Growth options

Spatial Option A: To maximise growth in all locations within the District to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option A: To maximise growth in all locations within the District to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO1	CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION					• Growth will be focussed in and around sustainable settlements but will seek to maximise both housing and employment growth in those locations, which will lead to additional development where there is more limited access to sustainable modes of transport, which may lead to unsustainable patterns of movement and further reliance upon the private motor vehicle and an increase greenhouse gas emissions overall in the short to medium term. The impact could be mitigated through the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure within new strategic residential extensions in the longer term. • The SA Scoping Report (June 2023)[1] shows Wealden's emissions totalled 516.3 ktCO_2e in 2020. The majority of greenhouse gas emissions come from road transport (55.6%) with domestic emissions accounting for a further 49.8%. It is known that growth in residential development specifically, even in sustainable locations, will result in increased greenhouse gas emissions through road transport and the domestic sector. The Council will produce further evidence on climate change as part of its Local Plan and will consider the emissions of different spatial options in further detail at the next stage. • This spatial option will remove some agricultural land from food production, particularly as it aims to maximise new development at the edge of sustainable settlements, which tends to incorporate greenfield land. However, new residential development will also provide opportunities for the creation of allotments, which could be used for local food production. The provision of new allotments associated with the new residential development is unlikely to equate to the loss of agricultural land. • A minor negative impact is expected overall as although the spatial option is likely to result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, it will support new development in locations that are genuinely well served by sustainable modes of transport or could be well served by sustainable modes of transport.

[1] Wealden District Council Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report, June 2023

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SO2	CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION					• The provision of green infrastructure associated with new development is likely to contribute positively to climate change adaptation by providing natural cooling and natural flood risk management measures (i.e. street trees, green corridors, SuDs etc.). Nonetheless, the provision of new green infrastructure as part of new residential/commercial development is not likely to compensate adequately for greenfield land lost through this spatial option. • The specific climate change adaptation measures for the spatial option will need to be identified in detail (including the specific sites identified). • The impact is therefore uncertain at this stage over all timeframes.	
SO3	FLOOD RISK					• Growth will be focussed in and around sustainable settlements across the District but will seek to maximise both housing and employment growth in these locations, which includes settlements that are greatly impacted by some/all forms of flood risk (fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding). • The Wealden Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) published in May 2022[2] confirms that fluvial flood risk is most notable in the Pevensey Levels, posing a risk to Hailsham, Westham and Pevensey. The other four principal watercourses (Rivers Medway, Uck, Cuckmere and Shortridge Stream) also pose a threat to Uckfield, Crowborough, Forest Row, Horam and Polegate. • New housing and employment development within and adjoining these settlements will mean that development in areas vulnerable to the impacts of climate change will not necessarily be avoided. This could lead to more development either adjacent to or within flood zones (i.e. Flood Zones 2 and 3), providing the specific sites meet the 'sequential' and potentially, 'exceptions' test. • A significant residential development site will be introduced near to the Cuckmere River, to the west of Hailsham, and there is some uncertainty as to whether all sites contained within this spatial option can be mitigated in terms of flood risk. • The impact is uncertain and further work will be undertaken to determine whether this spatial option can mitigate the flood risk issues.	

[2] Wealden District Council Level 1 SFRA

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SO4	WATER RESOURCES & QUALITY					• Wealden has been identified as an area of serious water stress by the Environment Agency. • All proposed development will increase the demand for both water consumption and wastewater treatment. • South East Water is in the process of updating their Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP), which will consider new infrastructure to serve the District's water supply in the future. There is a statutory duty for the utility provider to provide water to new homes and to support growth. • With respect to wastewater treatment works, it is known that new development within the Pevensey Levels catchment could cause environmental harm to the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site without mitigation (through increasing phosphorous levels) and that this will need to be carefully managed by the utility provider through consultation with the Council, Natural England and the Environment Agency. The Council will continue to liaise with the utility provider and other statutory bodies on this issue and to consider this spatial option in further detail, particularly in terms of the type and timing of mitigation needed. • The effect is currently uncertain and will be dependent on the exact location of growth and the implementation of infrastructure projects where this is needed (e.g. extensions to reservoirs or improvements to wastewater treatment works). • Impacts could be mitigated through good design and compliance with Local Plan policies, although it is acknowledged that a general increase in population/development is likely to lead to increased pressure on water resources and wastewater in the District.
SO5	SOIL, LAND & MINERALS					• Growth will be focussed within and adjacent to existing sustainable settlements, with the sites at the edge of existing settlements more likely to be greenfield sites, particularly where the District has a lack of industrial legacy. • This spatial option will not necessarily prioritise the use of previously developed land (brownfield) over greenfield land, albeit growth within sustainable settlements is supported. • Growth on greenfield land will be maximised adjacent to existing settlements, which could lead to the loss of the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land. • A minor negative impact is likely owing to the loss of greenfield land and the propensity to increase the development of BMV agricultural land in rural areas. • Both the quantum of greenfield land loss and the loss BMV land will be considered for each growth option at the next stage in the plan-making process.
SO6	WASTE					• All development will result in an increase in waste and materials. Maximising growth in all locations will lead to more waste overall, including construction, household and business waste.

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						• Suitable mitigation measures will need to be identified to reduce the impact of waste as far as possible in both the construction and operation of development. • The impact is likely to be minor negative in both the construction and operation of any development.
SO7	POLLUTION					• All new development will result in an increase in light pollution. It is noted that this specific spatial option will distribute and maximise growth in all areas of the District, including rural areas that may have 'dark night skies'. The Local Plan policy relating to dark night skies will provide mitigation; however, there will be some residual impact of light pollution due to encroachment of urban development into the countryside as a result of strategic extensions of existing sustainable settlements. • It is known that there are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26. Many of these junctions are at or approaching capacity (90% to 110%) at the time of writing and will require mitigation if further growth is to come forward in the District through the Local Plan. Maximising growth in all locations adjacent to settlements is likely to result in increased air pollution at those junctions and vehicular congestion generally across the District. Further work will be undertaken to ascertain whether mitigation at these junctions can be achieved, but early transport modelling shows that it is unlikely that mitigation at junctions along the SRN/MRN will be achievable for all the sites included. • The provision of new development in semi-rural areas, including the High Weald AONB, may reduce the tranquillity of the more rural locations in the District. • The existing evidence base shows that there are significant highway constraints on junctions close to some of our sustainable settlements (particularly in the Low Weald), that the majority of greenhouse gas emissions come from road transport (55.6%) and that the District is not well served by public transport generally with only 31% of internal Wealden trips made by non-private vehicle modes. • The impact is likely to be minor negative as a result of air pollution particularly from road traffic congestion. Further work is needed to consider the impact of growth through further traffic modelling and the impact of air pollution through the Council's HRA on designated ecological sites, such as Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA, the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site and the Lewes Downs SAC. Minor negative impacts are also expected from noise and light pollution in rural areas, which may be able to mitigated to some extent through good design and siting.
SO8	GREEN & BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE					• Growth is focussed on existing sustainable settlements which will include semi-rural locations at the edge of market towns and larger villages, where growth will be maximised. This will result in the loss of agricultural land at the edge of those settlements and may also result in the loss of

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						green and blue infrastructure features (i.e. hedgerows or lower quality trees) to allow, for example, for vehicular/pedestrian access. • All new residential and employment development is expected to secure a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain, which will assist in supporting the provision of new or enhanced green space and/infrastructure, as well as increasing or improving access to green spaces. Growth will be supported within sustainable settlements, including brownfield sites or sites within town and villages, which may greatly benefit from the provision or improvements to green infrastructure. • The detailed implementation of the Local Plan policies will be crucial in minimising impacts. The impact is therefore considered to be uncertain.
SO9	BIODIVERSITY					• Growth will be maximised within and in areas around sustainable settlements, including locations that are in close proximity to designated sites, such as the Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA, the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site and the Lewes Downs SAC. • The option includes areas of land (i.e. Uckfield, Maresfield etc.) within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA and could have a minor negative effect in terms of recreational pressure on the SPA. Nonetheless, it may still be possible to address the impact on the Ashdown Forest SPA through suitable mitigation measures in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) contributions and contributions towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) mitigation at the Ashdown Forest itself. This will be tested through the HRA for the Local Plan. • All new residential and employment development is expected to secure a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain. • Some sites at the edge of settlements are also located within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs), which could result in the loss of some BOAs from new development. There will be opportunities for the remaining land in these locations to be conserved, restored and enhanced, including priority habitats in these locations, but this is not likely to outweigh the loss of such land. • Due to the nature of the sites coming forward that surround sustainable settlements (greenfield/ agricultural), some biodiversity features can be lost during construction (e.g. hedgerows, in-field trees etc.) although the ecological value of individual sites will be considered as part of the site selection process. • The impact is likely to be minor negative
SO10	LANDSCAPE & TOWNSCAPE					• Growth will be maximised in and around sustainable settlements and will incorporate locations of higher landscape value, such as the High Weald AONB or adjacent to it. This could lead to significant harm to these nationally designated landscapes and result in detrimental harm to those landscapes. The NPPF confirms that harm to such valued landscapes can provide a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type and distribution of development in a plan area.

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						• Maximising growth in rural/semi-rural locations is also likely to lead to harm to other valued landscapes, including the Low Weald and this is unlikely to be fully mitigated. • Maximising growth is likely to lead to development of scale in rural areas which will have major negative impacts upon the townscapes of both small and larger villages. The option could result in illogical extensions to villages, which can cumulatively impact the character of those settlements and their townscape. Equally, maximising growth within our major towns and villages may also lead to poorer design, cramped housing/employment developments that may not be able to be mitigated. • Even with mitigation in place, it is clear that maximising growth within nationally designated landscapes and in semi-rural locations is likely lead to a major negative impact, it may be possible to reduce the impact to some extent through suitable mitigation measures.
SO11	HISTORIC & CULTURAL HERITAGE					• Growth will be maximised in and around sustainable settlements, which will include historic villages and towns that have designated heritage assets (i.e. conservation areas and listed buildings). Maximising new development in these locations may negatively affect designated heritage assets and their settings, where national planning policy aims to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of those proposals. • Growth will not be supported in some of Wealden's smaller villages that contain historic assets, and, which will preserve some of the smaller historic villages of the District in the longer term. • Maximising growth in locations with significant heritage value is likely to lead to at least a minor negative impact, but this could be reduced through suitable mitigation measures at individual sites.
SO12	DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE					• New homes and businesses will be delivered within or at the edge of Wealden's most sustainable settlements and digital infrastructure is likely to be improved in those locations that already benefit from broadband connectivity. Opportunities for developers in more rural villages and settlements to improve existing digital infrastructure will not necessarily be provided, and will depend on the detailed implementation of specific schemes. • The impact is currently uncertain.
SO13	SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL & ACCESSIBILITY					• Growth will be maximised within and surrounding sustainable settlements and therefore new development is more likely to have access, or can provide pedestrian/cycle links to sustainable modes of transport, although there is uncertainty regarding some larger strategic developments on the outskirts of sustainable settlements. • New employment development will be located in or around sustainable locations, accessible through sustainable modes of travel, which may lead to greater usage of sustainable modes of transport for commuting within the District and may also reduce out commuting.

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						• The District has the lowest levels of existing sustainable travel across East Sussex, with only 31% of internal Wealden trips made by non-private vehicle modes. It is considered that maximising growth in and around sustainable settlements, which are well served by the sustainable modes of travel for the most part, would improve patronage for these sustainable modes of transport. • It is known that there are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26. Many of these junctions are at or approaching capacity (90% to 110%) at the time of writing and would require mitigation if further growth was to come forward in the District through the Local Plan. Maximising growth in all locations is likely to cause severe impacts on the local highway network, particularly along existing SRN/MRN junctions. Further work will be undertaken to ascertain whether mitigation at these junctions can be achieved, but early transport modelling shows it would be unlikely that such mitigation at junctions along the SRN/MRN will be achievable for all the sites included in this option. • The delivery of new large-scale residential and employment development at the outskirts of settlements is unlikely to support the delivery of 20-minute walkable neighbourhoods, given the nature of those settlements and the lack of existing facilities, services, sustainable modes of travel within them. • Early transport modelling indicates that the impact is major negative at this stage. Further transport modelling is required.	
SO14	HOUSING					• The quantum of housing development within the plan period, will equate to around 20,260 (net) dwellings, which is approximately 400 (net) dwellings above the overall housing target of 19,800 (net) dwellings. New homes will be delivered in sustainable locations, which will support all settlements defined as sustainable and support the vitality of those communities. • Growth in housing in this option will be provided throughout the plan period, with strategic housing sites being delivered later into the Local Plan period, with existing commitments and other housing allocations delivering in the shorter term. • In terms of affordable housing, policies within the draft Local Plan state that housing schemes above a threshold of 10 units will deliver 35% of those dwellings as affordable, outside of the High Weald AONB, with the threshold being set at only 5 dwellings when within the High Weald AONB. The Council will consider the delivery of affordable housing for each growth option at the next stage of the SA report. • New housing is likely to be delivered at scale and will allow for different types of housing products to be delivered, such as self-build and custom build, older persons accommodation and family housing.	

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						• It is noted that not all development will be delivered in the most sustainable locations, however, this may lead to improvements to services, amenities and sustainable transport options at the edge of those sustainable settlements, thereby improving their sustainability. • The impact is expected to be major positive given the scale of housing to be delivered and the expectation that the option would meet a number of policy objectives of the Local Plan in terms of delivering against the District's housing requirement, affordable housing in the AONB, self-build and custom build plots, a mix of unit types and sizes etc.
SO15	HEALTH & WELLBEING					• Growth will be maximised within and surrounding sustainable settlements to meet the Council's housing and employment needs. This spatial option will lead to greater pressures on the health care system and also increased demand to existing forms of provision of open space, sport, leisure and recreation facilities (including indoor facilities and outdoor pitches) within the District. • The clinical area is currently operating within 86% of the clinical space it requires and due to the levels of development already proposed in the area, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) will likely need an additional surgery or funding to extend the existing surgeries if they are able to. Therefore, the existing capacity within the health sector for this area would need to be expanded. • A number of evidence base reports[3] have identified there are deficiencies in most sport facilities within Wealden District. The delivery of new housing in sustainable towns and villages across the District will result in the provision of new open space and sporting facilities, which is likely to mitigate the impact of new housing development and therefore, the need for such facilities in the longer term. • The existing capacity within the health sector for the District will need to be expanded over the longer term and at this stage, it is not known whether such capacity could be provided. The effects are uncertain.
SO16	QUALITY OF LIFE & PLACE					• The spatial option has no details in terms of the scale, layout or design of the sites, at the moment, the effect is this therefore uncertain.
SO17	SOCIAL DEPRIVATION					• Both market and affordable housing should be delivered in all locations across the District, including within or close to the High Weald AONB. This is likely to address issues of deprivation and poverty in many locations across the District. • New jobs should be delivered at the edge of existing sustainable settlements, which are easily accessible and are close to existing centres of population, which will provide opportunities for Wealden residents to be employed locally. Opportunities will also be provided for development to

[3] This includes the Wealden District Council Open Space Assessment Report (April 2022), the Wealden District Council Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (April 2022) and Wealden District Council Indoor Sports Facility Needs Assessment (March 2022).

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						be located on the edge of larger regional centres (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), which will provide further employment opportunities for Wealden residents. • The quantum of residential development is likely to result in some affordable housing being provided for all sustainable towns and villages across the District (including within the AONB), as well as the provision of amenities and services in our most sustainable market towns and larger villages. It is also clear that there that will be a significant level of jobs created through this spatial option and therefore the impact on this SA Objective is a minor positive at this stage.
SO18	ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT					• This spatial option will deliver the entirety of employment need identified for both B2 and B8 uses recommended within the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022) of 184,499 sqm, with the remaining need for office uses (ranging between 3.1ha and 6.8ha) being delivered in town centres. • Employment growth is supported in the most sustainable locations, as well as at the edge of sustainable settlements, which already have a local population, which may assist in a reduction of out-commuting to other locations for work, ensuring that the local economy is vibrant and sustained. • With the exception of a single employment site considered within this growth option, the employment sites are already in the planning application process, so should bring about a positive impact early on with the Local Plan timetable. No formal allocations for office use in town centres have been made, but this is expected to be developed throughout the Local Plan period. • It is also noted that substantial housing growth within the District (meeting our full housing need) will also bring about a significant number of construction jobs in the District. The Council's Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022)[4] confirms that the construction sector is highly concentrated within Wealden and accounts for 8.3% of employment in 2019 or 4,500 people. • The impact on this SA Objective is a major positive.
SO19	TOWN & VILLAGE CENTRES					• This spatial option will deliver both new housing and economic growth within and around our most sustainable settlements of the District to meet both housing and employment needs. This will in turn protect and enhance the viability and vitality of town or village centres across the District, as there will be more residents living and working within the District, which should also help retain and potentially provide additional retail and leisure floorspace in those centres and reduce the number of vacant units.

[4] Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April, 2022)

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						• Opportunities for residential development will be maximised in Wealden's town and village centres, which may bring additional footfall to those centres and help improve the night-time economy. • The significant growth for all areas of the District, may necessitate the need for out-of-town retail development if there are no possible options to develop large-scale retail uses in those specific town and village centres. However, Wealden's Town Centre Study (July, 2022) confirms that there is limited need for retail uses within the District until 2039 and did not recommend that the Council seek to specifically allocate sites for new retail or commercial leisure facilities through the emerging Local Plan. There may therefore be limited pressure to deliver out of town retail development. • The impact is minor positive.
SO20	EDUCATION & SKILLS					• Growth will be maximised within and surrounding sustainable settlements to meet the Council's housing and employment needs, which will inevitably lead to a need for new primary and secondary school places in many locations across the District. • Information from East Sussex County Council, as the education provider for state schools, indicates that local educational provision and capacity is currently adequate to meet the needs of new development across the District. The only exception to this is the Polegate and Willingdon area, where it is projected to have no surplus in the total capacity of primary schools by 2025/26 and a 3% capacity deficit by 2025/26 in secondary school places. Maximising housing growth in this location could lead to minor negative impact in the short term. • New housing growth at scale would provide opportunities to provide new primary schools on site and provide contributions towards other school places (primary and secondary in the local area), which would be able to mitigate the impacts in the longer term. • The impact is likely to be a minor negative in the short term in terms of the capacity of existing state schools in Polegate and Willingdon. However, it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate the impact. Over the long term, it is considered that there will be a minor positive impact.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:	Spatial Option A: To maximise growth in all locations within the district to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement.																			
SA EFFECTS	SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water resources/Quality	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Travel & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Deprivation	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
Major Positive																				
Minor Positive																				
Not Significant																				
Minor Negative																				
Major Negative																				
Uncertain																				

COMMENTARY:	
Duration/Reversibility	There will be a short-term negative impact on SA Objective SO20 (Education and Skills), as the capacity of schools (primary and secondary) will be in deficit by 2025/26 in the Polegate and Willingdon area that would be a focus for growth in this spatial option. However, it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate the impact in the longer term.
Mitigation Measures	• There may be specific mitigation measures needed for individual sites that come forward under this spatial option to address issues under SA Objective SO9 (Biodiversity), SO10 (Landscape and Townscape), SO11 (Historic and Cultural Heritage), which are considered either major or minor negative impacts, but this may be resolved/mitigated to some extent if suitable mitigation measures are identified on a site-by-site basis. • It is also known that infrastructure will need to be provided in terms of healthcare facilities and open space (SO15 Health and Wellbeing) at the District level to accommodate further growth. Mitigation measures will need to be employed for the significant highway constraints identified (SO13 Travel and Accessibility), as well as potentially improved water supply and wastewater infrastructure (SO4 Water Resources/Quality). The measures are unknown at this stage and will need to be considered further with the relevant infrastructure providers.

	• There is also a requirement to consider all sites included within this spatial option under SA Objective SO3 (Flood Risk). Many of the sites are considered suitable with mitigation measures in place, as described under the SFRA Level 2, but a significant residential development site near to the Cuckmere River, to the west of Hailsham, is considered to have some uncertainty as to whether the site can be mitigated in terms of flood risk, which will be explored prior to the Regulation 19 consultation.
Cumulative Effects	• The cumulative impacts of this spatial option and particularly around maximising growth around sustainable settlements relate largely to potential negative impacts on existing infrastructure (i.e. highways, education and health facilities). The evidence base on transport shows that there are significant existing highway constraints within the district along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26 in the Low Weald alongside market towns that will be the focus for growth. Further work will be undertaken to ascertain whether mitigation at these junctions can be achieved, but it is known through early transport modelling that if this option was pursued, it would be unlikely that such mitigation at junctions along the SRN/MRN will be achievable for all the sites included in this option. • It is also considered that the spatial option is likely to have a major negative impact upon the landscape, primarily due to growth coming forward within the High Weald AONB and the maximisation of growth around other sustainable settlements within the Low Weald. There will also be cumulative effects on biodiversity, as the spatial option will continue to focus housing growth within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA and will cause further recreational pressure on this international ecological site without mitigation. • The cumulative impacts of development will be considered further, where work will be undertaken to understand the impact on the transport network (through a county-wide transport model), which will also consider development from other emerging Local Plans within East Sussex. There will also be a need to consider other infrastructure issues such as education, health services, community facilities, water supply and wastewater and open space specifically, which will include discussion with the relevant infrastructure providers (that are ongoing). The Council will also need to understand the implications for designated ecological sites (i.e. Ashdown Forest, Lewes Downs and Pevensey Levels) through the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). Further information will also be needed in terms of detail of mitigation measures at specific development sites associated with the spatial option. However, it is acknowledged that this spatial option will result in pressure on infrastructure, climate as well as the built and natural environment.
Summary	**Major Positive Effects: SO14 Housing; SO18 Economy and Employment** • This spatial option will deliver around 20,250 (net) dwellings in, or surrounding sustainable settlements, which is circa 450 dwellings over Wealden District's overall housing need. A major positive impact has therefore been identified for SO14 (Housing) given the scale of housing to be delivered. The full employment needs for the District of 184,499 sqm from 2021 to 2039 will be met for both B2 and B8 uses, identified within the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022). Overall, this will bring a major positive impact for SA Objective SO18 (Economy and Employment). **Minor Positive Effects: SO17 Social Deprivation; SO19 Towns and Villages; SA20 Education and Skills** • There are a high number of settlements within Wealden District, including larger villages, which can deliver greater growth through this spatial option that will be able to support the vitality and viability of those villages and particularly their high streets and services, hence the identification of a minor positive impact for SA Objective 19 (Towns and Villages). A minor positive effect is also identified with regards to social deprivation (SO17) as the spatial option will deliver both market and affordable housing in and around all sustainable settlements (including the High Weald AONB), as well as provide job opportunities locally. • Information from East Sussex County Council, as the education provider for state schools, indicates that local educational provision and capacity is currently adequate to meet the needs of new development across the District, apart from the Polegate and Willingdon area where there will be a deficit in school places in the short term, leading to a minor negative impact. However, a minor positive effect has

been identified for SA Objective 20 in the longer term as it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the district to mitigate any short-term capacity issues, as well as the potential for new skills and training.

Minor Negative Effects: SO1 Climate Change Mitigation; SO5 Soil, Land and Minerals; SO6 Waste; SO7 Pollution; SO9 Biodiversity; SO11 Historic and Cultural Heritage

- Minor negative effects are identified in relation to climate change mitigation (SO1) as development will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. However, any impacts will be reduced, as far as possible, through the implementation of the relevant Local Plan policies. Minor negative effects have also been identified for waste (SO6) and pollution (SO7) which will increase as a result of development, although suitable mitigation and the implementation of the relevant Local Plan policies should reduce the impacts. Minor negative effects have been identified for soil, land and minerals (SO5) as this spatial option does not necessarily prioritise the use of previously developed land (brownfield) over greenfield land and maximises new development at the edge of sustainable settlements (generally greenfield land), which could also include BMV land, leading to minor negative effects on this SA Objective. The quantum of greenfield and BMV land loss in this spatial option will be considered in more detail at the regulation 19 stage of the Plan and compared with the other options, but it is known that this option will have a significant loss of greenfield land in order to meet housing need.
- Minor negative impacts are identified for biodiversity (SO9) due to development in this location, particularly to the edge of settlements on greenfield land, and the potential to lose greenfield land and ecological assets (i.e. hedgerows, in-field trees etc.) to allow for new development to take place. Minor negative effects have also been identified for heritage (SO11) as maximising new development in/around historic villages is likely to lead to negative impacts on designated heritage assets and their settings, where national planning policy aims to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of those proposals.

Major Negative Effects: SO10 Landscape and Townscape; SO13 Travel and Accessibility

- Major negative effects are identified with regards to landscape and townscape (SO10) as maximising development near to or within designated landscapes is likely within this spatial option. This spatial option is also likely to lead to development at scale in semi-rural areas, in order to maximise growth within Wealden District, which may lead to minor negative impacts to the townscapes of both our small and larger villages. The impact will be dependent on the specific settlement character and the implementation and design of any scheme.
- A major negative impact is identified with regards to travel and accessibility (SO13), as growth will be maximised around and within sustainable settlements. It is known that there are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the SRN/MRN. Maximising growth in all locations is likely to cause severe impacts on the local highway network, particularly along existing SRN/MRN junctions where there are known capacity issues and limited access to sustainable modes of travel. Further work will be undertaken to ascertain whether mitigation at these junctions can be achieved, but it is known through early transport modelling that if this option was pursued, it would be unlikely that such mitigation at junctions along the SRN/MRN will be achievable for all the sites included in this option.

Uncertain Effects: SO2 Climate Change Adaptation; SO3 Flood Risk; SO4 Water Resources/Quality; SO8 Green and Blue Infrastructure; SO12 Digital Infrastructure; SO15 Health and Wellbeing and SO16 Quality of Life and Place

- Uncertain effects are identified for several SA Objectives, as either there is not enough information known about the detailed implementation of the spatial option (i.e. site locations, their scale, design and accessibility) or in the case of providing infrastructure (i.e.SO4, SO12 and SO15) the information is uncertain.

Selection / Rejection of Option	This spatial option is not selected at this stage. This spatial option will deliver around 20,250 (net) dwellings in, or surrounding sustainable settlements, which is 450 dwellings over Wealden District's overall housing need. The option will also meet the full employment needs of the District and will improve town and village centres through new jobs and homes. However, there will be major negative impacts of this growth, namely from the impact on the landscape of Wealden (including the High Weald AONB). There are also significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the SRN/MRN. Maximising growth in all locations is likely to cause severe impacts on the local highway network, particularly along existing SRN/MRN junctions where there are known capacity issues and limited access to sustainable modes of travel. The Council will consider whether mitigation measures are possible between the Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 consultations, but early indications of the transport modelling show that if this option was pursued, it would be unlikely that such mitigation at junctions along the SRN/MRN will be achievable for all sites. **Spatial Option Not Selected**

Spatial Option B: To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells)

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option B: To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells)
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO1	CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION					• Growth will be focussed in and around all sustainable settlements, as well as on the edge of regional towns that are located close to the administrative border of Wealden District (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells). The settlements that are defined as sustainable within the SSS all benefit from some form of sustainable public transport (i.e. railway or mass transit) and contain day-to-day services (schools, GPs, food stores) within them. Growth within or on the edge of these sustainable settlements may result in improvements to existing transport infrastructure and key services within those settlements, albeit that further work is required to establish whether all key services within these settlements are capable of supporting such growth. • An increase in new homes and employment floorspace in or adjacent to these settlements is likely to result in the further use of the private motor vehicle, which will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions overall. The SA Scoping Report (June 2023)[5] shows Wealden's emissions totalled 516.3 ktCO_2e in 2020. The majority of emissions come from road transport (55.6%) with domestic emissions accounting for a further 49.8%. It is known that growth in residential development specifically, even in sustainable locations, will result in increased greenhouse gas emissions through road transport and the domestic sector. The Council will produce further evidence on climate change as part of its Local Plan and will consider the emissions of different spatial options in further detail at that stage. • Some agricultural land will be removed from food production, as the option will focus on the surrounds of sustainable settlements, which will include agricultural land. New residential development may provide opportunities for the creation of allotments that could be used for local food production. Nonetheless, the provision of new allotments associated with new residential development is unlikely to compensate for the loss of agricultural land. • A minor negative impact is expected for this SA objective overall as although development will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, new development is supported in locations that are well served by sustainable modes of transport.

[5] Wealden District Council Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report, June 2023

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option B:	To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells)
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
SO2	CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION					• The provision of green infrastructure associated with new development is likely to contribute positively to climate change adaptation by providing natural cooling and natural flood risk management measures (i.e. street trees, green corridors, SuDs etc.). Nonetheless, the provision of new green infrastructure as part of new residential/commercial development is unlikely to compensate for the loss of greenfield land at the edge of sustainable settlements. • The specific climate change adaptation measures will need to be identified in detail in the Plan policies (including the specific sites identified). • The impact is uncertain at this stage over all timeframes.	
SO3	FLOOD RISK					• Growth will be focussed in and around all sustainable settlements across the District, which would include settlements that are greatly impacted by some/all forms of flood risk (fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding). The Wealden Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) published in May 2022[6] confirms that fluvial flood risk is most notable in the Pevensey Levels, posing a risk to Hailsham, Westham and Pevensey. The other four principal watercourses (Rivers Medway, Uck, Cuckmere and Shortridge Stream) also pose a threat to Uckfield, Crowborough, Forest Row, Horam, Hailsham and Polegate. • New housing and employment development within and adjoining these settlements means that development will not necessarily be avoided in areas vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. This could lead to more development either adjacent to or within flood zones (i.e. Flood Zones 2 and 3), providing the specific site meets the 'sequential' and potentially, 'exceptions' test. • The Wealden Level 1 and 2 SFRA for the emerging Local Plan shows that sites can be brought forward, providing the sites themselves are not maximised and built development is sited away from flood risk zones, which can be avoided. • The impact is minor positive overall.	

[6] Wealden District Council Level 1 SFRA

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option B: To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells)
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO4	WATER RESOURCES & QUALITY					• Wealden has been identified as an area of serious water stress by the Environment Agency. • All proposed development will increase the demand for both water consumption and wastewater treatment. With respect to water consumption, South East Water is in the process of updating its Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP), which will consider new infrastructure to serve the District in the future. There is a statutory duty for the utility provider to provide water to new homes and to support growth. • With respect to wastewater treatment works, it is known that new development within the Pevensey Levels catchment could cause environmental harm to the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site without mitigation (through increasing phosphorous levels), which will need to be carefully managed by the utility provider through consultation with the Council, Natural England and the Environment Agency. The Council will continue to liaise with the utility provider and other statutory bodies on this issue and to consider the requirements in further detail, particularly the type and timing of mitigation needed. • The effects on this SA Objective are currently uncertain and will be dependent on the exact location of growth and the implementation of infrastructure projects where this is needed (e.g. extensions to reservoirs or improvements to wastewater treatment works). It is likely that the impacts could be mitigated through good design and compliance with Local Plan policies, although it is acknowledged that a general increase in population/development is likely to lead to increased pressure on water resources and wastewater in the District.
SO5	SOIL, LAND & MINERALS					• The use of previously developed land (brownfield) over greenfield land will not necessarily be prioritised. Growth will be focussed in and around sustainable settlements, which will provide opportunities to make the best use of brownfield land within, or at the edge of those settlements. The spatial option also supports sites that surround such sustainable settlements, which will include greenfield land for development. • Growth around sustainable settlements and to the edge of regional towns, which are likely to incorporate greenfield land, is supported and could lead to the loss of the best and most versatile land (BMV) agricultural land; however, there are other policies within the Local Plan to prevent the loss of BMV agricultural land. • The impact is uncertain. Growth will be focussed on sustainable settlements and provide opportunities to deliver on previously developed land but will also consider land at the edge of those sustainable settlements (as there will not be enough PDL to deliver housing growth). Both the quantum of greenfield land loss and the loss BMV land will be considered for each growth option at the next stage in the plan-making process.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option B: To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells)
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO6	WASTE					• All development will result in an increase in waste and materials during construction and operation. • Suitable mitigation measures will need to be identified to reduce the impact of waste as far as possible in both the construction and operation of development. Both housing and employment growth will lead to more waste overall, including construction, household and business waste. • The impact is likely to be a minor negative in both the construction and operation of development.
SO7	POLLUTION					• All new development will result in an increase in light pollution. There is a policy within the Local Plan which will address matters relating to 'dark night skies' and development. Given that growth is focused in and around all the sustainable settlements, it will avoid the most rural parts of the District. • It is known that there are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26. Many of these junctions are at or approaching capacity (90% to 110%) at the time of writing and will require mitigation if further growth is to come forward through the Local Plan. An increase in air pollution at those junctions is likely and vehicular congestion generally across the District, particularly at the settlements of Hailsham, Polegate and Uckfield. Further work will be undertaken to ascertain whether mitigation for these junctions can be achieved. • The existing evidence base shows that there are significant highway constraints at junctions close to some of our settlements (particularly in the Low Weald), that the majority of greenhouse gas emissions come from road transport (55.6%) and that the District is not well served by public transport generally with only 31% of internal Wealden trips made by non-private vehicle modes. Even when focusing growth on our most sustainable settlements or to the outskirts of those settlements, it is considered that air pollution, particularly from road traffic congestion will continue and will cause a minor negative impact. • Further work is needed to consider the impact of growth through further traffic modelling and air pollution assessment through the Council's HRA on designated ecological sites, such as Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA, the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site and the Lewes Downs SAC.
SO8	GREEN & BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE					• Growth will be focussed in and around all sustainable settlements, which will include urban areas and some semi-rural locations at the edge of market towns and larger villages. This will result in the loss of agricultural land at the edge of settlements and may also result in the loss of green and blue infrastructure features (i.e. hedgerows or lower quality trees) to allow, for example, for vehicular/pedestrian access.

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		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						• All new residential and employment development is expected to secure a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain, which will assist in supporting the provision of new or enhanced green space and/infrastructure, as well as increasing or improving access to green spaces. The spatial option includes brownfield sites, or sites within our town and villages, which may greatly benefit from the provision or improvements to green infrastructure. • As development is focussed in both urban and edge of settlement locations, it is clear that the detailed implementation of such Local Plan policies is crucial and the impact is therefore considered to be uncertain.	
SO9	BIODIVERSITY					• Growth will be focussed in and around sustainable settlements, and this will include locations that are in close proximity to designated sites, such as the Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA, the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site and the Lewes Downs SAC. • This will include areas of land (i.e. Uckfield, Crowborough etc.) within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA and could have a minor negative effect in terms of recreational pressure on the SPA. Nonetheless, a spatial option of this nature is likely to be able to address the impact on the Ashdown Forest SPA through suitable mitigation measures in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) contributions and contributions towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) mitigation at the Ashdown Forest itself. This will be tested through the HRA for the Local Plan. • All new residential and employment development is expected to secure a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain. • Several sites at the edge of settlements are located within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs), which could result in the loss of some BOAs from new development. There will be opportunities for the remaining land in these locations to be conserved, restored and enhanced, including priority habitats in these locations, but this is not likely to outweigh the loss of such land. • The impact of growth around sustainable settlements, which are likely to be greenfield sites, is considered to have a minor negative impact. It is noted that the implementation of Local Plan policies in the longer term may provide mitigation measures for these impacts, although this is uncertain.	
SO10	LANDSCAPE & TOWNSCAPE					• Growth will be focussed in and around all sustainable settlements and this will include settlements surrounded by the High Weald AONB (i.e. Heathfield and Crowborough) or washed over by the designation (i.e. edge of Tunbridge Wells). Paragraph 11 of the NPPF confirms that harm to those valued landscapes can provide a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type and distribution of development in a plan area. This spatial option could lead to harm to this nationally designated landscape.	

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		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						• Landscapes that surround the settlements (both within the High Weald AONB and in the Low Weald) will be included, which may lead to growth in rural/semi-rural locations. Such growth is likely to lead to harm to other valued landscapes as well, including the Low Weald, although there may be opportunities to mitigate this impact. • Development at scale is likely at the edge of the sustainable settlements, in order to support both housing and employment growth within Wealden District, which may lead to detrimental impacts to the townscapes of our market towns and larger villages. • The impact is likely to be minor negative but this could be reduced through suitable mitigation measures.	
SO11	HISTORIC & CULTURAL HERITAGE					• Growth will be focussed in and around all sustainable settlements, which will include market towns and larger villages that have designated heritage assets (i.e. conservation areas and listed buildings). Focusing growth in these locations may negatively affect designated heritage assets and their settings, where national planning policy aims to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of those proposals. • Growth will not be supported in some of Wealden's smaller villages that contain historic assets and will preserve some of the smaller historic villages of the district in the longer term. • Even with mitigation in place, focusing growth in locations with significant heritage value is likely to lead to a minor negative impact, but this impact could be reduced through suitable mitigation measures at individual sites.	
SO12	DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE					• New homes and businesses will be delivered within Wealden's most sustainable settlements and will therefore improve digital infrastructure in those locations that already benefit from broadband connectivity. Opportunities will not necessarily be provided for developers in more rural villages and settlements to improve existing digital infrastructure, although it will depend on the detailed implementation of specific schemes and other planning policies within the Local Plan. • The impact on this SA Objective is currently uncertain.	
SO13	SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL & ACCESSIBILITY					• Growth will be focussed in and around all sustainable settlements and therefore new development is more likely to have access to sustainable modes of transport. • New employment development will be located in or around sustainable locations, accessible through sustainable modes of travel. This may lead to greater usage of sustainable modes of transport for commuting within the District and may also reduce out commuting from the District. • The District has the lowest levels of existing sustainable travel across East Sussex, with only 31% of internal Wealden trips made by non-private vehicle modes. It is considered that focusing growth	

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option B:	To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells)
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						in and around sustainable settlements, which are well served by the sustainable modes of travel for the most part, would improve patronage for these sustainable modes of transport. • The delivery of new development (employment or housing) is not focused on rural areas; this may mean that existing sustainable modes of travel to our most rural villages could worsen in the future, and this could isolate some communities that would be reliant on the private motor vehicles for most trips. • The Council's existing evidence base on transport shows that there are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26. Many of these junctions are at or approaching capacity (90% to 110%) at the time of writing. A number of these junctions are linked with some of Wealden's largest market towns (i.e. Hailsham, Uckfield and Polegate). Focusing growth in these locations may cause severe impacts on the local highway network, particularly along the existing SRN/MRN junctions. Further work will be needed as part of the Local Plan process to understand what mitigation measures are necessary to alleviate congestion in this location. • Given the requirement to undertake further transport modelling work as part of the Local Plan process, the impact on this SA Objective is currently uncertain.	
SO14	HOUSING					• The quantum of housing development for the Plan period, will equate to around 15,750 (net) dwellings, which is approximately 4,000 dwellings short of the overall housing target of 19,800 (net) dwellings. New homes will be delivered in sustainable locations, which will support all settlements defined as sustainable and support the vitality of those communities. • Growth in housing in this option will primarily be provided at the start of the Plan period, with existing commitments and other housing allocations delivering in the shorter term. There may be a lack housing delivery in the longer term (i.e. last five year period of the Local Plan). • In terms of affordable housing, policies within the draft Local Plan state that housing schemes above a threshold of 10 units will deliver 35% of those dwellings as affordable, outside of the High Weald AONB, with the threshold being set at only 5 dwellings when within the High Weald AONB. The Council will consider the delivery of affordable housing for each growth option at the next stage of the SA report. • The delivery of housing will not be focussed in rural communities, which may lead to a deterioration of services, amenities and sustainable transport in the more rural settlements, thereby isolating some communities within the district.	

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option B:	To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells)
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						• A significant quantum of affordable housing growth in rural communities will not be produced, albeit that there are policies within the local plan (such as Rural Exception Sites for example) that may alleviate this issue to some extent. • The impact is expected to be minor negative given the scale of housing to be delivered, however, a number of policy objectives of the Local Plan will be met around delivering sustainable housing development, as well as delivering different housing products (i.e. affordable housing, self-build plots etc.).	
SO15	HEALTH & WELLBEING					• Growth will be focussed in and around all sustainable settlements. This will lead to greater pressures on the health care system and also increased demand to existing forms of provision of open space, sport, leisure and recreation facilities (including indoor facilities and outdoor pitches) within those market towns and larger villages specifically. • The clinical area is currently operating within 86% of the clinical space it requires and due to the levels of development already proposed in the area, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) is likely to need an additional surgery or funding to extend the existing surgeries, if possible. The existing capacity within the health sector will therefore need to be expanded. • A number of evidence base reports[7] have identified there are deficiencies in most sport facilities within Wealden District. The provision of new housing in sustainable towns and villages across the District will be required to provide new open space and sporting facilities that are likely to mitigate the impact of new housing development and therefore need for such facilities in the longer term. • The existing capacity within the health sector for the District will need to be expanded over the longer term and at this stage, it is not known whether such capacity can be provided and so the impact is uncertain.	
SO16	QUALITY OF LIFE & PLACE					• There are no details in terms of the scale, layout or design of the specific sites at the moment. The impact is therefore uncertain.	
SO17	SOCIAL DEPRIVATION					• Both market and affordable housing will be delivered in and around all sustainable settlements, including within or close to the High Weald AONB. This is likely to address issues of deprivation and poverty in many locations across the District. • New jobs will be delivered in and around all sustainable settlements, which are easily accessible and are close to existing centres of population. Opportunities will be provided for development to	

[7] This includes the Wealden District Council Open Space Assessment Report (April 2022), the Wealden District Council Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (April 2022) and Wealden District Council Indoor Sports Facility Needs Assessment (March 2022).

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option B:	To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells)
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						be located on the edge of larger regional centres (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), which will provide further employment opportunities for Wealden residents. • Some rural communities in Wealden may be left behind, as both new housing and businesses will be focused upon market towns and larger villages, rather than rural areas. This may leave some smaller communities more isolated and not necessarily prevent poverty and social deprivation in those rural areas. • At this stage, the quantum of residential development is likely to result in a substantial amount of affordable housing (including in the AONB), as well as the provision of amenities and services in the most sustainable market towns and larger villages. It is also clear that there that will be a significant level of jobs created through this spatial option. • The impact is minor positive at this stage.	
SO18	ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT					• The entirety of employment need identified for both B2 and B8 uses within the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022) of 184,499 sqm will be delivered, with the remaining need for office uses (ranging between 3.1ha and 6.8ha) being delivered in town centres. • Employment growth will be supported in the most sustainable locations, which already have a local population, and may assist in a reduction of out-commuting to other locations for work, ensuring that the local economy is vibrant and sustained. • With the exception of a single employment site considered within this growth option, the employment sites are already in the planning application process, so should bring about a positive impact early on with the Local Plan timetable. No formal allocations for office use in town centres have been made, but this is expected to be developed throughout the Local Plan period. • It is also noted that substantial housing growth within the District will also bring about new construction jobs in the District. The Council's Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April, 2022)[8] confirms that the construction sector is highly concentrated within Wealden and accounts for 8.3% of employment in 2019 or 4,500 people. • The spatial option will not necessarily support and encourage rural businesses to grow, expand and diversify and may not support growth in viticulture, agriculture or rural tourism that are similarly highly concentrated within the district. • The impact major positive given that the full employment needs of the District will be met.	

[8] Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April, 2022)

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option B: To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells)
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO19	TOWN & VILLAGE CENTRES					• Both new housing and economic growth will be delivered within and around the most sustainable settlements. This will in turn protect and enhance the viability and vitality of the existing towns or village centres across the District, as there will be more residents living and working within the District. This will also help retain and potentially provide additional retail and leisure floorspace in those centres and reduce the number of vacant units. • Opportunities for residential development in Wealden's town and village centres will be provided, which may bring additional footfall to those centres and help improve the night-time economy. • Growth will be focussed at the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the District (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), which may mean that future residents of those sites look towards those centres for shopping, leisure and employment. The Wealden Town Centre Study (July, 2022)[9] confirms that leakage out of the District equated to 75.8% of comparison good spending and 44.6% of convenience goods spending, which went to other destinations such as Eastbourne, Royal Tunbridge Wells, East Grinstead and Lewes. This spatial option could exacerbate this issue. • Overall, the impact on this SA Objective is minor positive and will largely support the existing town and village centres through focusing growth in and around those settlements.
SO20	EDUCATION & SKILLS					• Growth will be focussed in and around sustainable settlements, which will inevitably lead to a need for new primary and secondary school places in many locations across the District. • Information from East Sussex County Council, as the education provider for state schools, indicates that local educational provision and capacity is currently adequate to meet the needs of new development across the district. The only exception to this is the Polegate and Willingdon area that contains several sustainable settlements and would be a focus of new growth under this spatial option. The area is projected to have no surplus in the total capacity of primary schools by 2025/26 and a 3% capacity deficit by 2025/26 in secondary school places. Focusing housing growth in this location could lead to a minor negative impact in the short term. • It is noted that new housing growth in sustainable settlements in the District will provide opportunities to provide new primary schools on site and provide contributions towards other school places (primary and secondary in the local area) that will be able to mitigate the impacts in the longer term. • The impact is likely to be minor negative in the short term in terms of the capacity of existing state schools in Polegate and Willingdon. However, it is considered that there will be opportunities to

[9] Wealden Town Centre Study, July 2022

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		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate the impact. Over the longer term, it is considered that impact will be minor positive.	

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:	Spatial Option B:	To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells)																		
SA EFFECTS	SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water resources/Quality	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Travel & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Deprivation	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
Major Positive																				
Minor Positive																				
Not Significant																				
Minor Negative																				
Major Negative																				
Uncertain																				

COMMENTARY:	
Duration/Reversibility	There will be a short-term negative impact on SA Objective SO20 (Education and Skills), as it is known that the capacity of schools (primary and secondary) will be in deficit by 2025/26 in the Polegate and Willingdon area, which is a focus for growth in this spatial option. However, it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate the impact in the longer term.
Mitigation Measures	• Specific mitigation measures may be needed for individual sites that come forward under this spatial option to address issues under SA Objective SO9 (Biodiversity), SO10 (Landscape and Townscape), SO11 (Historic and Cultural Heritage), which are considered minor negative impacts, but this may be resolved if suitable mitigation measures are identified on a site-by-site basis. • Infrastructure will also need to be provided in terms of healthcare facilities and open space (SO15 Health and Wellbeing) at the District level to accommodate further growth, that mitigation measures will need to be employed for the significant highway constraints identified (SO13 Travel and Accessibility), as well as potentially improved water supply and wastewater infrastructure (SO4 Water

	Resources/Quality). The requirements are unknown at this stage and will need to be considered further with the relevant infrastructure providers.
Cumulative Effects	• The cumulative impacts of this spatial option and particularly growth around sustainable settlements relate largely to potentially negative impacts on existing infrastructure (i.e. highways, education and health facilities). The existing evidence base on transport shows that there are significant existing highway constraints within the District along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26 in the Low Weald alongside market towns that will be the focus for growth. It is also considered that the spatial option is likely to have a minor negative impact upon the landscape, primarily due to growth coming forward within the High Weald AONB, albeit this will be close, or within existing sustainable settlements. There will also be cumulative effects on biodiversity, as the spatial option focuses housing growth within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA and will cause further recreational pressure on this international ecological site without mitigation. • The cumulative impacts of development will be considered further, where work will be undertaken to understand the impact on the transport network (through a county-wide transport model) and will also consider development from other emerging Local Plans within East Sussex. There will also be a need to consider other infrastructure issues such as education, health services, community facilities, water supply and wastewater and open space specifically, which will include discussion with the relevant infrastructure providers (that are ongoing). The Council will also need to understand the implications for designated ecological sites (i.e. Ashdown Forest, Lewes Downs and Pevensey Levels) through the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). Further information will also be needed in terms of detail for mitigation measures at specific development sites, however, it is acknowledged that this spatial option will result in pressure on infrastructure, climate as well as the built and natural environment.
Summary	**Major Positive Effects: SO18 Economy and Employment** • The spatial option meets the full employment needs for both B2 and B8 uses identified within the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022) of 184,499 sqm from 2021 to 2039. Overall, this will bring a major positive impact for SA Objective SO18 (Economy and Employment). **Minor Positive Effects: SO3 Flood Risk; SO17 Social Deprivation; SO19 Towns and Villages; SA20 Education and Skills** • There are a high number of settlements within Wealden District, including larger villages, which can deliver greater growth through this spatial option, which will be able to support the vitality and viability of those villages and particularly their high streets and services, hence the identification of a minor positive impact for SA Objective 19 (Towns and Villages). • A minor positive effect has been identified for SO3 (Flood Risk) as it is known that development sites around the sustainable settlements have been through the SFRA Level 1 and 2 and are likely therefore to improve the current flood risk issues. A minor positive effect is also identified with regards to social deprivation (SO17) as the spatial option aims to deliver both market and affordable housing in and around all sustainable settlements (including the High Weald AONB), as well as provide job opportunities locally. • Information from East Sussex County Council, as the education provider for state schools, indicates that local educational provision and capacity is currently adequate to meet the needs of new development across the District, apart from the Polegate and Willingdon area where there will be a deficit in school places in the short term, leading to a minor negative impact. However, a minor positive effect has been identified for SA Objective 20 in the longer term as it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate any short-term capacity issues, as well as the potential for new skills and training. **Minor Negative Effects: SO1 Climate Change Mitigation; SO6 Waste; SO7 Pollution; SO9 Biodiversity; SO10 Landscape and Townscape; SO11 Historic and Cultural Heritage; SO14 Housing**

	• This spatial option will deliver around 15,750 (net) dwellings in sustainable settlements, which is circa 4,000 dwellings short of overall housing need. Therefore, a minor negative impact has been identified for SO14 (Housing) given the scale of housing to be delivered within this spatial option. • Minor negative effects have also been identified in relation to climate change mitigation (SO1) as development will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. However, any impacts will be reduced, as far as possible, through the implementation of the relevant Local Plan policies. Minor negative effects have also been identified for waste (SO6) and pollution (SO7), which will increase as a result of development, although suitable mitigation and the implementation of the relevant Local Plan policies should reduce the impacts. Minor negative impacts are also identified for biodiversity (SO9) due to development in this location, particularly to the edge of settlements on greenfield land, and the potential to lose greenfield land and ecological assets (i.e. hedgerows, in-field trees etc.) to allow for new development to take place. • Minor negative effects have been identified with regards to landscape and townscape as additional development near to or within designated landscapes is likely. This spatial option is also likely to lead to development in semi-rural locations, in order deliver growth within Wealden District, which may lead to minor negative impacts to the townscapes of both towns and larger villages, as well as the landscape that surrounds the settlements. The impact will be dependent on specific settlement character and the implementation and design of any scheme. Minor negative effects have also been identified for historic and cultural heritage (SO11) as new development in/around historic villages and towns is likely to lead to negative impacts on designated heritage assets and their settings, where national planning policy aims to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of those proposals. **Major Negative Effects: None** **Uncertain Effects: SO2 Climate Change Adaptation; SO4 Water Resources/Quality; SO5 Soil, Land and Minerals; SO8 Green and Blue Infrastructure; SO12 Digital Infrastructure; SO13 Travel and Accessibility; SO15 Health and Wellbeing; SO16 Quality of Life and Place** There are several SA Objectives that will have uncertain effects, as either there is not enough information known about the detailed implementation of the spatial option (i.e. site locations, their scale, design and accessibility) or in the case of providing infrastructure (i.e. SA Objectives SO4, SO8, SO12, SO13 and SO15), the information is unknown at this stage.
Selection / Rejection of Option	• This spatial option is not selected at this stage. This spatial option will deliver around 15,750 (net) dwellings in sustainable settlements, which is circa 4,000 dwellings short of overall housing need. The option, however, will meet the full employment needs of the District and will improve town and village centres through new jobs and homes. • There are no major negative impacts of this spatial option, although minor negative impacts do occur for climate change mitigation, waste, pollution, biodiversity, landscape and heritage, although there may be mitigation measures that could be implemented for some or all of these issues. • There is currently some uncertainty within the Local Plan as to whether an employment site (Ashdown Business Park) can come forward through the Local Plan and further work on this and other potential options for employment growth will be considered at the Regulation 19 stage. **Spatial Option Not Selected (but further work to be undertaken on this spatial option for the Regulation 19 stage).**

Spatial Option C: To focus growth outside of the High Weald AONB, within and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald (i.e., Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Willingdon and other villages)

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option C: To focus growth outside of the High Weald AONB, within and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald (i.e., Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Willingdon and other villages)
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO1	CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION					• Growth is focussed in and around sustainable settlements within the Low Weald, as well as on the edge of the regional town of Eastbourne. This spatial option will focus growth away from the High Weald AONB, including sustainable settlements washed over by the designation (i.e. Wadhurst, Bells Yew Green etc.). The settlements that are defined as sustainable in the Low Weald all benefit from some form of sustainable public transport (i.e. railway or mass transit) and contain day-to-day services (schools, GPs, food stores) within them. Growth within or on the edge of these sustainable settlements may result in improvements to the existing transport infrastructure and key services within those settlements, albeit that further work is required to establish whether key services within the south of the District particularly, can support such growth. • Opportunities may be missed to deliver growth in sustainable settlements within the High Weald AONB and this growth may actually be needed to maintain those services within smaller settlements. The loss of such services could lead to the further use of private motor vehicles for leisure, jobs and other amenities in the north of the District particularly. • An increase in new homes and employment floorspace in the Low Weald is still likely to result in the further use of the private motor vehicle, which would result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions overall. It is known from the SA Scoping Report (June 2023)[10] that Wealden's emissions totalled 516.3 $ktCO_2e$ in 2020. The majority of emissions come from road transport (55.6%) with domestic emissions accounting for a further 49.8%. Given the above, it is known that growth in residential development specifically, even in sustainable locations, will result in increased greenhouse gas emissions through road transport and domestic emissions. The Council will produce further evidence on climate change as part of its Local Plan and will consider the emissions of different spatial options in further detail at that stage. • Some agricultural land will be removed from food production, as development will continue to focus on the surrounds of sustainable settlements in the Low Weald, which includes agricultural land. New residential development may provide opportunities for the creation of allotments, which could be used for local food production, but such provision is unlikely to compensate for the loss of agricultural land.

[10] Wealden District Council Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report, June 2023

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option C:	To focus growth outside of the High Weald AONB, within and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald (i.e., Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Willingdon and other villages)
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						• A minor negative impact is expected overall as new development will be supported in locations that are well served by sustainable modes of transport. However, this spatial option will fail to support growth in sustainable settlements within the High Weald AONB, which may lead to a deterioration of sustainable modes of transport, services and amenities within those settlements. This option could lead to the further use of private motor vehicles in these locations for leisure, jobs and other amenities and will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions through both road transport and domestic emissions, which are the most significant contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in the District.	
SO2	CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION					• The provision of green infrastructure associated with new development is likely to contribute positively to climate change adaptation by providing natural cooling and natural flood risk management measures (i.e. street trees, green corridors, SuDs etc.). Nonetheless, the provision of new green infrastructure as part of new residential/commercial development is unlikely to compensate for the loss of greenfield land at the edge of sustainable settlements. • The specific climate change adaptation measures for the spatial option will need to be identified in detail in the plan policies (including the specific sites identified). • The impact is uncertain at this stage over all timeframes.	
SO3	FLOOD RISK					• This spatial option includes settlements that are greatly impacted by some/all forms of flood risk (fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding). The Wealden Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) published in May 2022[11] confirms that fluvial flood risk is most notable in the Pevensey Levels, posing a risk to Hailsham, Westham and Pevensey. The other four principal watercourses (Rivers Medway, Uck, Cuckmere and Shortridge Stream) also pose a threat to towns and villages in the Low Weald including Uckfield, Horam and Polegate. • New housing and employment development within and adjoining these settlements means development in areas vulnerable to the impacts of climate change will not necessarily be avoided, which could lead to more development either adjacent to or within flood zones (i.e. Flood Zones 2 and 3), providing the specific site meets the 'sequential' and potentially, 'exceptions' test. • The Wealden Level 1 and 2 SFRA for the emerging Local Plan shows that sites contained within this spatial option can be brought forward, providing the sites themselves are not maximised and built development is sited away from flood risk zones, which can be avoided. • Given the above, it is considered that the impact minor positive.	

[11] Wealden District Council Level 1 SFRA

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option C: To focus growth outside of the High Weald AONB, within and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald (i.e., Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Willingdon and other villages)
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO4	WATER RESOURCES & QUALITY					• Wealden has been identified as an area of serious water stress by the Environment Agency. • All proposed development will increase the demand for both water consumption and wastewater treatment. With respect to water consumption, South East Water is in the process of updating their Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) which will consider new infrastructure to serve the District in the future. There is a statutory duty for the utility provider to provide water to new homes and to support growth. • With respect to wastewater treatment works, it is known that new development within the Pevensey Levels catchment (which includes sustainable settlements in the Low Weald) could cause environmental harm to the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site without mitigation (through increasing phosphorous levels), which will need to be carefully managed by the utility provider through consultation with the Council, Natural England and the Environment Agency. The Council will continue to liaise with the utility provider and other statutory bodies on this issue and to consider this spatial option in further detail, particularly in terms of the type and timing of mitigation needed. • The impact is currently uncertain as it will be dependent on the exact location of growth and the implementation of infrastructure projects where this is needed (e.g. extensions to reservoirs or improvements to wastewater treatment works). It is possible that the impacts could be mitigated through good design and compliance with Local Plan policies, although it is acknowledged that a general increase in population/development is likely to lead to increased pressure on water resources and wastewater in the District.
SO5	SOIL, LAND & MINERALS					• The use of previously developed land (brownfield) is not necessarily prioritised over greenfield land. Growth will be focussed in and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald, which will provide opportunities to make the best use of brownfield land within, or at the edge of those settlements. • Growth will not be focussed in sustainable settlements within the High Weald AONB, where it is washed over by the designation. The two largest settlements within the High Weald AONB are only surrounded by the designation, which includes Heathfield and Crowborough, so this spatial option will allocate land within the development boundary of those settlements. • The location of new development to be developed is not defined in terms of land type, but this spatial option will support growth around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald and to edge of Eastbourne, which are likely to incorporate greenfield land, and could lead to the loss of the best and most versatile land (BMV) agricultural land. However, there are other policies within the Local Plan to prevent the loss of BMV agricultural land.

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		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						• The impact is uncertain as growth will be focussed in sustainable settlements and provide opportunities to develop previously developed land (PDL) where possible but will also consider land at the edge of those sustainable settlements, as it is known there will not be enough PDL to deliver housing growth. Both the quantum of greenfield land loss and the loss of BMV land will be considered for each growth option at the next stage in the plan-making process.	
SO6	WASTE					• Suitable mitigation measures will need to be identified to reduce the impact of waste, as far as possible, in both the construction and operation of development. Both housing and employment growth will lead to more waste overall, including construction, household and business waste. • The impact is minor negative for both the construction and operation of development.	
SO7	POLLUTION					• All new development will result in an increase in light pollution. Growth will be focussed in and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald and to the edge of Eastbourne, which lies adjacent to the District. Growth will be in and around sustainable settlements, which will avoid the most rural parts of the District, including the AONB. There is also a policy within the Local Plan, which will address matters relating to 'dark night skies'. • There are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26. Many of these junctions are at or approaching capacity (90% to 110%) at the time of writing and would require mitigation if further growth is to come forward in the District through the Local Plan. The sustainable settlements within the Low Weald (including Hailsham, Polegate and Uckfield) are linked to these junctions and development is likely to result in increased air pollution at those junctions and vehicular congestion generally across the District. Further work is to be undertaken to ascertain whether mitigation can be achieved. • The existing evidence base shows that there are significant highway constraints on junctions adjoining the sustainable settlements in the Low Weald, that the majority of greenhouse gas emissions come from road transport (55.6%) and that the District is not well served by public transport generally with only 31% of internal Wealden trips made by non-private vehicle modes. Even when focusing growth on the most sustainable settlements within the Low Weald or to the outskirts of those settlements, it is considered that air pollution, particularly from road traffic congestion will continue. • The impact is minor negative. Further work is needed to consider the impact of growth in this spatial option through traffic modelling and the impacts of air pollution through the Council's HRA on the designated ecological sites, such as Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA, the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site and the Lewes Downs SAC.	

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option C: To focus growth outside of the High Weald AONB, within and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald (i.e., Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Willingdon and other villages)
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO8	GREEN & BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE					• Growth is focussed in and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald, which will include urban areas and some semi-rural locations at the edge of market towns and larger villages. Agricultural land will be lost at the edge of those settlements and may also result in the loss of green and blue infrastructure features (i.e. hedgerows or lower quality trees) to allow, for improvements such as vehicular/pedestrian access. • All new residential and employment development is expected to secure a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain, which will assist in supporting the provision of new or enhanced green space and/infrastructure, as well as increasing or improving access to green spaces. Growth is focussed in and around sustainable settlements of the Low Weald, including brownfield sites, which may greatly benefit from the provision or improvements to green infrastructure. • The focus of development on the Low Weald in both urban and edge of settlement locations, will require the detailed implementation of the Local Plan policies. • The impact is uncertain at this time.
SO9	BIODIVERSITY					• Growth is focussed in sustainable settlements in the Low Weald, which includes locations that are in close proximity to designated sites, such as the Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA, the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site and the Lewes Downs SAC. • This includes areas of land (i.e. Uckfield) within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA, so could have a minor negative effect in terms of recreational pressure on the SPA. However, other towns in the High Weald AONB (such as Crowborough or Wadhurst) will not be the focus of growth and therefore, the impact will be more limited than in other spatial options. The impact on the Ashdown Forest SPA should be addressed through suitable mitigation measures in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) contributions and contributions towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) mitigation at the Ashdown Forest itself. However, this will be tested through the HRA process of the Local Plan. • All new residential and employment development is expected to secure a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain. • Several sites are included at the edge of settlements, which are located within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs). As a result, some BOAs could be lost through new development. There will be opportunities for the remaining land in these locations to be conserved, restored and enhanced, including priority habitats, but is not likely to outweigh the loss of these BOAs. • Due to the nature of the sites coming forward (that tend to be greenfield and agricultural in nature some biodiversity features could be lost during construction (e.g. hedgerows, in-field trees etc.) although the ecological value of individual sites will be considered as part of the site selection process.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option C: To focus growth outside of the High Weald AONB, within and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald (i.e., Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Willingdon and other villages)
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						• The impact is minor negative. It is noted that the implementation of Local Plan policies in the longer term may provide mitigation measures for these impacts.
SO10	LANDSCAPE & TOWNSCAPE					• Growth is focussed in and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald (as defined within the SSS), and will not impact the national landscape designation in the form of the High Weald AONB to the north of the District. • The landscapes that surround the settlements (i.e. the Low Weald) will be affected by development. The option may lead to growth at scale at edge of settlement locations, which is likely to lead to harm to other valued landscapes, including the Low Weald, although there may be opportunities to mitigate this impact. • The proposed growth may lead to detrimental impacts to the townscapes of market towns and larger villages within the Low Weald. However, settlements within the High Weald AONB and their townscapes would not be detrimentally impacted. • Development focussed away from the High Weald AONB will have a minor positive impact and will ensure that this nationally important landscape is protected in line with the NPPF.
SO11	HISTORIC & CULTURAL HERITAGE					• Growth is focussed in and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald, which will include market towns and larger villages that have designated heritage assets (i.e. conservation areas and listed buildings). Focusing growth in these locations may negatively affect designated heritage asset's and their settings, where national planning policy aims to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of those proposals. • Growth is not supported in some of Wealden's smaller villages or in settlements washed over by the High Weald AONB designation (i.e. Mayfield, Wadhurst etc.) that contain substantial historic assets, and will preserve some of the smaller historic villages of the District and heritage assets in settlements washed over by the High Weald AONB, in the longer term. • The impact is minor positive as development is focussed away from High Weald AONB settlements and rural areas, which contain a substantial amount of the historic designations[12] for the District and will ensure that historic assets within Wealden are preserved.

[12] Only 8 of the 33 designated conservation areas (24%) within Wealden District are in the Low Weald and within a 'sustainable settlement' as defined within the SSS.

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		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO12	DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE					• New homes and businesses will be delivered within Wealden's most sustainable settlements in the Low Weald and will therefore improve digital infrastructure in those locations that already benefit from broadband connectivity. Opportunities for developers in more rural villages and settlements to improve existing digital infrastructure will not necessarily be provided and will depend on the detailed implementation of specific schemes. • The impact on is currently uncertain.
SO13	SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL & ACCESSIBILITY					• Growth is focussed in and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald and therefore new development will have access to sustainable modes of transport (either through rail or mass transit). New employment development will be located in or around sustainable locations in the Low Weald, accessible through sustainable modes of travel. This spatial option may reduce the need to travel by car, as well as commuting times. • The District has the lowest levels of existing sustainable travel across East Sussex, with only 31% of internal Wealden trips made by non-private vehicle modes. Focussing growth in areas that are well served by sustainable modes of travel for the most part, is likely to improve patronage for these sustainable modes of transport. • The delivery of new development (employment or housing) is not focused in rural areas or in settlements located within the High Weald AONB, which may mean that existing sustainable modes of travel to rural villages worsen over time due to a lack of new employment opportunities or homes in the area. As a result, some communities could be isolated and become reliant on the private motor vehicles for most trips. • Limiting growth in the existing market towns and larger villages within the High Weald AONB, may result in a reduction of key services, amenities, and sustainable transport options. • The transport evidence base shows that there are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26. Many of these junctions are at or approaching capacity (90% to 110%) and will require mitigation if further growth is to come forward in the District through the Local Plan. A number of these junctions are linked with Wealden's largest market towns in the Low Weald (i.e. Hailsham, Uckfield and Polegate). Severe impacts on the local highway network may result, particularly along the existing SRN/MRN junctions. Further work will be needed as part of the Local Plan process to understand what mitigation measures are necessary to alleviate congestion in this location. • The delivery of new residential and employment development within the most sustainable settlements in the Low Weald will support the delivery of 20-minute walkable neighbourhoods in those market towns and large villages. The existing services and facilities within those settlements

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		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						will be supported and sustainable transport modes could be improved through increased patronage. However, growth not focused in rural locations and the High Weald AONB could result in smaller villages and settlements within the High Weald AONB seeing a loss of key services and facilities. • The impact is currently uncertain. Further transport modelling work will be required as part of the Local Plan process.	
SO14	HOUSING					• Growth is focussed around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald, and at the edge of the regional town of Eastbourne located to the south of the District but will limit growth in more rural settlements and areas, as well as within the High Weald AONB. • The quantum of housing development will equate to around 15,000 (net) dwellings, which is 4,800 dwellings short of the overall housing target of 19.800 (net) dwellings. New homes in sustainable locations of the Low Weald, will support these settlements and support the vitality of those communities. • Growth in housing in this option will primarily be provided at the start of the Plan period, with existing commitments and other housing allocations delivering in the shorter term. There may be a lack housing delivery in the longer term (i.e. last five year period of the Local Plan). • Affordable housing, policies within the draft Local Plan state that housing schemes above a threshold of 10 units will deliver 35% of those dwellings as affordable, outside of the High Weald AONB. The Council will consider the delivery of affordable housing for each growth option at the next stage of the SA report. • The spatial option may not produce a significant quantum of affordable housing growth in rural communities or within the High Weald AONB, albeit that there are policies within the Local Plan (Rural Exception Sites for example) that may alleviate this issue. • New housing is likely to be delivered at scale around the sustainable settlements in the Low Weald and will allow for different types of housing products to be provided, such as affordable housing, self-build and custom build, older persons accommodation and family housing. • The delivery of housing will not be focussed in rural communities or within the High Weald AONB, which may lead to a deterioration of services, amenities and sustainable transport in the more rural settlements, thereby isolating some communities within the District. • The impact is minor negative given the scale of housing to be delivered. It is noted that this spatial option will not provide (in substantial number at least) affordable housing in either rural areas or within the High Weald AONB and would fail to deliver the District's housing need.	

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		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO15	HEALTH & WELLBEING					• Growth is focussed in and around sustainable settlements within the Low Weald, which will lead to greater pressures on the health care system and increased demand for existing provision of open space, sport, leisure and recreation facilities (including indoor facilities and outdoor pitches) specifically within the market towns and larger villages. • The clinical area is currently operating within 86% of the clinical space it requires and due to the levels of development already proposed in the area, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) is likely to need an additional surgery or funding to extend the existing surgeries if it is possible. The existing capacity within the health sector for this area will need to be expanded. • A number of evidence base reports[13] have identified there are deficiencies in most sport facilities within Wealden District. It is noted that the provision of new housing in sustainable towns and villages in the Low Weald will be required to provide new open space and sporting facilities, which are likely to mitigate the impact of new housing development and the need for such facilities in the longer term. • Nonetheless, the existing capacity within the health sector for the District will need to be expanded over the longer term and at this stage, it is not known whether such capacity could be provided. • The impact is uncertain at this stage.
SO16	QUALITY OF LIFE & PLACE					• There are no details of the scale, layout or design of the sites at the moment. • The impact is uncertain at this stage.
SO17	SOCIAL DEPRIVATION					• Both market and affordable housing is to be delivered in and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald, which is likely to address issues of deprivation and poverty in the Low Weald. The SA Scoping Report[14] sets out that the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) undertaken in 2019, showed that out of the 95 neighbourhoods in Wealden, 3 (all located in Hailsham in the Low Weald) were among the 20% most income-deprived in England. • New jobs will be delivered in and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald, which are easily accessible and close to existing centres of population, which will provide opportunities for local residents to be employed locally. Opportunities for development to be located on edge of Eastbourne will provide further employment opportunities for Wealden residents.

[13] This includes the Wealden District Council Open Space Assessment Report (April 2022), the Wealden District Council Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (April 2022) and Wealden District Council Indoor Sports Facility Needs Assessment (March 2022).
[14] Wealden District Council Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report, June 2023

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		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						• Some rural communities in Wealden may be left behind, as both new housing and businesses will be focused upon market towns and larger villages in the Low Weald, rather than rural areas, which may result in some smaller communities becoming more isolated and not necessarily prevent poverty and social deprivation. • Sufficient amounts of affordable housing will not be provided either within rural areas or within the High Weald AONB. This spatial option will not necessarily support rural communities and residents living within them and may lead to both a lack of affordable housing and limited job opportunities in those parts of the District. • There are clearly benefits from supporting growth within the Low Weald, particularly for more socially deprived neighbourhoods within the area. However, the lack of employment opportunities and affordable housing provided through this spatial option within both rural areas and the High Weald AONB could lead to greater levels of social deprivation within other parts of the District. • The impact is minor negative at this stage.	
SO18	ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT					• The entire employment need of 184,499 sqm for both B2 and B8 uses will be delivered, as recommended within the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April, 2022), with the remaining need for office uses (ranging between 3.1ha and 6.8ha), delivered in town centres. • Employment growth is supported in the most sustainable locations of the Low Weald, which already have a local population and may assist in a reduction of out-commuting to other locations for work, ensuring that the local economic is vibrant and sustained. • With the exception of a single employment site considered within this growth option, the employment sites are already in the planning application process, so should bring about a positive impact early on with the Local Plan timetable. No formal allocations for office use in town centres have been made, but this is expected to be developed throughout the Local Plan period. • Housing growth within the District will also bring about new construction jobs. The Council's Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022)[15] confirms that the construction sector is highly concentrated within Wealden and accounts for 8.3% of employment in 2019 or 4,500 people. • The growth, expansion and diversification of rural businesses will not necessarily be supported and encouraged and may not support growth in viticulture, agriculture or rural tourism, which are highly concentrated within the District.	

[15] Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April, 2022)

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option C: To focus growth outside of the High Weald AONB, within and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald (i.e., Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Willingdon and other villages)
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						• The impact is major positive as the spatial option will meet the full employment needs of the District.
SO19	TOWN & VILLAGE CENTRES					• Both new housing and economic growth will be delivered within and around the most sustainable settlements in the Low Weald, which will protect and enhance the viability and vitality of the existing towns or village centres, as there will be more residents living and working within the Low Weald. This option will also help retain and potentially provide additional retail and leisure floorspace in those centres and reduce the number of vacant units. • Opportunities for residential development will be provided in Wealden's town and village centres, which may bring additional footfall to those centres and help improve the night-time economy. • There will be limited growth within the High Weald AONB, which has the potential to negatively impact those centres (i.e. Crowborough, Heathfield, Wadhurst and Forest Row) as new residents and employment growth are directed away from those centres. However, there will still be opportunities for retail and residential growth within Crowborough and Heathfield (including its centres) within the development boundary, as they are outside the High Weald AONB designation. • The impact is minor positive as the spatial option will largely support existing towns and villages, particularly in the Low Weald, through focussed growth in and around those settlements.
SO20	EDUCATION & SKILLS					• Growth is focussed in and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald, which will lead to a need for new primary and secondary school places in many locations in the south of the District. • Information from East Sussex County Council, as the education provider for state schools, indicates that local educational provision and capacity is currently adequate to meet the needs of new development across the District. The only exception to this is the Polegate and Willingdon area that contains several sustainable settlements and will be a focus of new growth under this spatial option. The area is projected to have no surplus in the total capacity of primary schools by 2025/26 and a 3% capacity deficit by 2025/26 in secondary school places. Focusing on housing growth in this location could lead to a minor negative impact in the short term. • New housing growth in sustainable settlements in the Low Weald will provide opportunities to provide new primary schools on site and provide contributions towards other school places (primary and secondary in the local area), which will mitigate the impacts in the longer term. • The impact is likely to be minor negative in the short-term owing to the capacity of existing state schools in Polegate and Willingdon. It is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the Low Weald to mitigate the impact.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option C:	To focus growth outside of the High Weald AONB, within and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald (i.e., Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Willingdon and other villages)
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						• The impact is minor positive over the longer term, given the opportunities to add capacity for school places in the medium to long term.	

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:	Spatial Option C:	To focus growth outside of the High Weald AONB, within and around sustainable settlements in the Low Weald (i.e., Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Willingdon and other villages)																		
SA EFFECTS	SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water resources/Quality	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Travel & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Deprivation	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
Major Positive																				
Minor Positive																				
Not Significant																				
Minor Negative																				
Major Negative																				
Uncertain																				

COMMENTARY:	
Duration/Reversibility	There will be a short-term negative impact on SA Objective SO20 (Education and Skills), as it is known that the capacity of schools (primary and secondary) will be in deficit by 2025/26 in the Polegate and Willingdon area, which will be a focus for growth in this spatial option. However, it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate the impact in the longer term.
Mitigation Measures	• Specific mitigation measures to address issues under SA Objective SO9 (Biodiversity) for individual sites may be resolved if suitable mitigation measures are identified on a site-by-site basis. • Infrastructure will need to be provided in terms of healthcare facilities and open space (SO15 Health and Wellbeing) at the District level to accommodate further growth. • Mitigation measures will also need to be identified for the significant highway constraints (SO13 Travel and Accessibility), and potentially for improved water supply and wastewater infrastructure (SO4 Water Resources/Quality). • The measures needed are unknown at this stage and will need to be considered further with the infrastructure providers.
Cumulative Effects	• The cumulative impacts of this spatial option and particularly growth around sustainable settlements relate largely to potentially negative impacts for existing infrastructure (i.e. highways, education and health facilities). The Council's evidence base on transport shows that

	there are significant highway constraints within the District along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26 in the Low Weald alongside market towns, which will be the focus for growth. There will also be cumulative effects on biodiversity, as the spatial option will continue to focus development (partly) within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA, which will cause further recreational pressure on this international ecological site without mitigation. • The cumulative impacts of development will need to be considered further. Work will be undertaken to understand the impact on the transport network (through a county-wide transport model), which will also consider development from other emerging Local Plans within East Sussex. There will also be a need to consider other infrastructure issues such as education, health services, community facilities, water supply and wastewater and open space specifically, which will include discussions with the relevant infrastructure providers. The Council will also need to understand the implications for designated ecological sites (i.e. Ashdown Forest, Lewes Downs and Pevensey Levels) through the HRA. Further information will be needed in terms of the detail of mitigation measures at specific development sites. It is acknowledged that this spatial option will result in pressure on infrastructure, climate as well as the built and natural environment particularly in the Low Weald.
Summary	**Major Positive Effects: SO18 Economy and Employment** • The spatial option meets the full employment needs of 184,499 sqm from 2021 to 2039 as identified for both B2 and B8 uses within the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022), which has a major positive impact for SA Objective SO18 (Economy and Employment). **Minor Positive Effects: SO3 Flood Risk; SO10 Landscape and Townscape; SO11 Historic and Cultural Heritage; SO19 Towns and Villages; SA20 Education and Skills** • There are a high number of settlements within the Low Weald, including larger villages, which can deliver greater growth through this spatial option, which will be able to support the vitality and viability of those villages and particularly their high streets and services, and will have a minor positive impact for SA Objective 19 (Towns and Villages). There are settlements washed over by the High Weald AONB designation which may not benefit in the same way, but the two main town centres within the High Weald AONB (Crowborough and Heathfield) are not covered by the designation so are supported in this spatial option. • A minor positive effect has been identified for SO3 (Flood Risk) as it is known that development coming forward as part of this spatial option around sustainable settlements have been through the SFRA Level 1 and 2 and are therefore likely to improve the current flood risk issues in those areas. • Minor positive impacts have also been identified with regards to landscape and townscape as there would be limited additional development near to or within designated landscapes (i.e. the High Weald AONB) within this spatial option. However, there is potential for impacts on landscape within the Low Weald resulting from development adjacent to existing sustainable settlements. Minor positive impacts are also identified for SO11 (Historic and Cultural Heritage) as this spatial option does not support growth in some of Wealden's smaller villages or in settlements washed over by the High Weald AONB designation (i.e. Mayfield, Wadhurst etc.) that contain substantial historic assets, and it will preserve some of the smaller historic villages of the District in the longer term. • Information from East Sussex County Council, as the education provider for state schools, indicates that local educational provision and capacity is currently adequate to meet the needs of new development across the District, apart from the Polegate and Willingdon area where there will be a deficit in school places in the short term, leading to minor negative impact. However, a minor positive effect has been identified for SA Objective 20 in the longer term as it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the district to mitigate any short-term capacity issues, as well as the potential for new skills and training.

	Minor Negative Effects: SO1 Climate Change Mitigation; SO6 Waste; SO7 Pollution; SO9 Biodiversity; SO14 Housing; SO17 Social Deprivation • This spatial option will deliver around 15,000 (net) dwellings in sustainable settlements, which is approximately circa 4,800 dwellings short of overall housing need. Therefore, a minor negative has therefore been identified for SO14 (Housing) given the scale of housing to be delivered within this spatial option. • Minor negative effects have also been identified in relation to climate change mitigation (SO1) as all development is likely to increase greenhouse gas emissions. However, any impacts will be reduced, as far as possible, through the implementation of the relevant Local Plan policies. Minor negative effects have also been identified for waste (SO6) and pollution (SO7), as impacts will increase as a result of development, although suitable mitigation and the implementation of the relevant Local Plan policies should reduce the impacts. Minor negative impacts are also identified for biodiversity (SO9) as development is focussed on the edge of sustainable settlements on greenfield land, where there is the potential to lose greenfield land and ecological assets (i.e. hedgerows, in-field trees etc.) to allow for new development to take place. • A minor negative impact is also identified with regards to SO17 (Social Deprivation) as the spatial option may leave behind some rural communities in Wealden, as both new housing and businesses will be focused upon market towns and larger villages in the Low Weald, rather than rural areas. The same reasoning applies to the High Weald AONB, as this spatial option does not focus growth on those settlements either and will not provide substantive amounts of affordable housing or jobs within the High Weald AONB. **Major Negative Effects** **Uncertain Effects**: **SO2 Climate Change Adaptation; SO4 Water Resources/Quality; SO5 Soil, Land and Minerals; SO8 Green and Blue Infrastructure; SO12 Digital Infrastructure; SO13 Travel and Accessibility; SO15 Health and Wellbeing and SO16 Quality of Life and Place** • There are several SA Objectives that will have uncertain effects, as either there is not enough information known about the detailed implementation of the spatial option (i.e. site location, their scale, design and accessibility) or in the case of providing infrastructure (i.e. SA Objectives SO4, SO8, SO12, SO13 and SO15) the information is uncertain.
Selection / Rejection of Option	This spatial option will deliver around 15,000 (net) dwellings in sustainable settlements, which is approximately circa 4,800 dwellings short of overall housing need and is the least of any spatial option considered. The option will, however, meet the full employment needs of the District and improve the town and village centres through new jobs and homes, at least within the Low Weald. There are no major negative impacts for this spatial option, although minor negative impacts do occur for climate change mitigation, waste, pollution, biodiversity and social deprivation. There may be mitigation measures which could be implemented for some or all of these issues. However, due to the low level of housing supported in this spatial option, particularly within the High Weald AONB, it is not considered to meet several objectives for the Local Plan. There is currently some uncertainty within the Local Plan as to whether an employment site (Ashdown Business Park) can come forward through the Local Plan and further work on this and other potential options for employment growth will be considered at the Regulation 19 stage. **Spatial Option Not Selected**

Spatial Option D: To focus growth on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements. Continue to support growth through windfalls at those settlements.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option D: To focus growth on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements. Continue to support growth through windfalls at those settlements.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO1	CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION					• Growth is focussed on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements, as well as the edge of regional towns, which are located close to the administrative border of Wealden District (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells). The settlements that are defined as sustainable within the SSS all benefit from some form of sustainable public transport (i.e. railway or mass transit) and contain day-to-day services (schools, GPs, food stores) within them. Growth within or on the edge of these settlements may result in improvements to existing transport infrastructure and key services within those settlements, albeit that further work is required to establish whether all key services within settlements are capable of such growth. • An increase in new homes and employment floorspace is likely to result in the further use of the private motor vehicle, which will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions overall. The SA Scoping Report (June 2023)[16] shows that Wealden's CO_2 emissions totalled 516.3 $ktCO_2e$ in 2020. The majority of emissions come from road transport (55.6%) with domestic emissions accounting for a further 49.8%. It is known that growth in residential development specifically, even in sustainable locations, will result in increased greenhouse gas emissions through road transport and domestic emissions. The Council will produce further evidence on climate change as part of its Local Plan and will consider the emissions of different spatial options in further detail at that stage. • A significant quantum of agricultural land will be removed from food production, particularly as the option will focus on the surrounds of sustainable settlements, which incorporate agricultural land. New residential development will also provide opportunities for the creation of allotments, which could be used for local food production; however, the provision of new allotments will not compensate for the loss of agricultural land. • A minor negative impact is expected overall as the option will support new development in locations that are well served by sustainable modes of transport.

[16] Wealden District Council Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report, June 2023

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option D: To focus growth on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements. Continue to support growth through windfalls at those settlements.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO2	CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION					• Development within this spatial option will introduce hard standing and structures onto greenfield land on the edge of sustainable settlements, which could make land vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, specifically surface water flood risk and overheating. • The provision of green infrastructure associated with new development is likely to contribute positively to climate change adaptation by providing natural cooling and natural flood risk management measures (i.e. street trees, green corridors, SuDs etc.) but will not compensate for the loss of greenfield land at the edge of sustainable settlements. • The specific climate change adaptation measures will need to be identified in detail (including the specific sites identified). • The impact uncertain at this stage over all timeframes.
SO3	FLOOD RISK					• Growth is focussed on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements across the District and includes settlements which are greatly impacted by some/all forms of flood risk (fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding). The Wealden Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) published in May 2022[17] confirms that fluvial flood risk is most notable in the Pevensey Levels, posing a risk to Hailsham, Westham and Pevensey. The other four principal watercourses (Rivers Medway, Uck, Cuckmere and Shortridge Stream) also pose a threat to Uckfield, Crowborough, Forest Row, Horam and Polegate. • New housing and employment development within and adjoining these settlements will not necessarily avoid development in areas vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which could lead to more development either adjacent to or within flood zones (i.e. Flood Zones 2 and 3), providing the specific site meets the 'sequential' and potentially, 'exceptions' test. • There is some uncertainty as to whether all sites contained within this spatial option can be mitigated in terms of flood risk. • The impact is uncertain.

[17] Wealden District Council Level 1 SFRA

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option D: To focus growth on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements. Continue to support growth through windfalls at those settlements.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO4	WATER RESOURCES & QUALITY					• Wealden has been identified as an area of serious water stress by the Environment Agency. • All proposed development will increase the demand for both water consumption and wastewater treatment. With respect to water consumption, South East Water is in the process of updating their Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP), which will consider new infrastructure to serve the District in the future. There is a statutory duty for the utility provider to provide water to new homes and to support growth. • With respect to wastewater treatment works, new development within the Pevensey Levels catchment (which includes a number of sustainable settlements in the south/southeast of the district) could cause environmental harm to the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site without mitigation (through increasing phosphorous levels), which will need to be carefully managed by the utility provider through consultation with the Council, Natural England and the Environment Agency. The Council will continue to liaise with the utility provider and other statutory bodies on this issue and to consider this spatial option in further detail, particularly in terms of the type and timing of mitigation needed. • The impact will be dependent on the exact location of growth and the implementation of infrastructure projects where this is needed (e.g. extensions to reservoirs or improvements to wastewater treatment works). The impacts could be mitigated through good design and compliance with Local Plan policies, although it is acknowledged that a general increase in population/development is likely to lead to increased pressure on water resources and wastewater in the District. • The impact is currently uncertain.
SO5	SOIL, LAND & MINERALS					• Growth is focussed on the delivery of new strategic extensions adjacent to existing sustainable settlements, which will tend to include greenfield sites, particularly where the District has a lack of industrial legacy. The use of previously developed land (brownfield) over greenfield land will not necessarily be prioritised, although growth through windfalls within sustainable settlements is supported which is likely to include the redevelopment of PDL. • The propensity to develop BMV agricultural land at the edge of existing sustainable settlements will increase, which could lead to the loss of the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land. • Both the quantum of greenfield land loss and the loss BMV land will be considered for each growth option at the next stage in the plan-making process. • The impact is uncertain.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option D: To focus growth on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements. Continue to support growth through windfalls at those settlements.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO6	WASTE					• Both housing and employment growth will lead to more waste overall, including construction, household and business waste. • Suitable mitigation measures will need to be identified to reduce the impact of waste as far as possible in both the construction and operation of development. • The impact is minor negative in both the construction and operation of development.
SO7	POLLUTION					• Growth is focussed on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements across the District and to the edge of regional towns that lie adjacent to the District. • All new development will result in an increase in light pollution. There is a policy within the Local Plan which will address matters relating to 'dark night skies'; however, there may be some residual impact of light pollution due to encroachment of urban development into the countryside as a result of strategic extensions of existing sustainable settlements. • There are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26. Many of these junctions are at or approaching capacity (90% to 110%) at the time of writing and will require mitigation if further growth is to come forward in the District through the Local Plan. This spatial option is likely to result in increased air pollution at those junctions and vehicular congestion generally across the District. Further work will be undertaken to ascertain whether mitigation at these junctions can be achieved. • Development is focussed at the edge of sustainable settlements, including the High Weald AONB, which may reduce the tranquillity of some semi-rural areas that surround those settlements, including parts of the High Weald AONB. • The evidence base shows that there are significant highway constraints on junctions close to some of the sustainable settlements (particularly in the Low Weald), that the majority of greenhouse gas emissions come from road transport (55.6%) and that the District is not well served by public transport generally with only 31% of internal Wealden trips made by non-private vehicle modes. Even when focusing growth on the most sustainable settlements or to the outskirts of those settlements, it is considered that air pollution, particularly from road traffic congestion will continue. • Further work is needed to consider the impact of growth through further traffic modelling and the impact of air pollution through the Council's HRA on designated ecological sites, such as Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA, the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site and the Lewes Downs SAC. • The impact is minor negative.
SO8	GREEN & BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE					• Growth is focussed on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements which will include semi-rural locations at the edge of market towns and larger villages, which will

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option D: To focus growth on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements. Continue to support growth through windfalls at those settlements.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						result in the loss of agricultural land at the edge of those settlements and may also result in the loss of green and blue infrastructure features (i.e. hedgerows or lower quality trees) to allow for improvements such as vehicular/pedestrian access. • All new residential and employment development is expected to secure a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain, which will assist in supporting the provision of new or enhanced green space and/infrastructure, as well as increasing or improving access to green spaces. The spatial option will continue to support growth within sustainable settlements, which includes brownfield sites, or sites within our town and villages that may greatly benefit from the provision or improvements to green infrastructure. • The impact is uncertain. The detailed implementation of Local Plan policies will be crucial in providing mitigation.
SO9	BIODIVERSITY					• Growth is focussed within or at the edge of sustainable settlements, which will include locations that are in close proximity to designated sites, such as the Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA, the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site and the Lewes Downs SAC. • Areas of land (i.e. Uckfield, Maresfield etc.) are included within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA, which could have a minor negative effect in terms of recreational pressure on the SPA. Any impact on the Ashdown Forest SPA should be capable of being addressed through suitable mitigation measures in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) contributions and contributions towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) mitigation at the Ashdown Forest itself. This will be tested through the HRA for the Local Plan. • All new residential and employment development is expected to secure a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain. • Some sites at the edge of settlements are located within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs), which could result in the loss of some BOAs from new development. There will be opportunities for the remaining land in these locations to be conserved, restored and enhanced, including priority habitats in these locations, but this is not likely to outweigh the loss of such land. • Due to the nature of the sites coming forward, which surround sustainable settlements (i.e. greenfield and agricultural in nature), some biodiversity features could be lost during construction (e.g. hedgerows, in-field trees etc.) although the ecological value of individual sites will be considered as part of the site selection process. • The impact is minor negative.
SO10	LANDSCAPE & TOWNSCAPE					• Growth is focussed on or at the edge of sustainable settlements, which will include settlements surrounded by the High Weald AONB (i.e. Heathfield and Crowborough) or washed over by the designation (i.e. edge of Tunbridge Wells). The NPPF confirms that harm to those valued

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option D: To focus growth on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements. Continue to support growth through windfalls at those settlements.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						landscapes can provide a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type and distribution of development in a plan area. This spatial option could lead to harm to this nationally designated landscape. • The focus of growth will include the landscapes that surround those settlements (both within the High Weald AONB and in the Low Weald), which will lead to growth in semi-rural locations, and is likely to lead to harm to other valued non-designated landscapes, including the Low Weald, although there may be opportunities to mitigate this impact. • This spatial option is likely to lead to development at scale on the edge of our sustainable settlements, to support both housing and employment growth within Wealden District, which may lead to detrimental impacts to the townscapes of our market towns and larger villages. • This impact is minor negative but could be reduced through suitable mitigation measures.
SO11	HISTORIC & CULTURAL HERITAGE					• Growth is focussed on the edge of sustainable settlements, which will include market towns and larger villages with designated heritage assets (i.e. conservation areas and listed buildings). Focusing growth at these locations may negatively affect designated heritage assets (i.e. historic farmsteads at the edge towns/villages) and their settings, where national planning policy aims to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of those proposals. • Growth is not supported in some of Wealden's smaller villages that contain historic assets, and will preserve some of the smaller historic villages of the District in the longer term. • The impact is minor negative but could be reduced through suitable mitigation measures at individual sites.
SO12	DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE					• New homes and businesses will be delivered within or at the edge of Wealden's most sustainable settlements, which is likely to improve digital infrastructure in those locations that already benefit from broadband connectivity. Opportunities for developers in more rural villages and settlements to improve existing digital infrastructure will not necessarily be provided, but it will depend on the detailed implementation of specific schemes. • The impact is currently uncertain.
SO13	SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL & ACCESSIBILITY					• Growth is focused on the delivery of new strategic extensions at sustainable settlements and therefore new development is more likely to have access to or can provide pedestrian/cycle links to sustainable modes of transport. • New employment development will be located in or at the edge of sustainable settlements, accessible through sustainable modes of travel, which may lead to greater usage of sustainable modes of transport for commuting within the District and may also reduce out commuting from the District.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option D: To focus growth on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements. Continue to support growth through windfalls at those settlements.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						• The District has the lowest levels of sustainable travel across East Sussex, with only 31% of internal Wealden trips made by non-private vehicle modes. Focusing growth in and around sustainable settlements, which are well served by the sustainable modes of travel for the most part, will improve patronage for these sustainable modes of transport. • The delivery of new development (employment or housing) is not focused on rural areas; this may mean that existing sustainable modes of travel to the most rural villages could worsen in the future, which could isolate some communities that will be reliant on the private motor vehicles for most trips. • The Council's evidence base on transport shows that there are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26. Many of these junctions are at or approaching capacity (90% to 110%) at the time of writing and will require mitigation if further growth is to come forward in the District through the Local Plan. A number of these junctions are linked with some of Wealden's largest market towns (i.e. Hailsham, Uckfield and Polegate). Focusing growth at the edge of these locations may cause severe impacts on the local highway network, particularly along the existing SRN/MRN junctions. Further work will be needed as part of the Local Plan process to understand what mitigation measures are necessary to alleviate congestion in this location. • New development at edge of settlement locations is likely to create opportunities for enhancing public rights of way, footpaths and/or cycle networks and may help to connect communities by improving access to key services and facilities within those market towns and larger villages. The impact will be dependent on the detailed implementation of specific schemes and is uncertain at this stage. • The impact is uncertain. Further transport modelling work will be required as part of the Local Plan process.
SO14	HOUSING					• Housing development within the growth option, for the plan period, will equate to around 15,500 (net) dwellings, approximately 4,300 dwellings short of the overall housing target of 19,800 (net) dwellings. New homes will be delivered in sustainable locations, which will support all settlements defined as sustainable and support the vitality of those communities. • Growth in housing in this option will primarily be provided at the start of the Plan period, with existing commitments and other housing allocations delivering in the shorter term. There may be a lack housing delivery in the longer term (i.e. last five year period of the Local Plan). • For affordable housing, policies within the draft Local Plan state that housing schemes above a threshold of 10 units will deliver 35% of those dwellings as affordable, outside of the High Weald AONB, with the threshold being set at only 5 dwellings when within the High Weald AONB. The

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option D: To focus growth on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements. Continue to support growth through windfalls at those settlements.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						Council will consider the delivery of affordable housing for each growth option at the next stage of the SA report. • New housing is likely to be delivered at scale around the sustainable settlements and will allow for different types of housing products to be delivered, such as affordable housing, self-build and custom build, older persons accommodation and family housing. • The delivery of housing will not be focussed in rural communities, and this may lead to a deterioration of services, amenities and sustainable transport in the more rural settlements, thereby isolating some communities within the District. • The impact is minor negative. Given the scale of housing to be delivered a number of policy objectives of the Local Plan will still be met including, delivering housing in sustainable locations, affordable housing (including within the High Weald AONB), self-build and custom build plots, a mix of unit types and sizes etc.
SO15	HEALTH & WELLBEING					• Growth is focussed on the delivery of new strategic extensions at sustainable settlements, and at the edge of regional towns, but will be limited in more rural settlements and areas. This will lead to greater pressures on the health care system and also increased demand to existing forms of provision of open space, sport, leisure and recreation facilities (including indoor facilities and outdoor pitches) within those market towns and larger villages specifically. • The clinical area is currently operating within 86% of the clinical space it requires and due to the levels of development already proposed in the area, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) is likely to need an additional surgery or funding to extend the existing surgeries if it is able to. The existing capacity within the health sector for this area would need to be expanded. • A number of evidence base reports[18] have identified there are deficiencies in most sport facilities within Wealden District. The provision of new housing in sustainable towns and villages across the District will be required to provide new open space and sporting facilities that is likely to mitigate the impact of new housing development and therefore, the need for such facilities in the longer term. • The impact is uncertain. The existing capacity within the health sector for the District will need to be expanded over the longer term and at this stage, it is not known whether such capacity could be provided.
SO16	QUALITY OF LIFE & PLACE					• There are no details in terms of the scale, layout or design of the sites in the spatial option, at the moment.

[18] This includes the Wealden District Council Open Space Assessment Report (April 2022), the Wealden District Council Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (April 2022) and Wealden District Council Indoor Sports Facility Needs Assessment (March 2022).

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option D: To focus growth on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements. Continue to support growth through windfalls at those settlements.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						• The impact is currently uncertain.
SO17	SOCIAL DEPRIVATION					• Growth is focussed on the delivery of both market and affordable housing through new strategic extensions to existing sustainable settlements including within or close to the High Weald AONB, which is likely to address issues of deprivation and poverty in many locations across the District. • New jobs will be delivered at the edge of existing sustainable settlements, which are easily accessible and are close to existing centres of population, which will provide opportunities for Wealden residents to be employed locally. Opportunities will also be provided for development to be located on the edge of larger regional centres (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells) that will provide further employment opportunities for Wealden residents. • Some rural communities in Wealden may be left behind, as both new housing and businesses will be focused on the edge of market towns and larger villages, rather than rural areas. This may leave some smaller communities more isolated and not necessarily prevent poverty and social deprivation in those rural areas. • At this stage, the quantum of residential development in this spatial option is likely to result in some affordable housing being provided for all sustainable towns and villages across the District (including in the AONB), as well as the provision of amenities and services in the most sustainable market towns and larger villages. It is also clear that there that will be a significant level of jobs created through this spatial option. • The impact is minor positive at this stage.
SO18	ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT					• Economic growth will be delivered through new strategic business parks at the edge of sustainable settlements. Existing key employment sites within and adjacent to existing settlements will also be supported, but not necessarily more rural areas. • The entire employment need of 184,499 sqm identified within the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022) for both B2 and B8 uses will be delivered in this option, with the remaining need for offices uses (ranging between 3.1ha and 6.8ha) delivered in town centres. • Employment growth will be supported in the most sustainable locations, which already have a local population, and will assist in a reduction of out-commuting to other locations for work, ensuring that the local economy is vibrant and sustained. • Substantial housing growth within the District will also bring about new construction jobs in the District. The Council's Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April,

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option D: To focus growth on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements. Continue to support growth through windfalls at those settlements.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						2022)[19] confirms that the construction sector is highly concentrated within Wealden and accounts for 8.3% of employment in 2019 or 4,500 people. • With the exception of a single employment site considered within this growth option, the employment sites are already in the planning application process, so should bring about a positive impact early on with the Local Plan timetable. No formal allocations for office use in town centres have been made, but this is expected to be developed throughout the Local Plan period. • Rural businesses will not necessarily be supported and encouraged to grow, expand and diversify and growth in viticulture, agriculture or rural tourism, which are highly concentrated within the District may also not be supported. • The impact is major positive and will meet the full employment needs of the District.
SO19	TOWN & VILLAGE CENTRES					• Both new housing and economic growth will be delivered through new strategic extensions at the most sustainable settlements, which will protect and enhance the viability and vitality of existing towns or village centres, as there will be more residents living and working within the District. This will also help retain and potentially provide additional retail and leisure floorspace in those centres and reduce the number of vacant units. • Opportunities for windfall residential development will be supported in Wealden's town and village centres, which may bring additional footfall to the centres and help improve the night-time economy. • Strategic growth will be focussed at the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the District (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), which may mean that future residents of those sites look towards those centres for shopping, leisure and employment. The Wealden Town Centre Study (July, 2022)[20] confirms that leakage out the District equated to 75.8% of comparison good spending and 44.6% of convenience goods spending, which went to other destinations such as Eastbourne, Royal Tunbridge Wells, East Grinstead and Lewes. This spatial option could exacerbate this issue. • The impact is minor positive. The spatial option will largely support existing town and village centres by supporting growth in those settlements and focusing new growth to the edge of those settlements.
SO20	EDUCATION & SKILLS					• Growth is focussed on the delivery of new strategic extensions at sustainable settlements, and at the edge of regional towns (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells) which will lead to the need for new primary and secondary school places in many locations across the District.

[19] Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April, 2022)
[20] Wealden Town Centre Study, July 2022

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option D:	To focus growth on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements. Continue to support growth through windfalls at those settlements.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						• Information from East Sussex County Council, as the education provider for state schools, indicates that local educational provision and capacity is currently adequate to meet the needs of new development across the District. The only exception to this is the Polegate and Willingdon area that contains several sustainable settlements and will be a focus of new growth under this spatial option. The area is projected to have no surplus in the total capacity of primary schools by 2025/26 and a 3% capacity deficit by 2025/26 in secondary school places. Focusing on housing growth in this location could lead to minor negative impact in the short term. • It is noted that new housing growth in sustainable settlements in the District will provide opportunities to provide new primary schools on site and provide contributions towards other school places (primary and secondary in the local area) that will be able to mitigate the impacts in the longer term. • The impact on this SA Objective is likely to be a minor negative in the short term in terms of the capacity of existing state schools in Polegate and Willingdon. However, it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate the impact. Over the longer term, the impact is minor positive given the opportunities to add capacity for school places in the medium to long term.	

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:	Spatial Option D:	To focus growth on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements. Continue to support growth through windfalls at those settlements.

SA EFFECTS	SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water resources/Quality	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Travel & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Deprivation	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
Major Positive																				
Minor Positive																				
Not Significant																				
Minor Negative																				
Major Negative																				
Uncertain																				

COMMENTARY:	
Duration/Reversibility	There will be a short-term negative impact on SA Objective SO20 (Education and Skills), as the capacity of schools (primary and secondary) will be in deficit by 2025/26 in the Polegate and Willingdon area, which will be a focus for growth in this spatial option. However, it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate the impact in the longer term.
Mitigation Measures	• There may be specific mitigation measures for individual sites that come forward under this spatial option to address issues under SA Objective SO9 (Biodiversity), SO10 (Landscape and Townscape), SO11 (Historic and Cultural Heritage), which are considered minor negative impacts, and may be resolved if suitable mitigation measures are identified on a site-by-site basis. • Infrastructure will need to be provided in terms of healthcare facilities and open space (SO15 Health and Wellbeing) at the District level to accommodate further growth. • Mitigation measures will need to be provided for the significant highway constraints identified (SO13 Travel and Accessibility), and water supply and wastewater infrastructure (SO4 Water Resources/Quality) potentially improved. • The measures needed are unknown at this stage and will need to be considered further with the relevant infrastructure providers.

Cumulative Effects	• The cumulative impacts of this spatial option and particularly growth around sustainable settlements relate largely to potentially negative impacts on existing infrastructure (i.e. highways, education and health facilities). The Council's evidence base on transport shows that there are significant highway constraints within the District along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which include junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26 in the Low Weald alongside market towns, which will be a focus for growth. A minor negative impact upon the landscape is also likely, primarily due to the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements both within the High Weald AONB and in the Low Weald. There will also be cumulative effects on biodiversity, as the spatial option will continue to focus housing growth within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA, which will cause further recreational pressure on this international ecological site without mitigation. • The cumulative impacts of development will be considered further, where work will be undertaken to understand the impact on the transport network (through a county-wide transport model), which will also consider development from other emerging Local Plans within East Sussex. There will also be a need to consider other infrastructure issues such as education, health services, community facilities, water supply and wastewater and open space specifically, which will include discussions with the relevant infrastructure providers (that are ongoing). • The Council will also need to understand the implications for designated ecological sites (i.e. Ashdown Forest, Lewes Downs and Pevensey Levels) through the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and the overall impact on national landscape designations, including the High Weald AONB. Further information will also be needed in terms of detail of mitigation measures at specific development sites associated with the spatial option, including flood risk. • It is acknowledged that this spatial option will result in pressure on infrastructure, climate as well as the built and natural environment.
Summary	**Major Positive Effects: SO18 Economy and Employment** • The spatial option meets the Council's full employment needs for both B2 and B8 uses identified within the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April, 2022), which will bring major positive impacts for SA Objective SO18 (Economy and Employment). **Minor Positive Effects: SO17 Social Deprivation; SO19 Towns and Villages; SA20 Education and Skills** • There are a high number of settlements within Wealden District, including larger villages, which can deliver greater growth through this spatial option which will be able to support the vitality and viability of those villages and particularly their high streets and services, and will result in a minor positive impact for SA Objective 19 (Towns and Villages). • A minor positive effect is also identified with regards to social deprivation (SO17) as the spatial option will deliver both market and affordable housing at the edge of all sustainable settlements (including the High Weald AONB), as well as provide job opportunities locally. Information from East Sussex County Council, as the education provider for state schools, indicates that local educational provision and capacity is currently adequate to meet the needs of new development across the District, apart from the Polegate and Willingdon area where there will be a deficit in school places in the short term, leading to a minor negative impact. However, a minor positive effect has been identified for SA Objective 20 (Education and Skills) in the longer term as it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate any short-term capacity issues, as well as the potential for new skills and training. **Minor Negative Effects: SO1 Climate Change Mitigation; SO6 Waste; SO7 Pollution; SO9 Biodiversity; SO10 Landscape and Townscape; SO11 Historic and Cultural Heritage; SO14 Housing** • Around 15,500 (net) dwellings will be delivered, which is circa 4,300 dwellings short of the overall housing target of 19,800 (net) dwellings. Therefore, a minor negative impact has been identified for SO14 (Housing) given the scale of the housing to be delivered within this spatial option.

	• Minor negative effects are identified in relation to climate change mitigation (SO1) as development will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. However, any impacts will be reduced, as far as possible, through the implementation of the relevant Local Plan policies. Minor negative effects have also been identified for waste (SO6) and pollution (SO7), as these will increase as a result of new development, although suitable mitigation and the implementation of the relevant Local Plan policies should reduce the impacts. Minor negative impacts are identified for biodiversity (SO9) due to development in this location, particularly at the edge of the settlements on greenfield land where there is the potential to lose greenfield land and ecological assets (i.e. hedgerows, in-field trees etc.) to allow for new development to take place. • Minor negative effects are identified with regards to landscape and townscape (SO10) as additional development at scale adjacent to or within designated landscapes (i.e. the High Weald AONB) are contained within this spatial option. This spatial option is also likely to lead to development in semi-rural/rural locations, in order deliver growth within Wealden District, which will lead to negative impacts to the landscapes that surrounds the settlements, as well as potentially harming the character of those townscapes. • Minor negative effects are identified for historic and cultural heritage (SO11) as new development in/around historic villages and towns (including those within the High Weald AONB) is likely to lead negative impacts on designated heritage assets and their settings, where national planning policy aims to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of those proposals. **Major Negative Effects: None** **Uncertain Effects: SO2 Climate Change Adaptation; SO3 Flood Risk; SO4 Water Resources/Quality; SO5 Soil, Land and Minerals; SO8 Green and Blue Infrastructure; SO12 Digital Infrastructure; SO13 Travel and Accessibility; SO15 Health and Wellbeing; SO16 Quality of Life and Place** • There are several SA Objectives which will have uncertain effects, as either there is not enough information known about the detailed implementation of the spatial option (i.e. site locations, their scale, design and accessibility) or in the case of providing infrastructure (i.e. SA Objectives SO4, SO8, SO12, SO13 and SO15), this information is unknown at this stage for the spatial option.
Selection / Rejection of Option	This spatial option is not selected at this stage. This spatial option will deliver around 15,500 (net) dwellings in sustainable settlements, which is circa 4,300 dwellings short of overall housing need. The option will, however, meet the full employment needs of the District and will improve the town and village centres through new jobs and homes. There are no major negative impacts for this spatial option, although minor negative impacts do occur for climate change mitigation, waste, pollution, biodiversity, landscape and heritage. There may be mitigation measures which could be implemented for some or all of these issues. There is currently some uncertainty within the Local Plan as to whether an employment site (Ashdown Business Park) in this option can come forward through the Local Plan and further work on this and other potential options for employment growth will be considered at the Regulation 19 stage. In addition, there is also uncertainty as to whether a large mixed-use site, named 'West of Uckfield' can come forward through this spatial option and this will be explored further in the Regulation 19 Local Plan. **Spatial Option Not Selected (but further work to be undertaken on this spatial option for the Regulation 19 stage).**

Spatial Option E: To maximise growth in all locations within the district to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement and to meet a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option E:	To maximise growth in all locations within the District to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement and to meet a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
SO1	CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION					• Growth is focussed in and around sustainable settlements in this spatial option but seeks to maximise both housing and employment growth in those locations, which will lead to additional development where there is more limited access to sustainable modes of transport. This may lead to unsustainable patterns of movement and further reliance upon the private motor vehicle, which will increase greenhouse gas emissions overall in the short to medium term, albeit that this could be mitigated through the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure within new strategic residential extensions. • The SA Scoping Report (June 2023)[21] shows Wealden's emissions totalled 516.3 $ktCO_2e$ in 2020. The majority of greenhouse gas emissions come from road transport (55.6%) with domestic emissions accounting for a further 49.8%. It is known that growth in residential development specifically, even in sustainable locations, will result in increased greenhouse gas emissions through road transport and the domestic sector. The Council will produce further evidence on climate change as part of its Local Plan and will consider the emissions of different spatial options in further detail at that stage. • Some agricultural land will be removed from food production, particularly as new development is maximised at the edge of sustainable settlements, which tends to incorporate greenfield land. However, new residential development will also provide opportunities for the creation of allotments which could be used for local food production. The provision of new allotments associated with new residential development in this spatial option is very unlikely to equate to the loss of agricultural land. • The impact is minor negative. New development will be supported in locations that are genuinely well served by sustainable modes of transport or could be well served by sustainable modes of transport.

[21] Wealden District Council Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report, June 2023

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option E:	To maximise growth in all locations within the District to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement and to meet a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
SO2	CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION					• The provision of green infrastructure associated with new development is likely to contribute positively to climate change adaptation by providing natural cooling and natural flood risk management measures (i.e. street trees, green corridors, SuDs etc.). Nonetheless, the provision of new green infrastructure as part of new residential/commercial development is not likely to compensate adequately for greenfield land lost through such a spatial option. • The impact is uncertain at this stage over all timeframes. The specific climate change adaptation measures will need to be identified in detail (including the identification of specific sites).	
SO3	FLOOD RISK					• Growth is focussed in and around sustainable settlements across the District but will seek to maximise both housing and employment growth in those locations, which will include settlements that are greatly impacted by some/all forms of flood risk (fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding). The Wealden Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) published in May 2022[22] confirms that fluvial flood risk is most notable in the Pevensey Levels, posing a risk to Hailsham, Westham and Pevensey. The other four principal watercourses (Rivers Medway, Uck, Cuckmere and Shortridge Stream) also pose a threat to Uckfield, Crowborough, Forest Row, Horam and Polegate. • New housing and employment development within and adjoining these settlements will not necessarily avoid development in areas vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which could lead to more development either adjacent to or within flood zones (i.e. Flood Zones 2 and 3), providing the specific site meet the 'sequential' and potentially, 'exceptions' test. • Significant residential development sites will be introduced near to the Cuckmere River, to the west of Hailsham and there is some uncertainty as to whether all sites can be mitigated in terms of flood risk. • The impact is uncertain. Further work will be undertaken to determine whether this spatial option can mitigate the flood risk issues.	

[22] Wealden District Council Level 1 SFRA

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option E: To maximise growth in all locations within the District to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement and to meet a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO4	WATER RESOURCES & QUALITY					• Wealden has been identified as an area of serious water stress by the Environment Agency. • All proposed development will increase the demand for both water consumption and wastewater treatment. With respect to water consumption, South East Water is in the process of updating their Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) which will consider new infrastructure to serve the District in the future. There is a statutory duty for the utility provider to provide water to new homes and to support growth. • With respect to wastewater treatment works, it is known that new development within the Pevensey Levels catchment could cause environmental harm to the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site without mitigation (through increasing phosphorous levels) and that this will need to be carefully managed by the utility provider through consultation with the Council, Natural England and the Environment Agency. The Council will continue to liaise with the utility provider and other statutory bodies on this issue and to consider this spatial option in further detail, particularly in terms of the type and timing of mitigation needed. • The impact is currently uncertain. The impact will be dependent on the exact location of growth and the implementation of infrastructure projects where this is needed (e.g. extensions to reservoirs or improvements to wastewater treatment works). It is not known whether this spatial option could be mitigated through good design and compliance with Local Plan policies, and it is acknowledged that a general increase in population/development is likely to lead to increased pressure on water resources and wastewater in the District.
SO5	SOIL, LAND & MINERALS					• This spatial option will focus growth within and adjacent to existing sustainable settlements, with the sites at the edge of existing settlements more likely to be greenfield sites, particularly where the District has a lack of industrial legacy. New development will be maximised in those locations. • Previously developed land (brownfield) will not necessarily be prioritised over greenfield land, albeit that the spatial option does support growth within sustainable settlements. • Growth on greenfield land, adjacent to existing settlements, will be maximised which could lead to the loss of our best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land. • The impacts is minor negative. This spatial option will lead to the greatest loss of greenfield land and will increase the propensity to develop BMV agricultural land in rural areas. • Both the quantum of greenfield land loss and the loss BMV land will be considered for each growth option at the next stage in the plan-making process.
SO6	WASTE					• Maximising growth in all locations will lead to more waste overall, including construction, household and business waste.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option E: To maximise growth in all locations within the District to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement and to meet a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						• Suitable mitigation measures will need to be identified to reduce the impact of waste as far as possible in both the construction and operation of development. • The impact on this SA Objective is likely to be a minor negative in both the construction and operation of any development.
SO7	POLLUTION					• All new development will result in an increase in light pollution. This specific spatial option will distribute and maximise growth in all areas of the District, including rural areas that may have 'dark night skies'. There is a policy within the Local Plan which will address matters relating to dark night skies; however, there will be some residual impact of light pollution due to encroachment of urban development into the countryside as a result of strategic extensions of existing sustainable settlements, with significant impacts expected on the High Weald AONB. • There are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26. Many of these junctions are at or approaching capacity (90% to 110%) at the time of writing and would require mitigation if further growth is to come forward in the District through the Local Plan. Maximising growth in all locations adjacent to settlements is likely to result in increased air pollution at those junctions and vehicular congestion generally across the District. Further work will be undertaken to ascertain whether mitigation at these junctions can be achieved, but early transport modelling shows that if this option was pursued, it would be unlikely that such mitigation at junctions along the SRN/MRN will be achievable for all the sites included within this spatial option. • New development will be provided in semi-rural areas, including the High Weald AONB, and this may reduce the tranquillity of the more rural locations in the District. • The Council's evidence base shows that there are significant highway constraints on junctions close to some of the sustainable settlements (particularly in the Low Weald), that the majority of greenhouse gas emissions come from road transport (55.6%) and that the District is not well served by public transport generally with only 31% of internal Wealden trips made by non-private vehicle modes. • The impact is major negative even when focusing growth on the most sustainable settlements or to the outskirts of those settlements, as a result of the likely increase in air pollution, particularly from road traffic congestion. Further work is needed to consider the impact of growth through further traffic modelling and the impact of air pollution through the Council's HRA on designated ecological sites, such as Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA, the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site and the Lewes Downs SAC.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option E:	To maximise growth in all locations within the District to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement and to meet a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						• There will also be major negative impacts resulting from noise and light pollution in rural areas from this spatial option, which could only be mitigated to some extent through good design and siting.	
SO8	GREEN & BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE					• Growth is focussed on existing sustainable settlements which will include semi-rural locations at the edge of market towns and larger villages, where this option will aim to maximise growth in these locations. This will result in the loss of agricultural land at the edge of those settlements and may also result in the loss of green and blue infrastructure features (i.e. hedgerows or lower quality trees) to allow for vehicular/pedestrian access, for example. • All new residential and employment development is expected to secure a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain, which will assist in supporting the provision of new or enhanced green space and/infrastructure, as well as increasing or improving access to green spaces. The spatial option will continue to support growth within sustainable settlements, which includes brownfield sites, or sites within town and villages which may greatly benefit from the provision or improvements to green infrastructure. • The impact is uncertain. The detailed implementation of the Local Plan policies will be crucial in determining the impact on this SA Objective.	
SO9	BIODIVERSITY					• Growth is maximised within and in areas around sustainable settlements, including locations that are in close proximity to designated sites, such as the Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA, the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site and the Lewes Downs SAC. • This option includes areas of land (i.e. Uckfield, Maresfield etc.) within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA and could have a minor negative effect in terms of recreational pressure on the SPA. Nonetheless, a spatial option of this nature may still be able to address the impact on the Ashdown Forest SPA through suitable mitigation measures in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) contributions and contributions towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) mitigation at the Ashdown Forest itself. This will be tested through the HRA for the Local Plan. • All new residential and employment development is expected to secure a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain. • Some sites at the edge of settlements are located within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs). and some BOAs could be lost through new development. There will be opportunities for the remaining land in these locations to be conserved, restored and enhanced, including priority habitats in these locations, but this will not likely outweigh the loss of such land. • Development will be maximised at existing sustainable settlements and due to the nature of the sites coming forward that surround sustainable settlements (which tend to be greenfield and	

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option E:	To maximise growth in all locations within the District to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement and to meet a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						agricultural in nature), this can result in the loss of some biodiversity features during construction (i.e. loss of hedgerows, in-field trees etc.) although the ecological value of individual sites will be considered as part of the site selection process. The impact is minor negative.	
SO10	LANDSCAPE & TOWNSCAPE					• Growth is maximised in and around sustainable settlements and will incorporate locations of higher landscape value, such as the High Weald AONB or adjacent to it. This spatial option will provide the highest amount new homes within the High Weald AONB through site allocations, including a significant scale site adjacent to Royal Tunbridge Wells. This is likely to lead to significant harm to the nationally designated landscapes and result in detrimental harm to those landscapes. The NPPF confirms that harm to those valued landscapes can provide a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type and distribution of development in a plan area. • Maximising growth in rural/semi-rural locations is also likely to lead to harm to other valued landscapes, including the Low Weald and this is unlikely to be fully mitigated. • Development at scale in rural areas is likely, to maximise growth within Wealden District and this may lead to major negative impacts to the townscapes of both our small and larger villages. This could result in illogical extensions to villages that can cumulatively impact the character of those settlements and their townscape. Equally, maximising growth within our major towns and villages may also lead to poorer design, cramped housing/employment developments that may not be able to be mitigated. • The impact is major negative. Even with mitigation in place, it is clear that maximising growth within nationally designated landscapes and in semi-rural locations is likely lead to a major negative impact, but this could be reduced through suitable mitigation measures.	
SO11	HISTORIC & CULTURAL HERITAGE					• Growth is maximised in and around sustainable settlements, which will include historic villages and towns that have designated heritage assets (i.e. conservation areas and listed buildings). Maximising new development in these locations may negatively affect designated heritage assets and their settings, where national planning policy aims to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of those proposals. • This spatial option will support growth in some of Wealden's smaller villages that contain historic assets, as well as sites which could cause harm to heritage assets at the edge of sustainable settlements. Some of the smaller historic villages of the District will not necessarily be protected in the longer term. • The impact is major negative. Even with mitigation in place, it is clear that maximising growth in locations with significant heritage value is likely to lead to a major negative impact, but this could be reduced through suitable mitigation measures at individual sites.	

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option E:	To maximise growth in all locations within the District to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement and to meet a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
SO12	DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE					• New homes and businesses are likely to be delivered within or at the edge of Wealden's most sustainable settlements and is therefore likely to improve digital infrastructure in those locations that already benefit from broadband connectivity. Opportunities for developers in more rural villages and settlements to improve existing digital infrastructure will not necessarily be provided, and it will depend on the detailed implementation of specific schemes within the spatial option. • The impact is currently uncertain.	
SO13	SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL & ACCESSIBILITY					• Growth will be maximised within and surrounding sustainable settlements and therefore new development is more likely to have access to or can provide pedestrian/cycle links to sustainable modes of transport, although there is uncertainty on this for some larger strategic developments on the outskirts of sustainable settlements. • New employment development will be located in or around sustainable locations, accessible through sustainable modes of travel. This may lead to greater usage of sustainable modes of transport for commuting within the District and may also reduce out-commuting from the District. • The District has the lowest levels of sustainable travel across East Sussex, with only 31% of internal Wealden trips made by non-private vehicle modes. It is considered that maximising growth in and around sustainable settlements, which are well served by the sustainable modes of travel for the most part, will improve patronage for these sustainable modes of transport. • There are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26. Many of these junctions are at or approaching capacity (90% to 110%) at the time of writing and will require mitigation if further growth is to come forward in the District through the Local Plan. Maximising growth in all locations is likely to cause severe impacts on the local highway network, particularly along existing SRN/MRN junctions. Further work will be undertaken to ascertain whether mitigation at these junctions can be achieved, but early transport modelling shows that if this option was pursued, it would be unlikely that such mitigation at junctions along the SRN/MRN will be achievable for all the sites included in this option. • The delivery of new large-scale residential and employment development at the outskirts of settlements is unlikely to support the delivery of 20-minute walkable neighbourhoods, given the nature of those settlements and the lack of existing facilities, services, sustainable modes of travel within them.	

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option E:	To maximise growth in all locations within the District to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement and to meet a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						• The impact is major negative. Further transport modelling work will be required as part of the Local Plan process.	
SO14	HOUSING					• Housing development within this growth option, for the plan period, will equate to around 21,200 (net) dwellings, which is approximately 1,400 (net) dwellings above the overall housing target of 19,800 (net) dwellings, which will meet a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need. New homes will be delivered in sustainable locations, which will support all settlements defined as sustainable and support the vitality of those communities. • Growth in housing in this option will be provided throughout the plan period, with strategic housing sites being delivered later into the Local Plan period, with existing commitments and other housing allocations delivering in the shorter term. • For affordable housing, policies within the draft Local Plan state that housing schemes above a threshold of 10 units will deliver 35% of those dwellings as affordable, outside of the High Weald AONB, with the threshold being set at only 5 dwellings when within the High Weald AONB. The Council will consider the delivery of affordable housing for each growth option at the next stage of the SA report. • New housing will be delivered at scale and will allow for different types of housing products to be delivered, such as self-build and custom build, older persons accommodation and family housing. • Not all development will be delivered in the most sustainable locations given the scale of some sites at the edge of towns and villages. However, this may lead to improvements to services, amenities and sustainable transport options at the edge of those sustainable settlements, thereby improving their sustainability, albeit that there is uncertainty on this issue. • The impact is major positive given the scale of housing to be delivered within this spatial option and the expectation that this would meet a number of policy objectives of the Local Plan including delivering against the District's housing requirement (and a small proportion of unmet housing need for Eastbourne), affordable housing in the AONB, self-build and custom build plots, and a mix of unit types and sizes etc.	
SO15	HEALTH & WELLBEING					• Growth is maximised within and surrounding sustainable settlements to meet the Council's housing and employment needs, which will lead to greater pressures on the health care system and also increased demand to existing forms of provision of open space, sport, leisure and recreation facilities (including indoor facilities and outdoor pitches) within the District. • The clinical area is currently operating within 86% of the clinical space it requires and due to the levels of development already proposed in the area, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) is likely to	

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option E: To maximise growth in all locations within the District to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement and to meet a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						need an additional surgery or funding to extend the existing surgeries if it is possible. Therefore, the existing capacity within the health sector for this area would need to be expanded. • A number of evidence base reports[23] have identified there are deficiencies in most sport facilities within Wealden District. The provision of new housing in sustainable towns and villages across the District will be required to provide new open space and sporting facilities which is likely to mitigate the impact of new housing development and therefore, the need for such facilities in the longer term. • The impact is uncertain. The existing capacity within the health sector for the District will need to be expanded over the longer term and at this stage, it is not known whether such capacity can be provided.
SO16	QUALITY OF LIFE & PLACE					• There are no details at this stage in terms of the scale, layout or design of the sites in the spatial option. • The impact is uncertain.
SO17	SOCIAL DEPRIVATION					• Both market and affordable housing will be delivered in all locations across the District and will be above the housing need required for the Local Plan; this will include new homes within or close to the High Weald AONB, which is likely to address issues of deprivation and poverty in many locations across the District. • New jobs will be delivered at the edge of existing sustainable settlements, which are easily accessible and are close to existing centres of population, which will provide opportunities for Wealden residents to be employed locally. Opportunities will also be provided for development to be located on the edge of larger regional centres (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells) that will provide further employment opportunities for Wealden residents. • At this stage, the quantum of residential development is likely to result in some affordable housing being provided for all sustainable towns and villages across the District (including within the AONB), as well as the provision of amenities and services in our most sustainable market towns and larger villages. It is also clear that there that will be a significant level of jobs created. • The impact is major positive at this stage.
SO18	ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT					• The employment need of 184,499 sqm identified for both B2 and B8 uses within the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022) will be delivered in its entirety, with the remaining need for office uses (ranging between 3.1ha and 6.8ha) delivered in town centres.

[23] This includes the Wealden District Council Open Space Assessment Report (April 2022), the Wealden District Council Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (April 2022) and Wealden District Council Indoor Sports Facility Needs Assessment (March 2022).

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option E: To maximise growth in all locations within the District to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement and to meet a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						• Employment growth will be supported in the most sustainable locations, as well as at the edge of sustainable settlements, which already have a local population, and may assist in a reduction of out-commuting to other locations for work, ensuring that the local economy is vibrant and sustained. • With the exception of a single employment site considered within this growth option, the employment sites are already in the planning application process, so should bring about a positive impact early on with the Local Plan timetable. No formal allocations for office use in town centres have been made, but this is expected to be developed throughout the Local Plan period. • Substantial housing growth within the District (that would meet our full housing need and a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need) will also bring about a significant number of construction jobs in the District. The Council's Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022)[24] confirms that the construction sector is highly concentrated within Wealden and accounts for 8.3% of employment in 2019 or 4,500 people. • The impact is major positive.
SO19	TOWN & VILLAGE CENTRES					• Both new housing and economic growth will be delivered within and around the most sustainable settlements of the District to meet both housing and employment needs, including a small proportion of housing to meet Eastbourne's unmet housing need. This will in turn protect and enhance the viability and vitality of town or village centres across the District, as there will be more residents living and working within the District, which will also help retain and potentially provide additional retail and leisure floorspace in those centres and reduce the number of vacant units. • Opportunities for residential development in Wealden's town and village centres will be maximised which may bring additional footfall to those centres and help improve the night-time economy. • Given that growth under this spatial option will be significant and come to all areas of the District, there may be a risk that this option will necessitate the need for out-of-town retail development if there are no possible options to develop large-scale retail uses in those specific town and village centres. However, Wealden's Town Centre Study (July, 2022) confirms that there is limited need for retail uses within the District until 2039 and therefore did not recommend that the Council seek to specifically allocate sites for new retail or commercial leisure facilities through the emerging local plan. There may therefore be limited pressure to deliver out of town retail development in any case. • The impact is minor positive.

[24] Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April, 2022)

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option E:	To maximise growth in all locations within the District to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement and to meet a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
SO20	EDUCATION & SKILLS					• Growth is maximised within and surrounding sustainable settlements to meet the Council's housing (with a small allowance made for Eastbourne) and employment needs, which will inevitably lead to a need for new primary and secondary school places in many locations across the District. • Information from East Sussex County Council, as the education provider for state schools, indicates that local educational provision and capacity is currently adequate to meet the needs of new development across the District. The only exception to this is the Polegate and Willingdon area, where it is projected to have no surplus in the total capacity of primary schools by 2025/26 and a 3% capacity deficit by 2025/26 in secondary school places. Maximising housing growth in this location could lead to minor negative impact in the short term. • New housing growth at scale will provide opportunities to provide new primary schools on site and provide contributions towards other school places (primary and secondary in the local area) that would be able to mitigate the impacts in the longer term. • The impact is likely to be minor negative in the short term in terms of the capacity of existing state schools in Polegate and Willingdon. However, it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate the impact. • Over the long term, it is considered that there is a minor positive impact on this SA Objective.	

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:	Spatial Option E:	To maximise growth in all locations within the district to meet the Council's housing and employment needs requirement and to meet a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need.																		
SA EFFECTS	SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water resources/Quality	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Travel & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Deprivation	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
Major Positive																				
Minor Positive																				
Not Significant																				
Minor Negative																				
Major Negative																				
Uncertain																				

COMMENTARY:	
Duration/Reversibility	There will be a short-term negative impact on SA Objective SO20 (Education and Skills), as the capacity of schools (primary and secondary) will be in deficit by 2025/26 in the Polegate and Willingdon area which would be a focus for growth in this spatial option. However, it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate the impact in the longer term.
Mitigation Measures	• There may be specific mitigation measures needed for individual sites that come forward under this spatial option to address issues under SA Objective SO9 (Biodiversity), SO10 (Landscape and Townscape), SO11 (Historic and Cultural Heritage), which are considered either major or minor negative impacts, but this may be resolved/mitigated to some extent if suitable mitigation measures are identified on a site-by-site basis. • Infrastructure will need to be provided in terms of healthcare facilities and open space (SO15 Health and Wellbeing) at the District level to accommodate further growth.

	• Mitigation measures will need to be provided for the significant highway constraints identified (SO13 Travel and Accessibility), and water supply and wastewater infrastructure (SO4 Water Resources/Quality) potentially improved. The measures needed are unknown at this stage and will need to be considered further with the relevant infrastructure providers. • There is also a requirement to consider all sites included within this spatial option under SA Objective SO3 (Flood Risk). Many of the sites are considered suitable with mitigation measures in place, as described under the SFRA Level 2, but a significant residential development site near to the Cuckmere River, to the west of Hailsham, is considered to have some uncertainty as to whether the site can be mitigated in terms of flood risk, which will be explored prior to the Regulation 19 consultation.
Cumulative Effects	• The cumulative impacts of this spatial option and particularly around maximising growth around sustainable settlements relate largely to potentially negative impacts on existing infrastructure (i.e. highways, education and health facilities). The evidence base for transport shows that there are significant existing highway constraints within the District along the SRN/MRN, which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26 in the Low Weald alongside market towns that will be the focus for growth. Further work will be undertaken to ascertain whether mitigation at these junctions can be achieved, but it is known through early transport modelling that if this option was pursued, it would be unlikely that such mitigation at junctions along the SRN/MRN will be achievable for all the sites included in this option. • A major negative impact is also likely upon the landscape, primarily due to growth coming forward within the High Weald AONB (this spatial option has the highest number of dwellings allocated within the High Weald AONB) and the maximisation of growth around other sustainable settlements within the Low Weald. There will also be cumulative effects on biodiversity, as the spatial option would continue to focus housing growth within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA and will cause further recreational pressure on this international ecological site without mitigation. • The cumulative impacts of development will be considered further, where work will be undertaken to understand the impact on the transport network (through a county-wide transport model) which will also consider development from other emerging Local Plans within East Sussex. There will also be a need to consider other infrastructure issues such as education, health services, community facilities, water supply and wastewater and open space specifically, which will include discussions with the relevant infrastructure providers (which are ongoing). The Council will also need to understand the implications for designated ecological sites (i.e. Ashdown Forest, Lewes Downs and Pevensey Levels) through the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). Further information will also be needed in terms of detail of mitigation measures at specific development sites associated with the spatial option. It is acknowledged that this spatial option will result in pressure on infrastructure, climate as well as the built and natural environment.
Summary	**Major Positive Effects: SO14 Housing; SO17 Social Deprivation; SO18 Economy and Employment** • Around 21,200 (net) dwellings will be delivered in, or surrounding sustainable settlements, which is approximately 1,400 (net) dwellings over Wealden District's overall housing need. The supply of new homes will also be able to meet a small proportion of Eastbourne's unmet housing need. Therefore, a major positive impact has been identified for SO14 (Housing) given the scale of housing to be delivered within this spatial option. • The Council's identified employment needs of 184,499 sqm from 2021 to 2039 for both B2 and B8 uses within the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022) will be met in full, which will bring a major positive impact for SA Objective SO18 (Economy and Employment) overall. A major positive effect is also identified with regards to social deprivation (SO17) as the spatial option aims to maximise both market and affordable housing in and around all sustainable settlements (including the High Weald AONB), as well as provide job opportunities locally. **Minor Positive Effects: SO19 Towns and Villages; SA20 Education and Skills**

- There are a high number of settlements within Wealden District, including larger villages, which can deliver greater growth through this spatial option, which will be able to support the vitality and viability of those villages and particularly their high streets and services, hence the identification of a minor positive impact for SA Objective 19 (Towns and Villages). Information from East Sussex County Council, as the education provider for state schools, indicates that local educational provision and capacity is currently adequate to meet the needs of new development across the District, apart from the Polegate and Willingdon area where there will be a deficit in school places in the short term, leading to a minor negative impact. However, a minor positive effect has been identified for SA Objective 20 in the longer term as it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate any short-term capacity issues, as well as the potential for new skills and training.

Minor Negative Effects: SO1 Climate Change Mitigation; SO5 Soil, Land and Minerals; SO6 Waste; SO9 Biodiversity; SO11 Historic and Cultural Heritage

- Minor negative effects are identified in relation to climate change mitigation (SO1) as development will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, however, any impacts will be reduced, as far as possible, through the implementation of the relevant Local Plan policies. A minor negative effect has also been identified for waste (SO6), which will increase as a result of development, although suitable mitigation and the implementation of the relevant Local Plan policies should reduce the impacts.
- Minor negative effects have been identified for soil, land and minerals (SO5) as this spatial option does not necessarily prioritise the use of previously developed land (brownfield) over greenfield land and will maximise new development at the edge of sustainable settlements (which tends to be greenfield land), which could also include BMV land, leading to minor negative effects on this SA Objective. This will be considered in more detail in terms of the quantum of greenfield and BMV land loss in this spatial option, compared with other options, but it is recognised that this option will result in the significant loss of greenfield land in order to meet housing need.
- Minor negative impacts are identified for biodiversity (SO9) due to development in this location, particularly to the edge of settlements on greenfield land, and the potential to lose greenfield land and ecological assets (i.e. hedgerows, in-field trees etc.) to allow for new development to take place.

Major Negative Effects: SO7 Pollution; SO10 Landscape and Townscape; SO11 Historic and Cultural Heritage; SO13 Travel and Accessibility

- Major negative effects are identified with regards to landscape and townscape (SO10) as maximising development near to or within designated landscapes is likely within this spatial option. This spatial option is also likely to lead to development at scale in semi-rural areas, in order to maximise growth within Wealden District, which may lead to minor negative impacts to the townscapes of both small and larger villages. The impact will be dependent on the specific settlement character and the implementation and design of any scheme. Major negative effects have also been identified for heritage (SO11) as maximising new development in/around historic villages is likely to lead negative impacts on designated heritage assets and their settings, where national planning policy aims to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of those proposals.
- A major negative impact is identified with regards to travel and accessibility (SO13), as this spatial option aims to maximise growth in around and sustainable settlements. There are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the SRN/MRN. Maximising growth in all locations is likely to cause severe impacts on the local highway network, particularly along existing SRN/MRN junctions where there are known capacity issues and limited access to sustainable modes of travel. Further work will be undertaken to ascertain whether mitigation at these junctions can be achieved, but early transport modelling shows that if this option was pursued, it would be unlikely that such mitigation at junctions along the SRN/MRN will be achievable for all the sites included in this option.
- A major negative impact has also been identified for pollution (SO7) given the scale of growth in this spatial option, and in particular the impact on the High Weald AONB in terms of noise and light pollution specifically, which could only be mitigated to some extent through good design and siting.

	Uncertain Effects: SO2 Climate Change Adaptation; SO3 Flood Risk; SO4 Water Resources/Quality; SO8 Green and Blue Infrastructure; SO12 Digital Infrastructure; SO15 Health and Wellbeing; SO16 Quality of Life and Place • There are several SA Objectives which will have uncertain effects, as either there is not enough information known about the detailed implementation of the spatial option (i.e. site locations, their scale, design and accessibility) or in the case of providing infrastructure (i.e.SO4, SO12 and SO15) this is uncertain.
Selection / Rejection of Option	This spatial option is not selected at this stage. This spatial option will deliver around 21,200 (net) dwellings in, or surrounding sustainable settlements, which is approximately 1,400 dwellings over Wealden District's overall housing need. The option will also meet the full employment needs of the District and will improve the town and village centres through new jobs and homes. However, there will be major negative impacts of this growth, namely the impact on the landscape of Wealden (including the High Weald AONB), the historic environment and pollution. There are also significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the SRN/MRN. Maximising growth in all locations is likely to cause severe impacts on the local highway network, particularly along existing SRN/MRN junctions where there are known capacity issues and limited access to sustainable modes of travel. The Council will consider whether mitigation measures are possible between the Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 consultations, but early indications of the transport modelling show that if this option was pursued, it would be unlikely that such mitigation at junctions along the SRN/MRN will be achievable for all sites. **Spatial Option Not Selected.**

Spatial Option F: To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), with limited employment growth.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option F: To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), with limited employment growth.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO1	CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION					• Growth is focussed in and around all sustainable settlements, as well as on the edge of regional towns that are located close to the administrative border of Wealden District (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells). The settlements that are defined as sustainable within the SSS all benefit from some form of sustainable public transport (i.e. railway or mass transit) and contain day-to-day services (schools, GPs, food stores) within them. Growth within or on the edge of these sustainable settlements may result in improvements to existing transport infrastructure and key services within those settlements, albeit that further work is required to establish whether all key services within these settlements can support such growth. • An increase in new homes and employment floorspace in or adjacent to these settlements is likely to result in the further use of the private motor vehicle, which will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions overall. The SA Scoping Report (June 2023)[25] shows Wealden's emissions totalled 516.3 ktCO_2e in 2020. The majority of emissions come from road transport (55.6%) with domestic emissions accounting for a further 49.8%. It is known that growth in residential development specifically, even in sustainable locations, will result in increased greenhouse gas emissions through road transport and the domestic sector. The Council will produce further evidence on climate change as part of its Local Plan and will consider the emissions of different spatial options in further detail at that stage. • Some agricultural land will be removed from food production, as the option will focus on the surrounds of sustainable settlements, which will include agricultural land. New residential development may provide opportunities for the creation of allotments, which could be used for local food production. The provision of new allotments associated with new residential development in this spatial option, however, is unlikely to compensate for the loss of agricultural land. • The impact is minor negative as new development will be supported in locations that are well served by sustainable modes of transport.

[25] Wealden District Council Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report, June 2023

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option F:	To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), with limited employment growth.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
SO2	CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION					• The provision of green infrastructure associated with new development is likely to contribute positively to climate change adaptation by providing natural cooling and natural flood risk management measures (i.e. street trees, green corridors, SuDs etc.). Nonetheless, the provision of new green infrastructure as part of new residential/commercial development is unlikely to compensate for the loss of greenfield land at the edge of sustainable settlements. • The specific climate change adaptation measures for the spatial option will need to be identified in detail in the plan policies (including the specific sites identified). • The impact is impact on this SA Objective is uncertain at this stage over all timeframes.	
SO3	FLOOD RISK					• Growth is focussed in and around all sustainable settlements across the District, which will include settlements which are greatly impacted by some/all forms of flood risk (fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding). The Wealden Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) published in May 2022[26] confirms that fluvial flood risk is most notable in the Pevensey Levels, posing a risk to Hailsham, Westham and Pevensey. The other four principal watercourses (Rivers Medway, Uck, Cuckmere and Shortridge Stream) also pose a threat to Uckfield, Crowborough, Forest Row, Horam, Hailsham and Polegate. • New housing and employment development within and adjoining these settlements will not necessarily avoid development in areas vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which could lead to more development either adjacent to or within flood zones (i.e. Flood Zones 2 and 3), providing the specific site meets the 'sequential' and potentially, 'exceptions' test. • The Wealden Level 1 and 2 SFRA for the emerging Local Plan shows that sites contained within this spatial option can be brought forward, providing the sites themselves are not maximised and built development is sited away from flood risk zones, which can be avoided. • The impact is minor positive overall.	

[26] Wealden District Council Level 1 SFRA

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option F: To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), with limited employment growth.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO4	WATER RESOURCES & QUALITY					• Wealden has been identified as an area of serious water stress by the Environment Agency. • All proposed development will increase the demand for both water consumption and wastewater treatment. With respect to water consumption, South East Water is in the process of updating their Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP), which will consider new infrastructure to serve the District in the future. There is a statutory duty for the utility provider to provide water to new homes and to support growth. • With respect to wastewater treatment works, it is known that new development within the Pevensey Levels catchment could cause environmental harm to the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site without mitigation (through increasing phosphorous levels), which will need to be carefully managed by the utility provider through consultation with the Council, Natural England and the Environment Agency. The Council will continue to liaise with the utility provider and other statutory bodies on this issue and to consider this spatial option in further detail, particularly in terms of the type and timing of mitigation needed. • The effects will be dependent on the exact location of growth and the implementation of infrastructure projects where this is needed (e.g. extensions to reservoirs or improvements to wastewater treatment works). However, it is likely that the impacts could be mitigated through good design and compliance with Local Plan policies, although it is acknowledged that a general increase in population/development is likely to lead to increased pressure on water resources and wastewater in the District. • The impact is uncertain.
SO5	SOIL, LAND & MINERALS					• This spatial option does not necessarily prioritise the use of previously developed land (brownfield) over greenfield land. The spatial option will focus growth in and around sustainable settlements, which will provide opportunities to make the best use of brownfield land within, or at the edge of those settlements. The spatial option will also support sites that surround such sustainable settlements, which will include greenfield land for development. • Growth will be supported around sustainable settlements and to the edge of regional towns that are likely to incorporate greenfield land, which could lead to the loss of our best and most versatile land (BMV) agricultural land as there will not be enough previously developed land to deliver housing growth; however, there are other policies within the Local Plan to prevent the loss of BMV agricultural land. • The impact is uncertain. Both the quantum of greenfield land loss and the loss BMV land will be considered for each growth option at the next stage in the plan-making process.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option F: To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), with limited employment growth.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO6	WASTE					• Both housing and employment growth will lead to more waste overall, including construction, household and business waste. • Suitable mitigation measures will need to be identified to reduce the impact of waste as far as possible in both the construction and operation of development within this spatial option. • The impact is likely to be minor negative.
SO7	POLLUTION					• All new development will result in an increase in light pollution. There is a policy within the Local Plan, which will address matters relating to 'dark night skies' and development within this spatial option. Development will focus growth in and around all our sustainable settlements so will avoid the most rural parts of the District. • It is known that there are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26. Many of these junctions are at or approaching capacity (90% to 110%) at the time of writing and will require mitigation if further growth is to come forward through the Local Plan. This spatial option is likely to result in increased air pollution at those junctions and vehicular congestion generally across the District, particularly at the settlements of Hailsham, Polegate and Uckfield. Further work will be undertaken to ascertain whether mitigation on these junctions can be achieved. • It is known from the existing evidence base that there are significant highway constraints on junctions close to some of our settlements (particularly in the Low Weald), that the majority of greenhouse gas emissions come from road transport (55.6%) and that the District is not well served by public transport generally with only 31% of internal Wealden trips made by non-private vehicle modes. Even when focusing growth on our most sustainable settlements or to the outskirts of those settlements, it is considered that air pollution, particularly from road traffic congestion will continue. • The impact is minor negative. Further work is needed to consider the impact of growth through traffic modelling and air pollution assessment through the Council's HRA on designated ecological sites, such as Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA, the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site and the Lewes Downs SAC.
SO8	GREEN & BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE					• Growth is focussed in and around all sustainable settlements, which will include urban areas and some semi-rural locations at the edge of market towns and larger villages. This will result in the loss of agricultural land at the edge of settlements and may also result in the loss of green and blue infrastructure features (i.e. hedgerows or lower quality trees) to allow for improvements such as vehicular/pedestrian access.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option F: To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), with limited employment growth.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						• All new residential and employment development is expected to secure a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain, will assist in supporting the provision of new or enhanced green space and/infrastructure, as well as increasing or improving access to green spaces. The spatial option includes brownfield sites, or sites within our town and villages, which may greatly benefit from the provision or improvements to green infrastructure. • The impact is uncertain. The detailed implementation of the Local Plan policies will be crucial in providing the necessary mitigation.
SO9	BIODIVERSITY					• Growth is focussed in and around sustainable settlements and will include locations that are in close proximity to designated sites, such as the Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA, the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site and the Lewes Downs SAC. • This spatial option will include areas of land (i.e. Uckfield, Crowborough etc.) within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA and could have a minor negative effect in terms of recreational pressure on the SPA. Nonetheless, a spatial option of this nature is likely to be able to address the impact on the Ashdown Forest SPA through suitable mitigation measures in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) contributions and contributions towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) mitigation at the Ashdown Forest itself. This will be tested through the HRA for the Local Plan. • All new residential and employment development is expected to secure a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain. • The option includes several sites at the edge of settlements that are located within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs), which could result in the loss of some BOAs from new development. There will be opportunities for the remaining land in these locations to be conserved, restored and enhanced, including priority habitats in these locations, but this is not likely to outweigh the loss of such land. • Growth is focussed around sustainable settlements, which are likely to be greenfield sites. • The impact is minor negative. The implementation of Local Plan policies in the longer term may provide mitigation measures for these impacts.
SO10	LANDSCAPE & TOWNSCAPE					• Growth is focussed in and around all sustainable settlements which will include settlements surrounded by the High Weald AONB (i.e. Heathfield and Crowborough) or washed over by the designation (i.e. edge of Tunbridge Wells). Paragraph 11 of the NPPF confirms that harm to those valued landscapes can provide a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type and distribution of development in a plan area. This spatial option could lead to harm to this nationally designated landscape.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option F: To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), with limited employment growth.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						• The option includes the landscapes that surround the settlements (both within the High Weald AONB and in the Low Weald). This may lead to growth in semi-rural locations at the edge of settlements, which are likely to lead to harm to other valued landscapes as well, including the Low Weald, although there may be opportunities to mitigate this impact. • This spatial option is likely to lead to development at scale on the edge of the sustainable settlements, in order to support both housing and employment growth within Wealden District, which may lead to detrimental impacts to the townscapes of our market towns and larger villages. • The impact is minor negative, but it may be possible to reduce the impact through suitable mitigation measures.
SO11	HISTORIC & CULTURAL HERITAGE					• Growth is focussed in and around all sustainable settlements, which will include market towns and larger villages that have designated heritage assets (i.e. conservation areas and listed buildings). Focusing growth in these locations may negatively affect designated heritage assets and their settings, where national planning policy aims to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of those proposals. • Growth will not be supported in some of Wealden's smaller villages that contain historic assets and will preserve some of the smaller historic villages of the District in the longer term. • The impact is minor negative. Even with mitigation in place, focusing growth in locations with significant heritage value is likely to lead to an adverse impact, but this could be reduced partly through suitable mitigation measures at individual sites.
SO12	DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE					• New homes and businesses will be delivered within Wealden's most sustainable settlements and will therefore improve digital infrastructure in those locations that already benefit from broadband connectivity. Opportunities will not necessarily be provided for developers in more rural villages and settlements to improve existing digital infrastructure, although it will depend on the detailed implementation of specific schemes and other planning policies within the Local Plan. • The impact is currently uncertain.
SO13	SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL & ACCESSIBILITY					• Growth is focussed in and around all sustainable settlements and therefore new development is more likely to have access to sustainable modes of transport. • New employment development within the spatial option will be located in or around sustainable locations, accessible through sustainable modes of travel. This may lead to greater usage of sustainable modes of transport for commuting within the District and may also reduce out commuting from the District. The quantum of employment development in this spatial option is more limited than in other spatial options, so this benefit will be more limited.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option F: To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), with limited employment growth.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						• The District has the lowest levels of existing sustainable travel across East Sussex, with only 31% of internal Wealden trips made by non-private vehicle modes. It is considered that focusing growth in and around sustainable settlements, which are well served by the sustainable modes of travel for the most part, would improve patronage for these sustainable modes of transport. • The delivery of new development (employment or housing) is not focused in rural areas; this may mean that existing sustainable modes of travel to our most rural villages could worsen in the future, and could isolate some communities which will be reliant on the private motor vehicles for most trips. • It is known from the Council's existing evidence base on transport that there are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26. Many of these junctions are at or approaching capacity (90% to 110%) at the time of writing. A number of these junctions are linked with some of Wealden's largest market towns (i.e. Hailsham, Uckfield and Polegate). Focusing growth in these locations may cause severe impacts on the local highway network, particularly along the existing SRN/MRN junctions. Further work will be needed as part of the Local Plan process to understand what mitigation measures are necessary to alleviate congestion in this location. • The impact is uncertain. Further transport modelling work will be required as part of the Local Plan process.
SO14	HOUSING					• Housing development within this growth option, for the plan period, will equate to around 15,750 (net) dwellings, which is approximately 4,000 dwellings short of the overall housing target of 19,800 (net) dwellings. New homes will be delivered in sustainable locations, which will support all settlements defined as sustainable and support the vitality of those communities. • Growth in housing in this option will primarily be provided at the start of the Plan period, with existing commitments and other housing allocations delivering in the shorter term. There may be a lack housing delivery in the longer term (i.e. last five year period of the Local Plan). • For affordable housing, policies within the draft Local Plan state that housing schemes above a threshold of 10 units will deliver 35% of those dwellings as affordable, outside of the High Weald AONB, with the threshold being set at only 5 dwellings when within the High Weald AONB. The Council will consider the delivery of affordable housing for each growth option at the next stage of the SA report. • Housing delivery will not be focussed in rural communities, which may lead to a deterioration of services, amenities and sustainable transport in the more rural settlements, thereby isolating some communities within the District.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option F: To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), with limited employment growth.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						• A significant quantum of affordable housing growth may not be provided in rural communities, although there are policies within the Local Plan (such as Rural Exception Sites), which may alleviate this issue to some extent. • The impact is minor negative given the scale of housing to be delivered within this spatial option. However, this spatial option will meet a number of policy objectives of the Local Plan around delivering sustainable housing development, as well as delivering different housing products (i.e. affordable housing, self-build plots etc.).
SO15	HEALTH & WELLBEING					• Growth is focussed in and around all sustainable settlements, which will lead to greater pressures on the health care system and also increased demand to existing forms of provision of open space, sport, leisure and recreation facilities (including indoor facilities and outdoor pitches) within those market towns and larger villages specifically. • The clinical area is currently operating within 86% of the clinical space it requires and due to the levels of development already proposed in the area, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) is likely to need an additional surgery or funding to extend the existing surgeries, if possible. Therefore, the existing capacity within the health sector will need to be expanded. • A number of evidence base reports[27] have identified there are deficiencies in most sport facilities within Wealden District. The provision of new housing in sustainable towns and villages across the District will be required to provide new open space and sporting facilities, which are likely to mitigate the impact of new housing development and the need for such facilities in the longer term. • The impact is uncertain. The existing capacity within the health sector for the District will need to be expanded over the longer term and at this stage, and it is not known whether such capacity can be provided at this stage.
SO16	QUALITY OF LIFE & PLACE					• There are no details in terms of the scale, layout or design of the specific sites in the spatial option, at the moment. • The impact is uncertain.
SO17	SOCIAL DEPRIVATION					• Both market and affordable housing will be delivered in and around all sustainable settlements, including within or close to the High Weald AONB, which is likely to address issues of deprivation and poverty in many locations across the District.

[27] This includes the Wealden District Council Open Space Assessment Report (April 2022), the Wealden District Council Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (April 2022) and Wealden District Council Indoor Sports Facility Needs Assessment (March 2022).

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option F: To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), with limited employment growth.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						• However, the spatial option will only deliver some new jobs in and around all sustainable settlements and will not necessarily prevent out-commuting from the District, as it will only deliver part of the District's employment need (specifically use classes B2 and B8), which is likely to result in more out-commuting from the District for work. • Some rural communities in Wealden may be left behind, as both new housing and businesses will be focused upon market towns and larger villages, rather than rural areas, which may result in some smaller communities being more isolated and not necessarily prevent poverty and social deprivation in those rural areas. • The quantum of residential development in this spatial option is likely to result in some affordable housing (including in the AONB), as well as the provision of amenities and services in our most sustainable market towns and larger villages but will not be able to deliver the quantum of jobs needed through the Council's evidence base (the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022)). • The impact is minor negative at this stage.
SO18	ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT					• Only 84,850 sqm of the employment need identified for both B2 and B8 uses within the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022) will be delivered, which is approximately 68,000 sqm short of the overall need for B2 and B8 uses accounting for completions during the 2019 to 2023 period. The remaining need for office uses (ranging between 3.1ha and 6.8ha) will still be delivered in town centres. • Employment growth will be supported in the most sustainable locations, which already have a local population, which may assist in a reduction of out-commuting to other locations for work but this benefit will be more limited than in other spatial options. • With the exception of a single employment site considered within this growth option, the employment sites are already in the planning application process, so should bring about a positive impact early on with the Local Plan timetable; however, this will not deliver employment growth in the later part of the Local Plan period. No formal allocations for office use in town centres have been made, but this is expected to be developed throughout the Local Plan period. • Substantial housing growth within the District will also bring about new construction jobs in the District. The Council's Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022)[28] confirms that the construction sector is highly concentrated within Wealden and accounts for 8.3% of employment in 2019 or 4,500 people.

[28] Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April, 2022)

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option F: To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), with limited employment growth.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						• This spatial option will not necessarily support and encourage rural businesses to grow, expand and diversify and may not support growth in viticulture, agriculture or rural tourism that are similarly highly concentrated within the district. • The impact is minor negative at this stage as the spatial option will only partly meet the employment needs of the District.
SO19	TOWN & VILLAGE CENTRES					• Both new housing and economic growth will be delivered within and around the most sustainable settlements, which will protect and enhance the viability and vitality of our existing towns or village centres across the District. There will be more residents living and working within the District, which will help retain and potentially provide additional retail and leisure floorspace in those centres and reduce the number of vacant units. • Opportunities for residential development will be provided in Wealden's town and village centres, which may bring additional footfall to those centres and help improve the night-time economy. • Growth will be focussed at the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), which may mean that future residents of those sites look towards those centres for shopping, leisure and employment. The Wealden Town Centre Study (July, 2022)[29] confirms that leakage out the District equated to 75.8% of comparison good spending and 44.6% of convenience goods spending, which went to other destinations such as Eastbourne, Royal Tunbridge Wells, East Grinstead and Lewes. This spatial strategy could exacerbate this issue. • The impact is minor positive as the spatial option will largely support the existing town and village centres through focusing growth in and around those settlements.
SO20	EDUCATION & SKILLS					• Growth is focussed in and around sustainable settlements, which will inevitably lead to a need for new primary and secondary school places in many locations across the District. • Information from East Sussex County Council, as the education provider for state schools, indicates that local educational provision and capacity is currently adequate to meet the needs of new development across the district. The only exception to this is the Polegate and Willingdon area that contains several sustainable settlements and will be a focus of new growth under this spatial option. The area is projected to have no surplus in the total capacity of primary schools by 2025/26 and a 3% capacity deficit by 2025/26 in secondary school places. Focusing housing growth in this location could lead to a minor negative impact in the short term.

[29] Wealden Town Centre Study, July 2022

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option F:	To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), with limited employment growth.
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
						• New housing growth in sustainable settlements in the District will provide opportunities to provide new primary schools on site and provide contributions towards other school places (primary and secondary in the local area) that would be able to mitigate the impacts in the longer term. • The impact is likely to be minor negative in the short term in terms of the capacity of existing state schools in Polegate and Willingdon. However, it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate the impact. Over the longer term, the impact is therefore minor positive.	

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:	Spatial Option F:	To focus growth in and around all sustainable settlements (as defined in the SSS), and to the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the district (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), with limited employment growth.																		
SA EFFECTS	SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water Resources/Quality	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Travel & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Deprivation	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
Major Positive																				
Minor Positive																				
Not Significant																				
Minor Negative																				
Major Negative																				
Uncertain																				

COMMENTARY:	
Duration/Reversibility	There will be a short-term negative impact on SA Objective SO20 (Education and Skills), as the capacity of schools (primary and secondary) will be in deficit by 2025/26 in the Polegate and Willingdon area, which will be a focus for growth in this spatial option. However, there are opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate the impact in the longer term.
Mitigation Measures	• There may be specific mitigation measures needed for individual sites that come forward under this spatial option to address issues under SA Objective SO9 (Biodiversity), SO10 (Landscape and Townscape), SO11 (Historic and Cultural Heritage), which are considered minor negative impacts, but this may be resolved if suitable mitigation measures are identified on a site-by-site basis. • Infrastructure will need to be provided in terms of healthcare facilities and open space (SO15 Health and Wellbeing) at the District level to accommodate further growth. • Mitigation measures will need to be provided for the highway constraints identified (SO13 Travel and Accessibility), and water supply and wastewater infrastructure (SO4 Water Resources/Quality) potentially improved. • The measures needed are unknown at this stage and will need to be considered further with the relevant infrastructure providers.

Cumulative Effects	• The cumulative impacts of this spatial option and particularly growth around sustainable settlements relate largely to potentially negative impacts on existing infrastructure (i.e. highways, education and health facilities). The evidence base on transport shows that there are significant existing highway constraints within the District along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26 in the Low Weald alongside market towns, which will be the focus for growth. The spatial option is also likely to have a minor negative impact upon the landscape, primarily due to growth coming forward within the High Weald AONB, although the growth will be close or within existing sustainable settlements. There will also be cumulative effects on biodiversity, as the spatial option will continue to focus housing growth within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA and will cause further recreational pressure on this international ecological site without mitigation. • The cumulative impacts of development will be considered further, where work will be undertaken to understand the impact on the transport network (through a county-wide transport model) which will also consider development from other emerging Local Plans within East Sussex. There will also be a need to consider other infrastructure issues such as education, health services, community facilities, water supply and wastewater and open space specifically, which will include discussions with the relevant infrastructure providers (which are ongoing). The Council will also need to understand the implications for designated ecological sites (i.e. Ashdown Forest, Lewes Downs and Pevensey Levels) through the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). Further information will also be needed in terms of the detail of mitigation measures at specific development sites associated with the spatial option. It is acknowledged that this spatial option will result in pressure on infrastructure, climate as well as the built and natural environment.
Summary	**Major Positive Effects: None** **Minor Positive Effects: SO3 Flood Risk; SO19 Towns and Villages; SA20 Education and Skills** • There are a high number of settlements within Wealden District, including larger villages, which can deliver greater growth through this spatial option, which will be able to support the vitality and viability of those villages and particularly their high streets and services, hence the identification of a minor positive impact for SA Objective 19 (Towns and Villages). A minor positive effect has been identified for SO3 (Flood Risk) as it is known that development coming forward as part of this spatial option around sustainable settlements has been through the SFRA Level 1 and 2 and is likely to improve the current flood risk issues in the areas considered. • Information from East Sussex County Council, as the education provider for state schools, indicates that local educational provision and capacity is currently adequate to meet the needs of new development across the District, apart from the Polegate and Willingdon area where there will be a deficit in school places in the short term, leading to a minor negative impact. However, a minor positive effect has been identified for SA Objective 20 in the longer term as it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate any short-term capacity issues, as well as the potential for new skills and training. **Minor Negative Effects: SO1 Climate Change Mitigation; SO6 Waste; SO7 Pollution; SO9 Biodiversity; SO10 Landscape and Townscape; SO11 Historic and Cultural Heritage; SO14 Housing; SO17 Social Deprivation; SO18 Economy and Employment** • This spatial option will deliver around 15,750 (net) dwellings in sustainable settlements, which is approximately 4,000 dwellings short of the overall housing need. A minor negative impact has been identified for SO14 (Housing) given the scale of housing to be delivered within this spatial option. • This spatial option will only deliver part of the employment need at 84,850 sqm for both B2 and B8 uses identified within the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022), which is approximately 68,000 sqm short of the overall need for B2 and B8 uses (when accounting for completions). A minor negative impact has also been identified for the economy and employment (SO18) and social deprivation (SO17). • Minor negative effects are identified in relation to climate change mitigation (SO1) as development will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. However, any impacts will be reduced, as far as possible, through the implementation of the relevant Local

	Plan policies. Minor negative effects have also been identified for waste (SO6) and pollution (SO7), as both will increase as a result of development, although suitable mitigation and the implementation of the relevant Local Plan policies should reduce the impacts. • Minor negative impacts are also identified for biodiversity (SO9) due to development in this location, particularly to the edge of settlements on greenfield land, as there is the potential to lose greenfield land and ecological assets (i.e. hedgerows, in-field trees etc.) to allow for new development to take place. • Minor negative effects are identified with regards to landscape and townscape (SO10) as additional development near to or within designated landscapes is likely. This spatial option is also likely to lead to development in semi-rural locations, in order to deliver growth within Wealden District and this may lead to minor negative impacts to the townscapes of both towns and larger villages, as well as the landscape that surrounds the settlements. The impact will be dependent on specific settlement character and the implementation and design of any scheme. • Minor negative effects are identified for historic and cultural heritage (SO11) as new development in/around historic villages and towns is likely to lead negative impacts on designated heritage assets and their settings, where national planning policy aims to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of those proposals. **Major Negative Effects: None** **Uncertain Effects: SO2 Climate Change Adaptation; SO4 Water Resources/Quality; SO5 Soil, Land and Minerals; SO8 Green and Blue Infrastructure; SO12 Digital Infrastructure; SO13 Travel and Accessibility; SO15 Health and Wellbeing; SO16 Quality of Life and Place** • There are several SA Objectives (SO2, SO4, SO5, SO8, SO12, SO13, SO15 and SO16), which will have uncertain effects, as either there is not enough information known about the detailed implementation of the spatial option (i.e. site locations, their scale, design and accessibility) or in the case of providing infrastructure (i.e. SA Objectives SO4, SO8, SO12, SO13 and SO15), it is unknown at this stage for the spatial option.
Selection / Rejection of Option	This spatial option will deliver around 15,750 (net) dwellings in sustainable settlements, which is approximately 4,000 dwellings short of the overall housing need. The spatial option will also not deliver the full employment needs of the District and will be 68,000 sqm short of the overall need for B2 and B8 uses (when accounting for completions). However, the option will continue to improve town and village centres through new jobs and homes. There are no major negative impacts for this spatial option, although minor negative impacts do occur for climate change mitigation, waste, pollution, biodiversity, landscape and heritage and social deprivation. There may be mitigation measures that could be implemented for some or all of these issues. There are no significant uncertainties surrounding the sites provided within this spatial option and it is considered that the spatial option is deliverable. **Spatial Option Selected (further work to be undertaken on this spatial option for the Regulation 19 stage).**

Spatial Option G: Combined Option of Spatial Options B and D

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option G: Combined Option of Spatial Options B and D
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO1	CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION					• Growth is focussed in sustainable settlements including within the High Weald AONB to some extent and at the edge of regional towns (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells) but will limit growth in more rural settlements and areas. The settlements that are defined as sustainable all benefit from some form of sustainable public transport (i.e. railway or mass transit) and contain day-to-day services (schools, GPs, food stores) within them. Growth within or on the edge of these sustainable settlements may result in improvements to existing transport infrastructure and key services within those settlements. Further work is required to establish whether all key services within settlements are capable of such growth. • An increase in new homes and employment floorspace in or adjacent to these settlements is likely to result in the further use of the private motor vehicle, which would result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions overall. It is known from the SA Scoping Report (June 2023)[30] that Wealden's greenhouse gas emissions totalled 516.3 ktCO_2e in 2020. The majority of emissions come from road transport (55.6%) with domestic emissions accounting for a further 49.8%. Growth in residential development specifically, even in sustainable locations, will result in increased greenhouse gas emissions through road transport and the domestic sector. The Council will produce further evidence on climate change as part of its Local Plan and will consider the emissions of different spatial options in further detail at that stage. • A significant quantum of agricultural land will be removed from food production, particularly as it would continue to focus on the surrounds of sustainable settlements, which tend to incorporate agricultural land. New residential development could also provide opportunities for the creation of allotments which could be used for local food production; however, the provision of new allotments will not compensate for the loss of agricultural land. • A minor negative impact is expected as the option will support new development in locations that are well served by sustainable modes of transport.

[30] Wealden District Council Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report, June 2023

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option G: Combined Option of Spatial Options B and D
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO2	CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION					• Development will introduce hard standing and structures onto greenfield land on the edge of sustainable settlements, which could make land vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, specifically surface water flood risk and overheating. • The provision of green infrastructure associated with new development is likely to contribute positively to climate change adaptation by providing natural cooling and natural flood risk management measures (i.e. street trees, green corridors, SuDs etc.). Nonetheless, the provision of new green infrastructure as part of new residential/commercial development will not compensate for the loss of greenfield land at the edge of sustainable settlements. • The specific climate change adaptation measures for the spatial option will need to be identified in detail (including the specific sites identified). • The impact is uncertain at this stage over all timeframes.
SO3	FLOOD RISK					• Growth is focussed in and around all sustainable settlements across the District, which will include settlements which are greatly impacted by some/all forms of flood risk (fluvial, groundwater and surface water flooding). The Wealden Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) published in May 2022[31] confirms that fluvial flood risk is most notable in the Pevensey Levels, posing a risk to Hailsham, Westham and Pevensey. The other four principal watercourses (Rivers Medway, Uck, Cuckmere and Shortridge Stream) also pose a threat to Uckfield, Crowborough, Forest Row, Horam, Hailsham and Polegate. • New housing and employment development within and adjoining these settlements will not necessarily avoid development in areas vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which could lead to more development either adjacent to or within flood zones (i.e. Flood Zones 2 and 3), providing the specific site meets the 'sequential' and potentially, 'exceptions' test. • There is some uncertainty as to whether all sites contained within this spatial option can be mitigated in terms of flood risk. • The impact is therefore uncertain.

[31] Wealden District Council Level 1 SFRA

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option G: Combined Option of Spatial Options B and D
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO4	WATER RESOURCES & QUALITY					• Wealden has been identified as an area of serious water stress by the Environment Agency. • All proposed development will increase the demand for both water consumption and wastewater treatment. With respect to water consumption, South East Water is in the process of updating their Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) which will consider new infrastructure to serve the District in the future. There is a statutory duty for the utility provider to provide water to new homes and to support growth. • With respect to wastewater treatment works, new development within the Pevensey Levels catchment (which includes a number of sustainable settlements, as defined in the SSS, in the south/southeast of the District) could cause environmental harm to the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site without mitigation (through increasing phosphorous levels), which will need to be carefully managed by the utility provider through consultation with the Council, Natural England and the Environment Agency. The Council will continue to liaise with the utility provider and other statutory bodies on this issue and to consider this spatial option in further detail, particularly in terms of the type and timing of mitigation needed. • The impact is currently uncertain. The impact will be dependent on the exact location of growth and the implementation of infrastructure projects, where this is needed (e.g. extensions to reservoirs or improvements to wastewater treatment works). However, it is likely that the impacts could be mitigated through good design and compliance with Local Plan policies, although it is acknowledged that a general increase in population/development is likely to lead to increased pressure on water resources and wastewater in the District.
SO5	SOIL, LAND & MINERALS					• The location of new development in terms of land type (i.e. greenfield and brownfield) is not defined, but growth is focussed on the delivery of new strategic extensions adjacent to existing sustainable settlements, which will tend towards greenfield sites, particularly where the District has a lack of industrial legacy. The use of previously developed land (brownfield) over greenfield land will not necessarily be prioritised, although the spatial option does support growth within sustainable settlements. • The propensity to develop BMV agricultural land at the edge of existing sustainable settlements will be increased, which could lead to the loss of the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land. • The impact is likely to be minor negative. Both the quantum of greenfield land loss and the loss BMV land will be considered for each growth option at the next stage in the plan-making process.
SO6	WASTE					• Both housing and employment growth will lead to more waste overall, including construction, household and business waste. • Suitable mitigation measures will need to be identified to reduce the impact of waste as far as possible in both the construction and operation of development within this spatial option.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option G: Combined Option of Spatial Options B and D
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						• The impact is likely to be minor negative.
SO7	POLLUTION					• All new development will result in an increase in light pollution. Growth is focussed on the delivery of new strategic extensions at existing sustainable settlements across the District and to the edge of regional towns that lie adjacent to the District. There is a policy within the Local Plan which will address matters relating to 'dark night skies'; however, there may be some residual impact of light pollution due to encroachment of urban development into the countryside as a result of strategic extensions of existing sustainable settlements. • There are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the Strategic Road Network (SRN)/Major Road Network (MRN), which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26. Many of these junctions are at or approaching capacity (90% to 110%) at the time of writing and would require mitigation if further growth is to come forward in the District through the Local Plan. An increase in air pollution is likely at those junctions and vehicular congestion generally across the District. Further work will be undertaken to ascertain whether mitigation at these junctions can be achieved. • Development will be focussed at the edge of sustainable settlements, including the High Weald AONB. This may reduce the tranquillity of some semi-rural areas that surround those settlements, including parts of the High Weald AONB. • The existing evidence base shows that there are significant highway constraints on junctions close to some of our sustainable settlements (particularly in the Low Weald), that the majority of greenhouse gas emissions come from road transport (55.6%) and that the District is not well served by public transport generally with only 31% of internal Wealden trips made by non-private vehicle modes. Given the above, even when focusing growth on our most sustainable settlements or to the outskirts of those settlements. The impact is minor negative. Further work is needed to consider the impact of through further traffic modelling and air pollution through the Council's Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) on designated ecological sites, such as Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA, the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site and the Lewes Downs SAC. • There is also some potential for minor negative impacts resulting from noise and light pollution in semi-rural areas to edge of sustainable settlements, including within the High Weald AONB, but these impacts could be mitigated through good design and siting.
SO8	GREEN & BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE					• Growth is focussed in and around all sustainable settlements, which will include urban areas and some semi-rural locations at the edge of market towns and larger villages. This will result in the loss of agricultural land at the edge of settlements and may also result in the loss of green and

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option G: Combined Option of Spatial Options B and D
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						blue infrastructure features (i.e. hedgerows or lower quality trees) to allow for improvements such as vehicular/pedestrian access. • All new residential and employment development is expected to secure a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain, will assist in supporting the provision of new or enhanced green space and/infrastructure, and increase or improve access to green spaces. Growth will be focussed in sustainable settlements, which includes brownfield sites, or sites within towns and villages that may greatly benefit from the provision or improvements to green infrastructure. • The impact is uncertain. The detailed implementation of the Local Plan policies will be crucial in providing suitable mitigation measures.
SO9	BIODIVERSITY					• Growth is focussed within or at the edge of sustainable settlements, and this will include locations that are in close proximity to designated sites, such as the Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA, the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site and the Lewes Downs SAC. • Areas of land are included (i.e. Uckfield, Crowborough etc.) within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA and could have a minor negative effect in terms of recreational pressure on the SPA. Nonetheless, a spatial option of this nature is likely to be able to address the impact on the Ashdown Forest SPA through suitable mitigation measures in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) contributions and contributions towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) mitigation at the Ashdown Forest itself. This will be tested through the HRA for the local plan. • All new residential and employment development is expected to secure a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain. • Growth is focussed in and around sustainable settlements, including strategic extensions around existing sustainable settlements, where some sites at the edge of settlements are located within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs), which could result in the loss of some BOAs from new development. There will be opportunities for the remaining land in these locations to be conserved, restored and enhanced, including priority habitats in these locations, but this will not likely outweigh the loss of such land. • Due to the nature of the sites coming forward that surround sustainable settlements (that tend to be greenfield and agricultural in nature), there could be a loss of some biodiversity features during construction (e.g. loss of hedgerows, in-field trees etc.) although the ecological value of individual sites will be considered as part of the site selection process. • The impact is minor negative.
SO10	LANDSCAPE & TOWNSCAPE					• Growth is focussed in and around all sustainable settlements and this will include settlements surrounded by the High Weald AONB (i.e. Heathfield and Crowborough) or washed over by the designation (i.e. edge of Tunbridge Wells). The NPPF confirms that harm to those valued

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option G: Combined Option of Spatial Options B and D
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						landscapes can provide a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type and distribution of development in a plan area. • The focus of growth will include the landscapes that surround those settlements (both within the High Weald AONB and in the Low Weald), which may lead to growth in semi-rural locations, and is likely to lead to harm to other valued landscapes, including the Low Weald, although there may be opportunities to mitigate this impact. • Development at scale is likely at the edge of the sustainable settlements, in order to support both housing and employment growth within Wealden District, which may lead to detrimental impacts to the townscapes of our market towns and larger villages. • The impact is likely to be minor negative but could be reduced through suitable mitigation measures.
SO11	HISTORIC & CULTURAL HERITAGE					• Growth is focussed in and around all sustainable settlements, including strategic extensions and this would include market towns and larger villages that have designated heritage assets (i.e. conservation areas and listed buildings). Focusing growth in these locations may negatively affect designated heritage assets and their settings, where national planning policy aims to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of those proposals. • Growth is not supported in some of Wealden's smaller villages that contain historic assets, and this spatial option would preserve some of the smaller historic villages of the district in the longer term. • The impact is likely to be minor negative but could be reduced through suitable mitigation measures at individual sites.
SO12	DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE					• New homes and businesses are likely to be delivered within or at the edge of Wealden's most sustainable settlements and will therefore improve digital infrastructure in those locations that already benefit from broadband connectivity. Opportunities for developers in more rural villages and settlements to improve existing digital infrastructure will not necessarily be provided, but will depend on the detailed implementation of specific schemes within the spatial option. • The impact is currently uncertain.
SO13	SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL & ACCESSIBILITY					• Growth is focussed in and around all sustainable settlements, including the delivery of new strategic extensions at those settlements and therefore new development is more likely to have access or would likely be able to provide access to a sustainable mode of transport. • New employment development within the spatial option will be located in or around sustainable settlements, accessible through sustainable modes of travel. This may lead to greater usage of sustainable modes of transport for commuting within the District and may also reduce out commuting from the District.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option G: Combined Option of Spatial Options B and D
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						• The District has the lowest levels of sustainable travel across East Sussex, with only 31% of internal Wealden trips made by non-private vehicle modes. Focusing growth in and around sustainable settlements, which are well served by the sustainable modes of travel for the most part, will improve patronage for these sustainable modes of transport. • The delivery of new development (employment or housing) is not focused in rural areas; this may mean that existing sustainable modes of travel to our most rural villages could worsen in the future and isolate some communities which would be reliant on the private motor vehicles for most trips. • The Council's existing evidence base on transport shows that there are significant highway constraints within the District for growth along the SRN/MRN, which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26. Many of these junctions are at or approaching capacity (90% to 110%) at the time of writing and would require mitigation if further growth was to come forward in the District through the Local Plan. A number of these junctions are linked with some of Wealden's largest market towns (i.e. Hailsham, Uckfield and Polegate). Focusing growth at the edge of these locations may cause severe impacts on the local highway network, particularly along the existing SRN/MRN junctions. Further work will be needed as part of the Local Plan process to understand the mitigation measures necessary to alleviate congestion, particularly in view of the prospective strategic extension to the west of Uckfield. • The allocation of new development at edge of settlement locations is likely to create opportunities for enhancing public rights of way, footpaths and/or cycle networks and may help to connect communities by improving access to key services and facilities within those market towns and larger villages. This would be dependent on the detailed implementation of specific schemes however and is uncertain at this stage. • The impact is uncertain. Further transport modelling work is required as part of the Local Plan process.
SO14	HOUSING					• Housing development within the growth option, for the plan period, equates to around 17,750 (net) dwellings, which is approximately 2,000 dwellings short of the overall housing target of 19,800 (net) dwellings. New homes will be delivered in sustainable locations, which will support all settlements defined as sustainable and support the vitality of those communities. • Growth in housing in this option will primarily be provided at the start of the Plan period, with existing commitments and other housing allocations delivering in the shorter term. There may be a lack housing delivery in the longer term (i.e. last five year period of the Local Plan). • For affordable housing, policies within the draft Local Plan state that housing schemes above a threshold of 10 units will deliver 35% of those dwellings as affordable, outside of the High Weald AONB, with the threshold being set at only 5 dwellings when within the High Weald AONB. The

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option G: Combined Option of Spatial Options B and D
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						Council will consider the delivery of affordable housing for each growth option at the next stage of the SA report. • New housing will be delivered at scale around the sustainable settlements and will allow for different types of housing products to be delivered, such as affordable housing, self-build and custom build, older persons accommodation and family housing. • The delivery of housing will not focus in rural communities, which may lead to a deterioration of services, amenities and sustainable transport in the more rural settlements, thereby isolating some communities within the District. • The impact is minor negative. However, this spatial option will meet a number of policy objectives of the Local Plan in terms of delivering housing in sustainable locations, affordable housing (including within the High Weald AONB), self-build and custom build plots, a mix of unit types and sizes etc.
SO15	HEALTH & WELLBEING					• Growth is focussed in and around all sustainable settlements, including the delivery of new strategic extensions at sustainable settlements, but will be limited in more rural settlements and areas. This will lead to greater pressures on the health care system and increased demand to existing provision of open space, sport, leisure and recreation facilities (including indoor facilities and outdoor pitches) within those market towns and larger villages specifically. • The clinical area is currently operating within 86% of the clinical space it requires and due to the levels of development already proposed in the area, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) is likely to need an additional surgery or funding to extend the existing surgeries if possible. The existing capacity within the health sector for this area will need to be expanded. • A number of evidence base reports[32] have identified there are deficiencies in most sport facilities within Wealden District. The provision of new housing in sustainable towns and villages across the District will be required to provide new open space and sporting facilities, which is likely to mitigate the impact of new housing development and therefore, the need for such facilities in the longer term. • The impact is uncertain. The health sector for the District will need to be expanded over the longer term and at this stage, it is not known whether such capacity can be provided.
SO16	QUALITY OF LIFE & PLACE					• There are no details in terms of the scale, layout or design of the sites in the spatial option, at the moment. • The effect is uncertain.

[32] This includes the Wealden District Council Open Space Assessment Report (April 2022), the Wealden District Council Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (April 2022) and Wealden District Council Indoor Sports Facility Needs Assessment (March 2022).

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option G: Combined Option of Spatial Options B and D
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
SO17	SOCIAL DEPRIVATION					• Growth is focussed on the delivery of both market and affordable housing in and around all sustainable settlements, including within or close to the High Weald AONB. This is likely to address issues of deprivation and poverty in many locations across the District. • New jobs will be delivered in and around all sustainable settlements, which are easily accessible and close to existing centres of population, which will provide opportunities for Wealden residents to be employed locally. Opportunities will also be provided for development to be located on the edge of larger regional centres (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), which will provide further employment opportunities for Wealden residents. • Some rural communities in Wealden may be left behind, as both new housing and businesses will be focused upon market towns and larger villages, rather than rural areas, which may leave some smaller communities more isolated and not necessarily prevent poverty and social deprivation in those rural areas. • The quantum of residential development is likely to result in the provision of some affordable housing for all sustainable towns and villages across the District (this will include some affordable housing within the AONB), as well as the provision of amenities and services in the most sustainable market towns and larger villages. There will be a significant level of jobs created through this spatial option. • The impact is minor positive at this stage.
SO18	ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT					• Economic growth is focussed in and around all sustainable settlements, including strategic business parks, but not necessarily to more rural areas. This spatial option will deliver the entire employment need of 184,499 sqm for both B2 and B8 uses identified within the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022), with the remaining need for offices uses (ranging between 3.1ha and 6.8ha) delivered in town centres. • Employment growth is supported in and at the edge of the most sustainable settlements within the District, which already have a local population, and will assist in a reduction of out-commuting to other locations for work, ensuring that the local economy is vibrant and sustained. • With the exception of a single employment site considered within this growth option, the employment sites are already in the planning application process, so should bring about a positive impact early on with the Local Plan timetable. No formal allocations for office use in town centres have been made, but this is expected to be developed throughout the Local Plan period. • Substantial housing growth within the District will also bring about new construction jobs in the district. The Council's Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option G: Combined Option of Spatial Options B and D
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						2022)[33] confirms that the construction sector is highly concentrated within Wealden and accounts for 8.3% of employment in 2019 or 4,500 people. • This spatial option will not necessarily support and encourage rural businesses to grow, expand and diversify and may not support growth in viticulture, agriculture or rural tourism which are highly concentrated within the District. • The impact is major positive.
SO19	TOWN & VILLAGE CENTRES					• Both new housing and economic growth will be delivered within and around the most sustainable settlements, including the delivery of new strategic extensions, which will in turn protect and enhance the viability and vitality of existing towns or village centres across the District, as there will be more residents living and working within the District. This will also help retain and potentially provide additional retail and leisure floorspace in those centres and reduce the number of vacant units. • Opportunities for residential development in Wealden's town and village centres will be supported, which may bring additional footfall to those centres and help improve the night-time economy. • Strategic growth is focussed at the edge of major towns that lie adjacent to the District (i.e. Eastbourne and Royal Tunbridge Wells), which may mean that future residents of those sites look towards those centres for shopping, leisure and employment. The Wealden Town Centre Study (July, 2022)[34] confirms that leakage out the District equated to 75.8% of comparison good spending and 44.6% of convenience goods spending, which went to other destinations such as Eastbourne, Royal Tunbridge Wells, East Grinstead and Lewes. This spatial strategy could exacerbate this issue. • The impact is minor positive.
SO20	EDUCATION & SKILLS					• Growth is focussed in and around sustainable settlements, including the delivery of new strategic extensions, which will inevitably lead to a need for new primary and secondary school places in many locations across the District. • Information from East Sussex County Council, as the education provider for state schools, indicates that local educational provision and capacity is currently adequate to meet the needs of new development across the District. The only exception to this is the Polegate and Willingdon area that contains several sustainable settlements and will be a focus for new growth under this spatial option. The area is projected to have no surplus in the total capacity of primary schools by 2025/26 and a 3% capacity deficit by 2025/26 in secondary school places. The focus of housing growth in this location could lead to minor negative impact in the short term.

[33] Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April, 2022)
[34] Wealden Town Centre Study, July 2022

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Spatial Option G: Combined Option of Spatial Options B and D
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary
						• New housing growth in sustainable settlements in the District will provide opportunities to provide new primary schools on site and provide contributions towards other school places (primary and secondary in the local area) which will be able to mitigate the impacts in the longer term. • The impact is likely to be minor negative in the short term in terms of the capacity of existing state schools in Polegate and Willingdon. However, it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate the impact. Over the longer term, it is considered that the impact is minor positive, given the opportunities to add capacity for school places in the medium to long term.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:	Spatial Option G:				Combined Option of Spatial Options B and D															
SA EFFECTS	SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water resources/Quality	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Travel & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Deprivation	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
Major Positive																				
Minor Positive																				
Not Significant																				
Minor Negative																				
Major Negative																				
Uncertain																				

COMMENTARY:	
Duration/Reversibility	There will be a short-term negative impact on SA Objective SO20 (Education and Skills), as the capacity of schools (primary and secondary) will be in deficit by 2025/26 in the Polegate and Willingdon area which will be a focus for growth in this spatial option. However, it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate the impact in the longer term.
Mitigation Measures	• There may be specific mitigation measures for individual sites that come forward under this spatial option to address issues under SO9 (Biodiversity), SO10 (Landscape and Townscape), SO11 (Historic and Cultural Heritage), which are considered minor negative impacts, but this may be resolved if suitable mitigation measures are identified on a site-by-site basis. • Infrastructure will need to be provided in terms of healthcare facilities and open space (SO15 Health and Wellbeing) at the District level to accommodate further growth. • Mitigation measures will need to be provided for the significant highway constraints identified (SO13 Travel and Accessibility), and water supply and wastewater infrastructure (SO4 Water Resources/Quality) potentially improved. The measures required are unknown at this stage and will need to be considered further with the relevant infrastructure providers.

Cumulative Effects	• The cumulative impacts of this spatial option and particularly growth at scale around our sustainable settlements relate largely to negative impacts on existing infrastructure (i.e. highways, education and health facilities). The Council's evidence base on transport shows that there are significant existing highway constraints within the District along the SRN/MRN, which includes junction capacity issues along the A27, A22, A2270 and A26 in the Low Weald alongside market towns that will be a focus for growth. The spatial option is also likely to have a minor negative impact upon the landscape, primarily due to growth coming forward within the High Weald AONB, but also due to scale of growth in the Low Weald, which will be higher than under Spatial Option B. There will also be cumulative effects on biodiversity, as the spatial option will continue to focus housing growth within the 7km zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA and will cause further recreational pressure on this international ecological site without mitigation. • The cumulative impacts of development will be considered in more detail as the Council progresses through the Local Plan. Further work will be undertaken to understand the impact on the transport network (through a county-wide transport model), which will also consider development from other emerging Local Plans within East Sussex. There will also be a need to consider other infrastructure issues such as education, health services, community facilities, water supply and wastewater and open space specifically, which will include discussions with the relevant infrastructure providers (which are ongoing). The Council will also need to understand the implications for designated ecological sites (i.e. Ashdown Forest, Lewes Downs and Pevensey Levels) through the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and the overall impact on the national landscape designations, including the High Weald AONB. Further information will also be needed in terms of the detail of mitigation measures at specific development sites associated with the spatial option. This spatial option will result in pressure on infrastructure, climate as well as the built and natural environment.
Summary	**Major Positive Effects: SO18 Economy and Employment** • The spatial option meets the Council's full employment needs for both B2 and B8 uses identified within the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022), which will bring major positive impacts for SA Objective SO18 (Economy and Employment). **Minor Positive Effects: SO17 Social Deprivation; SO19 Towns and Villages; SA20 Education and Skills** • There are a high number of settlements within Wealden District, including larger villages, which can deliver greater growth through this spatial option which will be able to support the vitality and viability of those villages, particularly their high streets and services, hence the identification of a minor positive impact for SA Objective 19 (Towns and Villages). • A minor positive effect is also identified with regards to social deprivation (SO17) as the spatial option will deliver both market and affordable housing within or at the edge of all sustainable settlements (including some affordable housing within the High Weald AONB), as well as provide job opportunities locally. • Information from East Sussex County Council, as the education provider for state schools, indicates that local educational provision and capacity is currently adequate to meet the needs of new development across the District, apart from the Polegate and Willingdon area where there will be a deficit in school places in the short term, leading to a minor negative impact. However, a minor positive effect has been identified for SA Objective 20 (Education and Skills) in the longer term as it is considered that there will be opportunities to deliver new schools and school places within the District to mitigate any short-term capacity issues, as well as the potential for new skills and training. **Minor Negative Effects: SO1 Climate Change Mitigation; SO5 Soil, Land and Minerals; SO6 Waste; SO7 Pollution; SO9 Biodiversity; SO10 Landscape and Townscape; SO11 Historic and Cultural Heritage; SO14 Housing** • This spatial option will deliver around 17,750 (net) dwellings, which is approximately 2,000 dwellings short of the overall housing target of 19,800 (net) dwellings. Therefore, a minor negative impact has been identified for SO14 (Housing) given the scale of the housing to be delivered within this spatial option.

	• Minor negative effects are identified in relation to climate change mitigation (SO1) as development will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. However, any impacts will be reduced, as far as possible, through the implementation of the relevant Local Plan policies. A minor negative impact has also been identified for SO5 (Soil, Land and Minerals) as this spatial option will focus growth on the delivery of housing at the edge of existing sustainable settlements (albeit this spatial option is mixed and will also support growth within those settlements), which will deliver growth adjacent to these settlements, which will largely include greenfield land. • Minor negative effects are identified for waste (SO6) and pollution (SO7), which will increase as a result of new development, although suitable mitigation and the implementation of the relevant Local Plan policies should reduce the impacts. Minor negative impacts are also identified for biodiversity (SO9) due to development in this location, particularly to the edge of the settlement on greenfield land, as there is the potential to lose greenfield land and ecological assets (i.e. hedgerows, in-field trees etc.) to allow for new development to take place. • Minor negative effects are identified with regards to landscape and townscape (SO10) as additional development near to or within designated landscapes is likely within this spatial option. This spatial option is also likely to lead to development in semi-rural locations, in order deliver growth within Wealden District, which may lead to minor negative impacts to the townscapes of both our towns and larger villages, as well as the landscape that surrounds the settlements. The effect will be dependent on specific settlement character and the implementation and design of any scheme. Minor negative effects have also been identified for historic and cultural heritage (SO11) as new development in/around historic villages and towns (including those within the High Weald AONB) is likely to lead negative impacts on designated heritage assets and their settings, where national planning policy aims to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of those proposals. **Major Negative Effects: None** **Uncertain Effects: SO2 Climate Change Adaptation; SO3 Flood Risk; SO4 Water Resources/Quality; SO8 Green and Blue Infrastructure; SO12 Digital Infrastructure; SO13 Travel and Accessibility; SO15 Health and Wellbeing; SO16 Quality of Life and Place** • There are several SA Objectives which will have uncertain effects, as either there is not enough information known about the detailed implementation of the spatial option (i.e. site locations, their scale, design and accessibility) or in the case of providing infrastructure (i.e. SA Objectives SO4, SO8, SO12, SO13 and SO15), it is unknown at this stage.
Selection / Rejection of Option	This spatial option will deliver around 17,750 (net) dwellings, which is approximately 2,000 dwellings short of the overall housing target of 19,800 (net) dwellings. The option will, however, meet the full employment needs of the District and will improve town and village centres through new jobs and homes. There are no major negative impacts of this spatial option, although minor negative impacts do occur for climate change mitigation, soil, land and minerals, waste, pollution, biodiversity, landscape and heritage, although there may be mitigation measures that could be implemented for some or all of these issues. There is currently some uncertainty within the Local Plan as to whether an employment site (Ashdown Business Park) in this option can come forward through the Local Plan and further work on this and other potential options for employment growth will be considered at the Regulation 19 stage. In addition, there is also uncertainty as to whether a large mixed-use site, named 'West of Uckfield' can come forward through this spatial option and this will be explored further in the Regulation 19 Local Plan. **Spatial Option Not Selected (but further work to be undertaken on this spatial option for the Regulation 19 stage).**