Settlement Hierarchy and Rural Areas Strategy

a. The categories of settlement are set out in Table 1. They have their basis in Appendix 3 of the Background Document Development of the Proposed Submission CS dated February 2011. It is based on the availability of services within a particular settlement which is an acceptable basis for assessing the sustainability of settlements.

b. The assessment of the individual settlements against the identified criteria is also presented in Appendix 3 of Background Document Development of the Proposed Submission CS dated February 2011. This assessment is subjective and inconsistent. Uckfield for example is identified as a District Centre and in the supporting text it is stated that its town centre role is limited by being surrounded by a number of large shopping destinations. In comparison the same situation identified in respect of Polegate is used as evidence to support this settlement as being only a "Service" centre.

c. With regard to the assessment of Polegate a secondary school is not identified as being within the settlement yet a secondary school is available at Willingdon which is classified as being part of Polegate for the purposes of the CS. The school at Willingdon is actually in comparable proximity to the population of Polegate as secondary schools in other Wealden Towns.

d. The assessment of the individual towns and the usage of the services in the towns is not backed up by written evidence and it is difficult to comprehend. In respect of Polegate why services would be provided in the town to “above average “ level if they are not used? Furthermore the assessment provides the basis for a sustainable distribution strategy and in respect of the Wealden towns has not successfully balanced the availability of public transport services in respect of the presence, availability and frequency of those services at the towns. In particular the very good availability at Polegate has

not been given sufficient weight and the lack of availability, particularly at Stone Cross has also not been acknowledged.

e. The failure to identify Polegate/Willingdon as a District Centre results in the evidence in the CS not being justified as it is not founded on a credible evidence base. This means that the CS cannot be found to be sound as the distribution of development is not justified.

The following revisions are sought.

Table 1 and Figure 2 Settlement Hierarchy.

REVISION SOUGHT. These needs to be amended to place Polegate/Willingdon as a District Centre to take into account the Secondary school at Willingdon which is spatially as close as Secondary schools at Crowborough, Uckfield and Hailsham to the majority of residents in the town. Also to reflect the importance of the mainline railway station at Polegate. The lack of public transport opportunities at Hailsham should also be noted.

Paragraph 3.4. There is no explanation as to why the existing settlement hierarchy is to be reinforced rather than changed. There is a conflict between reinforcing the pattern in the second sentence and promoting more sustainable patterns of development in the third sentence.

REVISION SOUGHT. “Our spatial strategy is to broadly follow this pattern whilst clearly acknowledging that future development in some of these settlements is more sustainable than in others.”

SP04. This needs to be revised to include Polegate as a town to receive more substantial investment in recognition of its ability to provide the most sustainable urban extensions as a result of the facilities and services already in the town, the ability to provide further facilities and services through the redevelopment of the town centre, the best public transport links of any of the

Wealden Towns, land within walking distance of the town centre and the main line railway station together with its proximity to Eastbourne and the higher tier of facilities and services available there.

REVISION SOUGHT. Second sentence to include Polegate with Hailsham and Uckfield.

Paragraph 5.5.

REVISION SOUGHT. Add Polegate to the list of towns where growth will be concentrated.

Paragraph 6.21 third sentence. Revise to reflect limited nature of Stone Cross facilities and identify landscape constraints.

REVISION SOUGHT. Amend third sentence “It has a small neighbourhood centre with a limited range of community facilities, limited bus service and landscape constraints.”