

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

1.1 This plan has been approved by the Council as an Interim Guide for Development Control; as such it forms a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It will help to guide development across the whole of Wealden district until 2011.

1.2 In Wealden District, the development plan currently comprises the Wealden Local Plan, adopted in 1998 together with the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011 (hereafter referred to as the Structure Plan) which was adopted in 1999. This plan does not form part of the development plan as the Council decided not to take it through the statutory process to formal adoption (see below).

The Plan's Status

1.3 This plan emanates from a decision to review the adopted 1998 Wealden Local Plan leading to a replacement plan. This was because of the significant requirement in the Structure Plan for new housing and business development in Wealden and because of the many changes to Government policy which guide development and change.

1.4 Although a First Deposit Draft plan of the Local Plan Review was published in January 2003 under the statutory process, the Council decided on the 19th May 2004 not to progress the Local Plan through to a Public Inquiry and the statutory procedures leading to its formal adoption. A Revised Draft Plan was published in November 2004 as a non statutory plan and following consideration of public representations, the Council approved the plan in December 2005 as an interim guide for development control.

1.5 In making this decision, the Council gave careful consideration to the Governments new requirements under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, namely the need to prepare a Local Development Framework to replace the existing Wealden Local Plan. The Government urged local planning authorities to expedite the completion of their local plan reviews and to progress work on a Local Development Framework.

1.6 As a consequence, the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998) and the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011 will continue to constitute the development plan for the District until replaced by the Local Development Framework. This plan will form a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Weight to be attached to the Plan

1.7 This plan is a non-statutory plan and therefore does not form part of the Development Plan and cannot have the weight attached to a statutory plan which is given by Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. However the extensive work undertaken on both the first deposit draft and the revised draft plan which underlies the non-statutory plan in terms of dealing with objections on the draft local plan and the resolutions made on the proposed policies contained in the plan and in particular the choice of sites following the detailed study of alternative sites, affords this non-statutory plan some status as a material consideration. This work, as a material consideration, will be accorded appropriate weight when dealing with planning applications and referred to in development control reports as and when applications for planning permission are considered. Reports on applications concerning an 'allocated' or 'unallocated' site or a site within or outside of the development boundaries shown in this plan, will contain an explanation of the specific consideration given to the particular site in the local plan process, how objections and proposals for alternative sites or relevant amendments to the relevant policy or development boundary were considered, and the basis for the decision to allocate or not allocate the site the subject of the application in issue in the final version of the non-statutory local plan. Decision making on planning applications will have regard to 'saved' policies from the Development Plan, policies contained within the non-statutory plan, Government guidance and other material planning considerations.

The Purpose of this Plan

1.8 In setting out policies and proposals for the development and use of land, the Plan looks to:-

- bring local planning issues before the public;

- develop the overall policy framework of the Structure Plan;
- provide a detailed framework for the control of development in the District;
- provide a basis for co-ordinating public and private development and for investment decisions.

1.9 Proposals for development will be subject to assessment against all the relevant policies in the Plan.

Key stages of Plan preparation

1.10 The main stages and associated timescale for the preparation of this Local Plan are outlined below:

- Issues Report (February 2000)
- the First Draft Deposit Plan (January 2003)
- the Revised Draft Plan (October 2004)
- Public Consultation (October – November 2004)
- Consideration of representations received (Winter 2005)
- Non-statutory plan (approved by the Council as an Interim Guide for Development Control December 2005)

Written Statement

1.11 Whilst recognising that this plan is non statutory, it remains in the format of a local plan for ease of reference and clarity. The Written Statement (this document) includes the Council's policies and proposals together with a reasoned justification and explanation for their inclusion. The policies and proposals are distinguished by being in bold type and have a reference number.

Proposals Map

1.12 The Proposals Map illustrates each of the detailed policies and proposals in the Written Statement in a precise manner on an Ordnance Survey base. Sites are identified for particular developments or land uses and areas are defined within which particular policies will apply for controlling development. The reference numbers are used to relate areas on the Map to the written policies and proposals.

1.13 The Proposals Map is at a scale of 1:50,000, and in order to show certain areas more clearly a number of Inset Maps have been prepared at a larger scale. Where Insets are

used their boundaries are clearly shown on the Proposals Map.

1.14 The Proposals Map and the Inset Maps for Cade Street, Crowborough, Crowborough Town Centre, Hailsham, Hailsham Town Centre, Heathfield, Hellingly, Lower Horsebridge, North Hailsham, Old Heathfield, Polegate, Polegate Town Centre, Uckfield, Uckfield Town Centre and Willingdon are found in a pocket at the end of this document. All other Insets are bound within the document.

1.15 Whilst not actually forming part of this Plan, the Council has adopted certain supplementary planning guidance to supplement the policies and proposals in the adopted Wealden Local Plan.

