Draft ‘Focused’ Wealden Regulation 18 Local Plan

Guidance Notes for Consultees

Draft ‘Focused’ Wealden Regulation 18 Local Plan

Wealden District Council is preparing a new Local Plan. The new Local Plan will be the key planning document for the district, excluding the area covered by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). The South Downs National Park has planning powers for its own area. Once adopted, the Local Plan will form part of the Development Plan for the District, replacing all existing local plan policies and will be used to assess and make decisions on planning applications.

In March 2024, Wealden District Council published a draft local plan (known as Regulation 18) that set out the Council’s draft policies and growth strategy for the plan period. In December 2024, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated as well as the calculation on housing need, known as the ‘standard method’ which results in increased housing need within Wealden District compared to that in our March 2024 draft local plan. Subsequently, the Council considers that a further consultation stage is needed to address those national planning changes and to consider whether further changes to the spatial strategy are required.

This ‘Focused’ Draft Local Plan consultation looks ahead to 2042. The Draft Local Plan focuses on a long-term spatial strategy for growth, including proposed locations for development and it provides a range of draft strategic policies for housing, the economy, town centres and Gypsy and Traveller provision. The Draft Local Plan also provides updates to our affordable housing policy, Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) policy and a new policy on Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs). It does not present a full Local Plan draft at this stage. We need focus, through this consultation, on areas updated through the recent national policy changes which give rise to the need for further consideration in that wider context.

Overall, this Plan will help meet the district’s needs and priorities, whilst protecting our natural and physical environment. It will ensure that future growth is delivered alongside required infrastructure and improvements, as well as deliver on climate change objectives. It will also help to ensure that our communities are supported with the services and facilities that they need to support daily life.

The Consultation on the 'Focused' Draft Local Plan will run from 5pm on Friday 6th February 2026 to 5pm on Friday 20th March 2026. Any responses received after this cannot be accepted. This is your opportunity to feed into the process ahead of us developing and testing the Local Plan further and publishing the Proposed Submission Local Plan for Consultation (Regulation 19) later this year.

Making representations using the online consultation portal.

The easiest way to respond to the consultation is to submit your comments via the consultation portal via the following link https://consult.wealden.gov.uk/kse/. We have provided a video to help guide you through using the consultation system which can be accessed here: https://youtu.be/oyRCLJW26PU

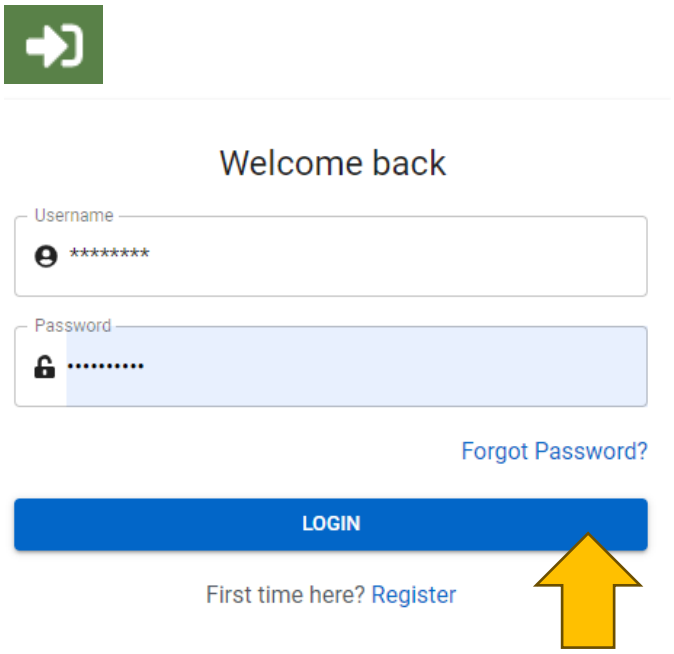
If you have used the portal before, the information that you will need to read is on page 2, starting at point 1.

If you haven't used the portal before and would like to register, the information that you will need to read is on page 4, starting at point number 11. After adding your details, see point 13, an activation email from keystone@objective.com will be sent to you. This may appear in your spam/junk mailbox. You will need to click on this to activate your account. Once you have done this, return to the log in page and input your username and password. Further instructions are on the guidance notes from point 15 onwards.

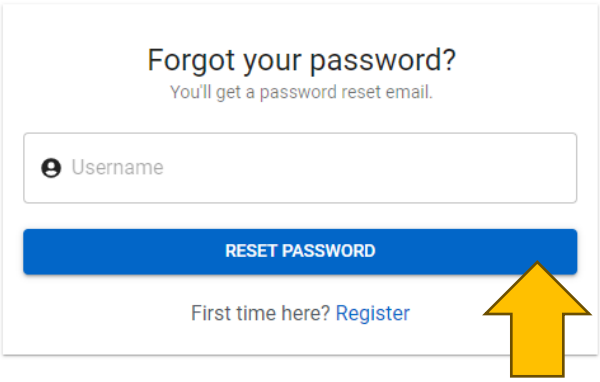
It is possible to use the portal without having previously registered, please see the instructions on page 4, from point 16.

If you have used the portal before – Follow this step-by-step guide

1. Follow the above link to our consultation portal. Here you will find all of our current and past consultations.
2. Log in by clicking on the white arrow at the top left-hand side of the screen.



3. Your username and password may already be saved. If they are not already saved, you will need to input them. Press the blue login button once you have entered your details.
4. If you have forgotten your password for the consultation portal, this can be reset by clicking on forgotten password. You will need to enter your username and then click on reset password.



5. If you cannot remember your username, please email Planningpolicy@wealden.gov.uk or telephone the Planning Policy team on 01892 602008 for assistance.
6. Once you are logged on, you will see the 'Focused' Draft Wealden (Regulation 18) Local Plan at the top of the list of the current consultations. Click on the Learn More tab and this will take you to the consultation event where you can access all of the information relating to the consultation including a number of supporting documents.



7. To view the local plan and to make a comment click on GO TO EVENT and you will be able to scroll through the document, or you can select an area of the document from the index on the left of the screen to view that chapter.
8. Once you have located an area, you will be able to answer the consultation questions and add your comments by selecting ADD COMMENT. A marker indicates which topic you are responding to as well as which topics you have already commented on. You can continue to provide feedback wherever the ADD comment button appears.

9. When you add a comment, it will ask you whether you wish to SUBMIT NOW or ADD MORE COMMENTS. If you still have comments to make, then select ADD MORE COMMENTS.
10. If you have finished commenting, then select SUBMIT NOW. When you press SUBMIT NOW all comments made will be collected to make up your completed submission.
11. Please don't forget to submit your comments.

If you haven't used the portal before – Registering for the first time. – Follow this step-by-step guide

11. Follow the above link to our consultation portal. Here you will find all of our current and past consultations.
12. Log in by clicking on the white arrow at the top left-hand side of the screen.



13. You will be taken to a page where you will need to add your details. This includes setting up your account including a username, password, email address etc.
14. An activation email will be sent to you. This may appear in your spam/junk mailbox. You will need to click on this to activate your account. Once you have done this, return to the log in page and input your username and password.
15. Once you are logged on, you will see the 'Focused' Draft Wealden (Regulation 18) Local Plan at the top of the list of the current consultations. Click on the Learn More tab and this will take you to the consultation event where you can access all of the information relating to the consultation including a number of supporting documents.

If you haven't used the portal before – step by step guide

16. Follow the above link to our consultation portal.
17. Here you will find all of our past and current consultations.
18. The 'Focused' Draft Wealden (Regulation 18) Local Plan is at the top of the list. Click on the learn more tab where you can access all of the information you will need.



19. To make a comment on the ‘Focused’ Draft Wealden (Regulation 18) Local Plan click on GO TO EVENT and you will be able to scroll through the document, or you can select an area of the document from the index on the left of the screen to view that chapter.
20. Once you are viewing the ‘Focused’ Draft Wealden (Regulation 18) Local Plan document, you will be able to answer the consultation questions and add your comments by selecting ADD COMMENT.
21. Just before you can make a comment, you will be taken to a page where you will need to add your details. This includes setting up your account including a username, password, email address etc.
22. Once you have added in your details you will be able to respond to the consultation. A marker indicates which topic you are responding to as well as which topics you have already commented on. You can continue to provide feedback wherever the ADD comment button appears.
23. When you add a comment, it will ask you whether you wish to SUBMIT NOW or ADD MORE COMMENTS. If you still have comments to make, then select ADD MORE COMMENTS.
24. If you have finished commenting, then select SUBMIT NOW. When you press SUBMIT NOW all comments made will be collected to make up your completed submission.
25. Please don’t forget to submit your comments.

Responding to the consultation using our questionnaire

If you do not have access to the internet, then we will accept paper copies of the questionnaire. You can ask someone to download the questionnaire from our consultation portal or obtain a questionnaire from the locations where you can view paper copies of the Local Plan. A list of these locations is provided here: https://www.wealden.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/new-local-plan

Questionnaires can be returned to us by email or post as detailed on the questionnaire.

Please ensure that you clearly identify which policies or questions you are commenting on so that we can accurately input your response to the consultation.

Updating contact details that we have for you.

In relation to future consultations, if we don't already, we would like to notify you by email, if you have an email address. This is the easiest and most effective way to keep you informed. If you are already registered on the consultation portal, to access your contact details, log into your account on the consultation portal at https://consult.wealden.gov.uk/kse/ and click on the white arrow tab, "Log In" and then click on "My Details". This will bring up the details we currently hold for you, and this is where you can update your details and contact preferences including ensuring we have an email address for you. It is very useful for us to have a postcode for you as this allows us to contact you for Planning Policy matters within your local area.

Please email Planningpolicy@wealden.gov.uk or telephone the Planning Policy team on 01892 602008, if you would like any further information, help or assistance.