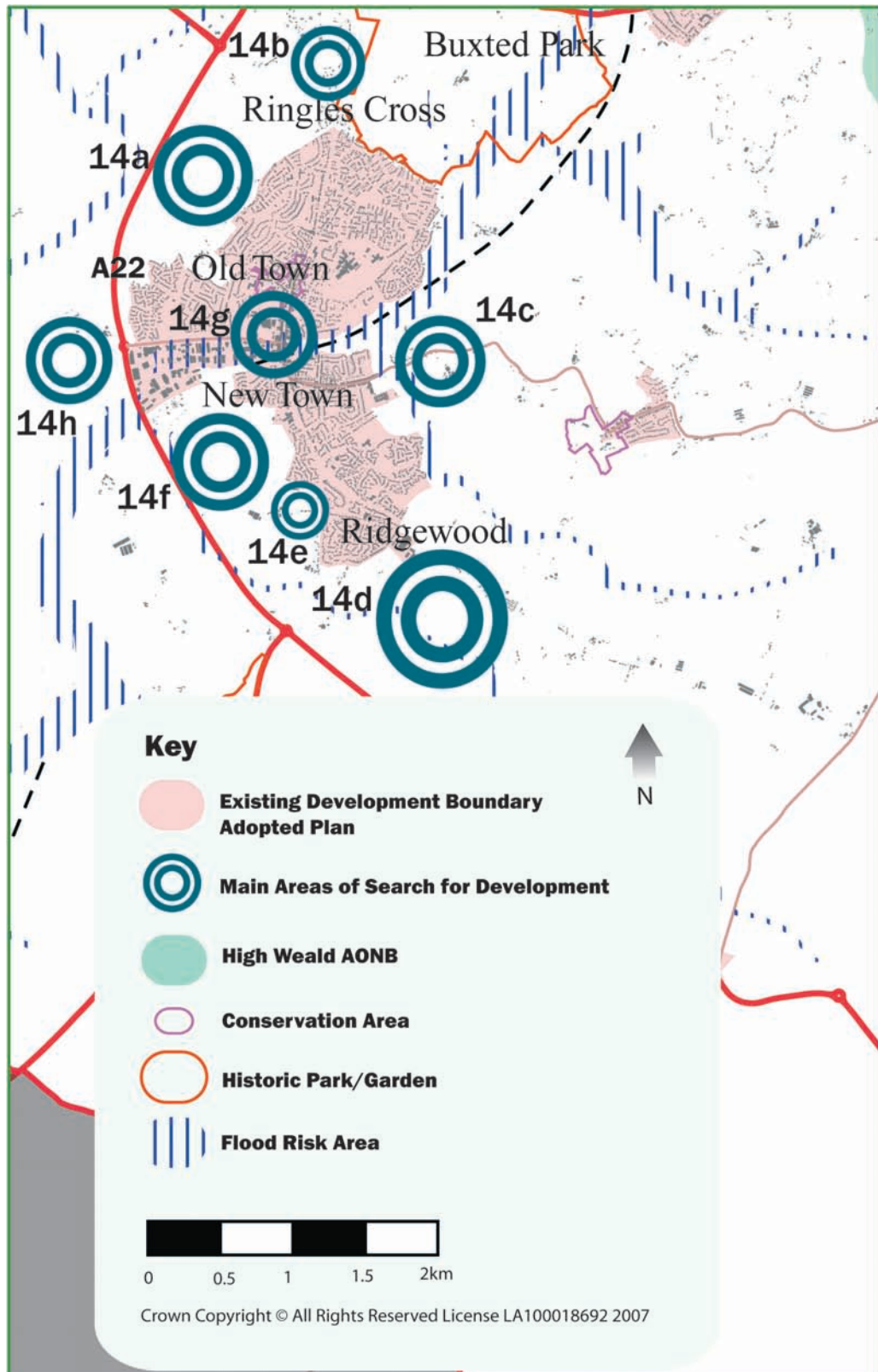


Table 5 Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Uckfield

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
14a -Areas to the North West of Uckfield	550-910 dwellings on Southern section	-In two distinct parts in landscape terms. A Ghyll (ancient woodland) runs down centre of Southern area and surrounds whole area	-Very poor access along Snatts Road/Church Road to Southern part, both essentially country roads at this point. Access would have to be off A22, through ancient woodland.	-Could be argued to be in effect a freestanding development in the countryside rather than an urban extension, due to circuitous car access and weak pedestrian/ cycle access to town centre
	200-340 dwellings on Northern section	-Area slopes down from wooded ridge currently enclosing Uckfield, towards and visible from some areas of Maresfield -Would impact on the views from publicly accessible areas of the rural setting of Uckfield Northern part surrounded by ancient woodland, but area very well contained and more limited visual impact from outside	-Snatts Road widens to North. Development of a certain scale could be accessed off it with restrictions on access/egress via Church Road. This would be more accessible to the town centre but too much additional traffic southbound through the High Street would be problematic -Well located in terms of A road network	-A reduced scale scheme with left turn access onto Snatts Road could be relatively well connected to town and its services -Previously considered in local plan review
14b - Areas around Ringles Cross	500-820 dwellings - total of three distinct areas	-Along old A22 is relatively attractive countryside forming a gap between Uckfield and Maresfield	-Would be good access off A22 and moderately good access to	-Attractive listed cottage on Western part

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
		-Enclosed, only visible from route of old A22 -Farm to North of old A22 relatively well concealed in large part -Also a strip of land between Ringles Cross and Views Wood - well contained. Although could be argued to extend ribbon development on Eastern side of road. Historic park to East.	the town, although physically divorced from it	-Excludes Playing field to south adjoining Views Wood -As some parts relatively flat could be a good location for a sixth form college or new community college with playing fields
14c - Area to the East of Uckfield along Framfield Road	130-210 dwellings on Northern part (assuming Western lower slopes only developed) 550-900 dwellings on Southern part (if whole farm included)	-On northern part Important view of old town and River Uck Valley from Framfield Road, development could be set below and to the west of here, relating to existing housing, to help limit impact -Southern part hilltop location, prominent from some Western parts of Uckfield -Breaches natural barrier formed by Framfield Stream	-Close to town and town centre. -Potential for pedestrian and cycle links to town centre. -Framfield Road is a country Lane, limits to amount of development it can take. Junction of Framfield Road and High Street already significantly congested, causes rat running along Alexandra Road and Mill Drove which has issues for pedestrian safety.	-Good access to town services, but physically divorced from town. -Was considered in local plan review. -Would require new GP surgery to East of Town.

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
			-Access may be possible over river to North	
14d - Area to the North and South of Eastbourne Road and West and East of Millennium Green In close proximity to land identified in Non-Statutory Plan for housing use. (UC2)	1,000-1,780 dwellings	-Area in natural bowl South of Ridgewood industrial estate is the least landscape sensitive area, area to South of Ridgewood Stream is more openly rural and attractive. -Needs to effectively frame and enhance the Millennium Green. Set slightly below and back from the Ridgewood ridge would limit visual impact due to drop in levels.	-Part of area with good access to A22 may be most appropriate for employment purposes. -Could be form a long term gradual extension of the town Southwards on roads with good access. -Could link through to Ridgewood Road	-Part of land is an aquifer
14e - Area to the West of Ridgewood Adjacent to land identified in Non-Statutory Plan for housing use. (UC3)	105-175 dwellings	-Development of lower slopes would be highly landscape sensitive, less so on top of hill	-Good access via Ridgewood to Uckfield.	-Aquifer in parts. -Area North of farm is disjointed, urban fringe uses
14f- West of New Town	1,000-1,600 dwellings	-Visible from footpath/ cycleway along old railway line to Uckfield, some parts/ upper slopes visually prominent from A22.	-Poor current access from East. Close to town centre -Access could come from North because of levels over former Railway line	-Aquifer in parts -Odour problems could effect extent of developable area

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
		-Development could be set below Victoria Recreation Ground to protect views of Downs	(potential property take - needs investigation)	
14g - Uckfield Town Centre Opportunity Area - Area mostly west of Lower High Street and including main flood risk area to the South	1,000-1,800 dwellings - Assumes high density because of accessibility, considerable meadows and mixed use with retailing.	-Town has spread from its medieval core down onto Uck flood plain. -River in semi-channelised state West of bridge, no public access. -Mostly brownfield sites, some of poor quality.	-Very accessible -Ambition to improve station and re-open line to Lewes	-Need to improve retail offer, provide better public spaces and to reduce flood risk. -Employment premises are fairly modern and would need replacing if part of any scheme.
14h - Areas to the West of Uckfield (A22) bypass	Not applicable - unsuitable for housing, possibly best suited for employment, as divorced from town.	-To the North of Uck fairly flat and contained, although this landscape creates a well defined urban edge to relatively unspoilt open countryside.	-Divorced from town - Excellent potential access to A22 perhaps through modified Copwood roundabout.	-Run off issues into Uck floodplain.

Question Fourteen**Uckfield Growth Options**

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following broad areas of search for new development in and around Uckfield:

Option 14a

Areas to the North West of Uckfield

Option 14b

Areas around Ringles Cross

Option 14c

Area to the East of Uckfield along Framfield Road

Option 14d

Area to the North and South of Eastbourne Road - and West and East of Millennium Green

Option 14e

Area to west of Ridgewood

Option 14f

West of New Town

Option 14g

Uckfield Town Centre Opportunity Area

Option 14h

West of A22 – Uckfield

Question 14i

If you have any further brief comments please tell us.

Question 14j

Please also tell us whether you agree with the suggested spatial objectives for Uckfield.

Question 14k

If there are any other broad areas you wish us to consider please tell us where and why they should be included.

Hailsham

5.30 Where the low weald meets the coastal levels is the town of:

5.31 Hailsham. A traditional market town dating back to Medieval times, and particularly proud of its market functions. It is the largest town in the Southern part of the District with a population of around 19,200. It is located around 10km North of Eastbourne on the A22 and bordered to the East by the edges of the Pevensey Levels. The town has significant pockets of deprivation. The District Council is planning to consolidate all of its offices at Hailsham. The largest brownfield site in the District is at Hellingly Hospital (where there is permission to build up to 400 homes) located to the North of Hailsham. The town is within the area of the Hailsham-Eastbourne Triangle initiative (see part Part 6 'Wealden's Communities'), where stimulating economic regeneration and investment is a key priority.

5.32 The town has opportunities for development in and near the town centre which, although attractive, has considerable problems of traffic congestion and a number of key brownfield sites. A new supermarket, to the West of the town centre now has planning permission. There is the potential to link some of the brownfield (and possibly greenfield) sites in and around the town centre in ways which might improve its townscape and connectivity, whilst improving retailing and helping resolve the traffic problems. As with all of the towns, infrastructure and enhancement will require development such as housing to fund it. It may be appropriate to undertake the kind of process now begun in Uckfield and work with the Town Council in relation to a chapter on this area for inclusion in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

5.33 Some of the development options for Hailsham may require a relief road to the North and/or the South of the Town to ensure traffic filters on to the A22 rather than through the town centre. The routing of these provides

challenges as there are no easy options. By the next stage of the plan an appraisal framework, looking at the potential impacts of different road and growth options together, will be needed. Growth options would also need to provide a park or parks the town currently lacks, possibly linked to the cuckoo trail (see part Part 6 'Wealden's Communities'). Sewerage capacity at the Hailsham South and North treatment works will impact upon all options here unless new capacity is developed. There is very limited spare primary health care capacity.



Possible Spatial Objectives for Hailsham

- Improving Hailsham's Economic performance and accessibility as part of the Hailsham- Eastbourne Triangle programme
- Reducing the deprivation in parts of Hailsham
- Reducing congestion and the impact of through traffic in the historic centre
- Enhancing the town's role as a service centre and improving its retail offer
- Improving local services and maximise opportunities for town centre regeneration
- Improving the quality of entrances/approaches to the A22 as 'gateways' to the town
- Enhancing the town's tourism role as a potential gateway to '1066 country'
- Maintaining a cattle market in the vicinity of the town
- Providing a central bus station
- Providing new parks for the town, as part of development of town extensions, linked to the cuckoo trail

Figure 18 Main options and alternatives for development in and around Hailsham

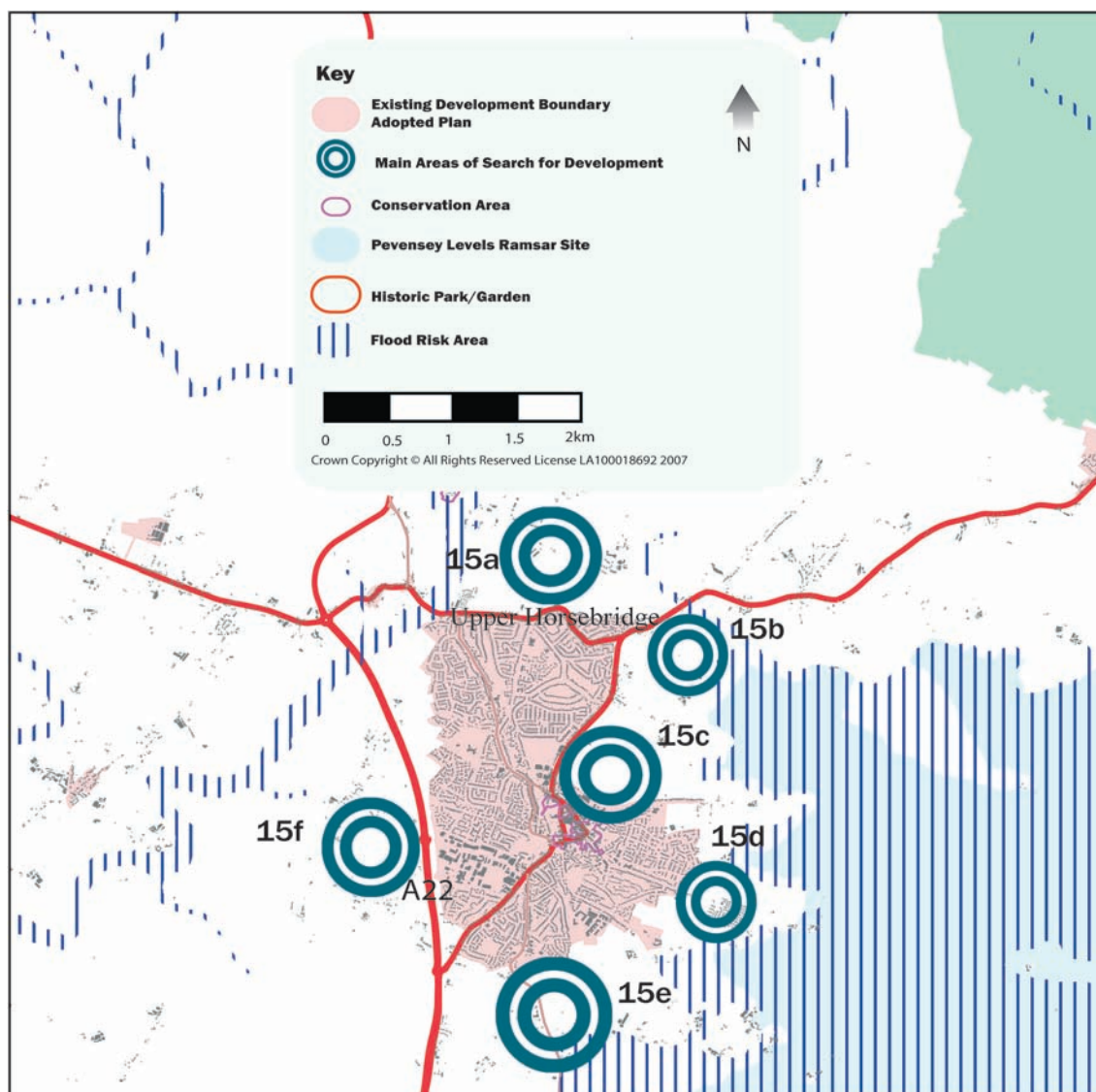


Table 6 Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Hailsham

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
15a - Areas to the North of Upper Horsebridge	890-1,500 dwellings	-Fairly flat and open countryside. -Setting of Cuckmere River and Hellingly	-Boship roundabout approaching capacity. Large scale	-Easily serviced area. Accessible to services of Horsebridge and Hellingly.

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
		limits scale of expansion to North. -To East of Cuckoo Trail less sensitive and potential to accommodate some development without significant harm to surrounding countryside. -Wildlife corridor between Cuckmere Valley and Pevensey levels.	development would require a relief/ access road to A22 providing relief for the existing A271, which could form a natural edge to the area of development. (Various alignment options some with negative impacts on Cuckmere Valley in terms of increased flood risk and impact on habitat, one alignment might isolate school and village hall from rest of Hellingly Village).	-No over-riding constraints in terms if water supply and surface water drainage.
15b -Area South of Amberstone/ Battle Road- Hailsham Adjacent area identified in Non-Statutory Plan for housing use (HA7).	730-1280 dwellings	-Land fairly flat and enclosed to South, becomes part of a ridge to North but no significant views from Hailsham (Battle Road) over the ridge to Pevensey Levels at this point. -Part of Pevensey Levels Ramsar catchment	-Access onto Battle Road, larger development would require a significant junction and could send traffic through town centre unless linked to Northern relief road (if pursued if North of Hailsham options chosen)	-Close to Sewage works. Used by sludge lorries, potential expansion of this area for residential would require resolution of odour problem.

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
15c - Hailsham Town Centre Opportunity Area and potentially adjoining land to the north of Vicarage Lane. Adjacent area identified in Non-Statutory Plan for mixed use (HA12).	1,050-1,800 dwellings (this notional figure is likely to be significantly reduced due to landscape issues).	-Land enclosed by Battle Road and Harebeating Lane exposed towards Pevensy Levels. -Highly sensitive in significant parts, extensive views, from Vicarage Lane, especially towards Herstmonceux Isaac Newton Observatory and of High Weald (former Pevensy Bay coastline) which need to be maintained as intrinsic to character of town; as should views of church of St Mary from Eastern vistas, including Harebeating Lane. -Western flanks on ridge towards Battle Road less sensitive. -Greenfield site, North of Vicarage Lane/Brownfield Site South of Vicarage Lane. Area between	-Potential access to Town Centre and public transport network. -Potential new streets connecting through to town centre. -Road Access for smaller scheme would be via town centre system - larger development would require access off Battle Road and link to potential Northern relief road (if options to the North and/or North East of Hailsham are chosen), and in longer term potential Southern relief road (see below).	-Hailsham North Sewage works capacity limits amount of development. -The setting of a number of listed buildings, and the town centre conservation area, may be impacted upon, but also opportunity to 'heal' gaps in and improve setting of parts of the conservation area. -Need to find land for school displaced by Tesco development and land for other community/civic purposes. -Need to co-ordinate with Wealden's civic accommodation plans and plans for future of community facilities in the vicinity. -Opportunity for mixed use scheme in 'grain' with historic market town.

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
		church and Vicarage Lane has poor connections and is of poor townscape quality -Part of Pevensey Levels Ramsar catchment -Remnant of enclosed medieval field system (Sallions), any development would need to seek to integrate historic landscape features.		
15d - Area along Hailsham's Far Eastern Flank In close proximity to area identified in Non-Statutory Plan for housing use (HA8 and HA9)	450-730 dwellings	-Very flat, bordering on Pevensey Levels - Land that may be available between urban edge and levels/flood risk area narrow in parts -Development would need to avoid damaging the appearance of a small town on a low ridge,	-Quality of access of different roads in this area varies considerably. All could filter traffic through medieval core of town which would be unacceptable. Alternative is to access via the potential Southern relief road off the A22 (See below) and eventually (if	-Amount of development would be limited as would require large areas for water settling and to protect wetland habitat -Potential to improve land by replacement redundant buildings. -Issues of cumulative impact and water quality on Ramsar levels. Limited wastewater capacity.

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
		in close association with the marshes.	areas to North (chosen) having the choice of linking through to a potential Northern relief road.	-Close proximity to wastewater treatment works and potential odour issues.
15e - Area along Hailsham's Southern Flank	340-570 dwellings, Eastern part 680-1130 dwellings central part (assumes part of land used for public park servicing South-East Hailsham in centre of area) 440-730 dwellings Western part	-Land slopes down towards Pevensey Levels, long views in some parts, would need careful design and landscape treatment. -Previously developed land (former waste water treatment works) -Small proportion of area subject to a Tree Preservation Order -Southern part former brickworks -Transitional residential/ rural character to South towards Summer Hill. -Parts enclosed by Bolney's Wood. Some loss of woodland would	-A new arm off the A22 Arlington Eagles roundabout at this point could be used to form a Southern relief road opening up areas along Hailsham's Southern flank without having to use Ersham Road/Station Road and medieval town centre which would be unacceptable. Road could cause severance effect for new communities unless on 'inner' side. -Parts have no current pedestrian facilities	-Issues of cumulative impact and water quality on Ramsar levels. -Potential land contamination. - Potential loss of employment, permission granted for business use on part of area. -If Southern access road option chosen may be suited in part for employment development. -Potential impact upon the setting of a Schedule Ancient Monument.

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
		be necessary to form through access, which is an issue. -Areas of scrub and regenerating woodland may have some biodiversity value.		
15f -Areas West of Hailsham By-Pass (A22)	Not applicable -Unsuitable for housing, divorced from town, severance effect of A22	-Much of it enclosed -Parts Ancient Woodland -Woods need better management -Fairly well contained: separated from main body of town -Opportunities for creation of strong natural networks	-Would require Western arm off Diplocks Way roundabout A22 -Lack of direct pedestrian access to Hailsham. -Currently no public transport	-Potential noise issues from Arlington Speedway Stadium -Perhaps best suited for employment purposes and/or relocation of employment uses from East of A22 -High voltage power line passes through area

Question Fifteen

Hailsham Growth Options

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following broad areas of search for new development in and around Hailsham:

Option 15a

Areas to the North of Upper Horsebridge

Option 15b

Area South of Amberstone/Battle Road-Hailsham.

Option 15c

Hailsham Town Centre Opportunity Area and potentially adjoining area to the North of Vicarage Lane.

Option 15d

Area along Hailsham's Far Eastern Flank

Option 15e

Area along Hailsham's Southern Flank

Option 15f

Areas west of A22 - Hailsham.

Question 15g

If you have any further brief comments please tell us.

Question 15h

Please also tell us whether you agree or disagree with the suggested spatial objectives for Hailsham.

Question 15i

If there are any other broad areas you wish us to consider please tell us where and why they should be included.

Polegate and Willingdon

5.34 Polegate/Willingdon (including the related suburb of Wannock) are settlements close to Eastbourne and adjoin the proposed South Downs National Park. Polegate and Willingdon are different in character with Willingdon an expanded village, and Polegate growing from an important railway junction. Polegate's population is around 7,800 and Willingdon's around 5,900. Both areas have a high proportion of elderly residents. Many of the local residents are dependent on Eastbourne for employment, shopping and local services. As with some of the other towns the District Council would support a Town Council led town centre regeneration initiative in the new plan.

5.35 The town has recently seen a bypass completed but despite this the A2270 is still heavily congested. The town centre is harmed by the frequent barrier closures on the level crossing. There is no public car park at the station and commuter parking clogs up local roads. The town centre retail offer is very limited.

5.36 Polegate has a number of key infrastructure deficiencies which growth options may be able to address: these include lack of a local park and an easily accessible country park, the poor quality station and station car parking, lack of a supermarket, lack of good quality employment premises, the need for a new sports hall, lack of facilities for the elderly, lack of high quality new housing able to attract inward investors, and lack of sewage capacity. Growth would also require additional secondary school capacity. There is the need to co-ordinate many of these issues with Eastbourne, which faces its own constraints on development and where there is the potential to develop some facilities in either authority which could be used by both.

Possible Spatial Objectives for Polegate/Willingdon

- Ensuring that the location of development to meet the town's service and employment needs is co-ordinated with that of Eastbourne, and that public transport links to Eastbourne are improved through a quality bus corridor.

- Taking advantage of Polegate's position at the junction of the A23 and A27 and at a rail junction, to provide for strategically important employment and civic facilities contributing to the aims of the Hailsham - Eastbourne Triangle Programme.

- Improving /redeveloping the Rail Station and adjoining town centre with more intensive use of land and an improved environment and choice of shops.

- Taking advantage of the bypass completion to improve the environment and space available for buses, pedestrians and cyclists.

- Improving gaps in Polegate's housing stock and in community facilities, including for the elderly, a new sports hall, and good quality new housing.

- Respecting and protecting the backdrop and setting of Polegate and Willingdon against the South Downs.

- Protecting Willingdon's village like character.

- Providing new parks and open spaces in and around Polegate and Willingdon.

Figure 19 Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Polegate, Willingdon and Stone Cross

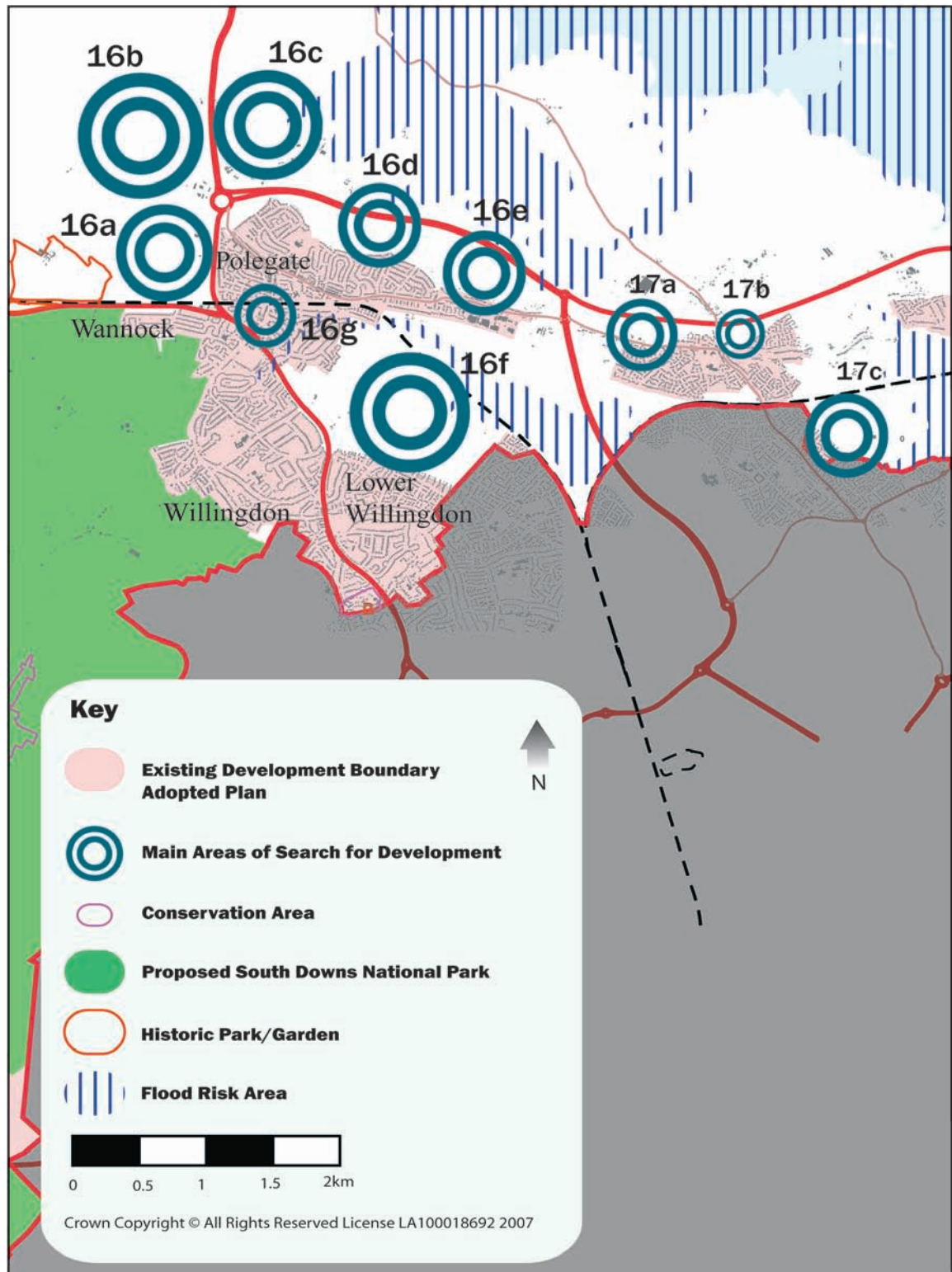


Table 7 Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Polegate/Willingdon

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
16a - Area to the North West of Polegate - between A22 and A27(T) Adjacent area identified in Non-Statutory Plan for housing use (PW1).	950-1,600 dwellings but may be reduced if small area is required as an A27(T) park and ride site for Eastbourne. -All North /North West of Polegate options would require significant community facilities, employment areas and open spaces, hence it is likely that these notional number of dwellings would be significantly reduced.	-Well screened from A22, less from A27(T) but highly visible from South Downs Ridge/Willingdon Hill and Wotton Manor Historic Park/ Garden. -Part forms an attractive valley which helps form an important component of the setting of Polegate and South Downs here. -Small previously developed site in area. -Important hedgerows and good biodiversity.	-Because of barrier effects, current roads have poor pedestrian access to Polegate Town Centre and Station. An A27(T)/ A22 link would enable downgrading of current road barriers making links more practical. -Idea of a Parkway would depend on track/ signalling capacity and having an acceptable impact on services to existing station. -A27(T)/ A22 junction capacity issues (see under 16b).	-May be best suited in part for open space/ recreation in connection with other options for Polegate. -Part may be suitable for high visibility/ high amenity employment location, which would reduce dwelling yield. -Served by Hailsham South Wastewater treatment works which has limited capacity.
16b - Area to the North West of A22 Polegate bypass and Cophall Roundabout	1,300-2,150 dwellings.	-Land behind the Cophall services forms a natural bowl bounded by the Caneheath etc. woodlands to North and a ridge along which runs the route of an old Roman Road	-Road access to A22 via Cophall Roundabout if this is acceptable to Highways Agency. Junction of A22 and A27(T) to South is problematic and may require	-Served by Hailsham South Wastewater treatment works which has limited capacity. -Physically separated from Polegate with poor access to

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
		to the South - this contains the area visually and significantly restricts visibility of area from both Polegate and the South Downs, is visible in parts from the far East of South Downs way, Willingdon Hill. -Proximate to ancient woodlands, extent of ancient woodlands needs review.	a new roundabout or link off the Cophall roundabout to the A22 in the Folkington Area (the Folkington Link).	town centre, however could potentially act as a partially self-contained Cophall 'Township' with its own services if of an appropriate scale. -High Voltage power lines run across centre of area, also dictate a layout parallel to Roman Road. -Noise screening from A22 needed.
16c -Area to the North East of Cophall - Polegate	990-1,660 dwellings - But may be reduced if chosen as an A22 Park and Ride site for Eastbourne.	-Partially visually contained to North by Summer Hill, but exposed to East from views across levels; these need to be carefully assessed. -Existing landscape/ tree stands along drainage ditches, provide a strong basis for a coherent and attractive urban layout.	-Problems of access to Cophall Roundabout, -could utilise/ widen existing sub-grade access to Bay Tree Lane to form a single new community (see to right). -Good pedestrian links to town via cuckoo trail, but distant and may have to provide own services. Good potential road links to wider area. -Potential park/open space links along Cuckoo trail.	-Served by Hailsham South Wastewater Treatment Works which has limited capacity. -Proximity of Pevensey Levels/ Flood Plain to East restricts size/scale of development. -Danger of being a separate and unsustainable suburb disconnected from Polegate by road barriers. Linking under the

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
		-Pevensey Levels, flood risk area at Eastern edge. High water table.		A22 to form a single 'township' with a single district centre could overcome this and provide a single public transport route which could then link northwards towards Hailsham. -Noise screening from A22 needed.
16d - Area North East of Polegate/South of Polegate Bypass	440-730 dwellings (if housing only pursued, may be suitable in part for employment).	-Exposed to views to North, some distant views to Hailsham - Single house may be a poor use of land at part of this location.	-Access possible off Shepham Lane, with improvements, if Highways Agency agreeable some access of A27(T) roundabout would be preferred, especially for employment uses.	-Noise issue from Polegate bypass, therefore would need to be screened. -High voltage powerlines through part of area. -Wastewater as above.
16e - Areas North of Dittons Road - Polegate Adjacent area identified in Non-Statutory Plan for housing and business use (PW2 PW3).	220 - 540 dwellings -assuming 50% of total wider area used for employment purposes.	-Fairly self contained areas not visible from bypass because of cutting. -Opportunities to enhance habitat, ancient treed landscape of Little Shepham could be incorporated as green space.	-Edge of town location. -Access to A27(T) not currently permitted by Highways Agency but would make area much more attractive for employment purposes. -May require access improvements.	

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
16f- Area between Lower Willingdon and Polegate	1,600-2,650 dwellings.	-From A2270 forms an attractive break between Polegate, Lower Willingdon and Willingdon - but lie of land means that this is only one field deep and development could be largely hidden behind. The South eastern part is the least landscape sensitive, but least accessible to services. -Good hedges and green lane. -Prominent from some views to East.	Would require two access points to A2270, as access to East is impractical. A2270 is approaching current operational capacity -Access would need to be designed to give bus priority at signalised junctions on quality bus corridor. -Excellent accessibility to North to Polegate Station and town centre, and by bus to Eastbourne.	-Playing pitches in area would need to be retained or relocated to accessible and well drained locations nearby. -A2270 frontage fields could become a Willingdon Park -Willingdon Levels drainage issues. -PCT considers it to be a poor location for GPs to operate from. -May be good location for new Eastbourne/ Polegate secondary school if needed.
16g - Polegate Town Centre and Station Redevelopment Opportunity Area	160-270 dwellings.	-20th century town centre with potential for substantial improvement. Few notable buildings. Station and car park need improvement.	-Level crossing limits accessibility but matters much improved since creation of Polegate bypass.	-Very well served area, multiple land ownerships, needs a partnership to drive regeneration forward and provide Polegate with the quality town centre it deserves. -Wastewater as above.

Question Sixteen

Polegate/Willingdon Growth Options

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following broad areas of search for new development in and around Polegate & Willingdon:

Option 16a

Area to the North West of Polegate - between A22 and A27(T)

Option 16b

Area to the North West of A22 Polegate bypass Cophall Roundabout

Option 16c

Area to the North East of Cophall - Polegate

Option 16d

Area North East of Polegate - South of Polegate Bypass

Option 16e

Areas North of Dittons Road - Polegate

Option 16f

Area between Lower Willingdon and Polegate

Option 16g

Polegate Town Centre and Station Opportunity Area

Question 16h

If you have any further brief comments please tell us.

Question 16i

Please also tell us whether you agree or disagree with the suggested priorities for Polegate/ Willingdon.

Question 16j

If there are any other broad areas you wish us to consider please tell us where and why they should be included.

Stone Cross

5.37 Stone Cross is a considerably enlarged village which, because of its proximity and function on the edge of Eastbourne is considered under the towns section of this paper.

Table 8 Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Stone Cross

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
17a - Area North of Dittons Road - Stone Cross	230-390 dwellings.	-Visible from A27(T), but most parts not sensitive given backdrop. -Development of some parts of this area would be visually prominent from Hailsham Road approaching Stone Cross.	-Potential good access onto Dittons Road.	-Noise from A27(T). -Good services at Stone Cross. -May also be suitable as a park and ride location.
17b - Area North of St Lukes Church	25-40 dwellings.	-Needs to be set below triangulation point and behind woods to limit impact.	-Access off Hailsham Road.	-Potential for sensitively designed scheme to enhance setting of attractive church.
17c - Area to East of Friday Street/Langney	540-900 dwellings (assumes upper rather than lower slopes developed: drainage considerations may reduce theoretical potential).	-Varying topography -Development towards top/ South West of hill would be least harmful visually, where there is a caravan park and where part of the area is in a very poor state. Very open and exposed towards	-Several potential points of access via Eastbourne possible. -Part of Eastbourne Urban Fringe. -Major development could be linked to reopening of/new Friday Street Station if	-Significant drainage capacity issues and environmental issues regarding levels.

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
		Mounteney levels on eastern flank.	operationally practical (as recommended in the 2004 Multimodal Study).	

Question Seventeen

Stone Cross Growth Options

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following broad areas of search for new development in and around Stone Cross?

Option 17a

Land North of Dittons Road

Option 17b

Land North of St Lukes Church

Option 17c

Area to East of Friday Street/ Langney

Question 17d

If you have any further brief comments please tell us.

Question 17e

If there are any other broad areas you wish us to consider please tell us where and why they should be included.

Potential for a New Settlement or Concentrated Growth

5.38 The potential for some development around rural stations for new settlements has also been broadly examined. There is no obvious scope at Wadhurst station, as this is on an isolated road outside the village and is located in the AONB. Frant Station is next to a small village with no services, is in the High Weald AONB but does have two small brownfield sites with limited potential. Eridge Station is in the AONB (see below), whilst Buxted Station is next to the Station and does have good potential areas next to it (see 'Village Strategy and Broad Locations').

5.39 **Berwick Station** is in a different category. It is now a small village in its own right and does have a brownfield site and infill potential, but is visible from and acts as a gateway to the South Downs. In addition growth here could impact on the already congested A27(T). Future residents might use rail but evidence from other station settlements in Wealden suggest that this will not significantly reduce the numbers commuting by car. Both the visual and transport impact issues are related to the scale of development. The area has often been suggested as a new settlement option so views on its suitability are invited, together with a nearby area at Wilmington Green North of the Railway where a new station might be possible.

5.40 In addition any reinstatement of the Wealden Rail Line/Central Rail Corridor proposals (see 'Infrastructure and Phasing in Part 7 'Making it Happen - Implementation') could see reopening (for full public use) of stations at Groombridge and Isfield, with Eridge station becoming more accessible. Whilst as a result these areas may have greater potential for development, in particular the former army camp at Isfield (which may be suitable for a small amount of development in current circumstances) it may be unwise to base any spatial strategy around the Wealden Line. This is because it may not be deliverable in the plan period and because

of the sensitive AONB locations at Groombridge and especially Eridge. Development could however help pay for new rail infrastructure and at locations where upgrading would be needed and enhance the business case for reinstatement of the Wealden Line. It may be appropriate therefore to reserve some areas for consideration for future phases of development beyond the initial 10 year period, which would only be considered for release if the rail proposals had a strong commitment to come forward.

5.41 The **Lower Dicker** area North-West of Hailsham is disparate in form, but is accessible along the A22 and has relatively few planning constraints on development. There are three potential locations in this broad area for a 'new village' of modest size which would need to be of exemplar quality – a true village with all attendant services not suburbanisation of the countryside.

5.42 Finally **Halland** which although not on a rail link is on an important crossroads location with relatively unconstrained land around it. Otherwise though it is quite remote.

5.43 Amongst the key factors in deciding whether a new settlement in terms of a new village or larger 'ecotown' are appropriate in any of these locations would be:

- Ensuring that it is of a minimum size to accommodate a primary school in the case of a new village (ideally a two form entry primary school acceptable to the education authority on curriculum grounds) - which equates to around 1,500 dwellings - and for a secondary school for a town or township on the same basis - around 4-5,000 dwellings, as well of being a minimum size to attract services such as shops and community facilities, whilst not harming shops and services in existing settlements. The scale of settlement necessary to support a secondary school however would be very high risk as it would take most of the growth for the entire District;

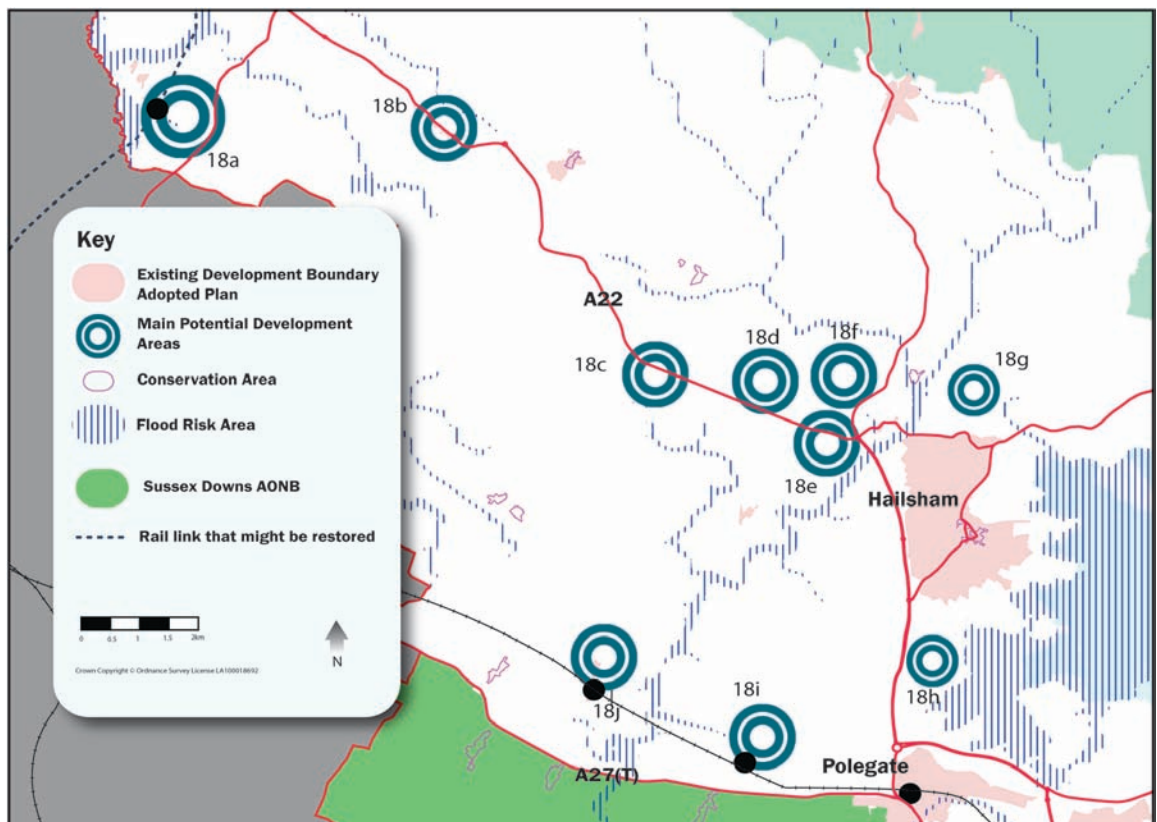
- Ensuring that development of this scale is capable of having infrastructure provided. This might be 'from scratch', in some cases building new sewerage works etc. if existing rural facilities would be overloaded;
- Ensuring that the location is acceptable in transport terms. Particularly as to whether good public transport can be provided in terms of routes through and to other settlements and whether the proportion of users who would inevitably drive could be accommodated safely on the road network;
- Whether acceptable access to employment can be suitably provided. This includes whether employment can be provided on site for which there is a market demand and whether the journey to work/weekly shop etc. would be more sustainable than town extension options;
- Whether the landscape impact would be less than other alternatives such as for town extensions, given that new settlements have close to a '360 degree' impact on the surrounding countryside whereas town extensions do not;
- Whether the long lead in and planning time for successful delivery would be appropriate if housing needs are pressing;
- The need to achieve a successful character and appropriate degree of self containment at each phase of development;
- Although the appropriateness of a new settlement or settlements would be restricted by the above the potential advantages must also be considered;
- The ability to build new state of the art infrastructure with sustainable technologies rather than potentially overloading existing facilities;
- Diverting development away from the attractive countryside around some towns towards less sensitive areas;
- The ability to link settlements old and new in a 'string of pearls' so that a public transport corridor can be provided whilst maintaining gaps between each settlement;
- The ability to provide a critical mass of development to pay for key infrastructure, although it should be appreciated that this may mean overall growth levels need to be increased if the infrastructure itself is very costly. This means that any new settlement, or network of new settlements, may need to play a sub-regional role as a 'growth point' in government terminology.

5.44 Undoubtedly, building any new community, whether a new or expanded village or town has risks. There are numerous examples nationally of the planning system bringing forward development of this scale which many will agree has failed, with a perceived lack of community heart, poor design, road dominated layouts, lack of public realm, failure of community facilities to keep pace with housing development, and funding gaps failing to deliver those elements that truly make a place rather than a housing estate. But it does not have to be this way. Good planning, provision of infrastructure and new thinking on urban and road design create an opportunity to make places that are really special, particularly if the infrastructure is planned in tandem and the vision for an exemplar place is developed from the outset. Use of tools such as 'Enquiry by Design'

where the local community helps build that vision have been instrumental in such projects elsewhere.⁽¹⁾

5.45 In the context of the Sussex Coast Policy Area some of the distinctions between New Settlements and Urban Extensions may be unclear in that some of the areas floated for significant urban extensions around Polegate would have poor connections to the town by virtue of the Polegate bypass. Hence they would have to function as a partially self contained 'township' with attendant services and infrastructure and new public transport links, if they were not to function as a disconnected car-orientated and unsustainable suburb.

Figure 20 New Settlement Options - Area of Search



1 http://www.southhams.gov.uk/enquiry_by_design_july_2004.pdf see also <http://www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/docdownload.aspx?doc=874BBD54E8164445B28C304CABD2CD10.pdf&pid=642410phak9K2AAJH5WmRzZ4YhYXY>

Table 9 Main Options and Alternatives for Development of a New Settlement

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
18a- Lavender New Settlement (Isfield)	5,300-8,200 additional dwellings.	-Gently rolling countryside off A26 between Uckfield and Lewes; -Development could be largely contained within folds of Low Weald Countryside -Could knit together disparate settlement.	-Key to acceptability would be potential to help fund and be served by restoration of Wealden Line link through to Lewes. -Public transport limited to two buses per hour peak (Uckfield to Lewes) at moment. -Capacity of A26 to north around Little Horsted is limited.	-Strategically could serve Lewes's as well as Uckfield's needs given impracticality and undesirability of expanding Lewes. -Could help provide services the village is currently severely lacking in. -Proximity to Uckfield, retail could act as a competing town centre
18b - Halland Expanded Village	1,800-2,800 additional dwellings.	-Modern Halland is mostly 20th Century ribbon development along the A22. -Open fields around most of Halland not outstanding, especially to South. Land to North which slopes away is more attractive. To East are woodlands.	-Good access via A22 Roundabout, but through and North of village A22 is poor and dangerous. Potential for bypass funded by development. -Peak bus service (Uckfield to Eastbourne) only one bus per hour, and would need radical improvement.	-No services or school at moment, village relies on East Hoathly. Key to acceptability might be provision of those services.

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
18c - Lower Dicker New Village Option - Golden Cross	650-950 additional dwellings.	-Lower Dicker overall is scattered and formless. Flat land to South of Golden Cross in particular is lacking in landscape sensitivity, but to North towards Chiddingly rapidly becomes attractive.	-A22 is a bottleneck at this point. Road would need considerable improvement and hence development would need to be of a scale to fund it. -Poor bus service.	-Lower Dicker services are lacking and scattered over several kilometres at the moment.
18d - Lower Dicker New Village Option - Industrial Area and Surrounds	1,300-1950 additional dwellings.	-Scattered mix of employment and residential uses lacking visual form.	-A22 is a bottleneck at this point. Road would need considerable improvement and hence development would need to be of a scale to fund it. -Poor bus service.	-Unimplemented employment land identification. -Development of this area alone would not solve ribbon development problems to North and South.
18e - Lower Dicker Option New Village Option -Infill	1,150-1,700 additional dwellings.	-Infill of largest concentration of ribbon development in Lower Dicker area.	-Would not solve problems of congestion on this section of A22, could worsen matters.	-Some significant employers here.
18f - Lower Dicker New Village Option - North of Lower Dicker	Could be of a variety of scales but potentially 600- 2,700 dwellings.	-Very large (for Wealden) and flat fields lacking in character.	-Could be accessed off A267 via roundabout at B2104 junction. B2104 could then be extended to service new settlement.	-Would require full range of local services to be provided - a true village. -Potential to fund 'tidying up' of Lower Dicker

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
			-Would require good bus links.	Frontage and improvement to A22 as part of scheme.
18g- Hellingly Hospital - Further Expansion	Potentially an additional 400-600 dwellings.	-North East of Hailsham land gently slopes upwards towards landmark feature of hospital, largely hidden in grounds - further expansion could erode this.	-Separate from main body of Hailsham, no public transport.	-Should not cause coalescence of Hailsham Hospital/Hellingly village as each has different characters. -Limited wastewater capacity North of Hailsham. -Would lack brownfield development justification of original scheme.
18h -Summer Hill New Settlement (midway between Hailsham and Polegate)	1,300-1900 additional dwellings.	-Scattering of semi urban uses. To north Borstall woods form an important rural gap at the edge of Hailsham, to South slopes down towards Polegate and Downs and is sensitive.	-Might only be feasible if linked to possible South of Hailsham Relief Road option and option 18b North East of Cophall Roundabout.	-Limited capacity of Hailsham South Wastewater treatment works.
18i -Wilmington Green New Village and New Station	1,600-2,400 additional dwellings.	-Sensitive location south of Railway close to Downs and Wilmington Conservation Area. Visibility	-Potential Parkway station serving Polegate. -A27(T) highly congested at this point.	-Could serve needs of South Downs villages as it is very difficult to expand these.

Ref. & Broad Area	Approximate Potential Scale of Development	Impacts & Issues		
		Landscape & Biodiversity	Transport & Accessibility	Infrastructure, Services & Other
		from Downs needs careful study.	-Could link to A26(T) relief options listed under Polegate.	
18j -Berwick Station new Settlement (village or town depending on chosen scale and the amount of infrastructure provided)	Up to 4,700-7,000 dwellings.	-South of Station forms a key visual and pedestrian/ transport link to Downs - North of station folds in land mean that development could in large part be hidden, although setting of reservoir is sensitive. Need to retain attractive farmsteads and small areas of woodland in the area. High water table, potential impact on Arlington Reservoir SSSI. Would require extensive settling ponds and new wetlands, if feasible at all.	-Key problem is limited capacity of A27(T) at this point. -Good rail links to Brighton and Polegate/ Bexhill etc. -Safety issue from increased traffic using a level crossing, may require a bridge with land take. -Few trains currently stop at the Station.	-Could serve needs of South Downs villages as it is very difficult to expand these. -Would require provision of services that the area is currently lacking in, including its own school. -Could be envisaged in a number of phases: firstly infill and brownfield development, followed by limited village expansion, followed by potential expansion to small town dependant upon road improvements (potentially linked to other options) - with potential for new neighbourhoods south of Arlington and North East of Berwick Station -

Question Eighteen**New Settlement Options**

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following possible new settlement options:

Option 18a

Lavender New Settlement (Isfield)

Option 18b

Halland Expanded Village

Option 18c

Lower Dicker New Village Option - Golden Cross

Option 18d

Lower Dicker New Village Option - Hackhurst Lane

Option 18e

Lower Dicker New Village Option - Infill

Option 18f

Lower Dicker New Village Option - North of Lower Dicker

Option 18g

Hellingly Hospital - Further Expansion

Option 18h

Summer Hill New Settlement (midway between Hailsham and Polegate)

Option 18i

Wilmington Green New Village and New Station

Option 18j

Berwick Station New Settlement (village or town depending on chosen scale and amount of infrastructure)

Question 18k

If you have any further brief comments please tell us.

Village Strategy and Broad Locations

5.46 Villages have been grouped into potential 'clusters' (See Part 6 'Wealden's Communities' chapter on affordable housing) covering different parts of the District and the possible growth potential of them has been assessed against the suggested settlement strategy as set out in 'Housing Needs - Affordable Housing'. For some of the smaller villages the draft principles set out in that section might set a 'cap' on the total amount of growth.

5.47 In the spirit of the new plan-making system, which has a focus on strategy first rather than extended debate over small sites, it may be inappropriate to identify smaller sites in villages (such as those suitable for less than 15 dwellings), as these could be assessed against criteria based policy.

5.48 A number of villages have significant brownfield sites in or near them, such as Isfield, East Hoathly, Five Ash Down, Maresfield and Wadhurst. The locations of some of these sites are not always in the most accessible or well serviced villages. An issue then is the relative weight to be given to the availability of such sites and the weight to be given to the accessibility of the location. Concentrating on accessibility may pull against the principal of developing brownfield sites to optimum potential. In some situations development of a more accessible greenfield site might be more sustainable than developing a more remote brownfield site.

Villages around the Ashdown Forest

5.49 These are a group of villages surrounding the Ashdown Forest. The area has a growing small business sector (which might imply mixed use, not solely housing allocations) and its own distinct social and economic characteristics. Forest Row is the main settlement. The local housing markets are strongly influenced by East Grinstead, Tunbridge Wells and Gatwick.

Figure 21 Villages around the Ashdown Forest

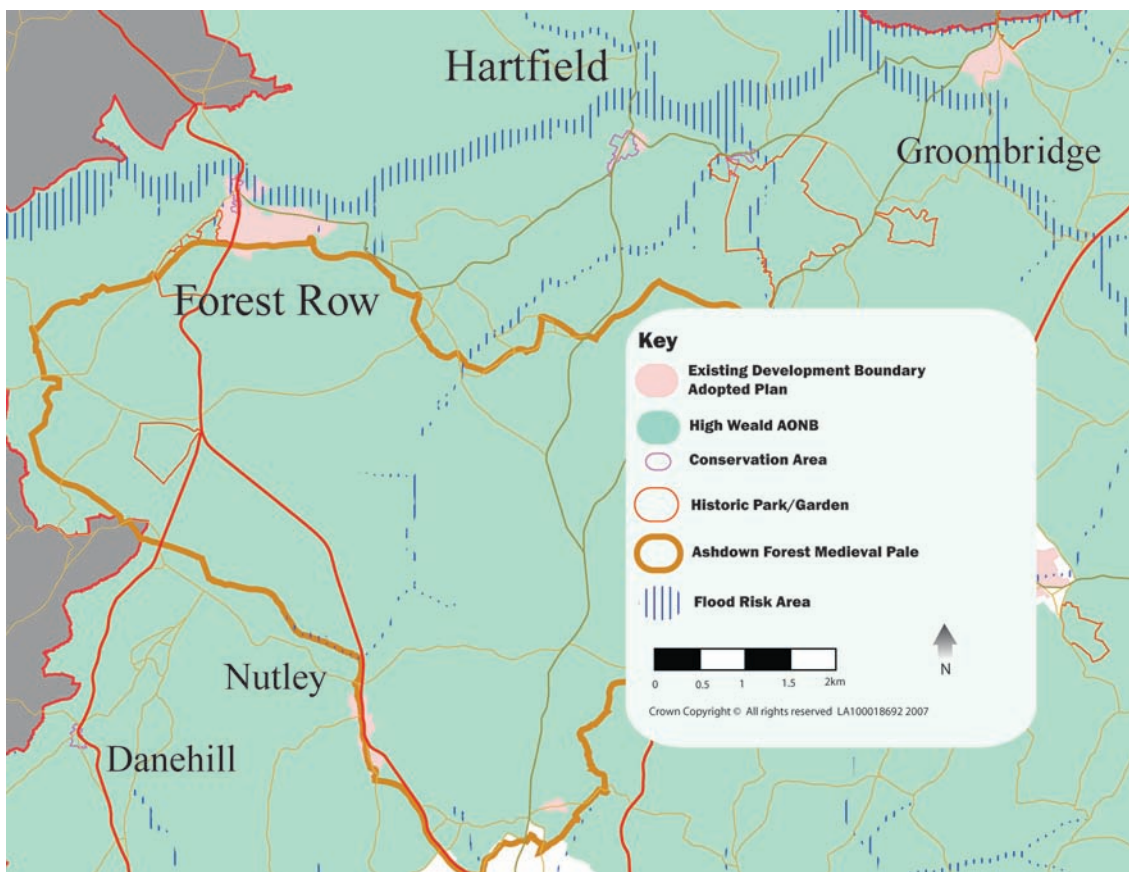


Table 10 Suggested Development Potential of Villages around the Ashdown Forest

Village Categories	Strategic Potential	Issues and Impacts
Villages with Growth Potential		
19a Forest Row	Total potential around 200-340 dwellings (less than the suggested cap of 350 dwellings in the draft settlement strategy)	-Forest Row is the second largest village in the District. The village is within the High Weald AONB -Potential locations lie to the North and West of the village -Heavily constrained to the South by the Ashdown Forest
Villages with Intermediate Growth Potential		
19b Nutley	Draft Settlement Strategy would limit growth to around 60 dwellings	-Located on A22 within the High Weald AONB -Potential broad locations to North East and West of Village -Access issues might limit scale of any potential development -Nutley primary school at capacity, would require expansion
19c Danehill	Draft Settlement strategy would limit growth to around 60 dwellings	-Potential areas in centre of village and main approaches varying widely in their visual impact. - Given character of village, if some growth is accepted then several smaller sites may be most in keeping.
19d Groombridge	Draft Settlement Strategy would limit growth to around 70 dwellings	-Main broad potential areas lie to the South and East of the village -Narrow roads are a significant issue, potentially limiting development size

Village Categories	Strategic Potential	Issues and Impacts
		Primary school at capacity: would need expansion if village is to grow
Villages with Limited Growth Potential		
19e Hartfield	Draft Settlement Strategy would limit growth of a single location to 20 dwellings	-Potential broad areas lie to North and West of village -Village requires new permanent GP surgery

Question Nineteen

Villages around the Ashdown Forest

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the possible growth potential at these villages:

Option 19a

Forest Row.

Option 19b

Nutley.

Option 19c

Danehill.

Option 19d

Groombridge.

Option 19e

Hartfield.

Question 19f

If you have any further brief comments please tell us.

Part 5 Wealden's Places



The Heart of the High Weald Villages

5.50 These are several large villages each acting as local service centres for a large catchment. Villages in this area tend to be located on top of steep High Weald ridgelines giving them their own distinct character. Wadhurst is particularly well served in having a railway station and a popular secondary school. Mayfield has a need for improved primary care facilities.

Figure 22 The Heart of the High Weald Villages

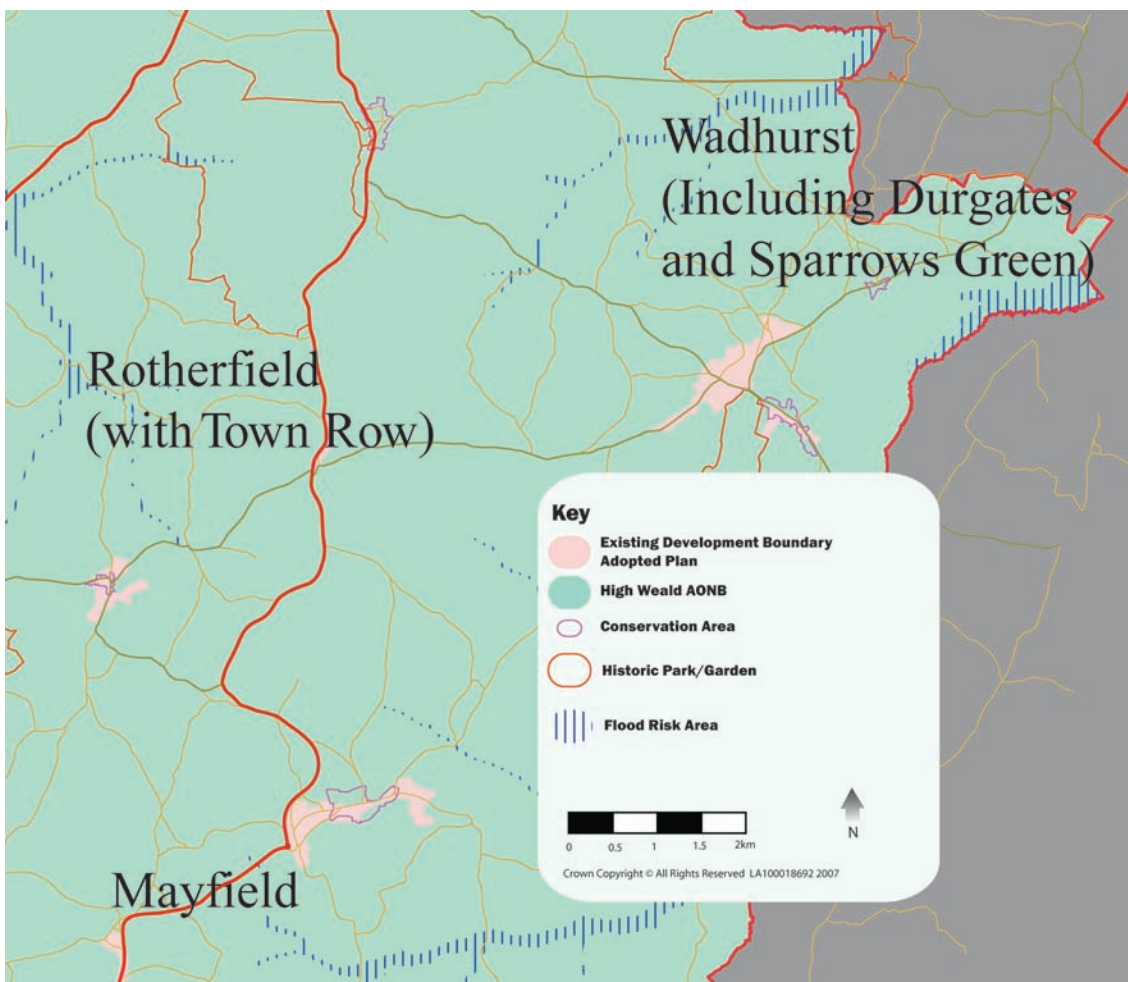


Table 11 Suggested Development Potential of the Heart of the High Weald Villages

Village Categories	Strategic Potential	Issues and Impacts
Villages with Growth Potential		
20a Rotherfield (including Town Row)	Draft settlement strategy would limit growth to 150 dwellings	-All potential locations are within the High Weald AONB -Route of high pressure gas pipeline restricts development options in some areas
20b Wadhurst (including Durgates & Sparrows Green)	285-320 dwellings (capped by Draft Settlement Strategy)	-Largest village in District entirely within High Weald AONB -Potential locations mostly on the approaches to West and East and North -Good access to railway station
Villages with Intermediate Growth Potential		
20c Mayfield	Draft settlement strategy would limit growth to around 135 dwellings	-Village preliminary classified as having intermediate growth potential -Broad locations to East and West -Any growth would have to be within the AONB -Need to enhance primary care facilities

Question Twenty**The Heart of the High Weald Villages**

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the possible growth potential at these villages:

Option 20a

Rotherfield (including Town Row)

Option 20b

Wadhurst (including Durgates & Sparrows Green)

Option 20c

Mayfield

Question 20d

If you have any further brief comments please tell us.

Villages around Uckfield

5.51 This is a selection of villages that rely on Uckfield for many higher level services. The landscape varies considerably from the fringes of the High Weald to Low Weald landscapes.

Figure 23 Villages around Uckfield

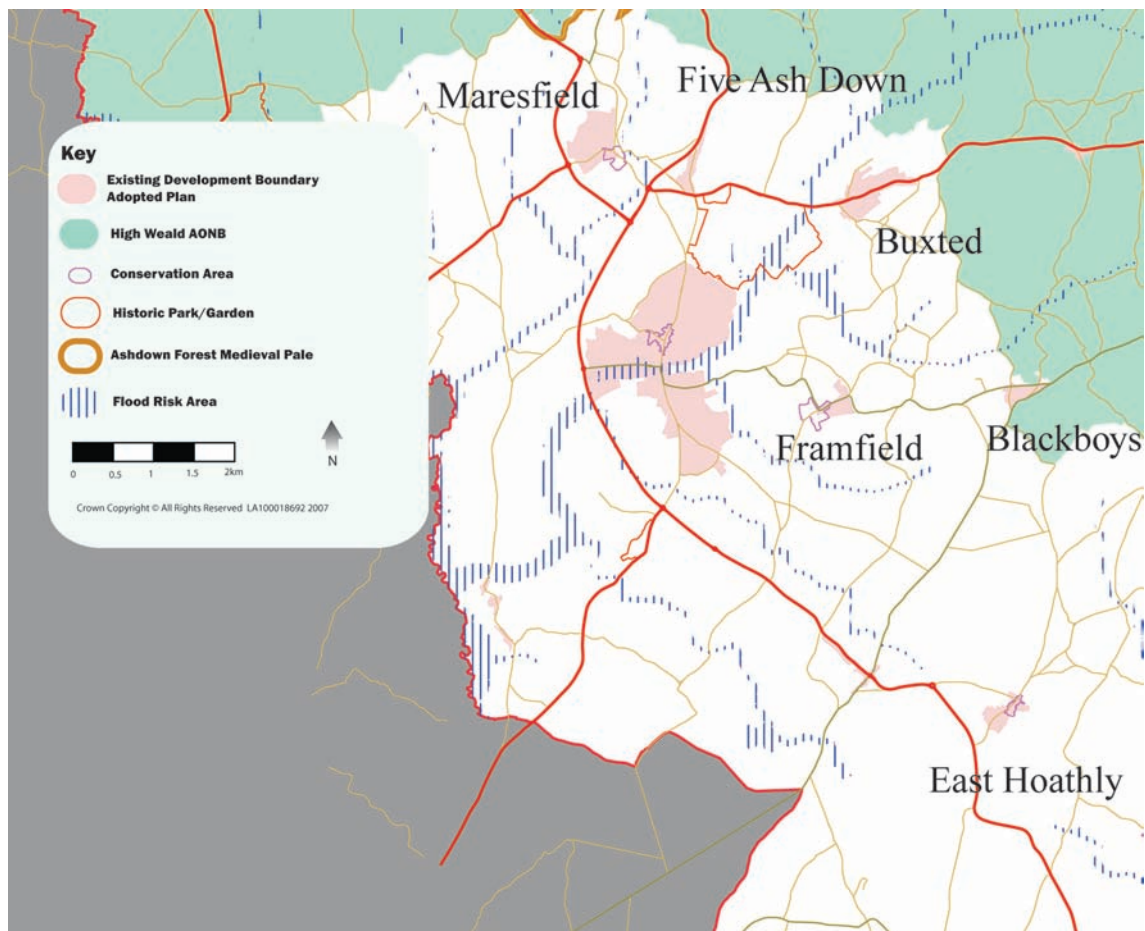


Table 12 Suggested Development Potential of Villages around Uckfield

Village Categories	Strategic Potential	Issues and Impacts
Villages with Growth Potential		
21a Maresfield	Potential scale of 350-500 restricted by capacity of any junction onto A22 Settlement considered to have capacity in excess of Draft Settlement Strategy	-Outside AONB -Potential to relieve traffic through village and potential to enhance village facilities with mixed use development -Close proximity to Uckfield could mean that development would benefit from town's facilities
21b Five Ash Down	260 -430 dwellings in total Settlement considered to have capacity in excess of Draft Settlement Strategy	-Outside of but just South of High Weald AONB -Close proximity to Uckfield could mean that development here would benefit from town's facilities -Central junction at Five Ash Down/Coopers Green may require improvement
21c Buxted	-Draft settlement strategy would limit growth to around 120 dwellings	-Broad locations to East and West of village -Potential to extend station car park -Possible potential for village centre enhancement
Villages with Intermediate Growth Potential		
21d Framfield	-Draft Settlement Strategy would limit growth of the village to around 60 dwellings and individual schemes to 20 dwellings	-Outside High Weald AONB -Potential broad locations to North and East of village
21e Blackboys	-Draft Settlement Strategy would limit scale of growth of village to around 40 dwellings	-Broad locations to the West lie outside the High Weald AONB

Village Categories	Strategic Potential	Issues and Impacts
21f East Hoathly	-Draft settlement strategy would limit any further growth beyond sites identified in the Non-Statutory Wealden Local Plan	

Question Twenty One**Villages Around Uckfield**

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the possible growth potential at these villages:

Option 21a

Maresfield

Option 21b

Five Ash Down

Option 21c

Buxted

Option 21d

Framfield

Option 21e

Blackboys

Option 21f

East Hoathly

Question 21g

If you have any comments about any village or potential village location please tell us.

Villages around Heathfield

5.52 This is a large area where there are several villages that rely on Heathfield for higher order services. Horam has more services and a greater degree of independence.

Figure 24 Villages around Heathfield

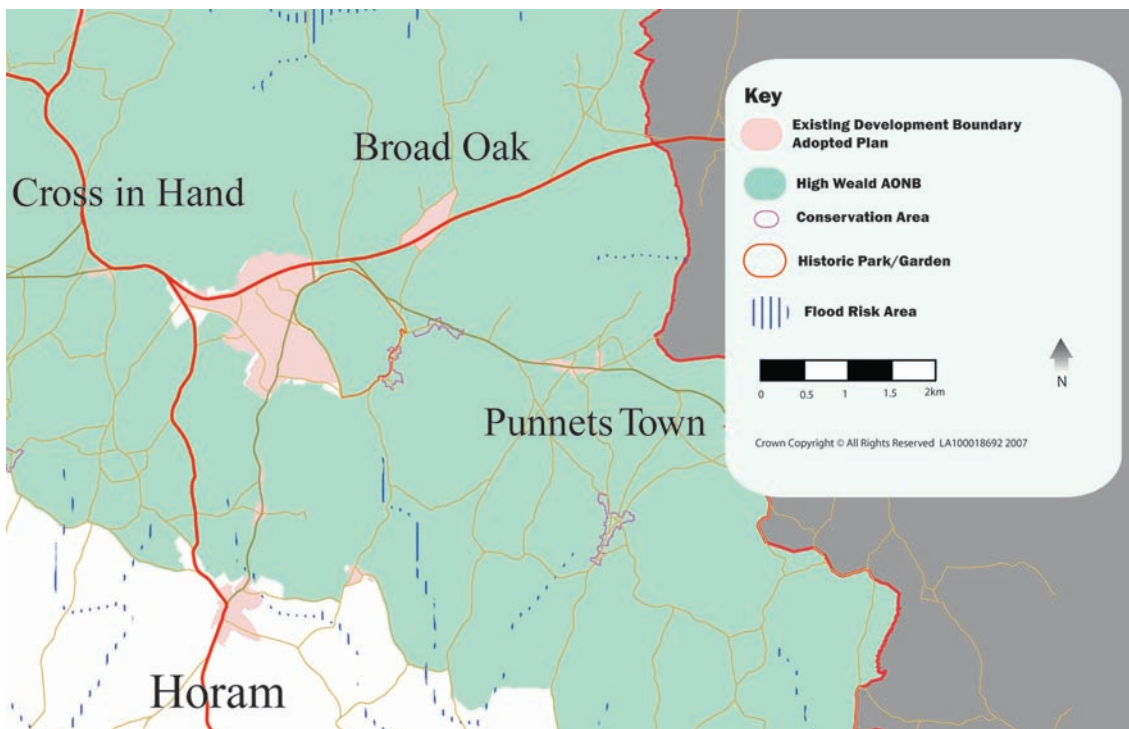


Table 13 Suggested Development Potential of Villages around Heathfield

Village Categories	Strategic Potential	Issues and Impacts
Villages with Growth Potential		
22a Cross in Hand	-190-320 dwellings -Settlement considered to have capacity in excess of Draft Settlement Strategy	-Several broad locations to North and in centre of village, partially on previously developed land -Good potential access from A265 -All areas within High Weald AONB -Opportunities for enhancement of village services
22b Horam	-Draft Settlement Strategy would cap total additional dwellings to around 160	-Broad potential locations in Centre and to South of village -Mixed uses including employment needed - High Weald AONB to North of village
Villages with Limited Growth Potential		
22c Broad Oak	-Single location would be capped at 20 dwellings in such a village by the Draft Settlement Strategy	-Within High Weald AONB, broad potential area to North of village
22d Punnetts Town	-Draft Settlement Strategy would cap total additional dwellings to around 25	-Potential locations to South and North of village -Within High Weald AONB

Question Twenty Two**Villages Around Heathfield**

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the possible growth potential at these villages:

Option 22a

Cross in Hand

Option 22b

Horam

Option 22c

Broad Oak

Option 22d

Punnetts Town

Question 22e

If you have any further brief comments please tell us.

Villages in the Sussex Coast Policy Area

5.53 This area has many villages, but many are small and very sensitive, such as in the Sussex Downs AONB, so no growth is proposed in this area. Similarly there are a number of isolated and very small Low Weald villages which it is not considered would be appropriate to grow significantly.

5.54 The villages where it is considered would be appropriate for some growth are those with close associations with the Sussex Coastal towns, whether Hailsham, Eastbourne or Bexhill.

Figure 25 Villages in the Sussex Coast Policy Area

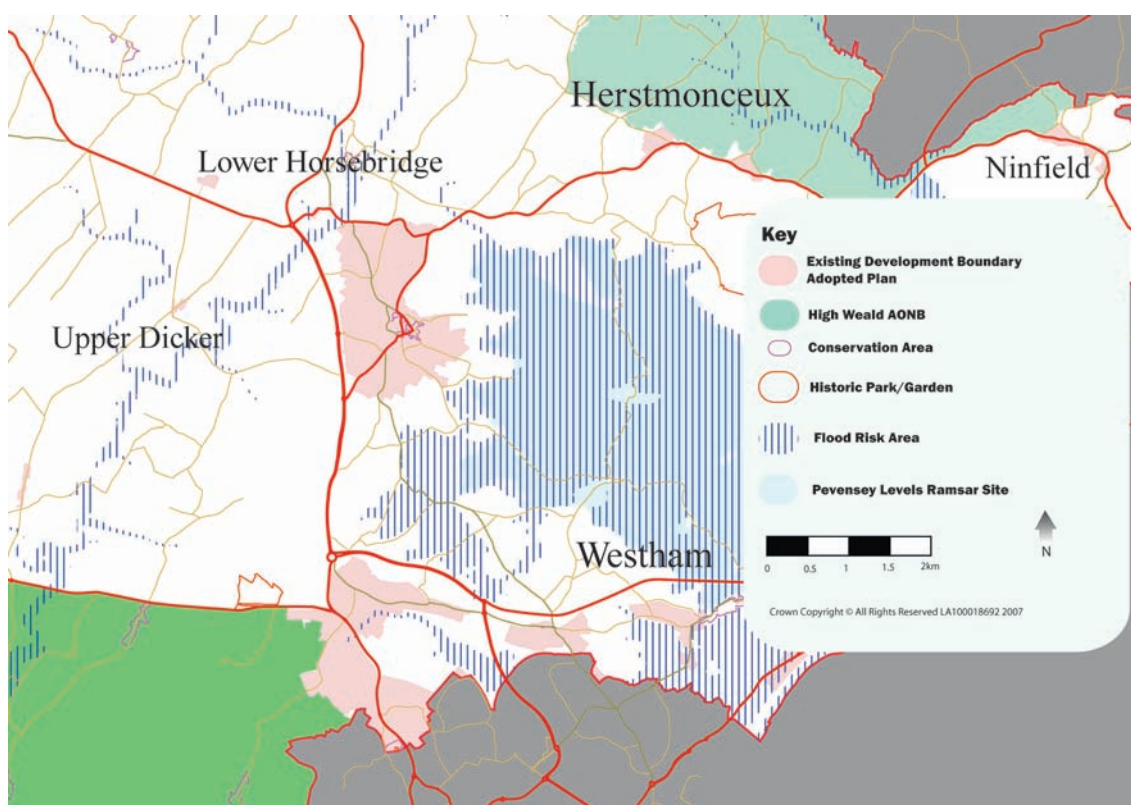


Table 14 Suggested Development Potential of Villages in the Sussex Coast Policy Area

Village Categories	Strategic Potential	Issues and Impacts
Villages with Growth Potential		
23a Herstmonceux	-Draft Settlement Strategy would cap total additional dwellings to around 100	-Broad locations, to North, West and South of village

Village Categories	Strategic Potential	Issues and Impacts
		-Village on High Weald AONB boundary
23b Lower Horsebridge	120-200 dwellings (may be considered acceptable as part of meeting growth needs of Hailsham) Settlement considered to have capacity in excess of Draft Settlement Strategy	-Potential broad locations to North and South of Village
23c Westham	300-500 dwellings (may be considered acceptable as part of meeting growth needs of South Coast towns. This would probably require a new A27 access) Settlement considered to have capacity in excess of Draft Settlement Strategy	-Broad locations to North of village, large scale development may require dedicated A27 access -Good access to village services and railway station
Villages with Intermediate Growth Potential		
23d Ninfield	-Draft settlement strategy would limit individual scheme size to 50 dwellings	-Potential broad locations to South of village -High Weald AONB to North of village limits opportunities.
Villages with Limited Growth Potential		
23e Upper Dicker	-Draft settlement strategy would limit individual scheme size to 20 dwellings -However, settlement has some specific needs which could be addressed by development	-Potential broad locations around the edge of the village -Occupation of village housing by St Bedes school creates particular local need for housing. The village is the focus of services within Arlington Parish

Question Twenty Three

Villages in The Sussex Coast Policy Area

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the possible growth potential at these villages:

Option 23a

Herstmonceux

Option 23b

Lower Horsebridge

Option 23c

Westham

Option 23d

Ninfield

Option 23e

Upper Dicker

Question 23f

If you have any further brief comments please tell us.

Part 6 Wealden's Communities

The Spatial Challenge:

Wealden needs to boost affordability of housing and improve services to a scattered community. How this can best be done given poor transport links and high house prices is a key challenge for the new plan.

Education Needs

6.1 Secondary Schools in Uckfield, Crowborough and Wadhurst have recently been expanded although there is a shortage of secondary capacity broadly in the District. Half are full, half are on sites with limited capacity for expansion. Both secondary and primary schools will require expansion in the District depending on the location of growth. The local schools organisation plan anticipates the need to provide new secondary and primary school accommodation in Hailsham and Polegate/South Wealden depending on the implementation of housing schemes as identified in the Non-Statutory Plan. Uckfield may also require a sixth form. Eight form entry (1,200 pupils) is the preferred size for a new secondary school. This, however is based on the Structure Plan and new projections will be needed (based on the locations proposed for growth in this new plan). East Sussex County Council has agreed standard arrangements with Wealden District on securing developer contributions towards school places and they are in the process of being updated in the light of the latest evidence.

6.2 As part of this, surveys will be needed of the children generated by new housing (child yield). Existing assumptions can undercount, as new housing is more likely to be occupied by younger families. There is more recent research from Oxfordshire and

Kent which suggests that contributions need to be closely related to housing type and number of bedrooms. Failure to do so give small unit dwellings financial disadvantages and could lead to shortages of school places⁽¹⁾.

6.3 In the Eastbourne and Polegate areas new housing development may generate a need to develop a new secondary school. Hailsham also needs a new primary school because of growth, and the White House School is to be relocated because of supermarket development. Most rural primary schools in the District have healthy rolls and some may need to expand. At Frant a larger school on a more suitable site is needed, the previous location chosen for the new school has proven unsuitable. In a small number of cases some village schools are small and rolls are fragile and opportunities may exist to help address this through provision of housing development which is suitable and affordable for young families.

6.4 There are a significant number of private schools in the District, some very large and in rural locations. They present their own planning challenges. Also a number of the less successful schools have recently closed creating pressure for residential conversion/development on sites classified as 'brownfield'.

6.5 The District is currently lacking in further and tertiary provision with opportunities to link to Brighton University. Uckfield may have the potential to develop such a facility serving areas now poorly provided for.

Health Needs

6.6 The District has no major hospitals, but there are minor injuries units at Crowborough and Uckfield. Primary care is provided by the Sussex Downs and Weald Primary Care Trust and the Eastbourne Downs Primary Care

1 <http://www.london.gov.uk/gla/publications/factsandfigures/dmag-update-2006-11.pdf>

Trust. There are major changes being examined to health service provision in Surrey and Sussex as part of the 'Fit for the Future' programme⁽²⁾. This could mean increased emphasis on walk-in and local provision of services at GP surgeries. GP rolls in the District are above optimum numbers and there may be a need to expand GP surgery provision in conjunction with new development in certain locations, and/or facilitate land for premises where there are identified shortages and/or deficient premises. Because developments have to be very large to justify totally new surgeries it is more likely that existing surgeries will relocate to new purpose-built premises and expand. There is currently no local requirement for planning obligations for the capital costs of health provision, although this is common elsewhere in the country. There is a lag of several years between new housing growth and the funding allocated to health providers⁽³⁾. There are acknowledged needs for new, enlarged or relocated surgeries in a number of villages, such as Hartfield and East Hoathly. Some larger villages such as Nutley also lack surgeries. Surgery provision however depends on doctors willing to occupy them.

Housing Needs - Dwelling Mix and Density

6.7 Small units, flats and terraced houses comprise 22.9% of existing stock compared to the national mean level of 45%. Historically most units built were larger units. In Wealden between 2004-2006 50% of new homes were two bedroom units, reflecting the decreasing number of households able to afford more space. This has increased demand for housing on brownfield sites in the towns. Unfortunately this is against a backdrop of low overall delivery and, with most proposals for greenfield sites being predominantly larger units not meeting overall needs and not providing mixed and balanced communities.

6.8 As part of the work on the Strategic Housing Markets Assessments undertaken by DTZ Consultants for the District, household growth has been mapped against preferences of existing households of different sizes for different sizes of house using data from household projection and the Survey of English Housing. This shows that the indicative need for market housing is as follows: 31% one bed, 32% two bed, 29% three bed, 8% 4+beds. The main need in terms of social housing is for small units for the elderly and larger 3/4 bedroom family units. More smaller units in appropriate locations may also help reduce out and in commuting in the District through more closely matching local need. It may also be possible to measure density in terms of habitable rooms per hectare (rather than dwellings) as this does not provide a disincentive for building smaller units.

6.9 Encouraging smaller units in rural areas could help younger families with less equity to afford to live there. The Non-Statutory Local Plan requires 20% of units to be small 1-2 bedroom units and there is scope for this to be higher and for differential splits for general market (indicative), intermediate and social housing - and in different urban and rural areas- the so called 'matrix' approach towards housing mix. This approach can help determine the varying needs for housing of different sizes in different parts of the District. For example, the need for smaller units is greater in the rest of Wealden than in the Sussex Coast Policy Area according to the draft Housing Market Assessment.

6.10 If more smaller units were built then this could be one of several factors allowing densities to increase. Mean densities of new development in Wealden, at 35 dwellings per hectare, are below the 40+ dwellings per hectare achieved in surrounding rural districts. They are also sometimes below historical densities of developments of small units with small gardens in the centres of

towns and in parts of villages. Schemes of small houses with street layouts and plot/development widths in keeping with traditional street patterns may not be possible with parking standards as high as two per dwelling. This is because the space to accommodate parking areas leads to continuous street patterns being broken and an inability to 'hide' a second street of development behind a main street frontage. A study for the Council in 2001 found that *'with a slight relaxation of parking standards it is possible to achieve quality and efficiency, particularly at over 40 [dwellings per Ha].'*⁽⁴⁾

6.11 In certain locations with good public transport access it may be possible to push densities higher saving greenfield land. In such locations it might also be possible to push down parking levels, enabling higher densities, and controlling overspill on street parking. This might be most easily achievable in large scale new sustainable communities/urban extensions.

6.12 Increasing densities, including possibly on unimplemented schemes with permission, might increase the viability of some schemes coming forward, increase affordable housing and take a considerable bite out of requirements for 'greenfield' sites. National and international experience suggest that higher densities, including in village and urban edge locations, can be achieved very successfully with good design.

6.13 Current policy does allow some higher densities which are acceptable in terms of accessible sites in or at the edge of settlements but it could be made clearer. Site specific figures in the Non-Statutory Wealden Local Plan are not density maxima but density minima. There is also a considerable stock of unbuilt permissions. Allowing higher densities on new applications, (especially in locations near to town centres and/or rail stations/quality bus corridors), providing there is demonstrably good design, might make

some of these more viable and likely to come forward as well as reducing the future requirement for new greenfield allocations.

6.14 The local plan contains a policy protecting areas of lower densities as areas of open character and 'arcadian' form. An approach towards densities which is more 'design-led' could possibly allow for both approaches with a density appropriate to the character of the area and the location of the site, as densities vary dramatically throughout the District largely depending on the sizes of gardens in plots rather than relating to the openness of character of an area.

6.15 Even where single 'villa' type houses are redeveloped, appropriate design and generous landscape can provide smaller units whilst still protecting local character. Redevelopment of some very low density housing in this manner in selective parts of some towns and villages - especially in the High Weald where this type of housing is most prevalent - could also mean less greenfield sites in the AONB were needed.

Question Twenty Four

Housing Density

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following options for the density of future housing development:

Option 24a

Typical densities for new development in Wealden should be at around 30-35 dwellings per hectare (as in the Non-Statutory Plan).

Option 24b

Typical densities in Wealden should rise to around 40 dwellings per hectare (potentially saving up to around 1/7th of the new land requirement, which may otherwise need to be found on greenfield sites).

Option 24c

Typical densities in Wealden should rise to around 50 dwellings per hectare (potentially saving up to around 1/3rd of the new land requirement, which may otherwise need to be found on greenfield sites).

Please also tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following.

Option 24d

For locations accessible to public transport higher densities should be permitted.

Housing Needs - Affordable Housing

6.16 The Wealden Housing Needs Survey 2005 (David Couttie) found that income levels of 91% of the new households forming are below the level necessary to be able to buy, and 72% to rent, in the local private market. The single most common reasons given by existing households for moving outside the District was lack of affordable housing (43.0%). The research found a clear mismatch between the types of housing required and what is available (see fig 20.). One of the reasons for the high average house prices, particularly within the rural areas of North Wealden, is its bias of the existing stock towards larger and detached properties.

6.17 The housing needs survey of 2005 recommended that 40% of new units provided overall should be affordable – comprising 25% social housing for rent and 15% intermediate housing (that is housing for those on low-intermediate incomes who do not qualify for social housing). The draft South East Plan also recommends at least 40% affordable housing in the Sussex Coast sub-region, because of its pressing housing needs. The draft Strategic Housing Market Assessment recommends that the percentage varies to take account of different land values in different areas of the District, perhaps 30% in the Sussex Coast Policy Area Towns, 40% in the Rest of Wealden Towns and 50% in rural areas.

6.18 28% of the population in the sub-region is over 60 and therefore consideration needs to be given to meeting their needs. There is a need for additional purpose-built housing to enable elderly people living in unsuitable dwellings to stay in their town or village and free up the original house for new occupants. An ageing population creates the need for ancillary housing for elderly relatives or carers and current policy restricts these. Some emerging plans elsewhere in the country allow for these, for example North Hertfordshire, with occupancy controlled by planning obligations. The problem is what happens after the death of the person or persons generating the need and when enforcement of the terms of the original permission may prove impractical. One option is for the smaller unit to then become fully self contained and be secured for affordable housing purposes.

Affordable Rural Housing Needs

6.19 Affordable Housing is a particular issue in rural areas, with many residents with a local connection with a particular area not being able to afford high prices and the small scale of new housing developments meaning that the number of affordable units normally secured through planning is low. Evidence on the scale, nature and locational distribution of rural housing needs has to be updated.

Previous parish surveys of self identified need are useful, indicating a need for 500 rural units (2004 survey). This figure may be too low. The high cost of rural housing and the constraints on supply have meant that many people on low/moderate incomes have moved from rural areas and people buying new properties have by definition been of high income. This means that over time local rural need on a self assessed basis must fall, exacerbated by falling household sizes and an ageing population, whilst the lack of affordability of the housing to those with a connection with an area, or wanting to start a rural business, is actually rising. The flipside of this paradox is that the expressed needs of those wanting a town location may simply reflect the lower cost nature of town housing sought by those on low/moderate incomes rather than a preference or connection to a rural location.

6.20 The possible answer to this 'rural affordability paradox' is to treat rural needs as a component of overall housing needs with an appropriate proportion assigned to one of several clusters of villages based on their ability to meet this overall need. This could be done according to a range of factors including existing social mix, school rolls, accessibility to towns and jobs, availability of sites and of land values able to cross subsidise affordable housing. It might also point to the need to vary the amount of intermediate housing and dwelling mix, according to the proposed 'matrix' approach suggested in the previous section, within each cluster, helping to secure mixed and balanced village communities overall. This could be backed up by 'cascade' mechanisms (which allow some intermediate housing if no funding for social housing found) controlling occupancy to individuals with a connection to that cluster of villages.

6.21 Government policy allows for a number of responses to rural affordability problems including allowing only affordable housing on so-called 'exceptions' sites on the edge of but outside settlement boundaries, as well as allocating sites for affordable housing in

villages. Both of these approaches require a degree of philanthropy by landowners and this has not always been forthcoming. Owners have sometimes withdrawn the offer of land to hold out for full general market housing values.

6.22 The Council has had a specific programme in place to identify sites for affordable housing in rural areas. This has been christened the HOPE (Housing Our People) project and as a result sites were identified in the Non-Statutory Plan for just under 100 dwellings on sites where there was Parish support. An examination of the success of this programme has shown that the scheme is now anticipated to bring forward 39 units. Whilst having some success, this is disappointing as half of the sites have proven either to be unsuitable or unavailable with only four of the 12 identified sites coming forward. In considering whether to roll this policy approach forward or not it is important to understand that the 'parish veto' which applied to these sites would be legally incompatible with the new development plan system; it may have also hindered more appropriate and deliverable affordable housing sites coming forward. HOPE may have deflected affordable housing providers from seeking out 'exceptions sites' and concentrate instead on often undeliverable HOPE sites, and so the programme may have actually reduced affordable housing provision rates overall.

6.23 The more housing allocated to villages, the more affordable housing there will be. The new plan will need to be able to justify its approach to allocating any sites for housing and/or affordable housing only in villages against a consistent strategy. One approach used elsewhere in the Country (including South Northamptonshire District) is to allocate some housing to service a less well located parish and/or that has few development opportunities as part of a 'cluster' of villages to a village which does have scope for new development. This could link well to the idea of apportioning overall housing needs to different clusters. Public

funding is likely to be much easier to obtain for such schemes. Also permissions for affordable housing could be subject to covenants preventing sites being held back in expectation of open market housing, removing that possibility in perpetuity.

6.24 Another potential approach would be to ensure that sufficient affordable housing is built alongside general market housing at villages. The Non-Statutory Wealden Local Plan introduced a 'sliding scale' approach to thresholds for affordable housing - so for example, one scheme of three to four units must provide one affordable unit. In rural locations development might not have to fund strategic infrastructure, so evidence nationally suggests that a high or higher proportion of affordable housing on small rural sites might still be viable. In practice general market housing is not permitted outside settlement development boundaries and small infill sites in villages are often very small (1-2 units) so no affordable housing is then provided. An approach successfully adopted in certain other high demand areas such as the South West of England is a 'one for one' policy⁵ of one unit of affordable housing for every unit of general market in rural areas (typically settlements of less than 3,000 dwellings). This would mean that development of a single general market unit would be acceptable. If a flexible approach is chosen for village boundaries this could reduce affordable 'Rural Exceptions' housing coming forward. If this approach were taken then a 'one for one' policy might be required as a safeguard. Overall housing/ affordable housing might have to meet a maximum cap set for that village, meet plan wide phasing policies and should not preclude better planning options for provision of that village's housing. The risk is reducing 'Rural Exceptions' housing coming forward.

6.25 The current policy on these 'exceptions sites' is fairly strict, allowing them only on the edges of the most accessible villages. This

has proved too restrictive and has required flexible interpretation. The policy may need to be changed, especially if more housing overall is allocated on the edges of the most accessible villages and needs in remoter areas are unmet. Infrastructure in remote rural areas where a small exceptions scheme is proposed might not always be considered essential. In many cases nominated persons will already be living in the area and may have become used to the remote rural way of life. Relaxation of agricultural occupancy to allow affordable only occupancy might be appropriate.

6.26 More can be done outside the development plan process to proactively identify 'exceptions' sites in rural areas and to help third party 'brokers' who act as a go-between for landowners, parishes, Registered Social Landlords and the Council in bringing forward such exceptions sites.

6.27 The problems experienced by those wanting to set up businesses or provide services in villages is another issue raised in consultation. A 'key services dwelling' type policy has been suggested, similar to that of key workers. Again the problem occurs, similar to agricultural workers dwellings, about when the original occupancy ceases. This might be easier to control if the business and dwelling are built together and could only be sold as one together (secured by planning obligation) together with strong restrictions on use.

⁵ See Affordable Housing Commission and Commission for Rural Communities Reports (2006)
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/pdfs/housing/commission/affordable-housing.pdf>

Question Twenty Five**Housing Policy**

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following options:

Option 25a

More housing should be in the form of small dwellings (flats and terraced housing).

Option 25b

In the towns of Hailsham and Polegate on sites capable of 10 or more units around 30% of new dwellings and in Uckfield, Crowborough and Heathfield around 40% of new dwellings should be affordable housing, where this is viable.

Option 25c

Outside of Wealden's five towns, schemes should include at least one affordable unit, and match 'one to one' general market units with affordable units.

Option 25d

Sites solely for affordable housing should be allocated in rural areas.

Option 25e

The Council should maintain a rural exceptions policy with appropriate criteria.

Option 25f

Ancillary dwellings for elderly relatives/disabled relatives or carers should be allowed if appropriate controls are in place.

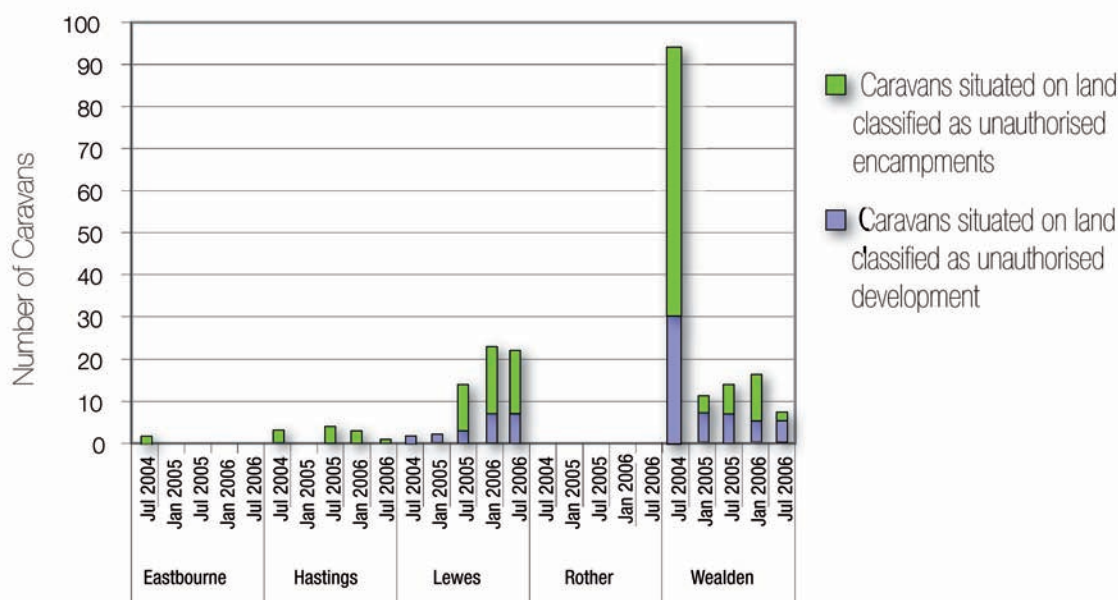
Option 25g

Ancillary dwellings to businesses providing key rural services should be permitted if appropriate controls are in place.

Gypsies and Travellers Needs

6.28 The District Council is required by national policy to include policies and site allocations for Gypsies and Travellers. The Council undertook a Joint Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA) in 2005 involving the County Council, all Districts and Boroughs in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove City Council.

6.29 The assessment identified the need for 80 additional site pitches throughout the County over the next five years. Wealden is currently assigned 34 permanent pitches (based on survey respondents preferences), which is higher than any other authority in East Sussex/Brighton and Hove and may be slightly too high. This assessment assumes that some of the transit need (sites which accommodate seasonal travellers) will be accommodated in the 80 permanent pitches. The assessment concludes that some community owned and managed sites as well as private and Local Authority sites should be developed.

Figure 26 Number of Unauthorised Caravans in East Sussex

6.30 Between April 2004 and early 2006, 71 unauthorised encampments were recorded in Wealden. In order to evict the occupants of the unauthorised encampments it is necessary to have suitable temporary accommodation, in the form of transit sites, within the County. At present the only transit sites in the area are located within Lewes District and Brighton and Hove. It is considered that the provision of transit sites within 'travelling areas' would reduce the need for eviction from other less suitable sites.

6.31 Of the nine sites in the District subject to unauthorised development involving the change of use of land for the stationing of caravans for residential use by gypsies, five have now been granted planning permission on appeal, surprisingly two of which were in the AONB. The presence of unauthorised sites, together with the GTAA and appeal decisions clearly indicate the need for pitch provision in Wealden.

6.32 East Sussex County Council currently provides three permanent sites within Wealden with a capacity for 23 caravans.

6.33 The assessment revealed a preference for sites of less than 10 pitches which reflects the fact that gypsies and travellers do tend to settle and travel as an extended family.

6.34 There is an identified need to provide sites for travellers and gypsies in Wealden to prevent adverse impact on the environment and local amenities. The South East Plan Partial Review will determine the number of pitches, with the mix of transit/ permanent pitches as well as the ownership. However, in light of the timescales, options on pitch provision are set out in this paper. In addition, the Council will need to provide locational criteria for the development of sites, taking into account the different site requirements of transit and permanent sites. Government policy favours sites on the edge of settlements prioritising brownfield sites where possible. Practically, many sites are likely to be in District or County ownership and the availability of such sites limited. The primary need for sites is focused on the North of the District, possibly because of its proximity to Kent with its large Gypsy community. Sites will need to be deliverable, either through being publicly owned, owned by gypsies/travellers or possibly promoted by

developers as part of a 'package deal' to help meet the totality of housing need as required by national policy.

Question Twenty Six

Gypsies and Travellers Locations

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following options:

Option 26a

Sites should be focused in the North of the District – in or close to the towns (this is where the evidence suggests the need is greater)

Option 26b

Sites should be distributed throughout the District - in or close to the towns

Transport Needs

6.35 The District's poor public transport network and scattered nature creates a heavy car dependence and makes the creation of a viable public transport system difficult. The rail network is weak and much reduced from its heyday with four rail lines and 10 stations all servicing London. Parking at stations is often severely limited with a number in very rural locations. The capacity of certain parts of the main road network is low, but on a national scale most of the District does not suffer congestion and there remains capacity in the system. Part of this will be used up through growth in population and car ownership, but only some of this from new housing development, some of which will be redistributing rather than adding to traffic growth as it will meet local needs and cater for existing residents.

6.36 The "Coastway" rail route along the Sussex Coast accommodates a range of train services to London, faster trains along the coast centred on Brighton, and all-station stopping services. All services using the Coastway have significant spare capacity, and the existing service pattern could accommodate significant growth in use. Redevelopment of the limited station facilities at Polegate is considered a priority in the South East Plan

6.37 Three former railway lines are currently safeguarded for possible reinstatement of the former Uckfield to Lewes railway line, the Polegate to Pevensey rail link and the former Eridge to Tunbridge Wells railway line. The District has funded a study into the Lewes/Uckfield potential re-instatement by Mott MacDonald which found no major obstacles. The "Central Rail Corridor" ⁽⁶⁾ scheme for the 'Wealden Line' (Lewes-Uckfield and Eridge-Tunbridge Wells reopening) would provide an additional train path to the South Coast and a public transport link from Sussex to Tunbridge Wells. This

was curiously opposed by the Government in representations to the South East Plan, partially because it 'would be slower than the existing route to London from Lewes'. In a change of heart in February 2007 Network Rail agreed to improvements at Tunbridge Wells which could act as the first step towards reinstatement of the Eridge link. In addition in April 2007 Network Rail in its annual business plan included various options for the Uckfield Line upgrade, including platform extensions, double-tracking, line speed increases and electrification. Network Rail says this would enable the, "implementation of more frequent services on this route," as well as, "potential for extension to Lewes and beyond". This appears to centre on capacity problems on the core Brighton Main Line ⁽⁷⁾. At a number of potential locations re-instatement could be costly due to short-sighted planning decisions. At these locations development might be able to fund preliminary engineering works.

6.38 A local priority is the provision of enhanced bus services. There are limited long distance services between the North and South of the District and a number of more local services, although services within towns to some stations and to nearby villages are generally poor. There are two community run bus services in the Cuckmere Valley and around Forest Row. A bus corridor is proposed from Polegate to Eastbourne by the County which might possibly be extended to Hailsham and to serve new development areas in/around Polegate. Only major growth will enhance the viability of new bus services.

6.39 Proposed developments in the Non-Statutory Wealden Local Plan at Hailsham and Polegate were dependent on A27 West of Polegate improvements (at Selmeston and Wilmington). Together with a new link road from the A27 to the A22 Polegate bypass roundabout, developments in Hailsham and Polegate should contribute to and be phased to coincide with the

6 [http://www.wealden.gov.uk/moderngov/Data/Cabinet/20020515/Agenda/\\$JR6501-0201.doc.pdf](http://www.wealden.gov.uk/moderngov/Data/Cabinet/20020515/Agenda/$JR6501-0201.doc.pdf)

7 <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/browse%20documents/BusinessPlan2007/PDF/Route%20%20Brighton%20Main%20Line.pdf>

completion of the West of Polegate improvement. There remains, however, no firm scheme and timescale in place for this improvement. A significant landowner also resists it. The Selveston/Wilmington improvements are included as a priority in the South East Plan for completion between 2011-16, the Secretary of State having previously rejected proposals for bypasses at these locations. An alternative option, considered previously by the Highways Agency, is to take the main alignment of the A27(T) further north, away from the South Downs across relatively unconstrained and flat low weald landscape going north of the Arlington Reservoir basin and linking back to the original alignment between Selveston and Firle; the original A27 could be returned to a more local function. This may overcome some environmental and national policy objections to any dualling and potential impact upon the proposed National Park, as well as relating well to certain growth options North West of Polegate and at Berwick Station. Such an option might only be viable in conjunction with very large development at these locations. There may be lower cost solutions in the shorter term than the 'Folkington Link', such as improving the junction/creating a roundabout at the A27(T)/Old A22 junction upon entry into Polegate.

6.40 Any measures must be consulted on early with the Highways Agency and they will advise on what is practical and deliverable. New junction/road arrangements must be consulted on and included in the new plan. The Agency may require demand management (e.g. parking controls and promotion of no-car modes) and possibly access control measures (e.g. managed access by signal controls) as part of any significant development impacting upon the A27(T).

6.41 The A22 is the main North-South route in the District. The Structure Plan approach, which the new plan might carry forward, is to create a 'trunk road box' so that the main London-Brighton (A23) and London-Hastings

(A21) roads become the preferred access routes to East Sussex with the A22 serving a more local function. Concern has been expressed at previous proposals for a road to the east of East Grinstead in Mid-Sussex District as part of their area action plan for growth of East Grinstead, as this could see the A22 becoming much more attractive as a through route, impacting on already high levels of traffic in the AONB villages such as Forest Row and Nutley. There are some local aspirations for a bypass, which one of the East Grinstead options would provide for, although this would have no funding and would conflict with national policy on major roads in AONB and in terms of its impact on the Ashdown Forest. It appears now that improvements to the existing road network around East Grinstead is most likely.

6.42 There are significant concerns about the capacity of the primary route network, including both the A27(T) and the A22 to cope with the level of housing anticipated in the South East Plan for the low weald Towns. The County Council's current policy is to restrict all new junctions onto the A22, with major development using existing junctions. This policy is now stricter than the revised policy of the Highways Agency to the A27(T) which does allow new accesses where a case can be made and it helps facilitate housing growth. The County policy could prevent a number of growth options, such as at Maresfield, as well as removing the possibility of less environmentally damaging access road alignments to potential growth options to the North of Hailsham and to the West of Uckfield.

6.43 The new plan will also have to include parking standards. Previously the District Council only partially accepted county wide parking standards, not accepting the proposition that parking standards should be as low as one space for small units, affordable dwellings and/or dwellings in more accessible locations. Current standards are two spaces per dwelling. National policy

requires a design led approach to parking and for regard to be had to variations in car ownership by location and by tenure.

6.44 2001 Census data on car ownership levels has been examined and this shows that households in the District have an average car ownership level of 1.45 cars per household. Car ownership levels appear to have little correlation with public transport accessibility, the demographic characteristics of areas being a far stronger factor with areas of deprivation and high levels of the elderly displaying much lower car ownership levels. Wealden residents may use public transport for work journeys but there is no clear evidence of this impacting upon car ownership levels.

6.45 Car ownership levels do vary with the size of dwellings and is higher for houses rather than flats, with small dwellings having less than half the car ownership levels of large dwellings in the South East region (according to independent research designed to inform car parking standards)⁽⁸⁾ although it is difficult to obtain very local level data on this. So on that basis a parking standard of 1.5 cars per dwelling might be more reasonable than 2 cars per dwelling, varying between around 1.2 and 2.2 cars per dwelling for houses and 1 and 2 for flats, depending on the number of bedrooms. Rented affordable dwellings tend to have 2/3rds of the levels of car ownership as owner occupied dwellings so a reduction of 1/3rd could be appropriate.

6.46 It is possible to use fractional parking standards because of the research based recommendation made in the official 'Manual for Streets'⁽⁹⁾ that most parking be provided as 'unallocated' parking for medium/high density developments, that is, parking in bays adjoining the street, or on wide streets, available for all households rather than within dwelling curtilages or assigned to individual dwellings. The evidence quoted above

suggests that where such parking is provided then 17% less parking is needed, as households can use 'spare' spaces as can visitors. On this basis a reduction of say 15% where parking is provided as unallocated might be appropriate.

6.47 A final concern is over the use of garages for storage rather than parking, (especially where small), leading to inappropriate verge parking etc. Again research quoted in Manual for Streets suggests that only between 36% to 45% of garages are used for parking, in part attributable to the small sizes of garages and lack of storage space provided by developers. This suggests that garages should only count as 0.4 of a parking space. Many authorities now recommend a minimum garage size of 3m by 6m and perhaps a lower reduction factor might apply to such garages. If overspill informal on-street parking is an potential issue developers should submit surveys of safe available on street parking capacity very close by.

6.48 Parking for town centres is an issue. The District Council is proud of there being no charged parking anywhere. However potential intensification and additional retailing in some town centres such as Uckfield/Crowborough and/or Polegate may require structures for parking that necessitate a revenue stream (of whatever form) to maintain. In addition, there is the issue of possible provision for Park and Ride for Eastbourne and/or Tunbridge Wells at a main approach into one of these towns. Further retail floorspace in these town centres may require a modal shift in favour of the bus as conservation and other constraints may restrict the amount of parking that can be provided in the centres.

6.49 In addition further rail station car parking areas may need to be identified (including for potential stations on a reinstated Wealden line) and their commercial and

⁸ <http://www.trics.org/philjonesalanyoung.pdf>
⁹ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/manforstreets/pdfmanforstreets.pdf>

operational viability might depend on controlled parking in the surrounding streets. Parkway stations might also be a possibility providing these do not adversely harm service patterns to town centre stations.



Question Twenty Seven

Transport Policy

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following options:

Option 27a

Development should be located where it might improve the viability of bus services to and between towns.

Option 27b

Instatement of a Lewes/ Uckfield/ Tunbridge Wells train service should be a long term priority of the new plan even if that means development at certain sections along its route to help fund missing links.

Option 27c

Further consideration should be given to a Parkway Station (rail based park and ride) in the Polegate area even if this could reduce the number of stopping services at the existing stations.

Option 27d

The potential for dualling of the A27(T) west of Polegate is unrealistic given the impact on the South Downs.

Option 27e

Park and Ride facilities should be provided in Wealden to serve Tunbridge Wells and/or Eastbourne.

Option 27f

Parking standards should derive from the car ownership levels of different types of household.

Open Space and Leisure Needs

6.50 The District Council has recently completed a study to audit and assess the District's open space, sport and recreation needs⁽¹⁰⁾. It recognises the importance of retaining existing outdoor space, improving its quality and overcoming identified deficiencies. This thorough report found, in summary, that provision was below standard in terms of quality, accessibility and quantity. The standards of provision it sets could be adopted by the District Council as a supplementary planning document and then the final Core Strategy could have a policy requiring development to have regard to meeting this standard. Furthermore, sports pitches could be protected unless replaced adequately and no less accessibly.

6.51 The provision of open space and leisure is important for health as well as social reasons as the draft South East Plan acknowledges, helping to stem the dramatic rise in obesity⁽¹¹⁾.

6.52 The total District wide requirements – there were requirements for different parts of the District as well - were as follows. The shortfalls are very large in some cases and might not be practical to fully reduce in the short term:

- Allotments: 15.5 ha shortfall;
- Bowling Greens: 6 greens shortfall;
- Children's Play: Significant shortfalls: (not meaningful to quantify);
- Rugby: 28 pitches shortfall of various sizes;
- Football: 85 pitches total shortfall (adult plus junior);
- Artificial turf – Hockey – shortfall one at Crowborough one at Hailsham;
- Artificial turf – Football and Rugby- five spread throughout the District;
- Public Open Spaces – With the possible exception of Uckfield, open spaces are

found to be disjointed and limited, with a real lack of 'parks'. There is a need to develop a proper main park for each town without detriment to current recreational use. A number of spaces require real improvement. There should be a standard of 15 sqm. of public open space per person;

- Multi Sport Courts and Tennis Courts – Priority should be to open up school courts for wider community use and provide floodlighting for existing courts;
- Teenage facilities – Standard of 0.3 sqm, per person;
- Community Halls – Expressed need for new or better halls in several parishes;
- Sports Halls – No additional need except at Polegate, and
- Athletic – refurbish Goldsmiths at Crowborough and provide training area at Hailsham community sports college.

6.53 There is also the potential to create a better network of open spaces, using cycleway and walking connections such as the Cuckoo Trail and the Forest Way. In the Sussex Coast policy area for example the major urban development proposed will require its own open space provision. Also development of new parks/ country parks at easier gradients outside but close to the South Downs can ease visitor pressure on the Downs and provide a more accessible and sustainable recreational experience for the local population. A country park serving the Hailsham and surrounding area will be provided as part of the Hellingly Hospital development.

10 Kit Cambell Associates – Wealden PPG17 Assessment Audit and needs assessment for Open sapce Sport and Recreation, March 2007.
11 Choosing Health, Choosing Activity Department of Heath 2004

Question Twenty Eight**Open Space and Leisure Policy**

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following options:

Option 28a

The new plan should include proposals for quality parks for each of the towns at locations to meet local deficiencies.

Option 28b

Developer contributions should be secured for recreational facilities to meet local standards.

Option 28c

The new plan should protect indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facilities unless suitable, equally accessible and high quality replacement provision is made.

Minerals and Waste

6.54 East Sussex County Council will be publishing a minerals and waste development framework. There is a recently adopted waste local plan (jointly with Brighton and Hove), however consultation on the framework will not begin until 2008 following agreement of a new waste management strategy. The main issue for the District will be to ensure that any changes to land use allocations are compatible and that waste-water options are included/ compatible.

Part 7 Making it Happen - Implementation

Infrastructure and Phasing

7.1 The new national mechanism for housing allocations ([PPS3](#)) requires, in effect, a plan, monitor, manage, release, approach to housing. Sites from a 'pot' are released over time to ensure a continuous five year supply of available sites. Many aspects of how the new system will work in practice need to be resolved. It is open to local authorities to have phasing policies to manage this, for example, ensuring that development and infrastructure do not fall out of synchronisation and that greenfield sites are developed alongside and not instead of brownfield sites. Phasing will be a particular issue in villages, to ensure development of small sites occurs gradually over time so as to protect their character and not overload local services. It will also be an issue in the North of the District where the much higher levels of 'windfall' brownfield sites suggest one policy approach of restricting greenfield land releases if brownfield completions are sufficient to maintain housing levels on 'trajectory'- that is on target. On the other hand releases here in the first five years of the plan could compensate for the sparsity of within five year deliverable and suitable housing areas in the Sussex Coast Policy Area.

7.2 This paper has identified a number of infrastructure requirements. They are summarised in fig 27. following, together with the main delivery agencies. Some are clearly required, others are contingent upon certain growth options being chosen and are marked as such. Where potential growth options require nothing more than local road access and potential associated junction improvements they are not specifically identified. A few transport proposals are included in the South East Plan as priorities for regional investment. Some infrastructure improvements will need to be carried out by the utilities as a statutory requirement. In other cases developer contributions are

required to fund necessary infrastructure. Some infrastructure will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment/ Sustainability Appraisal as part of the appraisal of the Local Development Framework; some will have already been appraised as part of the South East Plan process. Clearly the totality of planning obligation contributions will need to be viable and the District will need to consider the implications of proposed reforms to planning obligations and the potential for an extension of the standardised 'tariff' type approach, especially as the current approach of using guidance tied to the structure plan cannot continue after the structure plan is superseded by the South East Plan. In due course the Council will need to carry forward the County's work with its own Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations.

7.3 A particular evidence gap is the lack of co-ordinated transport studies through the Local Transport Plan process, linked to the growth options discussed in this paper. This is needed to ascertain the infrastructure costs and cumulative impacts of various options and to provide a basis for distributing costs amongst development based on impact and according to a predictable and standardised rate. Once the totality of obligations are known then it will be much easier to calculate the viability of a scheme and the amount of affordable housing subsidy that it might be able to attract or otherwise. This will keep the 'hope value' of land down, delivering more affordable housing without additional cost to developers. Once predictable these costs will come off the price of land. It could also ensure that public subsidies for affordable housing can be used to help deliver housing in a timely way, and that subsidies are not spent unnecessarily or unwittingly have the effect of inflating land prices.

7.4 Wealden District Council has been very concerned that the provision of housing growth is contingent upon additional infrastructure. It is important that housing and

infrastructure are planned for and provided in tandem to avoid a 'chicken or egg' scenario where neither get provided. Recognising that this is an issue the 2007 budget report and the planning white paper propose⁽¹⁾ that Local Development Frameworks should undertake sound infrastructure planning, including the resources likely to be available (which includes that coming from development), thus maximising the use of new infrastructure. Key stakeholders such as local developers, public sector service providers and utility companies need to be actively involved in this process. Such planning is likely to include infrastructure such as trunk road improvements and sewerage facilities that have not in the past been the remit of plans at a local level.

Delivery

7.5 Once robust infrastructure plans are in place then the District as Local Planning Authority will have lead responsibility for coordinating and driving forward infrastructure delivery. Hence the new plan will not just be a plan for homes and jobs, but also for infrastructure.

7.6 Ensuring that there will be a continuous five year housing supply will be a challenging task, especially in the Sussex Coast Policy Area where infrastructure issues are holding up development on almost all the major sites. In many ways the key issue in Wealden is improving delivery through the unlocking of infrastructure barriers.

7.7 The District currently has a significant shortfall in its five year Structure Plan housing requirement. There are a significant number of consents for housing where delivery has been slow, especially in the South of the District, where few of the sites in the

Non-Statutory Wealden Local Plan have commenced. There are a number of potential responses. For example:

- Permission could be limited to two years and not renewed unless there was a binding legal commitment for delivery within two to five years of the originally granted consent, possibly only the general market component of schemes could expire in this way⁽²⁾;
- Granting permission with conditions requiring a 'delivery strategy' - to deliver the housing at a minimum rate - to be agreed before a development could lawfully commence⁽³⁾. Such a strategy could include developers submitting a planning obligation to an agreed standard and acceptable form which could require no commencement of subsequent phases if the delivery of the previous phases were not to schedule. This would prevent consents being kept alive through 'trench in the ground' tactics and developers 'landbanking' or drip feeding sites to keep prices high - especially where they own more than one site in an area. This problem was recently highlighted by the Government Advisor Kate Barker⁽⁴⁾;
- Larger locations being developed by several developers simultaneously, including those with the national capacity and financing to build out large schemes quickly;
- Making award of public subsidy for affordable housing strictly time limited and conditional upon high quality

1 http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/669/PlanningforaSustainableFutureWhitePaper_id1510669.pdf

2 See para 73 of PPS3 http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/931/PlanningPolicyStatement3Housing_id1504931.pdf

3 Of the legal form as endorsed by the government- see the Planning Officers Society Good Practice Note <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/article.cp/articleid/42>

4 http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/consultations_and_legislation/barker/consult_barker_index.cfm

designs submitted and discussed well in advance of submission of a planning application, and

- Charging for pre-application advice on major applications - to fund high quality advice from an enhanced District development team. This could fund key gaps in expertise at the moment - such as proactive and urban design led advice on transport and other delivery issues.

7.8 Bringing forward some difficult preferred sites will require close co-operation and a positive co-operative stance between the District, County and infrastructure providers, and discussions are underway on potential local delivery arrangements.

7.9 In the interim it is suggested setting up the 'Wealden Delivery Board' between Wealden District, East Sussex County, Eastbourne Borough, SEEDA, the Highways Agency, Invest in East Sussex, the Government Office, the Environment Agency and the utilities. It is proposed that this operates a rigorous project management approach, and not be a talking shop, to delivering key required infrastructure, with considerable executive delegated authority. Everyone would have to give a little to achieve wider benefits and unblock the 'showstoppers' to development. In the government's jargon it could grow to a dedicated delivery body with its own expert staff and special powers granted under draft legislation. There are many potential and successful models for how this could operate nationally.

7.10 Given that a number of major sites in the South of the District from the Non-Statutory Plan are unlikely to be deliverable within five years it will mean that the District Council will need to look at ways of bringing forward other sites (potentially even before the new plan process is concluded) otherwise decisions may be taken out of the hands of the District and made on appeal.

7.11 The new plan will also have to contain contingencies in case the preferred strategy is unable to deliver at the required rate. This might especially be the case if higher risk strategies such as concentrating development at one of two large concentrations, are pursued.

Question Twenty Nine

Housing Delivery

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the options (in this chapter) for ensuring that once planning permissions have been granted the housing is then built.

Question Thirty

Infrastructure Requirements

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the potential infrastructure requirements identified in Table 15.

Table 15 Potential Infrastructure Requirements

Major Item of Infrastructure	Included and appraised as part of South East Plan	Contingent upon Certain Options for Growth being Chosen	Delivery Agency	Developer contributions required to fund
30a West of Polegate A27(T) Improvements	Yes	No	Highways Agency	No
30b A27(T)-A22(T) Link or Junction improvement (various options)	Yes	No – any significant growth in Polegate/ Willingdon will require some form of link or improvement to the A27(T) entry point into Polegate. Various options exist from a roundabout at the junction to links further westwards, including a Folkington/ Cophall link, each with differing landscape impacts	East Sussex County Council/ Highways Agency/ SEEDA – may require compulsory purchase	Yes - different options will require objective Strategic Environmental Assessment looking at how each option might impact upon different delivery scenarios for the South East Plan in the Sussex Coast Policy Area as set out here. If this infrastructure test of soundness is not met then no option(s) impacting upon this part of the highway network is likely to be found sound. These options will require consultation.
30c Bewl Water and other reservoir expansion	Yes	No	Southern Water	No
30d New sewage treatment works/ long	No	Yes -one or both sewage works might need replacing depending on locations chosen for growth.	Southern Water	Yes

Major Item of Infrastructure	Included and appraised as part of South East Plan	Contingent upon Certain Options for Growth being Chosen	Delivery Agency	Developer contributions required to fund
sea outfall serving Hailsham and Polegate				
30e New Willingdon Levels/ Eastbourne Park surface water outfall	No	No - any significant growth in Polegate/ Willingdon will require this	Southern Water	Yes
30f Relocation or odour control modification of Uckfield Sewage Treatment Works	No	Yes	Southern Water	Yes – but could also release land value of existing site
30g Uckfield Town Centre traffic relief/ management and streetscape enhancement scheme	No	No – significant growth in Uckfield will require this	East Sussex County Council, Uckfield Town Council and Wealden District Council	Yes
30h Hailsham Town Centre traffic management and streetscape enhancement scheme	No	Yes - although certain relief road options North and South of Hailsham will reduce traffic through the centre	East Sussex County Council, Hailsham Town Council and Wealden District Council	Yes
30i New GP surgeries primary care	No	Yes	Primary Care Trust	Yes

Major Item of Infrastructure	Included and appraised as part of South East Plan	Contingent upon Certain Options for Growth being Chosen	Delivery Agency	Developer contributions required to fund
facilities in parts of District				
30j New Polegate sportshall	No	No	Wealden District Council	Yes
30k Hailsham North access road and/ or Lower Dicker road links	No	Yes, depends upon significant growth being chosen for North and possibly East of Hailsham -Alternative alignments with differing impacts on Cuckmere River. Northern alignments impact on Hellingly area. Alternative Southern alignment South of Lower Horsebridge might have less landtake of floodplain, but would take in some land previously identified for housing	East Sussex County Council	Yes -Different options will require objective Strategic Environmental Assessment looking at how each option might impact upon different delivery scenarios. If this infrastructure test of soundness is not met then no option(s) impacting upon this part of the highway network is likely to be found sound. These options will require consultation.
30l Hailsham South access road	No	Yes, if any Southern Growth options chosen,	East Sussex County Council	Yes - as above.
30m SE Crowborough – Improved local road link	No	Yes -may be needed to relieve problems in Jarvis Brook area if Southern options for growth at Crowborough are chosen	East Sussex County Council	Yes
30n Wealden Line/ Central Rail	No	No	Network Rail	Yes – contributions can help secure

Part 7 Making it Happen - Implementation

Major Item of Infrastructure	Included and appraised as part of South East Plan	Contingent upon Certain Options for Growth being Chosen	Delivery Agency	Developer contributions required to fund
				station upgrades and reinstatement of missing links
30o Polegate New Town Centre station and possible Park and Ride station to West of Polegate	Yes - Town Centre Station	See to right	Network Rail	Yes - development options need to maintain a town centre station. If a Parkway station is proposed - including as part of certain growth options, needs to be far enough away from Polegate Station to be operationally practical to have trains stopping at both, and for there to be a business and overall impact case.
30p Eastbourne, Polegate and Hailsham Bus Quality Corridor	No	No – but certain options might require dedicated route	East Sussex County Council/ Quality Bus Partnership	Yes
30q Uckfield flood relief scheme/ Uck Meadows Park	No	No - desirable in any event but might only demonstrate a business case with certain development options	Environment Agency/ SEEDA	Yes
30r New Eastbourne / Polegate Secondary School	No	Yes	East Sussex County Council	Yes

Major Item of Infrastructure	Included and appraised as part of South East Plan	Contingent upon Certain Options for Growth being Chosen	Delivery Agency	Developer contributions required to fund
30s New Primary schools, and enlarged schools, in several parts of District	Yes	Yes	East Sussex County Council	Yes
30t Crowborough Multi-Purpose Community Hall	No	No – but certain options might provide a site.	Crowborough Town Council	Yes - in part

Part 8 Developing a Spatial Vision for Wealden

Where We Want to get to

8.1 All new plans must include a long term spatial vision, with spatial objectives that flow from that vision and strategic policies to achieve it. Having set out the potential options in terms of where we might possibly want to get to it is now possible to talk about what that spatial vision might be.

8.2 According to government planning policy and advice the vision for an area must be contained in the Community Strategy with the spatial vision contained in the Core Strategy. This has to be visionary, clear, embedded in place and locally distinctive, and provide a picture of how the area will spatially develop, taking account of local aspirations - whilst being realistic and deliverable.⁽¹⁾ The vision needs to avoid the 'anytown' syndrome of being applicable to everywhere and nowhere.

8.3 The current Wealden Community Strategy is based on a number of consultation responses about what local residents want to see. Protection of the local environment is the primary concern. Whilst the themes set by the Community Strategy set the context for the new plan for Wealden, a crystallisation of the implied vision of the area – that sets out how the area should change through to 2026 - is needed to meet national policy requirements. This means developing a spatial dimension of that vision - in terms of a vision of the best combination of locations to accommodate growth.

8.4 The best plan visions are often fairly short. A spatial picture need not be an executive summary of the entire spatial strategy. As a prompt to thinking here are some extracts from 'stand out' draft spatial visions for some well known places:

York – A city making History – Celebrating our historic past, whilst creating a successful and thriving future.

Plymouth – By 2020 Plymouth will be one of Europe's finest, most vibrant waterfront cities.

Norfolk Broads – An unrivalled naturally functioning wetland ecosystem of international natural and cultural importance, a place which provides, in the words of the late Norfolk naturalist Ted Ellis, 'a breathing space for the cure of souls'.

8.5 Whilst the final vision will need to take on board the chosen options in terms of what kind of new places will be made it is possible to draw out a number of possible early themes for discussion.

8.6 Firstly, **Protecting Wealden's Beautiful Landscapes**.

8.7 Secondly, **Increasing Economic Momentum** – making Wealden an even better place for small businesses to start and grow and for all businesses to invest, in particular making the Eastbourne/Hailsham triangle the South Coast choice for investment.

8.8 Thirdly, **a Constellation of Small Towns and Villages Working Together** – with growth focused where it will be accessible, most sustainable and most benefit the objectives for that place.

8.9 Fourthly, **Improving Health and Social Well Being to a Highly Dispersed Community** - including reducing the fear of crime.

8.10 The importance of the landscape to local residents is one thing that stands out in previous consultations. It is a District of long, dramatic, often windmill topped, views; a beauty robust to the seasons, revealed in its

¹ See Creating Local Development Frameworks – A companion Guide to PPS12 http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/863/CreatingLocalDevelopmentFrameworksACompanionguidetoPPS12_id1143863.pdf and Planning Advisory Service Core Strategy Guidance Dec 2006 <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/aio/31034>

rather splendour with the iconic flowering of bluebell woods and driveway sides. Whilst the District contains many fine historic buildings and areas it is the quality and variety of the landscape, and the way in which heritage and settlements are embodied and embedded within the landscape, which contributes to the area's very high quality of life as well as forming part of our cultural and literary landscape.

Or, as Kipling put it:

I'm just in love with all these three,

The Weald and the Marsh and the Down
countree,

Nor I don't know which I love the most,

The Weald or the Marsh or the white Chalk
coast.

(A Three Part Song - 1906)

8.11 A suggested preliminary vision for the area is set out below, deriving from these qualities of place, as well as being forward looking, and pulling together these possible themes. The protection of these qualities requires innovation and more sustainable forms of land management and economic development. The vision is only preliminary in that we need to know what you value, and what the communities' aspirations are, the choices on options for the new plan need to be made before it can paint a full spatial picture of how the area will change.

Preliminary Spatial Vision

By 2026 in Wealden District:

Its beautiful landscape of Weald, Forest and Down, Coast, Level, Village and Town, will be preserved and enhanced for future generations. Development and land management will flow from the potential of landscape and place in innovative and sustainable ways.

Necessary development for homes, employment, tourism & farm diversification, new community facilities & enhanced infrastructure will be sensitively integrated into this landscape. Growth will be focused where it will be accessible, most sustainable and most benefits the objectives set for that place.

Wealden will be a constellation of small towns and villages working together. These and their rural surrounds will be made better places to live, and affordability of housing will be increased.

There will be increased economic momentum. It will be a place for small businesses to start and grow and for all businesses to invest. In particular the Eastbourne/Hailsham triangle will have become the South Coast choice for investment.

It will be a place where its dispersed community will have better services to improve health and social well being, as well as reduced crime and fear of crime.

It will be a much better connected place. The Wealden Line will be reopened with direct rail links to Tunbridge Wells and the South Coast, there will be a safer and less congested A26(T); North-South (A22) through road traffic will continue to be discouraged.

Question Thirty One

Spatial Vision Themes

Question 31a

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the main themes of this Preliminary Spatial Vision for Wealden.

Question 31b

If you have any further brief comments please tell us.



Possible Spatial Objectives for Wealden

8.12 The Strategy for Wealden must contain a series of spatial objectives which should be derived from the spatial vision and be clearly defined and measurable. They should build upon national and regional planning policy objectives as well as having regard to other development plan documents. It is best practice that where possible objectives should be SMART objectives – that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Limited.

8.13 Considering the draft vision, the following preliminary local spatial objectives are put forward.

Question Thirty Two

Local Spatial Objectives

Question 32a

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following possible local spatial objectives for Wealden identified in this vision.

Question 32b

If you have any further brief comments please tell us.

Objective SO1

To protect, properly manage and enhance the nationally designated landscapes of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sussex Heritage Coast and the Proposed South Downs National Park, whilst appropriately integrating development to meet local needs.

Objective SO2

To protect the countryside, to maximise the use of previously developed land, and make full and efficient use of land, ensuring at least 60% of new housing is on previously developed land and that at least 75% of new residential development is at a density of at least 40 dwellings per hectare.

Objective SO3

To enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity of Wealden, meeting local biodiversity action plan targets and protecting locally and nationally designated sites of nature conservation importance; in particular the internationally important sites of the Pevensey Levels and Ashdown Forest.

Objective SO4

To ensure that the built heritage of the Sussex Countryside and Towns, which is nationally important, is protected and enhanced for future generations.

Objective SO5

To meet the requirements for additional housing as set out in the South East Plan and ensure that the minimum target in the plan for provision of affordable housing is met.

Objective SO6

To increase visitors staying in Wealden, focusing on sustainable tourism, whilst ensuring that the tranquility and beauty which attract people to the area is not undermined.

Objective SO7

To ensure a step change in the quality of urban and rural design in Wealden through application of policies in the new plan and the principles set out in the Wealden Design Guide.

Objective SO8

To work with partners to help ensure that Wealden remains a safe place, with levels of crime and disorder well below the national mean.

Objective SO9

To work with partners to effectively meet the health and lifelong learning needs of a widely dispersed population.

Objective SO10

To broaden the weak retail offer of the District's Towns through meeting the need for additional comparative goods floorspace and additional convenience goods floorspace by 2016.

Objective SO11

To ensure that by 2026 no Super Output Areas within Wealden District are in the 15% most deprived areas within England.

Objective SO12

To increase the GVA (Gross Value Added) of the District.

Objective SO13

To reduce the shortfall of open space, leisure and recreational facilities in the District, providing quality parks in or adjoining each of the District's towns by 2026.

Objective SO14

To take full account of the local impacts of climate change and to ensure that development is 'carbon neutral' and sustainable as far as practically possible.

Part 9 What Happens Next?

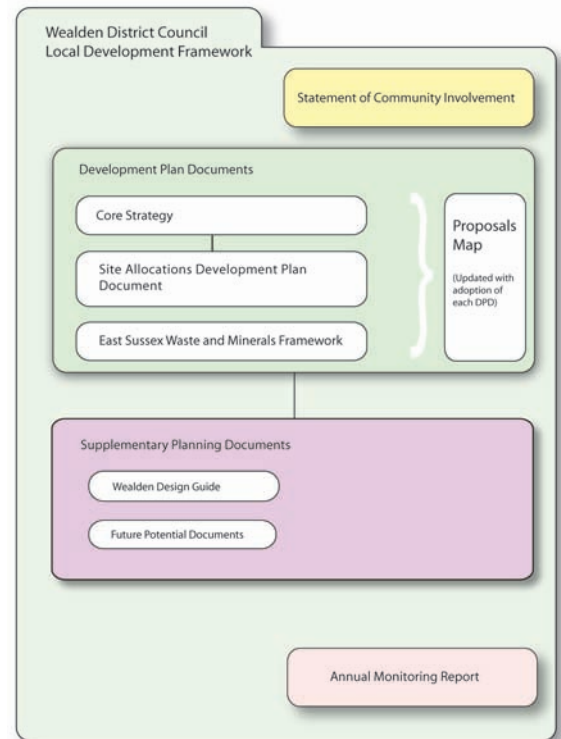
9.1 Thank you for taking the time and interest to read through this paper - Wealden really appreciates it.

9.2 The diagram below explains how different plans fit together.

9.3 It is anticipated that proposals for areas/sites and settlement boundary changes omitted from consultation in this paper will come forward as responses. It is advised by the Government to publicly consult on these, which we intend to do alongside the next stage of consultation on the preferred approach.

9.4 The next key stage will be the publication of the preferred approach. If the government's white paper proposals come forward this may well be in the form of a draft plan some time in 2008. By this stage key spatial decisions will be made and will be consulted on - together with a draft Strategic Environmental Appraisal. Following this the Council will submit its plan for examination and then you can say if and why you think it 'sound'.

Figure 27 Wealden Local Development Framework - Documents



Part 10 Details of How to Comment

10.1 We would encourage you to send us your views online, as this is the easiest and quickest way for you to comment. **Please ensure that you submit your comments to us by Monday 13 August at 5.30pm.**

10.2 You will need to register on our consultation system, which will only take a few minutes of your time.

10.3 You can register by going to our website www.wealden.gov.uk and following the link to the Local Development Framework pages. You will need to provide an email address in order to receive a password which will enable you to submit your comments.

10.4 If you do not have access to the Internet at home, you can visit your local library where you can log on to our website at the Internet points.

10.5 If you have any questions relating to this document or wish to discuss how to make your comments, please contact the Planning Policy team on 01892 602007 or email ldf@wealden.gov.uk.

10.6 Please note that due to legislative requirements, we are unable to accept anonymous responses. We will not be able to respond to each individual response. We will however produce a summary of all responses received (after the consultation has ended), which will be available on our website.

Glossary

Adopted Local Plan The Wealden Local Plan was adopted in December 1998 to guide development across the District. It will continue to remain in force until all parts are superseded by the new Local Development Framework

Adoption The date upon which a document becomes finalised and fully operational in law

Affordable Housing Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market

Affordable housing should:

- Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices
- Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision

Social rented housing is:

‘Rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. The proposals set out in the Three Year Review of Rent Restructuring (July 2004) were implemented as policy in April 2006. It may also include rented housing owned or managed by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Housing Corporation as a condition of grant

Intermediate affordable housing is:

Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents, and which meet the criteria set out above.

These can include shared equity products (e.g. HomeBuy), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent

The definition does not exclude homes provided by private sector bodies or provided without grant funding. Where such homes meet the definition above, they may be considered, for planning purposes, as affordable housing. Whereas, those homes that do not meet the definition, for example, ‘low cost market’ housing, may not be considered, for planning purposes, as affordable housing

(Source [PPS3](#))

Allocations One of the key functions of the development plan is to ‘allocate’ land. An allocation is land shown on a proposals map as being acceptable for a certain type and possibly amount of development

Annual Monitoring Report - A report on the progress, implementation and delivery of the Local Development Framework

Aquifer Source Protection Zones - Protection zones around sources of groundwater which are used for public water supply. Within these zones, certain activities and processes are prohibited or restricted

Assart - A pasture in a ghyll enclosed by shaws

Brownfield - Land which has been previously developed

Carbon Neutral - Relates to the balance between producing and using carbon

Community Strategy - A document, developed in 2002 and revised in 2006 by a range of partner organisations in the light of information from residents about the quality of life locally. The Strategy has been

implemented, monitored and updated since by the partner organisations which form the Local Strategic Partnership⁽¹⁾

Core Strategy - A visionary Development Plan Document that sets out the key elements of the planning framework for Wealden. It contains a spatial vision and strategic objectives, a spatial strategy, core policies and a monitoring and implementation framework

Development Plan - A document which sets out policies for the use and development of land used to determine planning applications and other spatial policies relating to development not reliant on the grant or refusal of planning permission for implementation. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless there are good reasons not to. Under the planning system introduced by the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, the development plan will consist of Regional Spatial Strategies (The South East Plan), Wealden's Development Plan Documents and Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents (prepared by East Sussex County Council)

Development Plan Documents - Documents that form part of the Local Development Framework. They contain spatial planning policies and strategies that will guide development in conjunction with the Regional Spatial Strategy and national policy. These documents are subject to independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate

Droeway - A weald lane typically in sandstone areas where movements of livestock has worn down the lane over many years to create a deeply indented routeway

Enquiry By Design - A participative planning mechanism that can challenge the validity and effectiveness of previous or existing development solutions through process of shared analysis of places and alternative design solutions

Frontloading - Early involvement of key stakeholders in the preparation of Local Development Documents

Generic Policies - Policies in a development plan other than those which provide the spatial strategy or which allocate land. Typically development management policies such as those covering design

Ghyll - A steep valley of a stream in the Weald

Greenfield Land - Land which has not been previously developed

Independent Examination - The binding examination of a draft Development Plan Document by an independent Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State, taking into account any representations received

Issues and Options - The early consultation stage in the preparation of a Local Development Document, in accordance with Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004

Key Stakeholders - A generic term used for bodies and organisations with a significant interest in the Wealden District, such as representatives from health, infrastructure and education

Local Area Agreement - Voluntary agreements between government, the local authority and its partners in order to improve public services and quality of life. Delivered through the Local Strategic Partnership and the Community Strategy

Local Development Framework - The entire collection of Local Development Documents that collectively will guide or be used to determine development

Local Development Scheme - The programme for preparation of the Local Development Framework

1 www.wealdencommunitystrategy.co.uk

Local Strategic Partnership - A group of key local stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sectors with an instrumental role in Wealden's Community Strategy. Through a co-operative approach to joint working at a local level they are able to address multi-faceted problems by providing a range of responses

Non-Statutory Wealden Local Plan - This Plan was approved in December 2005. It does not have statutory status, but is a material consideration in determining planning applications until replaced by the new plan

Preferred Options - The Council's most favoured course of action, based upon evidence collected from the early consultation stage of document production

Primary Care - Doctors and dentists surgeries, walk in centres etc.

Proposals Map - A map which indicates the spatial extent of policies and land allocations in a development plan

Ransom Strip - A piece of land where through ownership of this area a larger site is undevelopable otherwise (such as a required access). The owner is able to 'ransom' the price of the land upwards above its normal value

Ramsar Site - The Convention on Wetlands, signed at Ramsar, Iran in 1971 is an intergovernmental treaty which provides a framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Pevensey Levels is a Ramsar site

Rathe - Appearing early in the year, as bluebells and cuckoos traditionally do in Sussex

Sallions - A type of medieval field enclosure system including ridge and furrows

Shaw - A small wood in a ghyll (see Ghyll)

Soundness - A Development Plan Document will be considered sound if it has been prepared in accordance with the criteria set out in Government Guidance [PPS12](#). The tests are partly procedural, concerning whether it has been prepared in accordance with the local development scheme, Statement of Community Involvement and has had a Strategic Environmental Assessment, and partly qualitative, e.g. whether a plan conforms to national and regional policy and is the best plan in the circumstances supported by the evidence

South East Plan - Currently in draft form, the South East Plan will become the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England. It is being prepared by the South East England Regional Assembly and will set the strategic context in which the Local Development Framework is located

Submission - The stage at which the plan is submitted for independent external examination and anyone can make representations as to whether the plan meets the tests of soundness

Strategic Environmental Assessment - A process for evaluating the environmental consequences of proposals and to ensure that environmental considerations and the decision making process are fully integrated

Supplementary Planning Documents - These documents provide additional guidance to supplement the proposals and policies within a Development Plan Document. They are not subject to independent examination and do not form part of the Development Plan, but do form part of the Local Development Framework

Statement of Community Involvement - The Council's statutory policy statement of consultation on planning matters

Sustainable Development - Defined as "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of

future generations to meet their own needs,” in the Brundtland Commission Report “Our Common Future” 1987

Twittens - Paths between streets, and/or hedges are known by different names in different parts of the country. In the Weald they are known as twittens

Water Cycle - Also known as the hydrologic cycle, this is the continuous movement of water on, above, and below the surface of the Earth

Wealden Design Guide - A Supplementary Planning Document which expands on policies with regard to design

Index

Alderbrook.....	60	Five Ash Down.....	44, 47, 54, 102, 111–112
Alfriston.....	8, 23, 44, 54	Fletching.....	8, 28, 44
And Hailsham.....	140	Folkington.....	137
Arlington.....	100	Forest Row.....	28, 44, 47, 103– 105, 128– 129
Bexhill.....	116	Framfield.....	28, 44, 47, 111– 112
Blackboys.....	44, 47, 111–112	Frant.....	44, 94, 119
Brighton.....	128	Groombridge.....	44, 47, 94, 104– 105
Broad Oak.....	44, 47, 114–115	Hailsham.....	8, 10, 20, 29, 31– 32, 36, 48–49, 54, 76– 77, 79– 82, 84– 85, 87– 89, 92, 94, 99, 101, 116– 117, 119, 128–129, 138–139, 142–143
Buxted.....	44, 47, 54, 111– 112	Halland.....	94, 97, 101
Cross in Hand.....	44, 47, 114–115	Hartfield.....	8, 44, 47, 105, 120
Crowborough.....	8, 28, 36, 49–50, 52, 54– 55, 58, 60–61, 68, 119, 130, 139, 141	Hastings.....	28
Danehill.....	28, 44, 47, 104– 105	Hawkenbury.....	66–67
Eastbourne.....	5, 8, 19– 20, 28– 29, 31, 36, 48, 52, 76– 77, 85, 87, 90, 92, 97, 116, 128, 130–131, 138, 140, 142–143	Heathfield.....	8, 28, 36, 49–50, 52, 61, 63–65, 113, 115
East Dean.....	28	Hellingly.....	44
East Grinstead.....	8, 28, 49, 103, 129	Herstmonceux.....	44, 47, 116, 118
East Hoathly.....	44, 47, 54, 102, 112, 120	Hertsmonceux.....	54
Eridge.....	94, 128	Horam.....	28, 44, 47, 113– 115

Isfield.....	94, 97, 101–102		128, 130– 131, 143
Jarvis Brook.....	55, 58, 60, 139	Uckfield.....	8, 19, 21, 28, 36, 49–50, 55, 68– 69, 71– 76, 97, 110, 119, 128–131, 138, 140
Laughton.....	44, 54		
Lewes.....	28, 69, 74, 97, 126, 128, 131	Upper Dicker.....	44, 47, 117–118
Lower Dicker.....	94, 98, 101, 139	Wadhurst.....	36, 44, 47, 54, 94, 102, 107–109, 119
Lower Horsebridge.....	44, 47, 54, 117– 118	Westham.....	44, 47, 117–118
Maresfield.....	32, 44, 47, 54, 71, 102, 111–112, 129	Willingdon.....	8, 48, 85, 90, 138
Mayfield.....	8, 44, 47, 107–109	Willingdon.....	137
Ninfield.....	44, 47, 117–118	Wilmington.....	128–129
Nutley.....	28, 44, 47, 104– 105, 120, 129	Windmill Hill.....	44
Pevensey.....	44, 128		
Pine Grove.....	60		
Polegate.....	8, 10, 20, 31–32, 36, 48– 49, 85, 87–90, 96, 99– 101, 119, 128–131, 137–140		
Polegate.....	140		
Punnetts Town.....	44, 47, 114–115		
Ridgewood.....	69, 73, 75		
Rotherfield.....	44, 47, 108–109		
Selmeston.....	128–129		
Stone Cross.....	44, 47, 92		
Tunbridge Wells.....	8, 10, 28, 36, 49, 55, 66– 67, 103,		