Subject	Wealden District Council Core Strategy: Examination in Public
	Matter 2: SETTLEMENT HIERACHY AND RURAL STRATEGY (WCS6)
Prepared by	SKM Colin Buchanan
On behalf of	David Wilson Homes

Main Issue: Whether the settlement hierarchy and strategy for rural areas are soundly based.

a) Are the categories in the Core Strategy settlement hierarchy appropriate and justified?

1. The settlement hierarchy and strategy for the rural areas is effectively based on the use of a sustainability checklist (see paragraphs 2.7 of the Core Strategy and paragraphs 8.61 and 8.62 and Appendix 3 of Background Paper 1 to the Core Strategy for example, with further information set out in Background papers to the 2007 and 2009 Core Strategy consultation documents, as discussed in section 4 of our representations). We do not consider this to be an appropriate approach for the rural areas.

2. The Core Strategy does not allow for change and flexibility over time. It is static: if a place is unsustainable now, then it will forever more be unsustainable. It does not allow for change to come forward that will address the challenges faced by the rural areas. It artificially constrains growth and development in the rural areas, which could in fact make them less 'sustainable'. We suggest that, instead, the approach taken in the Core Strategy should be on improving the 'sustainability' of rural areas, maintaining and improving service provision, public transport and the identified need for housing, meeting the needs of both existing and future residents.

3. PPG3 (2000) (paragraphs 29 – 34: see appended extract 1) established a sequential approach to the identification of land for housing, which effectively discouraged housing in rural areas (e.g.: a key settlement policy). PPS3 (June 2011) does not have this same policy approach. But it has been interpreted as such. Specifically, paragraph 38 of PPS3 recognises '*the need to provide housing in rural areas, not only in market towns and local service centres but also in villages in order to enhance or maintain their sustainability... so as to ensure that growth is distributed in a way that supports informal social support networks, assist people to live near their work and benefit from key services, minimise environmental impact and, where possible, encourage environmental benefits*'.

4. The Taylor Report (CLG, 2008, Living Working Countryside) (Extract 2) states that sustainability checklists should not be used as a planning tool because the approach '*cannot be sound planning, since it makes such*

communities less not more sustainable... this narrow view of sustainability is far too simplistic and wrong' (see page 44).

5. In response to the Taylor Report, the then Secretary of State for the Environment rejected the use of sustainability checklists and the key settlement approach, stating that '*small villages can be characterised as 'unsustainable' and then denied development to help change that. I don't think that's a very sensible interpretation of sustainability. In my view there is no such thing as an unsustainable place, only unsustainable ways of doing things*' (Speech by Hilary Benn, 2009, at the Commission for Rural Communities summit on Releasing the innovative potential of rural economies - 'Why the rural economy matters'). (Extract 3)

6. The draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes sustainable development but does not seek to restrict development in rural locations or those places considered 'less sustainable'. Rather, it says (at paragraph 126, fourth bullet point) that where '*development is proposed in less sustainable locations, authorities should require investment to improve the sustainability of the site'*.

7. The settlement hierarchy approach effectively says that if a place does not meet certain criteria and is thus not sustainable, then people should not be living there and it should not be a place for new housing. The effect of this is to make a place even more unsustainable. This could also increase land values and further restrict the affordability of housing.

8. This was recognised in the SEP, which states at paragraph 7.5, '*affordability also remains a concern in the rural settlements in the South East. Against a back ground of a 'rural premium' for the price of housing, many rural settlements in the region have been faced with closure of village services and increased reliance on urban settlements for their survival. In seeking to achieve the Government's strategic housing policy objectives, this RSS emphasises the need to create and maintain sustainable communities in all areas, both urban and rural'*.

9. And at paragraph 7.10, the SEP states *'it is important that housing growth in rural areas is not artificially constrained. The regional planning body and the local planning authorities must plan for and manage the provision of housing to enhance the viability of rural settlements and promote a rural renaissance, and thereby meet the long term needs of the rural communities'*.

10. This is particularly important in Wealden, where around half of the District's population live in rural areas (see Background Paper 3, paragraph 3.10), and which informs the spatial characteristics of the district. The rural areas strategy set out in the Core Strategy fails to recognise the needs of half of its population.

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11. The Rural Coalition[1], on page 5 of their August 2010 report, '*The Rural Challenge*' (Extract 4), write '*planning practice for rural areas has failed to meet the unique housing, work and service requirement of the people who live and work in these communities. With fewer young families and low-income households able to access housing in villages, services like schools, buses, and Post Offices become even less viable – and if lost altogether further threaten the sustainability of communities*'.

12. And on page 10, they continue that '*we need to move away from asking is this settlement sustainable? – which too often leads to a decision to prevent any development, cut back services, and refuse any change. Rather, we must ask how we can enhance the sustainability of this community'*.

13. In their 2009 prospectus (Extract 5), the Rural Coalition had previously stated that '*protection can have a perversely negative effect. Villages are denied the chance to respond organically to change, and so to remain vibrant living, working communities. Sustainability doesn't mean a slavish adherence to what exists*' (page 11).

14. This point is reiterated by the Taylor Report (Extract 2), which on page 8 states '*what is required to escape the "sustainability trap" too many communities are caught in is a flexible planning system with a real sense of vision that is based on recognising how our rural communities can be rather than writing them off as unsustainable'*. It reports '*how a tick box approach has held back sensitive and appropriate development and how an inflexible range of sustainability criteria has condemned many villages to a downward cycle of decline with services lost as those who work in them cannot afford to live in them*'.

15. This is exactly what is happening with the approach to the villages in Wealden. The settlement hierarchy assesses the potential of the village on what it is now rather than what it can be. There is no allowance for the opportunity to enhance the quality and offer of a village through growth. Artificial limits have been put in place.

16. Further, BP1 states at paragraph 6.41 that the greater the sustainability of a settlement, the greater the potential for growth. This ignores the fact that growth and development can improve the sustainability of a place. By limiting or restricting growth, the Council are exacerbating problems – a lack of affordable housing, an ageing population, no economic investment and loss of services and facilities.

[1] Membership of the Rural Coalition includes: Action with Communities in Rural England, Action for Market Towns, Arthur Rank Centre, Campaign to Protect Rural England, Country Land & Business Association, County Councils Network, Local Government Association, National Association of Local Councils, National Farmers Union, National Housing Federation, Plunkett Foundation, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, Royal Town Planning Institute, Rural Services Network, Town and Country Planning Association.

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17. Research on behalf of DEFRA in 2010 (Research into Rural Housing Affordability) (Extract 6) showed that local affordability is an issue that leads to young people moving away from rural areas and there is a widely shared recognition that employment factors also play a part. The research indicated that the needs of the local people should be taken into consideration in the allocation of affordable local housing. But it also recognised that people outside the area with housing needs should also be accommodated (see summary findings on page 4). The relevance for Maresfield being that both market and affordable housing is clearly needed in the village, and that with the Ashdown Business Park adjacent to the village, there is a real opportunity to balance homes with employment and thus mean people will not have to move elsewhere.

b) Does the evidence base support the position of individual settlements within the settlement hierarchy?

18. Putting to one side our comments on the use of the settlement hierarchy as outlined in response to question (a), we contend that the housing figure allocated to Maresfield in the Core Strategy is significantly less than it should be. This is reported in sections 2.4 and 4.2 of our representations to the submission Core Strategy.

19. We suggest that the approach to the villages and to Maresfield in particular is reconsidered. Housing need and research shows that new development is needed. Government reports also indicate that growth should come forward in rural locations. Maresfield has the potential to accommodate growth, and can mitigate this through provision of SANGS, and can help balance new homes and jobs, through creation of new employment opportunities at the Ashdown Business Park. Maresfield also has village services and good sports and leisure provision. It is not constrained by landscape, the flood plain or AONB policy designations. Further, consultation responses have shown support for growth and development in Maresfield.

20. Paragraph 8.101 of BP1 states that the Parish Councils views were given significant weight. But as we note in our representations at paragraph 2.4.7, the Core Strategy does not accurately reflect the Parish Councils response for Maresfield. The Parish Council's response has been mis-interpreted. Their response has been used as a reason for capping growth in Maresfield at 50 units, but the full response from the parish was that greater than 50 units would be considered acceptable if local benefits could be demonstrated. This also stands in contrast to responses made by the Maresfield Conservation Group for example, who have repeatedly promoted additional growth in Maresfield (see their representations to the Core Strategy for example: ID 107137).

21. The figure of 50 is artificial and ignores responses to consultation on the Core Strategy in 2007 that supported a growth figure for Maresfield of between 350 – 500 homes. Paragraph 7.5 of Background Paper 1 (BP1)

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to the Core Strategy states '*notwithstanding the absence of significant amounts of land available in the rural settlements to achieve change, there is no overwhelming public appetite apparent from our consultations to change the settlement hierarchy*'. This is incorrect. As our representations clearly point out (see section 2.4 and figure 2.1 of our representations), consultation responses (not just by ourselves) have repeatedly pointed to the incorrect assessment of Maresfield and its growth potential. In response to the 2007 Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation, Maresfield was the only one of the six villages around Uckfield where more respondents were in favour of the scale of development proposed (350-500 units) than against. There is also land readily available in Maresfield to accommodate growth. The SHLAA illustrates this clearly.

22. We note that at paragraph 8.78 of BP1 the Council seeks to refute the representations made in response to Maresfield. It claims that the Ashdown Business Park (see location plan: Appendix A) is not within Maresfield. Where would the Council have us believe it is? Given Government policy on the importance of economic growth (see for example 'Planning for Growth'), Wealden will be failing if they do not facilitate the provision of new jobs in the district: particularly on a site they recognise as being, strategically, the most important in the north of the district.

23. Paragraph 5.42 of BP1 states that '*the development of housing and business within walking distances of town centres, and improved connectivity overall, may increase the number of people using town and village centres*'. So why have these opportunities for Maresfield not been fully grasped: new housing growth, coupled with new jobs at the Ashdown Business Park provide a very real opportunity to enhance the economic viability of the village.

c) Is it appropriate for the Core Strategy to indicate the overall scale of new housing allocations in individual villages and, if so, is the level of provision justified and deliverable?

24. We have no in principle objection to the Core Strategy including housing allocations for individual villages, as long as those allocations are evidence based.

25. We do though object to the rigid figures in the Core Strategy, particularly those for Maresfield, which we contend are not justified.

26. It is clear from representations to the Core Strategy (as will be discussed further in Matter 3), that more housing than the Core Strategy provides for is needed. Maresfield can accommodate some of this. Consultation responses to the 2007 Issues and Options Core Strategy supported much higher levels of growth (see responses to previous questions).

27. In paragraph 7.6 of BP1 the Council states that '*it is clear there is a fundamental need for market and affordable housing in the rural settlements*'. There has though been a history of underperformance in Wealden in terms of delivering housing (see the completions summarised in our Matter 3 response which show a shortfall against the SEP since 2006 and indeed, against Structure Plan figures before that) but in the submission Core Strategy further development in Maresfield is unduly constrained.

28. We note in paragraphs 6.26 and 8.78 of BP1 that the issue of Nitrogen Depositions is being cited as a reason for capping growth in Maresfield to 50 units. This relates to the volume of traffic generated from new development within 7km of the Ashdown Forest and associated traffic flows on roads through the Forest. The Councils Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) (Background Paper 9) models the volume of traffic generated by the Core Strategy allocations. It effectively says that if development results in an average of 1,000 daily trips (AADT) on any road link within the Ashdown Forest, it will be considered unacceptable because the associated nitrogen depositions will adversely affect the ecological integrity of the Forest. Our modelling (see appendix) shows that the threshold of 1,000 trips is though only breached on one section of one road at a level of 170 additional dwellings in Maresfield over and above that allowed for in the HRA (61 units, being the Core Strategy figure of 50 units plus existing commitments).

29. This additional level of development would result in 1,001 AADT on the A26: only one additional daily movement over and above the threshold. And on only one of the link roads. There is still headroom above this on the other link roads and, therefore, other settlements within 7km of the Ashdown Forest may well be able to accommodate development before the thresholds are breached on any of the other link roads.

30. In their response to the Inspector's concerns discussed at the Exploratory meeting, the Council state (EiP document X4, paragraphs 3.0 – 3.7), that although AADT levels are below thresholds for the Ashdown Forest, any further development would breach the threshold. A precautionary approach is thus taken and no further development considered appropriate. However, our analysis demonstrates there is clearly potential to accommodate more growth in Maresfield than the Council would have us believe.

31. Further consideration also needs to be given to additional mitigation measures and whether these would allow additional development to take place within the 7km buffer. Natural England and the Council should be asked what measures could be put in place and what capacity this might release for additional development over and above that in the Core Strategy (see our statement on matter 14).

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32. We note that the decision to limit growth in Maresfield to just 50 units was taken well in advance of the Council assessing the nitrogen deposition impacts on the Ashdown Forest. It would therefore appear that the Council are using levels of Nitrogen Deposition as a reason for justifying their decision to limit the potential growth of Maresfield to just 50 units. We suggest that this is the wrong approach: instead, the Council should have considered the real unconstrained potential of the village and then worked out how this might need to be reduced based on impacts such as those on the Ashdown Forest.

d) Has the approach to development boundaries in some villages been justified by the evidence base?

33. We point to section 5 of our representations to the submission Core Strategy.

Summary Response

What part of the CS is unsound?	Policy on housing allocations to the villages (WCS6)
Which of the soundness criteria it fails to meet	Not justified
Why it fails	Not supported by evidence
How the CS can be made sound	It should acknowledge the need for growth in villages like Maresfield, rather than constraining them and be based upon a full assessment of capacity / constraints.
The precise change / wording sought	Increase growth figures for Maresfield to at least 200.

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EXTRACT 1: PPG3 (2000)

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Planning Policy Guidance 3: Housing

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Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes set out the Government's policies on different aspects of planning. They should be taken into account by regional planning bodies and local planning authorities in preparing regional planning guidance and development plans and may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals. This guidance introduces a new approach to planning for housing which, for most authorities, will mean that their development plan will require early review and alteration in respect of housing.

This PPG provides guidance on a range of issues relating to the provision of housing. It replaces the 1992 version of PPG3. Circular 6/98 *Planning and Affordable Housing* will continue to apply, within the framework of policy set out in this guidance.

27.In compiling the base data for their capacity work, local planning authorities should draw on the National Land Use Database (NLUD), which will help identify and track available sites and their potential for housing development. The intention is that as NLUD is developed, it will increasingly provide a common data set which will underpin capacity studies. They should also draw upon empty home reduction strategies which local authorities have in place.

Identifying areas and sites

28.RPG and development plans should provide clear guidance as to the location of new development so that it meets housing requirements in the most sustainable way:

- at the regional level, RPG should identify the major areas of growth in the region, and determine where housing provision is to be sought by structure plan/UDP area, taking account of assessed capacity;
- at the strategic planning level, structure plans/UDPs should identify growth areas and a distribution of the additional housing likely to be required to district level; and
- at the local level, local plans and UDPs should identify sites for housing and buildings for conversion and re-use sufficient to meet housing requirements after making an allowance for windfalls (see paragraphs 35-36), and manage the release of land over the plan period.

29.Local planning authorities in preparing development plans should adopt a systematic approach to assessing the development potential of sites, and the redevelopment potential of existing buildings, deciding which are most suitable for housing development and the sequence in which development should take place.

30.In identifying sites to be allocated for housing in local plans and UDPs, local planning authorities should follow a search sequence, starting with the re-use of previously-developed land and buildings within urban areas identified by the urban housing capacity study, then urban extensions, and finally new development around nodes in good public transport corridors. They should seek only to identify sufficient land to meet the housing requirement set as a result of the RPG and strategic planning processes. In doing so they do not need to consider all the land in their area: they should not extend the search further than required to provide sufficient capacity to meet the agreed housing requirement.

31.In deciding which sites to allocate for housing in local plans and UDPs, local planning authorities should assess their potential and suitability for development against each of the following criteria:

- the **availability of previously-developed sites** and empty or under-used buildings and their suitability for housing use;
- the **location and accessibility** of potential development sites to jobs, shops and services by modes other than the car, and the potential for improving such accessibility;
- the **capacity of existing and potential infrastructure**, including public transport, water and sewerage, other utilities and social infrastructure (such as schools and hospitals) to absorb further development and the cost of adding further infrastructure;
- the **ability to build communities** to support new physical and social infrastructure and to provide sufficient demand to sustain appropriate local services and facilities; and

- **the physical and environmental constraints on development of land**, including, for example, the level of contamination, stability and flood risk, taking into account that such risk may increase as a result of climate change.

Allocating and releasing land for development

32.In determining the order in which sites identified in accordance with the criteria set out in paragraphs 30 and 31 should be developed, the presumption will be that previously-developed sites (or buildings for re-use or conversion) should be developed before greenfield sites. The exception to this principle will be where previously-developed sites perform so poorly in relation to the criteria listed in paragraph 31 as to preclude their use for housing (within the relevant plan period or phase) before a particular greenfield site.

33.Local plans and UDPs should include policies for the release of sites for housing development according to the order of priority set out in the first sentence of paragraph 32. This should take account of the likely supply of windfall sites. Local authorities should manage the release of sites over the plan period in order to control the pattern and speed of urban growth, ensure that the new infrastructure is co-ordinated with new housing development and deliver the local authority's recycling target. It is for each local planning authority to determine the form of such phasing policies but good practice guidance will be issued. One possible approach to managing the release of land for housing is to divide the plan into three phases, allocating sites for development in accordance with the presumption in paragraph 32.

34.Sufficient sites should be shown on the plan's proposals map to accommodate at least the first five years (or the first two phases) of housing development proposed in the plan. Site allocations should be reviewed and updated as the plan is reviewed and rolled forward at least every five years. Local planning authorities should monitor closely the uptake of both previously-developed and greenfield sites and should be prepared to alter or revise their plan policies in the light of that monitoring. However, it is essential that the operation of the development process is not prejudiced by unreal expectations of the developability of particular sites nor by planning authorities seeking to prioritise development sites in an arbitrary manner.

Windfalls

35.Windfall sites are those which have not been specifically identified as available in the local plan process. They comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available. These could include, for example, large sites such as might result from a factory closure or very small changes to the built environment, such as a residential conversion or a new flat over a shop.

36.Authorities should make specific allowances for all the different types of windfalls in their plans. Allowance should be made on the basis of examining past trends in windfalls coming forward for development and on the likely future windfall potential as assessed in a capacity study. No allowance should be made for greenfield windfalls (refer to Annex D for good practice advice on capacity studies).

Determining planning applications

37.Development plans form the framework within which decisions on proposals for development are taken. It is important that plans are kept up to date and properly reflect national policy guidance. Local planning authorities should revise their plans to take account of the guidance set out in this PPG: they should seek to do so as quickly as possible by incorporating revised policies and proposals either in replacement plans or by alteration of existing housing policies.

EXTRACT 2: THE TAYLOR REPORT (CLG, 2008, Living Working Countryside)

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Living Working Countryside

The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing



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Published by:
Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU
Telephone: 020 7944 4400
Website: www.communities.gov.uk

Communities and Local Government Publications
PO Box 236
Wetherby
West Yorkshire
LS23 7NB
Tel: 08701 226 236
Fax: 08701 226 237
Textphone: 08701 207 405
Email: communities@capita.co.uk
Online via the Communities and Local Government website: www.communities.gov.uk

July 2008

Product code: 08REAH05452

ISBN: 978 1 4098 0328 7

15. This report sets out the steps necessary for the planning system to play its role in realising the vision of mixed, thriving and sustainable rural communities – a living, working countryside.

Chapter One: A Living, Working Countryside

16. Our rural communities can only prosper and survive if we nurture a living, working countryside. Yet the countryside is under intense pressure.

17. Large scale migration to rural areas, which has increased the rural population by 800,000 over the past ten years, has pushed rural house prices substantially above the national average. In 2007 the cost of an average family home was over £8,000 more expensive in rural areas compared to urban areas, and first time buyer homes were £16,000 dearer.

18. At the same time those working in rural areas earn significantly less than their urban counterparts. The average wage in the most rural areas is just £20,289 compared to £27,487 in urban areas. This destructive combination of high cost homes and low rural wages is putting rural housing out of the reach of many who work in the countryside.

19. There is no sign of the migratory trend abating. Nine out of ten people living in the countryside say they would prefer to stay there, whereas half those living in urban areas say they want to move to the countryside. The Office of National Statistics predicts the rural population will increase by 16 per cent by 2028 compared to 9 per cent in urban areas.

20. These pressures demand urgent and innovative action to deliver more affordable homes to meet local needs and stimulate economic regeneration. Without this action the countryside faces a sterile future, based on virtual gated communities of the elderly retired and wealthy commuters while those who work in these communities are forced to live in nearby towns.

21. This chapter examines how the restrictive nature of many planning practices has played a part in creating these pressures; how a tick box approach has held back sensitive and appropriate development and how an inflexible range of sustainability criteria has condemned many villages to a downward cycle of decline with services lost as those who work in them cannot afford to live in them.

22. What is required to escape the “sustainability trap” too many communities are caught in is a flexible planning system with a real sense of vision that is based on recognising how our rural communities can be rather than writing them off as unsustainable.

77. This all results in a 'sustainability trap'. In essence, otherwise beneficial development can only be approved if the settlement is considered sustainable in the first place. Failure to overcome this hurdle essentially stagnates the settlement – freezing it in time – potentially for the life of the adopted development plan. This cannot be sound planning, since it makes such communities less, not more, sustainable.

78. So many smaller rural settlements without certain services are written off as inherently 'unsustainable', in which case no new housing or economic development may be allowed at all. There is a widespread assumption that because smaller rural communities may have little or no services, shops, or public transport of their own they are fundamentally unsustainable – and therefore not suitable for development on the grounds of an implied greater need to commute and travel by car to access services and employment. This has translated into restrictive regional and local policy, and also reflects aspects of national policy.[51] Increasingly decision making in rural areas is determined solely by reference to limiting car based travel. While current Government policy does provide a more pragmatic stance this is not the interpretation applied 'on the ground'.

79. An interesting parallel might be drawn with the widely accepted criticism of the "key settlement" approach to planning in the 1970s, where resources were concentrated on larger settlements and smaller ones left to dwindle and lose self sufficiency. Durham County Council in the 1950's, provides another parallel where villages defined as in "Category D" were left to decline, the populations encouraged to move away, and vacant homes demolished; though in fact many people refused to move.

80. This narrow view of sustainability is far too simplistic – and wrong. Indeed, it starts from the wrong premise, because it asks the wrong question. If people in rural areas can't live near where they work because it is unaffordable, or can't work near where they live because employment is increasingly directed to towns, restricting development has the effect of making communities even less sustainable environmentally, let alone socially and economically sustainable. **Since we are not going to bulldoze our villages and start again, and people are going to continue to live in them, the key emphasis of the planning system (at all levels) needs to move away from asking "is this settlement sustainable?", to "will this development enhance or decrease the sustainability of this community – balancing social, economic and environmental concerns?"**

81. Some steps have been taken more recently to try and address this situation, by building in explicit advice for the application of policy in rural areas. The *Planning and Climate Change Supplement* to *PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development*

EXTRACT 3: SPEECH BY HILARY BENN, 2009

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Speech by Hilary Benn at the Commission for Rural Communities summit on Releasing the innovative potential of rural economies - Why the rural economy matters

5 February 2009

Good afternoon. I'd like to begin by thanking ONE North East, the North West Development Agency, Yorkshire Forward, and the Commission for Rural Communities for organising this important event, and Stuart [Burgess] for your report on the economic potential of rural areas, which has brought us here today. The countryside occupies a special place in our nation's affections. Its beauty means so much to us. It is the golden thread which binds together past and present, nature and culture, tradition and invention. I think we can all understand what the poet, William Cowper, meant when, he wrote that: "man made the town, but God made the country". It's great to be here in York. What better place could there be than 'God's own county' to talk about the importance and resilience of the rural economy?

And it's a soberly appropriate time to be talking about this too. The recession is, of course, making life hard for many communities and businesses. People are worried about their jobs and what the future may hold. That's just as true of rural communities as it is of our towns and cities. And the Government's job is to continue to do what we can to help on bank lending, on support to businesses, and assistance for those who lose their jobs or who are worried about losing their homes. Stuart is one of those who is monitoring what is happening, and I will continue to work with the CRC, the RDAs and others to look at what the rural economy needs, and how government can best support it in the face of global recession.

Rural businesses play a vital role in our economy, and they will be even more important in future. So we need to be alert to warning signs now. The CRC reports that unemployment in market towns is higher than they have seen before. And of course the cumulative impact for market towns of multiple shop or factory closures can be huge. As Stuart's report indicated, many small rural businesses do not have large loans, and do not rely on the more usual lines of credit. But they are borrowers, often from family and friends, or through overdrafts and credit cards. And the credit crunch may leave them vulnerable.

So we need to ask some important questions. How can we ensure that we continue to give the right help to businesses and individuals? How can we provide the right opportunities for training or advice? And how can we quickly identify any rural problems that require specific action? I am very grateful for the briefing being provided to me by the Commission for Rural Communities and the RDAs on how the recession is affecting rural areas. I can assure you that I will do everything in my power to ensure that the rural economy is at the heart of the decisions we take in Government as we steer a course through the recession, and that rural businesses are able to benefit fully from the help that government is making available.

So today I am announcing that I will call together all those involved, Stuart Burgess, the chairs of the RDAs and others, to look at the impact of the recession on the rural economy and see what further assistance we can give through the National Economic Council. And one of the things that will help us to do this is an understanding of the nature of the rural economy and how it has changed.

And here I'd like to deal with a few urban myths. Our rural areas are not economic backwaters. Quite the opposite. They are not the poor relations of England's large towns and cities. In fact,

Stuart's report showed us just how the rural economy has been diversifying and just what an important part of the UK economy rural areas now are. They are home to around a million businesses, a quarter of England's total, and they provide just over five and a half million jobs. Together they have a turnover of over £300 billion a year. In fact, there are more businesses for every 10,000 people in rural areas than there are in urban areas. And though they are rural in location, they are not local in their reach. Indeed, these businesses are more likely to sell to national, and export to international markets, than their urban counterparts.

Farming is of course hugely important in rural areas, and to the nation as a whole. Not just in shaping and preserving the landscape, such as our cherished moors, dales and tors, but also in producing our food. In fact, when the ONS published figures showing that all sectors of the economy had shrunk over the last three months, there was one exception: agriculture. That shows its strength. Last year's wheat harvest was a record. And we want it to continue to thrive and to prosper, especially as the world seeks to feed another 2.5 to 3 billion human beings in the coming decades, and to do so in a way that is sustainable. We are, of course, putting £3.9 billion into our new rural development programme for England, more than double the size of its predecessor, both to help farmers do that and to support rural businesses.

The rural economy is, however, not just about agriculture, vital though it is. 95% of the rural workforce are employed in other sectors. If you look beyond the fields and hedgerows you will see that rural areas boast businesses of all shapes and sizes, producing and providing all sorts of goods and services. Lift the thatch of a cottage in Exmoor or the slates on a barn in Swaledale and you might find a high-tech start-up business, a consultancy firm, or a design studio. In rural Kirkbymoorside, not too far from where we are today, you will find a firm producing structural composites for some of the world's largest companies. In a converted country house not far from Leeds-Bradford airport, you will find an award-winning healthcare technology company that produces unique fabric strips to replace damaged ligaments. And last year I visited a company near Evesham that sells jute shopping bags , in huge demand as shoppers move away from plastic. The company does the designs for the bags in Worcestershire, sends them electronically to India for printing. They then import the bags which they sell to retailers, including the major supermarket chains. These are just three examples, and there are so many others, of thriving rural businesses.

I tell you, there's no shortage of entrepreneurs in rural areas. You can see this particularly in the growth of high-tech and high-skill businesses. The CRC tells us that last ten years has seen a rise of nearly 300,000 people working in these businesses in rural areas, an increase more than twice that of urban areas. And new research by Defra and the Office of National Statistics shows that productivity in rural areas is as high as it is in urban areas outside of London.

We are at a point in human history where, for the first time, over half of the world's population are now living in towns and cities, but in Britain, the growth in population in rural areas has actually outstripped that in urban areas for each of the last four decades. And it's not hard to see why rural Britain is so popular. Average incomes are higher. Unemployment is lower. So are crime rates. School results are better. And rural areas tend to be rich in one of the greatest resources we have as human beings, a sense of community. I saw that in Ashton Hayes in Cheshire last year which is working hard to become Britain's first low carbon village. Ordinary people, in their own words, doing extraordinary things.

But not everything is rosy. There is also poverty. Real poverty, not as concentrated as in our cities, but there in homes and communities. That's why the Government has worked so hard to lift children out of it. And I'm glad to say that in recent years, the number of children living in poverty in rural areas has declined faster than the national average. But, of course, much more work needs to be done. It's a job for all of us, and I welcome the new £20 million scheme announced recently by the DCSF, DWP and the Treasury that includes specific help for children living in rural areas.

So, what does this picture of the rural economy and the challenges it faces mean for the way we think about it? Rural areas are not small cities, nor should they be treated as such. The rural economy isn't a backwater and it doesn't need special care. It contributes hugely to the economy, but it is different from urban areas and its needs are different too, just as there are significant differences between rural areas. My job is to ensure that in Government we recognise and act on those differences, where we need to, and to champion that part of our country where one-in-five people in the UK live.

This is what we mean when we talk about 'mainstreaming' and 'rural-proofing', not brilliantly evocative words, to tell the truth - but it's about national, regional and local government working to understand the needs and interests of rural residents, businesses and communities, and then incorporating what we have learned into the work we do every day.

Now I must tell you, Stuart, that your report has done a huge amount to raise the profile of rural affairs across government. And I am delighted today to be able to launch our response to your report. What we're saying is this: the rural economy is strong, diverse and resilient, but we need to redouble our efforts. We need to shout about the successes, and the innovation that we see, to change the way people perceive the rural economy, and to continue to champion its cause across government. And it is vital that we both help the rural economy through the current downturn, and take the right decisions for the future to help it prosper in the recovery, when it comes. And, in that spirit, I want to look at three important areas: housing, energy, and broadband.

First, housing and development. There are great pressures on the housing market at the moment. That's why the government is taking steps to help homeowners and first-time buyers in urban and in rural areas. That's why we're expanding the availability of shared equity. And that's why we're working so closely with lenders to keep people in their homes, by for example extending the income support for mortgage interest payments to help people when they've fallen on hard times. Decent housing enables people to create communities, and to build the local economy. Now in rural areas, the tensions, let's be honest, between economic growth on the one hand and quality of life on the other can be a real barrier. That's why the Prime Minister asked Matthew Taylor to conduct a review on how land use and planning can better support rural business and affordable housing.

Now, I am a passionate defender of our natural heritage, our landscape, our wildlife and our biodiversity. But in protecting nature we must also recognise people's need for somewhere to live and for a job. As Matthew Taylor's review sets out, small villages can be characterised as 'unsustainable' and then denied development to help change that. I don't think that's a very sensible interpretation of sustainability. In my view there is no such thing as an unsustainable place, only unsustainable ways of doing things. Sustainability is not about choosing the environment over development, it is about recognising both and striking a balance. That's the CRC's approach; and that's my approach. And I don't think we should take a nostalgic view of rural areas either, the view

that says all development is a bad thing. Preserving beauty and character are really important, but you can do that alongside enabling businesses and innovation to thrive.

Let's take a practical example. We all know that rural businesses can find it difficult to recruit and retain staff. And we know that young people often leave to find better opportunities, and better housing, elsewhere. That's why good rural housing is so important. That's why we're investing in it, and I'm pleased to say that over 5,500 new affordable homes are now scheduled for completion in villages across England over the next two years. We want to give communities the means to overcome these problems, and we'll shortly be publishing our response to the Taylor review setting out how we intend to do just that.

The second area is energy. As we strive to overcome dangerous climate change, the way in which we produce our energy will be increasingly important. There's a real opportunity here. Rural areas have some advantages over cities in exploiting renewable technologies. In the US, for example, it is estimated that the next 20 years could see as much as $1 trillion worth of new investment in renewable energy for rural areas. There's no reason why we can't see a big increase too. And in the UK there's a lot going on already. Take anaerobic digestion, using waste to make energy. We've doubled the incentives for AD and we're putting £10 million into demonstration projects. What a way to deal with farm slurry and food waste to generate power. Take the example of Community Energy Solutions, here in Yorkshire and Humber, and in the North East. This project is delivering mains gas connections and community-based renewable technologies under pilot schemes co-funded with the RDAs. That's energy generated in local communities, for local communities, and we're taking steps, with feed-in tariffs, which will enable individuals, communities and businesses to sell the energy they've generated back to the grid. Or look at Saltash in Cornwall where they've just 'switched on' the first biomass woodchip boiler in the region, set up by the South West Bio-Heat Programme and funded by the South West RDA. It will use some 500 tonnes of wood and save around 400 tonnes of CO2 a year, while reducing heating costs by some £40,000 each year.

Third, there's the information and broadband revolution. To borrow Professor Neil Ward's phrase, rural economies are now in the age of 'the modem and the barn conversion'. It is technology that has helped rural entrepreneurship to grow. It is technology that has allowed home working in rural areas to rise to twice that of urban areas. It is technology that has tempted people to turn their backs on the city, towards a world where the only things that scrape the sky are church spires and great oaks. And it is a specific technology, broadband, which is transforming lives, communities and jobs today. Canals were the arteries of our economy in the 18th century, trains in the 19th century, roads in the 20th century. And in the 21st century it will be broadband.

Broadband is now becoming essential - for individuals, for small businesses and for voluntary organisations. There are some really innovative projects out there bringing broadband to rural areas. NYnet, in North Yorkshire, which was initially funded by Yorkshire Forward, has made cheap broadband available to over 50,000 rural businesses. It is estimated to have brought in hundreds of thousands of pounds of investment by enabling entrepreneurs to thrive in areas that might previously have been off limits, while also connecting communities, and public services to the network. The project has become a model. I know that many rural communities are, however, still unable to access broadband. I know how important it is for rural communities and businesses, the more remote you are, the more important it can be to be connected. And I know about the barriers that still need to be overcome - not just access, but also quality, speed and cost.

That's why last week we announced our intention that by 2012, in just three years' time, broadband, of up to 2 megabits per second, should be a universal service. I will be working hard to ensure that access for rural areas is a central part of government plans for the future of broadband. It's taking steps like these that will best help the rural economy through the recession and best assist it to prepare for the economy of the future. There's been a lot of talk this week about 1991, the last time the country saw such heavy snow. And of course, 1991 was also the last time the country was facing the chill wind of recession. Then, rural areas were unprotected and ill-equipped for what happened to them. But in recent years the support available has been transformed. When the RDAs were created in 1999, they provided a new kind of help for businesses, based on knowing what was happening on the ground. And with 30% of that help going to rural businesses, they are in an ideal position to target support where it's most needed. In addition, the Rural Development Programme for England will put £600 million in to support small businesses, improve the quality of life, and provide better infrastructure. It will also provide help for diversification, and for tourism. A Visit Britain survey in December found that about one-in-five people who took a foreign holiday last year plan to save money this year by choosing the UK instead.

So, Stuart, I think the rural economy's future lies in diversity, resilience, capacity for change, innovation, and a lot of potential waiting to be tapped. That was what you really said in your report. And I promise you that as a government, we will continue to work with you at the CRC and with all of you to ensure that our rural communities can make their full contribution to the future of this country. Our rural communities are the roots from which we grew. They've shaped our history, they've shaped our culture and they've shaped the way in which we see ourselves. And by their efforts, they are helping to shape the future too. Thank you.

EXTRACT 4: THE RURAL CHALLENGE (The Rural Coalition, August 2010)

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The Rural Challenge

Achieving sustainable rural communities for the 21st century

The Rural Coalition













This report

This report is about a future for rural England in which every rural community can thrive. It presents a shared policy agenda for rural communities, and its overriding objective is to help achieve a positive, lasting legacy of sustainable rural communities in which people enjoy living and working; which are vibrant, distinctive and in keeping with the character of their surroundings, with a full range of good-quality local services; and which enhance local landscapes, heritage and biodiversity while meeting the challenges of climate and economic change. It proposes urgent, implementable changes that pick up and respond to the concerns that the partners in the new Coalition Government have already stated they wish to address.

The Rural Coalition comprises the following organisations:

- **Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE).**
- **Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).**
- **The Country Land and Business Association (CLA).**
- **The Local Government Group (LG Group).**
- **The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).**
- **The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA).**

The Commission for Rural Communities brought the Rural Coalition together in September 2008 and has supported the Rural Coalition Chair and its Members with the production of this report and with technical advice on its content.
The Rural Coalition has also been supported and advised by:

- **Action for Market Towns (AMT).**
- **The Rural Services Network (RSN).**
- **The Carnegie UK Trust Rural Community Development Programme.**
- **The Plunkett Foundation.**

Further helpful advice has been provided by:

- **The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE).**
- **English Heritage (EH).**
- **National Association of Local Councils (NALC).**
- **The National Housing Federation (NHF).**
- **The English National Parks Authorities Association (ENPAA).**

The Rural Challenge. Achieving sustainable rural communities for the 21st century
© The Rural Coalition. August 2010
Published on behalf of the Rural Coalition by the Town and Country Planning Association, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AS

Printed by RAP Spiderweb Ltd, Clowes Street, Hollinwood, Oldham OL9 7LY

local economy of rural communities. In 2008 alone the net migration from urban to rural areas was 92,000 people.[3] This migratory trend has social, environmental and economic implications – not least that, as increasing numbers made the choice to move from urban to rural communities, with limited housing supply, house prices in many rural settlements were pushed up beyond the means of local people.

- The stock of affordable homes in rural areas has historically been proportionately lower than in urban areas. A slow rate of build, and a significant decline in the number of affordable homes as Right to Buy sales have not been replaced, has impacted disproportionately on the current rural stock of affordable housing. By 2008, 315,506 households in predominantly rural districts were on Local Authority housing waiting lists, but the proportion of affordable homes in rural areas is little more than half that in urban communities.[4] Low local wages and a lack of affordable homes in our villages mean that the people who do the work in the countryside – on the farms, in the shops, in the huge diversity of local businesses – are increasingly priced out of housing near where they work. Already many rural workers are forced to commute from towns, and some businesses now fail to find employees or rely on migrant temporary labour. ONS (Office for National Statistics) figures show that in June 2010 there were 91,581 unfilled vacancies in rural England.[5]

- Rural economies provide millions of jobs, are home to half a million businesses, and are worth nearly £145,000 million to the national economy every year.[6] They are critical for meeting the need for national sustainability in the context of climate change. The planning system has rightly played a decisive role in protecting the open countryside, historic towns and charming villages which are of themselves assets of significant environmental, social, cultural, and economic value. Too often, however, planning practice for rural areas has failed to meet the unique housing, work and services requirements of the people who live and work in these communities. With fewer young families and low-income households able to access housing in villages, services like schools, buses, and Post Offices become even less viable – and if lost altogether further threaten the sustainability of communities. From 1998 to 2009 there have been 285 rural primary school closures,[7] and the pace of closures of village schools is rising once again, despite the presumption against the closure of village schools adopted by Government in 2009.[8]

- Rural England is actually more dependent on public sector jobs than is urban England. On average 33% of jobs in predominantly rural authorities are public sector, compared with 27% for other authorities. That means that as public spending is cut back, the economic, employment and service delivery impacts are potentially greatest across rural communities.[9]

- Rural services will be more vulnerable than most to public finance constraints since rural service delivery, even at its most effective, is more expensive per head of population than in urban areas.[10] Pressures to deliver more for less money will inevitably lead to further loss of local services altogether – unless communities are empowered, as the term 'Big Society' suggests, to design appropriate local service levels and means of delivery, building on a rural culture of self-help that is already very high.

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3 *State of the Countryside 2010*. CRC 119. Commission for Rural Communities, July 2010. http://ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/sotc/sotc2010.pdf

4 *State of the Countryside Update: Housing demand and supply*. CRC Web 42. Commission for Rural Communities, February 2010. www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/CRC%20Web%2042.pdf

5 Jobcentre Plus, Unfilled vacancies data. Office for National Statistics, June 2010

6 *State of the Countryside 2010*. CRC 119. Commission for Rural Communities, July 2010. http://ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/sotc/sotc2010.pdf

7 *State of the Countryside Update: Children and educational services*. CRC Web 43. Commission for Rural Communities, March 2010. http://ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/CRC%20WEB43%20SOTC%20Update_TAGGED180310.pdf

8 See www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/publications/documents/laeruralschoolclosures/

9 See www.roseregeneration.co.uk/media/Cameron%20County%20Press%20Release%20Background.pdf

10 In 2004 Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) commissioned Secta to review published evidence that supports (or contradicts) the Rural Premium. Secta found that collectively the studies reviewed concluded that 'rural areas face greater difficulties in providing services to the same standard of effectiveness at the same levels of costs as in urban areas and that as a result either cost is higher (in rural areas) or performance (response times, access and so on) is lower'

6.4 Local Authorities should recognise that there will often be a very strong case for individual **communities obtaining visible benefits, community facilities and community-led services from accepting more development in their area**, to support community facilities and community-led services. The forthcoming Decentralisation and Localism Bill should ensure that there are straightforward mechanisms to enable this.
See Recommendation 38

We need to act now

These measures will not only improve economic, social and environmental sustainability; they will create a virtuous cycle. If more affordable housing, better services and a more vibrant economy means people on a broader range of incomes can afford to live in rural communities, it may increase their social diversity and sustainability. If they support a broader range of community services, shops and work, then people will need to travel less, not more.

In terms of housing, jobs or services, existing or new development, or stretching increasingly limited government funding further, we need to move away from asking 'Is this settlement sustainable?' – which too often leads to a decision to prevent any development, cut back services, and refuse any change. Rather, we must ask how can we enhance the sustainability of this community, taking account of social, economic and environmental concerns – which means embracing the right sort of change. And the people we need to ask first are the communities themselves.

Finally, **the Rural Coalition itself is committed to building on this report by continuing to work together to influence the thinking and behaviour of national and local politicians and planning professionals**.

EXTRACT 5: THE FUTURE IS RURAL TOO (The Rural Coalition, 2009)

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The future is rural too

The Rural Coalition:

ACRE

Campaign to Protect Rural England

CLA Country Land & Business Association

LGA group

RTPI

Vibrant villages

The protection of the built heritage, natural environment and landscape in and around rural villages continues to be critical. But when protection becomes thoughtless – when the immediate instinct is to say no to almost everything – then 'protection' can have a perversely negative effect. Villages are denied the chance to respond organically to change, and so to remain vibrant living, working communities. 'Sustainability' doesn't mean a slavish adherence to what exists – no development at all can lead to the local school, shop and pub closing for lack of custom as the community ages, or as commuters and holiday homes displace local families.

Villages need to be encouraged and empowered to make the changes needed to sustain them. Affordable housing can meet the needs of those working and growing up in rural communities who could never otherwise afford a local home, and local jobs help sustain schools and other services that may close if working families can no longer afford to live there.

Thriving economies

Not all economic developments are good and not all economic developments are bad. To distinguish between the two, on a case-by-case basis, is seldom easy. It seems safer to say no. As a result, potentially valuable kinds of economic development are all too often blocked in principle, without considering the contribution they can make to supporting both the local community and the national economy – and without undesirable consequences for heritage or environment. The result is that local jobs in rural communities are amongst the lowest paid in the UK – 20% below the national average. Vital opportunities to use the land to meet the challenge of climate change are missed and the fruitful development of both rural communities and the national economy is held back.

Climate change makes land-based businesses even more important, and modern communications makes all kinds of businesses more workable in rural communities than ever before. Planning policies need to recognise that, if proposed developments are in keeping with their location and of suitable scale, they should be assessed with optimism. And if they seem likely to help local employment needs and increase the economic, social and environmental sustainability of even the smallest communities, they should be warmly welcomed.

EXTRACT 6: RESEARCH INTO RURAL HOUSING AFFORDABILITY (2010)

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Defra

Research into Rural Housing Affordability

Final Report

TRANSPORT
TRAFFIC
DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN
ECONOMICS
MARKET RESEARCH

Executive Summary

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) commissioned Colin Buchanan and Nick Gallent and Steve Robinson of University College London to conduct a study into rural housing centring on three inter-related issues:

- local affordability as it impacts on change in communities, stability and social networks;
- how the attributes of a rural location affect prices / affordability;
- the expectation of priority for housing amongst local populations, its rationale, its benefits and drawbacks and its achievability.

The objective is to expand the Department's rural evidence base, increasing its understanding of rural housing market dynamics and the part played by housing access in supporting the development of communities.

The study consisted of: a literature review; case studies in four rural districts involving focus groups (mainly made up of local residents with formal and informal roles in the village e.g. shopkeeper, school teacher) and household surveys; and an hedonic price analysis to determine the influence of aspects of rurality on rural house prices. The literature review (summarised in chapter 2) led to the development of critical questions that were addressed in the focus groups and household surveys.

The case study areas were selected to reflect the differing typographies of rural areas as defined by Lowe and Ward. The typologies and districts chosen were:

- Dynamic commuter: (relatively high population densities with young to middle-age, high-income professional classes predominating. Economically closely connected to adjoining urban areas with high levels of out-commuting) - Mid Sussex.
- Deep rural: (reflect traditional notions of the 'countryside', agriculture, particularly livestock farming and tourism form an important aspect of the local economy. Population and income levels are below rural averages) - South Shropshire.
- Retirement retreat: (popular retirement destinations, found particularly along the coast, retirement-related services including leisure, social care and health are significant sources of jobs) - North Norfolk.
- Transient rural: (situated relatively close to urban centres and, as sources of local employment are not substantial, they experience significant levels of out-commuting) – Selby.

Within each of these districts, villages/parishes were selected that typified the broad characteristics of their typographies. The key findings of the study are set out under the three issues covered.

Housing affordability and its consequences

Rural housing affordability, explored in chapter 4, hinges a great deal around 'within' and 'without' affordability. Essentially, what are the consequences of the expectation that, on the one hand, housing within a village will meet local needs against the alternative expectation that access to affordable homes in nearby towns is sufficient? The case studies highlighted that the majority of respondents felt local housing was not affordable especially for young people and that supply issues, both in terms of the type of new housing built and approaches to the allocation of social/council housing were contributory factors. However, it was also recognised that while young people had had to move away from the village to find property, this move was often principally for employment reasons.

There were mixed views as to whether it was acceptable for local people to have to move from the village to access affordable housing. In Mid Sussex and Selby over 60% of respondents believed it was acceptable to move to the closest town or elsewhere within the district to obtain housing while in South Shropshire and Norfolk that proportion was 47% and 30% respectively. In general in the less

transient and more dispersed case study areas it was significantly less acceptable for people to have to move away from their own village.

If people should not have to move away from their village, where should new housing be provided? The focus groups tended to oppose new building believing that in the past it had not met a local housing need and as a consequence they preferred alternative solutions. The vast majority of survey respondents felt that housing should be provided within or on the outskirts of the village but to meet the needs of local people. There was also little contradiction in peoples' views. So, for example, North Norfolk residents believed it was least acceptable for people to have to move elsewhere in the district for their housing needs and were the most receptive to having new housing built locally. Whilst the residents of Mid Sussex were more receptive to people having to move to neighbouring towns and were the most likely to prefer new housing to meet local need being built in the closest town.

When asked how long they expect to remain in the village survey respondents in Mid Sussex were far more likely to move. Almost a third of respondents expected to move within ten years compared to less than a tenth in North Norfolk. Across all the districts, housing issues were the main reason for people considering moving - making up a third of reasons, suggesting that they did not expect that their future housing needs could be met locally. The next biggest reason for moving, in a fifth of cases was employment, followed by a desire to move closer to family members.

Chapter 4 goes on to explore evidence for the importance of social networks in sustaining communities (from p.30), which emerged strongly from the case studies. This was in terms of the extent to which newcomers were considered active in village life and how this supported the village 'life-cycle' i.e. the balance between younger residents, families and older people. Life-cycle issues and their importance for the long term social sustainability of villages were raised consistently in the focus groups. It was felt that newcomers did not always support this through using local services (e.g. schools by or getting involved in the community even at the most basic level.

In the surveys, residents who had lived in a village between 5-20 years typically socialised with more people than five years ago, suggesting that as time goes on newcomers' circle of acquaintances increases within a fairly stable population as one might expect. It was clear that a village school or nursery and having children in general served as a 'gateway' to meeting people and forming networks.

However, amongst the longer standing residents i.e. those who had lived in the villages more than 20 years, over a fifth reported that they socialised with fewer people as time went on. Older residents reported friends moving away or dying and finding few opportunities to meet newcomers, with the loss of local facilities such as pubs and less church going among younger residents. This was a factor commented upon in the focus groups where there was a concern raised about a number of older residents living in near isolation. In some cases newcomers (wealthier commuters, second home owners, younger) were seen as being very different with little in common with existing (longer-term) residents.

Influences on house prices

House prices and the factors that influence them provided a more quantitative focus in chapter 5. We approached the issue of influence from several angles: investigations in parish meetings (attempting to understand why migrants were drawn to particular locations and remained there), insights from the village surveys, a focused telephone survey of estate agents (highlighting patterns of apparent purchaser preference) and a statistical analysis of the Valuation Office residential property sales data.

The initial literature review (from p.7) highlighted some of the obvious influences on house prices, linked to location, to property characteristics and to the value placed on living in a rural area (for example, the utility value derived from access to open countryside, the perception of peace and quiet and the belief that a greater community spirit can be found in rural areas). These issues were investigated in the meetings and surveys, with the aim being to tie generic attributes to the case studies and to particular locations. The key factors in attracting people to the case study villages, and

hence influences on house prices, were predominantly accessibility, local facilities, schools, rurality and the sense of community.

The household surveys highlighted considerable differences between the villages in terms of the importance of transport accessibility in the choice of village of those who had recently moved in. For Mid Sussex, which attracted many out-commuters, the ability to commute conveniently to work scored highly. This was especially true in relation to rail access highlighting the importance of being able to access central London. In the other districts good links to neighbouring towns were more important than a convenient commute to work.

While participants of the focus groups believed the availability of local facilities were important the household surveys stated this was less so in attracting recent incomers. With incomers having high car ownership the availability of services within the village itself was not regarded as crucial, but rather it was the ability to access such services in nearby towns that was important.

The importance of the quality of local schools in attracting people to a village varied depending on the typography of the districts. In Mid Sussex, which had many professionals with young families, it was important to over 80% of recent incomers. In Selby, which attracted a more varied group of incomers it was only important to around half.

However, the household surveys highlighted that the most important factors in attracting people to the villages surveyed were those related to their environment or rurality. Across the villages around 90% of respondents reported that issues such as peace and tranquillity, quality of the surrounding environment and safety and security were important in their choice of location.

The next step was to take the findings of the survey and see if these could be quantified in terms of their influence on property prices (from p.45 chapter 5). Simply mapping house prices (using average price per room data) across all four districts showed prices were higher in the rural areas. However, the price of a home is some function of its structural and locational attributes which may include:

- Structural (number of rooms, plot size, garage, garden, age etc);
- Neighbourhood (e.g. crime rates, employment rate, private home ownership etc);
- Accessibility (e.g. distance to schools, shops, transport etc); and
- Surrounding environment (e.g. quality of open space, natural and built environment, noise level etc);
- Housing supply constraints relative to more urban areas

It is not possible to obtain data for all these factors, especially those in relation to property specific issues and relative supply constraints (which were treated as a given in the rural areas surveyed) but this was possible for many of the locational attributes. For each attribute that data is available correlation analysis was undertaken to determine key explanatory variables of house prices by district. Once this had been done regressions were run to assess the degree to which the explanatory variables determined the variation in house prices in each district.

The limitations of the analysis should be noted in terms of the “goodness of fit” of the results which, depending on the district, are only able to account for 50-60% of the variation in price. This reflects that some structural attributes not captured within the model are important factors influencing house prices. However, it was clear that in terms of the locational factors rurality was a key driver in all districts being responsible for around 10% of the total variation in property price. However, there are varying degrees of rurality, with prices rising as one moves further from urban areas but then they start to fall again moving into very rural areas as access to services becomes remote. Other specific factors vary by district. For example in Mid Sussex access to schools and services were most important, whereas in North Norfolk, being in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was responsible for the largest variation in price.

Local Priority

The third focus of the study, set out in chapter 6, was the potential policy response: the case for interventions that support 'local' needs, whether existing interventions have local support or how communities would like to see them adjusted to better reflect local realities.

The household surveys looked to investigate this in much greater detail in an attempt to reveal exactly who village residents consider to be 'local'. So how is a local defined? Someone who lives in the village is generally regarded as local, usually followed by someone who used to live in the village and still has a family connection to it. After that there are some marked differences between districts. In Mid Sussex people who are active or who work in the village but who do not live there are much more likely to be regarded as local than is the case in the other districts.

A second issue within this theme is how long you have to live in the village before you are considered a local. Again Mid Sussex stands out as being more accepting, with the majority of respondents regard someone a local who has lived one year or more in the village, whereas in Selby 48% believe you have to be in the village for more than 10 years before you can be regarded as local.

Across all the villages it is the case that the longer a respondent has lived in the village, the longer they believe another person should have lived in the village before they can be regarded as local. In terms of distance from the village, people who live in the closest village but not in the nearest town or the wider county are generally considered as local.

Having defined a local person, the final question was concerned with whether people who are local should receive priority in terms of locally provided affordable homes. There were differences in this respect between the focus groups and the survey results. The focus groups were clearly of the view that any additional housing should principally go to local people. The survey indicated that respondents were more open to the needs of people across the district but that it was appropriate that some account should be given to local people in the allocation of affordable homes within the village.

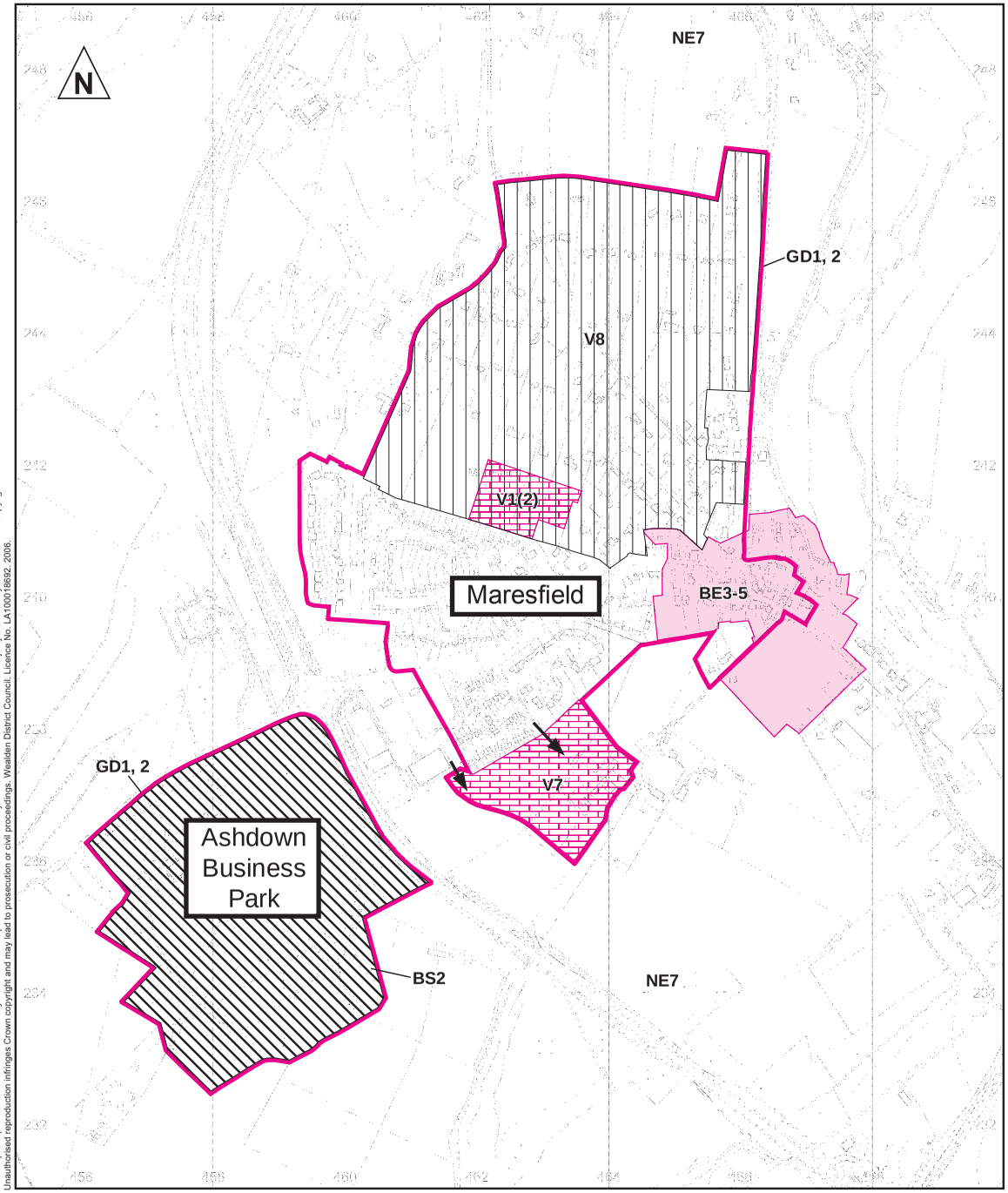
The full conclusions of the report are set out from page 68, but in summary these include:

- That local affordability (driven in part by lack of supply of a range of property types) is an issue that leads to young people moving away from rural areas but there is also a widely shared recognition that employment factors play an equal part.
- The acceptability of people having to move away to the nearest town to access housing varies between the districts, but is generally higher in more dynamic (i.e. commuting affected) areas than in more isolated areas.
- Networks are built around family-ties and for in-migrants, in particular, the use of local facilities especially schools. In those localities with a higher turnover of people (leading to fewer local family ties) and few facilities (and hence less interaction) it can become harder to maintain networks, especially for older people who can become isolated.
- Rurality is a key driver of property prices provided there is still access to key services (even if these are in neighbouring towns). Other key drivers relate to the typography of the district. So where many residents commute out of the village the ability to access employment outside the district is important.
- The definition of a local person again varies by typography; districts with a more transient population embrace far more people as local, while in more stable communities and in older populations people are regarded as requiring much closer links with a village and to have lived there longer to be regarded as local.
- Nevertheless, a willingness to become involved in the community has a big impact in attitudes, and facilities such as schools are important in assimilating newcomers.
- The predominant view was that the needs of local people should be taken into account in the allocation of local affordable housing and some villages had sought their own routes to achieving this. However there is also recognition among the existing population that people outside the area with housing needs should also be accommodated.

APPENDIX A: LOCATION PLAN – ASHDOWN BUSINESS PARK

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Inset Map No. 40
Maresfield



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LOCATION PLAN:
ASHDOWN BUSINESS PARK,
MARESFIELD

Click here for proposals map

Image Source:
Wealden DC Non-Statutory Local Plan, 2005

KEY

- Inset Map Boundary
- Development Boundary
- Conservation Area
- Main Business Area
- Housing Policy Area
- Housing Allocation
- Vehicular Access Point

Plan wide policies are listed on the main Proposals Map.

Wealden Local Plan — Proposals Map

0 100 200 metres

Non Statutory Wealden Local Plan : December 2005

APPENDIX B: TECHNICAL NOTE - DEVELOPMENT IMPACT UPON ASHDOWN FOREST

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Subject	Wealden District Council Core Strategy: Examination in Public Matter 2: SETTLEMENT HIERACHY AND RURAL STRATGEY (WCS6) Appendix B Technical Note TN111201: Maresfield - Development impact upon Ashdown Forest
Prepared by	SKM Colin Buchanan
On behalf of	David Wilson Homes

Introduction

1. The Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) of the Core Strategy undertaken in August 2011 calculates the impact of the scale of new housing allocated to Maresfield, Uckfield and Crowborough in the Core Strategy on the Ashdown Forest.

2. The HRA follows guidance contained within the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB; Highways Agency 2007) to assess the impact of new development on roads and thus impact on local air quality and nitrogen deposition levels.

3. In this case, assessing development impact relates primarily to the potential change in Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) on roads, with an affected road being classified as one that has a change in traffic flow of 1,000 movements.

4. The HRA demonstrates that the proposed amount and distribution of development included within the draft Core Strategy at Maresfield, Uckfield and Crowborough will have no adverse effects on the ecological integrity of any European site, including Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA).

5. The HRA shows that the housing figures allocated to Maresfield, Uckfield and Crowbough in the Core Strategy do not result in any roads in the Ashdown Forest having a change in traffic flow of 1,000 movements or greater. Indeed, the calculations in the HRA show that there is capacity on all the roads through the Ashdown Forest.

6. This Technical Note seeks to establish the maximum quantum of additional development within Maresfield that can be accommodated before the cumulative impact of development traffic (and thus nitrogen deposition levels) on Ashdown Forest is considered unacceptable.

7. The HRA calculates the impact of 61 additional residential units in Maresfield on the Ashdown Forest. This figure is derived from the 50 units allocated in the Core Strategy plus eleven units that have been granted permission in Maresfield.

8. Based on the methodology adopted within the HRA, the work presented in this Technical Note shows that 170 additional housing units over and above the 61

included in the HRA can be accommodated in Maresfield before any link road in the Ashdown Forest exceeds 1,000 AADT. This would suggest that the potential development quantum for Maresfield may be 231 units. The Technical Note does though also show that there is still additional headroom on other links in the Ashdown forest, which suggests that the potential for new housing may be greater still.

HRA Methodology

9. To assess the impact of the net increase in scale of development on the ecological integrity of Ashdown Forest in terms of traffic movements and air quality, the analysis presented in this Technical Note has used the same methodology that was adopted within the HRA.

10. The HRA methodology relies on guidance contained within the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB; Highways Agency 2007) on the assessment of the impact of road projects on local air quality. The HRA confirms that the guidance is also appropriate for existing roads.

- The DMRB includes criteria for defining an affected road as follows:
- Road alignment will change by 5 metres or more; or
- Daily traffic flows will change by 1,000 AADT or more; or
- Heavy Duty Vehicle (HDV) flows will change by 200 AADT or more; or
- Daily average speed will change by 10km/hr or more; or
- Peak hour speed will change by 20km/hr or more.

11. In this case, assessing development impact relates primarily to the potential change in Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT), with an affected road being classified as one that has a change in traffic flow of 1,000 movements.

12. The HRA quantified the vehicular trip generation associated with development proposals included within the draft Core Strategy, adopted an appropriate distribution profile, and calculated whether there was a resultant change in observed AADT flows above this threshold.

13. The full methodology, which is described in Box 2 of the HRA, is not re-produced in this note. The findings of the HRA in terms of additional AADT on routes in close proximity to Ashdown Forest are indicated in Table 5.2 of the HRA and reproduced below as Table 1.

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Table 1: Additional Annual Average Daily Traffic Flows (AADT) on Ashdown Forest and Highway Links from Allocations and Commitments in Uckfield and Crowborough (HRA Table 5.2)

Link	Additional AADT (HRAWCS)
A22 north of Forest Row	583
A22 Forest Row - Wych Cross	583
A22 Wych Cross - Nutley	583
A22 Nutley - Maresfield	506
A26 Maresfield - Duddleswell Road	773
A26 Duddleswell Road - Crowborough	950
B2026 Maresfield - Duddleswell	105
B2026 Duddleswell - B2188	179
B2026 B2188 - Kidds Hill	179
B2026 Kidds Hill - Hartfield	105
B2188 B2026 - Friars Gate	0
Kidds Hill	74
Colemans Hatch - Wych Cross	0
Duddleswell Road (west)	77
Duddleswell Road (east)	151
B2110 Colemans Hatch - Forest Row	74

14. Table 1 clearly demonstrates that development proposals in the draft Core Strategy do not result in any road exceeding the additional AADT threshold of 1,000 movements, with the A26 Duddleswell Road – Crowborough being the most sensitive with an additional AADT of 950 vehicle movements.

Net Increase in Development Impact

15. The HRA methodology used the TRICS database to adopt a strategic AADT trip rate of 2.21 vehicles per household.

16. In terms of distribution of these movements onto the local road network, Table 2 below summarises the distribution profile that was adopted within the HRA for development sites within Uckfield and Maresfield on roads that were classified as relevant to Ashdown Forest.

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Table 1: Distribution Profile

Workplace (LA Area)	% Of Total Trips	Routeing Options	% By Each Route
Rest of Wealden	28%	A22 to Forest Row	5%
		A26 to Crowborough and Eridge	20%
		B2026 to Hartfield	5%
Sevenoaks	1%	A26 to Crowborough and Eridge	100%
Tonbridge and Malling	1%	A26 to Crowborough and Eridge	100%
Tunbridge Wells	5%	A26 to Crowborough and Eridge	100%
Crawley	8%	A22/A264	50%
Mid Sussex	13%	A22 to East Grinstead	33%
Outer London	4%	50% public transport - A22 via East Grinstead	38%
		50% public transport - B2026 via Hartfield toward Edenbridge	12%
Surrey	4%	A22 via East Grinstead	75%
		B2026 via Hartfield towards Edenbridge	25%

17. In order to establish the maximum quantum of development that can be accommodated in Maresfield before any identified link road within the Ashdown Forest accommodates an increase in AADT of 1,000 vehicle movements a range of development numbers have been tested

18. It was found that an additional development of 170 units over and above that already included within the HRA modelling for Maresfield (61 units) would generate an AADT of 376 vehicle movements,115 of which would be on relevant links within Ashdown Forest. This would result in one link (A26 Duddleswell Road) exceeding the threshold of 1,000 additional AADT vehicle movements based on the adopted distribution profile. At a total additional development quantum of 170 units, there would be 1,001 additional AADT vehicle movements on this link. This is summarised below in Tables 3 and 4.

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Table 3: Distribution of Net Increase in AADT (full calculations shown at end of Technical Note)

Workplace (LA Area)	% Of Total Trips	Total AADT	Routeing Options	% By Each Route	Additional AADT
Rest of Wealden	28%	104	A22 to Forest Row	5%	5
			A26 to Crowborough and Eridge	20%	21
			B2026 to Hartfield	5%	5
Sevenoaks	1%	5	A26 to Crowborough and Eridge	100%	5
Tonbridge and Malling	1%	5	A26 to Crowborough and Eridge	100%	5
Tunbridge Wells	5%	19	A26 to Crowborough and Eridge	100%	19
Crawley	8%	29	A22/A264	50%	15
Mid Sussex	13%	47	A22 to East Grinstead	33%	16
Outer London	4%	16	50% public transport - A22 via East Grinstead	38%	6
			50% public transport - B2026 via Hartfield toward Edenbridge	12%	2
Surrey	4%	16	A22 via East Grinstead	75%	12
			B2026 via Hartfield towards Edenbridge	25%	4
Total					115

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Table 4: Additional Annual Average Daily Traffic Flows (AADT) on Ashdown Forest and Highway Links from Allocations and Commitments in Uckfield and Crowborough + Proposed Development

Link	Additional AADT (HRA)	Development AADT	Total AADT
A22 north of Forest Row	583	53	636
A22 Forest Row - Wych Cross	583	53	636
A22 Wych Cross - Nutley	583	53	636
A22 Nutley - Maresfield	506	53	559
A26 Maresfield - Duddleswell Road	773	51	824
A26 Duddleswell Road - Crowborough	950	51	1001
B2026 Maresfield - Duddleswell	105	11	116
B2026 Duddleswell - B2188	179	11	190
B2026 B2188 - Kidds Hill	179	11	190
B2026 Kidds Hill - Hartfield	105	11	116
B2188 B2026 - Friars Gate	0	11	11
Kidds Hill	74	11	85
Colemans Hatch - Wych Cross	0	11	11
Duddleswell Road (west)	77	0	77
Duddleswell Road (east)	151	0	151
B2110 Colemans Hatch - Forest Row	74	0	74

* Flows will come from B2026, therefore never more than 11, but no distribution details included within HRA.

19. In conclusion, based on the methodology adopted within the HRA, the maximum quantum of development that can be accommodated within Maresfield, before any link exceeds 1,000 AADT, is 170 additional units above the 61 included within the HRA model. The potential development quantum for Maresfield is thus 231 units.

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Detailed Traffic Distribution Calculations (overleaf)

Ashdown Forest Appropriate Assessment
Routeing Options (Based on Census JTW); Plus NEW AADTs Allocations and Commitments (1609 HH)

Uckfield	1548
Maresfield	61
Total	1609
HH AADT Trip Rate	2.21
Total AADT Trips	3556

Maresfield Allowance	61
Maresfield Park Farm Lane	11
Net Maresfield	50
Scenario	170

Total Net AADT Trips	376

Ashdown Forest relevant route
Ashdown Forest non-relevant route

Workplace (LA Area)	Out-commuters (2001 person trips all modes	Routeing Options	Total AADT	% Of Total	% By Each Route (persons)	Additional Traffic	Relevant
Eastbourne	91	whole route not within study area	76	2.14%	100.00%		N
Hastings	21	whole route not within study area	18	0.51%	100.00%		N
Lewes	544	whole route not within study area	452	12.71%	100.00%		N
Rother	45	whole route not within study area	38	1.07%	100.00%		N
Rest of Wealden	1177	A22 to Forest Row	980	27.56%	5%	49	Y
		A26 to Crowborough and Eridge			20%	196	Y
		B2026 to Hartfield			5%	49	Y
		A272 E/W, A22/A26 south, whole route not in study area			70.00%		N
Brighton and Hove	238	whole route not within study area	198	5.57%	100.00%		N
Sevenoaks	58	E/W, A22/A26 south, whole route not in study area	48	1.35%	100%	48	Y
Tonbridge and Malling	63	A26 to Crowborough and Eridge	52	1.46%	100%	52	Y
Tunbridge Wells	218	A26 to Crowborough and Eridge	182	5.12%	100%	182	Y
Rest of Kent	51	whole route not within study area	43	1.21%	100.00%		N
Adur	30	whole route not within study area	25	0.70%	100.00%		N
Crawley	332	A22/A264	276	7.76%	50%	138	Y
		A272/A23			50.00%		N
Horsham	39	A272	32	0.90%	100.00%		N
Mid Sussex	536	A272 to Haywards Heath / Burgess Hill etc	446		67.00%		N
		A22 to East Grinstead		12.54%	33%	147	Y
Worthing	24	whole route not within study area	20	0.56%	100%		N
rest of West Sussex	18	whole route not within study area	15	0.42%	100.00%		N
inner/central London	292	all public transport	243	6.83%	100.00%		N
Outer London	188	50% public transport - A22 via East Grinstead	156	4.39%	38%	59	Y
		50% public transport - B2026 via Hartfield toward Edenbridge			12%	19	Y
Surrey	180	A22 via East Grinstead	150	4.22%	75%	113	Y
		B2026 via Hartfield towards Edenbridge			25%	38	Y
Elsewhere in UK	117	all public transport	97	2.73%	100%		N
Outside UK	10	all public transport	8	0.22%	100%		N
Total	4272		3555	100.00%		1089	

Maresfield Relevant Routes Only

Workplace (LA Area)	Out-commuters (2001 person trips all modes	Routeing Options	Total AADT	% Of Total	% By Each Route (persons)	Additional Traffic
Rest of Wealden	1177	A22 to Forest Row	104	27.56%	5%	5
		A26 to Crowborough and Eridge			20%	21
		B2026 to Hartfield			5%	5
Sevenoaks	58	A26 to Crowborough and Eridge	5	1.35%	100%	5
Tonbridge and Malling	63	A26 to Crowborough and Eridge	5	1.46%	100%	5
Tunbridge Wells	218	A26 to Crowborough and Eridge	19	5.12%	100%	19
Crawley	332	A22/A264	29	7.76%	50%	15
Mid Sussex	536	A22 to East Grinstead	47	12.54%	33%	16
Outer London	188	50% public transport - A22 via East Grinstead	16	4.39%	38%	6
		50% public transport - B2026 via Hartfield toward Edenbridge			12%	2
Surrey	180	A22 via East Grinstead	16	4.22%	75%	12
		B2026 via Hartfield towards Edenbridge			25%	4
			242	64.40%		115

an addition	Additional AADT (HRAWCS)	Maresfield Net Additional AADT	Total
A22 north of Forest Row	583	53	636
A22 Forest Row - Wych Cross	583	53	636
A22 Wych Cross - Nutley	583	53	636
A22 Nutley - Maresfield	506	53	559
A26 Maresfield - Duddleswell Road	773	51	824
A26 Duddleswell Road - Crowborou	950	51	1001
B2026 Maresfield - Duddleswell	105	11	116
B2026 Duddleswell - B2188	179	11	190
B2026 B2188 - Kidds Hill	179	11	190
B2026 Kidds Hill - Hartfield	105	11	116
B2188 B2026 - Friars Gate	0	11	11
Kidds Hill	74	11	85
Colemans Hatch - Wych Cross	0	11	11
Duddleswell Road (west)	77	0	77
Duddleswell Road (east)	151	0	151
B2110 Colemans Hatch - Forest Rov	74	0	74

Via A22
Via A26
Via B2026