

Wealden
District Council

Local Development Scheme

September 2026

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Local Development Scheme 2026 – 2029

1. Introduction

1.1 Local planning authorities are required to prepare a Local Development Scheme (LDS) under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011). The purpose of this document is to enable communities and stakeholders to find out about planning policies for their area; the timetable for producing planning documents; and to also inform communities and stakeholders when they will be able to take part in the plan making process, at its various consultation stages.

1.2 This LDS identifies and sets out the timetable for planning documents that the Council will prepare to plan for development in its area. It will enable our local communities and stakeholders to find out about the planning policy documents being prepared until Autumn 2029. This LDS covers the period from the September 2026 – 2029. It updates the previous LDS published in January 2026 and provides information and the timetable in relation to preparing the Local Plan and other relevant documents. It also sets out the geographical area to which the documents relate.

2. The Planning System

2.1. Planning Acts and Regulations and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[1] and associated guidance provides the legislative and national policy requirements for plan making. Local plans are to set out a positive vision and framework for the future of the area addressing needs, priorities and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, infrastructure and community facilities, the natural and historic environment, climate change and design.

2.2. The NPPF (2024) at paragraphs 17 – 19 details that a development plan must contain both strategic and non-strategic policies (which deal with matters that are more detailed). Strategic policies can be produced in different ways, depending on the issues that need to be considered and the opportunities that may exist. Strategic policies can be contained in a single or a joint local plan, where authorities work together or independently. Non-strategic policies can be included in local plans that contain strategic and non-strategic policies or in a local or neighbourhood plan, which just contains non-strategic policies.

2.3. The NPPF requires policies to be underpinned by relevant and up to date evidence, which is adequate and proportionate, focused on supporting and justifying policies and taking into account market signals. Engagement with partners, stakeholders, interested parties and communities is also an important and key element in local plan production.

[1] NPPF (December 2024)

2.4. Planning legislation[2] sets out certain statutory requirements for plan making. This includes requirements to have regard to national policy and advice, to produce certain documents such as this LDS, the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), the Sustainability Appraisal and to ensure that policies are contained in the plan to contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. Legislation[3] also requires a policies map to be produced and to have regard to transport and waste plans and policies. It also requires local plans to be independently examined by a person appointed by the Secretary of State.

2.5. In addition, the legislation[4] prescribes specific requirements for consultation. There are two key stages, a Regulation 18 stage, which is where a draft Local Plan is consulted upon and a Regulation 19 stage, where the final (proposed submission) version of the Local Plan is published and under Regulation 20, representations are invited on whether the Local Plan has been positively prepared, is justified, effective, and consistent with national policy. Consultation periods must be for a minimum of six weeks.

2.6. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) can also be produced to build upon and provide advice that is more detailed, or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. They form a material consideration in decision-making. SPDs when produced are also consulted upon; however, they are not subject to an independent examination.

2.7. The preparation of Neighbourhood Plans is not a compulsory requirement of the planning system. However, when Neighbourhood Plans are 'made' (adopted) they become a statutory document which forms part of the Development Plan for the relevant area. Neighbourhood Plans can be produced by Town or Parish councils in consultation with their communities. Their purpose is to shape the development and growth of their local area to meet their community's needs. Wealden District Council has a legal duty to support the preparation of any Neighbourhood Plan, which must conform to the NPPF and the 'strategic policies' contained in the adopted Local Plan.

3. The Current Development Plan

3.1. The following documents currently comprise Wealden District Council's development plan:

- Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan (February 2013);
- Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan (May 2016);
- Saved policies contained in the Wealden District Local Plan (1998);
- Herstmonceux Neighbourhood Development Plan (July 2019);
- Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan (July 2021);
- Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan (July 2021);

[2] Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)
[3] Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
[4] Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

- Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan (May 2024);
- East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood Plan (October 2024);
- Horam Neighbourhood Plan (October 2024);
- Ninfield Neighbourhood Plan (October 2024);
- East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan (February 2013);
- East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Sites Plan (February 2017); and
- East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan Review – Revised Policies (October 2024).

3.2. A summary of each document that currently comprises Wealden District Council's development plan is provided below.

The Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan (February 2013)

3.3. The Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan (incorporating part of the South Downs National Park) was adopted in February 2013. The Local Plan identifies future growth for housing, employment and retail within Wealden District until 2027 and supersedes affordable housing policies in the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998).

3.4. The Core Strategy incorporated the area of Wealden that falls within the South Downs National Park. However, the South Downs National Park, as statutory planning authority for the National Park area[5], adopted the South Downs Local Plan in July 2019. The South Downs Local Plan (July 2019) supersedes the Core Strategy, the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan and any saved policies contained in the Wealden Local Plan (1998) for the area of Wealden District that falls within the South Downs National Park.

The Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan (May 2016)

3.5. The Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan was adopted in May 2016 and includes a single policy on affordable housing that supersedes the affordable housing policy within the adopted Core Strategy (Policy WCS8).

Wealden Local Plan (1998)

3.6. The adopted Wealden District Local Plan 1998 contains a number of 'saved policies' relevant to development within Wealden District. These policies were saved as of 27 September 2007 by approval of the Secretary of State under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

3.7. The Policies Map is a component part of the Wealden Local Plan (1998) and will be saved until it is replaced. Until then, the Policies Map will need to be read

[5] The South Downs National Park Authority (SDPNA) was established on 1 April 2011.

in tandem with the list of 'saved policies' in the Wealden Local Plan (1998). A list of 'saved policies' has been produced and can be found on the Council's website[6].

3.8. The Wealden Local Plan (1998) Policies Map is partially superseded by Policy WCS6 (Rural Areas Strategy) of the Core Strategy Local Plan that removed a number of development boundaries for smaller settlements in the district.

Herstmonceux Neighbourhood Development Plan

3.9. The Herstmonceux Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) contains policies that seek to manage change and growth in Herstmonceux Parish. The Herstmonceux Neighbourhood Plan[7] was 'made' on 24 July 2019.

Hailsham Neighbourhood Development Plan

3.10. The Hailsham Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) contains policies that seek to manage change and growth in Hailsham Parish. The Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan[8] was 'made' on 21 July 2021.

Hellingly Neighbourhood Development Plan

3.11. The Hellingly Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) contains policies that seek to manage change and growth in Hellingly Parish. The Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan[9] was 'made' on 21 July 2021.

Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan

3.12. The Wadhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) contains policies that seek to manage change and growth in Wadhurst Parish. The Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan[10] was 'made' on 15 May 2024.

East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood Plan

3.13. The East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) contains policies that seek to manage change and growth in East Hoathly and Halland Parish. The East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood Plan[11] was 'made' on 16 October 2024.

[6] 'Saved policies' of the Wealden Local Plan (1998)
[7] Herstmonceux Neighbourhood Plan (July 2019)
[8] Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan (July 2021)
[9] Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan (July 2021)
[10] Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan (May 2024)
[11] East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood Plan (October 2024)

Horam Neighbourhood Plan

3.14. The Horam Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) contains policies that seek to manage change and growth in Horam Parish. The Horam Neighbourhood Plan[12] was 'made' on 16 October 2024.

Ninfield Neighbourhood Plan

3.15. The Ninfield Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) contains policies that seek to manage change and growth in Ninfield Parish. The Ninfield Neighbourhood Plan[13] was 'made' on 16 October 2024.

East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan (February 2013)

3.16. The East Sussex, South Downs, Brighton and Hove Minerals and Waste Local Plan was adopted 19 February 2013. East Sussex County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council and the South Downs National Park Authority jointly prepared this Local Plan. This Plan outlines strategic policies relating to minerals and waste proposals within East Sussex, such as the safeguarding of mineral resources, requirements for waste and recycling processing and mineral extraction. Wealden District Council therefore needs to take account of such policies in its decision taking. Subsequent Local Plans continue to be the responsibility of the Minerals and Waste planning authorities.

East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Sites Plan (February 2017)

3.17. The Waste and Minerals Sites Plan (WMSP) provides the spatial details for the requirements contained within the Waste and Minerals Plan (WMP) and was adopted on 7 February 2017. The WMSP identifies potential locations for future waste facilities and safeguards existing waste and minerals resources. The Plan provides communities and the waste and minerals industry with greater certainty about where waste and minerals development can take place. The safeguarding of minerals and waste resources ensures that those that presently exist can be retained. The WMP Policy Maps have been prepared and are produced separately from the WMSP.

East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan Review – Revised Policies (October 2024)

3.18. The East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan Review – Revised Policies is a partial review of the adopted plan. It focuses on minerals, and more specifically, aggregate provision in the Plan Area. It also includes a number of updates to clarify and consolidate existing

[12] Horam Neighbourhood Plan (October 2024)
[13] Ninfield Neighbourhood Plan (October 2024)

policies, along with a new policy for the provision of an additional area of clay extraction at Aldersaw Farm in Rother District.

4. Neighbourhood Development Plans

4.1. Not including the seven Towns and Parishes with 'made' plans, there are a further six NDP Designated Areas in the District, although two Councils (Crowborough and Maresfield) have suggested, at the time of writing, that they are not actively pursuing a Neighbourhood Plan. The remaining Parishes include Fletching, Frant, Hartfield and Uckfield. These NDPs are in varying stages in the NDP process and information relating to their current stage in the progress can be found on our neighbourhood planning pages[14].

4.2. In addition, several Town and Parish Council's have commenced the review of their existing Neighbourhood Plans, including Hailsham Town Council, which recently submitted their plan to Wealden District Council to undertake the Statutory Regulation 16 consultation. That 16 consultation was undertaken over the summer and the Plan is due to be submitted for its Examination by the end of September 2026,

5. Other Planning Documents

5.1. A brief description of the role and coverage of other relevant planning documents are outlined in the sections below:

Policies Map

5.2. The Policies Map, which previously was called a Proposals Map, forms part of a Development Plan. It illustrates geographically the policies in the plan. The current Policy / Proposals Map was adopted alongside the Wealden Local Plan (1998)[15].

5.3. The Wealden Local Plan (1998) Policies Map is partially superseded by Policy WCS6 of the Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan, which removes a number of development boundaries. The development boundaries that are removed are provided on page 73 of the Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan[16].

5.4. The Policies Map is also superseded by the South Downs Local Plan (July 2019)[17] as relevant to the area of Wealden District located within the South Downs National Park.

[14] Neighbourhood Planning Webpage
[15] Wealden Local Plan (1998), Policies Map
[16] Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan (February 2013)
[17] South Downs Local Plan (July 2019)

Statement of Community Involvement

5.5. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)[18] sets out how stakeholders and communities will be consulted and involved in the planning process. The objective of an SCI is to ensure that effective engagement takes place with all sections of the community and that appropriate engagement techniques are used. The Council adopted its SCI on 19 November 2025, which covers this LDS period.

Supplementary Planning Documents

5.6. The following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in Wealden District (not including the area of Wealden District located within the South Downs National Park). They provide additional detail to relevant saved policies in the Wealden Local Plan (1998).

- Wealden Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), November 2008 (Policies EN1 and EN27);
- High Weald AONB Management Plan (Policies EN6 and EN7);
- Ashdown Business Park (Policy BS10); and
- Hellingly Hospital (Policy HH1).

5.7. The Council will also prepare a new Wealden Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document following adoption of the Wealden Local Plan. The new SPD will replace the 2008 Design Guide and provide detailed, locally distinctive guidance to support the implementation of the Local Plan's design policies and inform the determination of planning applications. Further detail is set out elsewhere in this LDS.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

5.8. Wealden's CIL charging schedule came into effect on 1 April 2016. It enables the Council to levy a charge on certain types of new development to help fund improvements to local infrastructure such as schools, transport, green spaces, and health and leisure facilities, all necessary to support new development and ensure the creation of sustainable communities. It has previously been the Council's intention to review the Wealden CIL charging schedule and update it, should this be required, alongside the production of the Local Plan. However, given the deadline currently set by government to submit Local Plans under the current planning system by the end of December 2026, the review of the CIL charging schedule has been paused to ensure that this Local Plan submission deadline can be met.

[18] Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), November 2025

6. Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents – Timetable

6.1. Policy WCS1 (Provision of Homes and Jobs 2006 - 2027) of the Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan (February 2013) identifies that the strategy will be reviewed in 2015 or when a preferred solution to the capacity issues within Hailsham North and Hailsham South Wastewater Treatment Works has been identified, whichever is the earliest.

6.2. In October 2015, Wealden District Council formally began its Local Plan Review. Following its Regulation 18 and 19 consultation stages, which took place in October 2015 and August 2018 respectively, Wealden District Council submitted its Draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination on 18 January 2019.

6.3. Following an extensive examination process in the spring/summer of 2019, including public hearing sessions, the appointed Inspector provided the Council with a letter on 20 December 2019 setting out the conclusions from the hearing sessions relating to the examination process of the Draft Wealden Local Plan. The letter concluded that the submitted plan could not proceed further in the examination process and should be withdrawn. On 19 February 2020, Wealden District Council agreed to formally withdraw its Local Plan. In accordance with the regulations[19], the Council has removed documents from its website that relate to the withdrawn plan.

6.4. Following the withdrawal of the local plan, Wealden District Council started work on a new Local Plan. This plan will be prepared in accordance with the most recent publication of the NPPF (December 2024) and any subsequent updates to the NPPF that are relevant and applicable to the production of the emerging Local Plan.

6.5. The following tables set out the planning documents that the Council will prepare to Autumn 2029. A profile for each document is provided, which outlines the role of each document and a timetable for their production. The timings provided are indicative on the basis that it is difficult at the outset to be precise about the timetable. However, key milestones are provided, and the timetable will be kept under review through the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) process that takes place each year. Where necessary the timetable will be updated. In addition, an overarching timetable covering all the planning policy documents can be found in Appendix 1 of this document.

[19] The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

WEALDEN LOCAL PLAN

Subject	Response
Role and subject	The Wealden Local Plan will set out the vision and spatial development strategy for Wealden District up to 2042. The local plan will be a single document and will include both strategic and non-strategic planning policies. The plan will also identify site allocations for different land uses such as housing, employment, retail and leisure, health, education, open space as well as seek to address climate change and protect the natural and built environment. It will provide the policy context for neighbourhood plans. A revised Policies Map will be submitted with the Wealden Local Plan, which will replace the adopted Policies Map associated with the 1998 Wealden Local Plan.
Status	Statutory Development Plan Document
Geographical Area	Wealden District except for the area located within the South Downs National Park area.
Prepared jointly with other Local Authorities	No. However, the Council will be working closely with neighbouring local authorities on strategic matters in line with the NPPF as part of its plan-making process, including joint evidence bases where relevant.
National Legislation and Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

Indicative timetable

Key Milestones	Date
Approval of the revised Local Development Scheme	Quarter 3 - 2026/27 (September 2026)
Publication of the Proposed Submission Local Plan Document (Regulation 19)	Quarter 3 - 2026/27 (September 2026)
Public representation period on the Proposed Submission Local Plan (Regulation 20)	Quarter 3 - 2026/27 (September 2026)
Proposed Submission Local Plan submitted to the Secretary of State Draft (Regulation 22)	Quarter 3 - 2026/27 (December 2026)
Examination in Public (Regulation 24)	Quarter 3 – 2026/27
Publication of the recommendations of the appointed Independent Inspector (Regulation 25)	Quarter 1 – 2027/28
Adoption of the Local Plan (Regulation 26)	Quarter 2 - 2027/28

Documents to be replaced

6.6. The new Wealden Local Plan will supersede the saved policies contained in the Wealden Local Plan (1998), the Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan (February 2013) and the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan (May 2016) upon adoption.

Production Arrangements

Process	By Whom
Lead Department	Planning Policy Team
Management Arrangements	Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development / Planning Consultative Advisory Group / Local Plan Working Group.
Resources Required	Planning Policy team, specialist advisors (including those from Development Management, Housing, Economic Development and Culture, Leisure and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Environmental Health, Building Control and external consultants.
Community and Stakeholder Involvement	In accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
Monitoring and Review	The Council will monitor the LDS each year through the Council's Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR is published at the end of each calendar year.

WEALDEN DESIGN GUIDE SPD

Subject	Response
Role and subject	The purpose of the new Wealden Design Guide is to encourage a higher standard of design for development within the District. Wealden is predominantly a rural district and is larger than most, encompassing a number of well defined areas whose character is drawn from the local landscape and building materials which derive from that landscape. These elements contribute significantly to the local distinctiveness and it is the aim of this document to ensure that new development (in particular the larger schemes) does not dilute this distinctiveness.
Status	Supplementary Planning Document
Geographical Area	Wealden District except for the area located within the South Downs National Park area.
Prepared jointly with other Local Authorities	No.
National Legislation and Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

Indicative timetable

Key Milestones	Date
Early Engagement (preparatory work and early stakeholder engagement)	On-going
Draft Stage (Regulation 13) - community and stakeholder engagement/public consultation	Quarter 4 - 2026/27/Quarter 1 2027/28

Key Milestones	Date
Adoption of the SPD (Regulation 14) following adoption of the Local Plan	Quarter 2 - 2027/28

Documents to be replaced

6.7. The new Wealden Design Guide will replace the existing Wealden Design SPD adopted in November 2008 upon adoption.

Production Arrangements

Process	By Whom
Lead Department	Planning Policy Team
Management Arrangements	Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development / Planning Consultative Advisory Group / Local Plan Working Group.
Resources Required	Planning Policy team, specialist advisors (including those from Development Management, Housing, Economic Development and Culture, Leisure and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Environmental Health, Building Control and external consultants.
Community and Stakeholder Involvement	In accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
Monitoring and Review	The Council will monitor the LDS each year through the Council's Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR is published at the end of each calendar year.

7. Other documents to be published

Brownfield Land Register

7.1. The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 requires local planning authorities to prepare, maintain and publish a brownfield land register for each calendar year. The brownfield land register aims to provide publicly available information on all brownfield sites (subject to criteria) considered by the local authority as appropriate for residential development. The brownfield land register is used to monitor the government's commitment to the delivery of brownfield sites. The Council's brownfield land register was last published in December 2025[20].

Authority Monitoring Report

7.2. Local planning authorities are required to publish a report that monitors the implementation of the LDS and whether adopted planning policies are delivering their objectives. The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) should be published at least once per year and this usually completed in December each year. The latest AMR is published on the Council's website[21].

Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment

7.3. As part of the plan making process, local planning authorities are required to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for Local Plans and where applicable for SPDs. The purpose of a SA is to ensure that the social, economic and environmental effects of policies are taken into account in the plan making process. An important part of the SA process is testing alternative options and their likely significant adverse effects.

7.4. The first stage of the SA is to produce a scoping report and consult with conservation bodies (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) on the SA scoping Report for a 5-week period. A scoping report[22] was consulted upon and published in 2020/2021 period alongside our Direction of Travel Consultation. However, given the time passed we have updated our SA Scoping Report to ensure it accounts for recent plans, policies and programmes, the most up-to-date baseline information, as well as considering sustainability issues and updating our SA Framework accordingly. We undertook a further consultation on the SA Scoping Report where we asked for statutory consultees, colleagues from neighbouring authorities and other relevant organisations, as well as our communities to take part in the consultation. This was held between 26 June and 7 August 2023.

[20] Brownfield Land Register 2025
[21] Wealden District Council Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)
[22] Wealden Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (November 2020)

7.5. The comments received to that consultation have been considered and the SA Scoping Report updated accordingly. This updated scoping report[23] was published alongside the Wealden Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 document and has informed the Sustainability Appraisal accompanying the Proposed Submission Local Plan at Regulation 19.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

7.6. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be undertaken as part of the local plan process. The purpose of HRA is to assess whether the local plan policies and proposals will result in a significant effect on the integrity of European designated sites. The first stage is to undertake a screening or 'likely significant effect' assessment. The second stage is to undertake an appropriate assessment. The HRA has been updated to accompany the Proposed Submission Local Plan at Regulation 19 and will be reviewed and updated as necessary for submission under Regulation 22.

Evidence base

7.7. The Council will gather appropriate and proportionate evidence to inform the production of the Wealden Local Plan. The evidence base will be published on the Council's website as studies are completed. The Council's evidence base can be found on our website[24].

Duty to Cooperate

7.8. The statutory Duty to Cooperate has been abolished and is no longer a separate legal test at examination. However, effective cross-boundary cooperation remains an important part of plan-making and the soundness of the Local Plan. Local Plan Inspectors are expected to examine plans in line with the policies in the NPPF on 'maintaining effective co-operation. The Council continues to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with neighbouring local planning authorities, prescribed bodies and other strategic partners on strategic matters, including housing needs, infrastructure, transport, the environment and other cross-boundary issues. The outcomes of this engagement will be recorded through Statements of Common Ground or other appropriate evidence and published on the Council's website as work progresses.

8. Council procedures

8.1. The preparation of development plan documents will be informed and monitored through the following groups and Council Committees:

[23] Wealden Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Update) (January 2024)
[24] Wealden District Council Planning Policy Evidence Base

- Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) for Planning which includes all Council Members;
- Local Plan Officer Working Groups;
- Corporate Management Team (CMT);
- Cabinet;
- Majors and Minors Planning Committee; and
- Full Council.

8.2. Committees considers the Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 versions of the Local Plan, and a recommendation will be sought for the Council to consult on the documents at these stages.

9. Risk Assessment

9.1. Risks to the delivery of development plan documents are identified in the table below. It is important to identify risks and to monitor these effectively, so that where necessary risks can be mitigated. The LDS will be monitored on an annual basis through the AMR.

9.2. The risks below are assessed against the milestones in this LDS and in the context of the December 2026 deadline for submission of Local Plans under current planning system. The planned actions are intended to minimise timetable slippage and support submission, examination and adoption of the Local Plan.

Risk No.	Risk description	Likelihood 1 – Unlikely 2 – Possible 3 – Probable 4 - Certain	Impact 1 – Minor 2 – Significant 3 – Serious 4 - Major	Planned Actions to Reduce Risk
1	Legislation or National Planning policy or guidance changes or updates	4	3	Review national planning policy to ensure that the Local Plan stays flexible for as long as possible to adapt to changes needed. Review the process and plan priorities, manage, and update the local plan timetable to ensure the delivery of a robust evidence base and local plan.
2	Consultation - High response rate to the Regulation 19 representation stage, which would result in a longer period being required to consider and process responses.	3	3	This is a normal part of the local plan process. It is not possible to predict the number and nature of the responses received. The publication of clear consultation guidance may help focus responses. Where necessary timetables for reporting can be adjusted. The plan can progress in a timely manner with appropriate forums in place to discuss responses and facilitate progression of the plan.
3	Consultation identifies constraints that require further work or the identification of further evidence base requirements.	3	3	This has been accounted for in the timetable to a degree. Where further time is required, plan priorities will be managed and where necessary work programmes and timetables will be adjusted.

Risk No.	Risk description	Likelihood 1 – Unlikely 2 – Possible 3 – Probable 4 - Certain	Impact 1 – Minor 2 – Significant 3 – Serious 4 - Major	Planned Actions to Reduce Risk
4	Delay in completing critical modelling work or completing the evidence base.	2	4	Provide partners and consultants clear timescales and make them aware of the consequence of not meeting timescales. Introduce project Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Failing this, a delay would be likely to the timetable, depending on the criticality of the evidence base and the stage in plan preparation.
5	New information or updates to the NPPF/PPG changes the direction of the evidence base that requires a change to the strategy or a change to the plan.	2	3	Gathering evidence has been frontloaded in the timetable to ensure that the plan is evidence led. However, should there be a significant change in plan direction or in the evidence required to support this, a delay would be likely to the timetable.
6	Cross-boundary strategic matters require further work or agreement before the plan can progress.	1	2	Continued early and ongoing engagement with neighbouring local authorities, statutory bodies and their strategic partners, using statements of common ground or other appropriate records to identify matters of agreement, disagreement and any further work needed. Seek support from the Planning Advisory Service or other peer review arrangements where this would assist resolution. Although the Duty to Cooperate is no longer a separate legal test, unresolved strategic matters could affect the soundness or effectiveness of the Local Plan at examination.
7	Cross-boundary strategic matters cannot be resolved and materially affect the ability to progress or demonstrate the soundness of the plan.	1	3	Continue constructive engagement with neighbouring local authorities, statutory bodies and other strategic partners. Prepare Statements of Common Ground or other appropriate records setting out the matters considered, areas of agreement and disagreement,

Risk No.	Risk description	Likelihood 1 – Unlikely 2 – Possible 3 – Probable 4 - Certain	Impact 1 – Minor 2 – Significant 3 – Serious 4 - Major	Planned Actions to Reduce Risk
				and the steps taken or proposed to resolve outstanding issues. Where necessary, seek independent or peer advice. Although the Duty to Cooperate is no longer a separate legal test, unresolved cross-boundary strategic matters could affect the soundness or effectiveness of the Local Plan at examination.
8	Staffing resources and loss of key staff.	2	2	Meeting staffing capacity requirements and the loss of key staff to be addressed through a recruitment drive. Where staffing capacity cannot be met there is potential to use planning officers from Development Management or agency staff. Where planning officers are deployed, workloads to be considered to match skill sets. Staff sickness to be managed by reviewing priorities.
9	Staff resource diversion	1	3	Unavoidable delay to the timetable until staffing resources are in place.
10	Lack of member agreement over the local plan strategy, policies or contents of the plan.	3	4	Early and continued engagement with members throughout the plan preparation and delivered in accordance with the SCI.
11	Financial resources	1	2	Address the financial resource required to deliver the local plan and review the budget regularly. Make additional financial resources available should this be required to meet evidence base requirements.

Risk No.	Risk description	Likelihood 1 – Unlikely 2 – Possible 3 – Probable 4 - Certain	Impact 1 – Minor 2 – Significant 3 – Serious 4 - Major	Planned Actions to Reduce Risk
12	Failure of consultation software (Objective) during the formal consultation.	1	2	The contract with Keystone Objective covers the timely response to software outages. In the event of a software outage, look to extend the formal consultation period to cover the downtime experienced with the software and notify consultees of this extension. A small delay may be likely to the timetable.
13	Devolution (mayoral spatial planning powers impacting on plan-making)	3	3	East Sussex, Brighton & Hove and West Sussex are identified as a forerunner in the devolution programme. Constant review of the wider devolution programme will ensure that the Local Plan stays flexible for as long as possible to adapt to any changes needed particularly in respect of strategic planning powers. Review the process and plan priorities, manage, and update the local plan timetable to ensure the delivery of a robust evidence base and local plan.
14	Local Government Reorganisation creates continuing uncertainty for plan-making. On 7 September 2026, the Government announced a rapid review of the Local Government Reorganisation programme and paused the July 2026 decision affecting East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. The timing and outcome of the review are currently uncertain	3	3	Monitor the Government's rapid review and maintain dialogue with East Sussex authorities, Brighton & Hove City Council and Government. Keep the Local Plan programme, evidence base, governance arrangements and resource requirements under review so that work can continue under existing council arrangements while remaining capable of adapting to any subsequent decision. Any implications for the Local Plan timetable or future plan-making responsibilities will be assessed when the Government confirms the outcome and implementation timetable.

Risk No.	Risk description	Likelihood 1 – Unlikely 2 – Possible 3 – Probable 4 - Certain	Impact 1 – Minor 2 – Significant 3 – Serious 4 - Major	Planned Actions to Reduce Risk
	and could affect future governance arrangements, organisational capacity and responsibility for progressing the Local Plan.			

Appendix 1: Council programme for preparing planning policy documents.

Appendix 1: Council programme for preparing planning policy documents

			2025/26		2026/27				2027/28				2028/29			
Document	Stage	Completed	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
New Local Plan	Stakeholder Engagement/Early Evidence Gathering															
	First Draft Plan Consultation (Regulation 18)															
	Further Evidence Gathering															
	Second Draft Plan Consultation (Regulation 18)															
	Proposed Submission Publication (Regulation 19)															
	Submission															
	Examination															
	Adoption															
Wealden Design Guide SPD	Pre-Production															
	Consultation on Draft SPD															
	Adoption															
Local Plan Policies Map																
Statement of Community Involvement	Pre-Production															
	Consultation on Draft SCI															
	Adoption															
Brownfield Land Register	Annual Update															
Monitoring Reports	Five Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement															
	Authority Monitoring Report															
Infrastructure Funding Statement	Annual Update															

Note: The term quarter refers to financial years rather than calendar years (i.e. quarter 4 2026/27 refers to January - March 2027).