

Chapter 3

General Development Principles

Introduction

3.1 This Local Plan sets out detailed policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land, and consequently will guide most planning decisions. This chapter highlights basic development principles which proposals should meet and describes the use of development boundaries as a policy tool.

Development Criteria

3.2 A number of policies in the Local Plan set out general planning criteria that will be applicable to most forms of development. In order to assist applicants and other users of the Plan, these are listed below:

Policy BE1	Design
Policy BE2	Design for people with mobility difficulties
Policy TR1	Accessibility
Policy TR2	Transport requirements
Policy TR5	Car Parking
Policy TR8	Pedestrian and cycle routes
Policy CS1	General infrastructure provision
Policy CS5	Surface water drainage

3.3 However, it is important to appreciate that the Local Plan should be read as a whole; the individual policies and proposals must not be considered in isolation from each other. Often several different policies will be applicable to a single development proposal. In reaching decisions on planning applications, the Council and others involved in decision making will consider all the relevant plan policies, together with other material considerations.

3.4 For this reason, cross-referencing of policies in the Local Plan is considered unnecessary and inappropriate. The repetition of standard planning criteria in every site-specific policy has similarly been avoided.

Development Boundaries

3.5 The Council has adopted the use of 'development boundaries' to make a clear distinction between town or village areas where certain forms of development may be appropriate and the rural area where, normally, the protection and enhancement of the countryside is of paramount importance. Structure Plan policies propose the definition of development boundaries for towns and villages where appropriate.

3.6 Development boundaries define the areas where, in principle, new development would be permitted subject to other proposals and policies in this Plan. New development will generally be contained within the development boundaries.

3.7 Outside the development boundaries, the Council will resist development in accordance with the Plan's more restrictive countryside policies, seeking to conserve and enhance the rural environment, although certain forms of development may be allowed such as the re-use of rural buildings and land in the interests of the rural economy and low cost housing for local need. New housing, industrial or commercial development will not be allowed outside the development boundaries unless provided for through the specific policies of the Local Plan.

3.8 Some of the countryside around Wealden's towns and villages is particularly vulnerable to development pressure. In line with the Structure Plan, an important objective of the Plan and policies GD1 and GD2 in particular, is to prevent development that would result in the eventual coalescence of nearby settlements and the loss of their individual identities.

3.9 The Plan's policies are therefore expressed in the terms of either within or outside the development boundaries or Plan wide. References to the 'countryside' or the rural area in this Plan refer to the area outside the development boundaries, which will include the smaller settlements without such a boundary.

3.10 It is important to note that the development boundary is a policy line applying Structure and Local Plan policies to a specific area, thereby giving a sound basis for development control decisions. It does not

attempt to define town or village limits in physical or social terms.

3.11 Development boundaries have full regard to the physical and landscape characteristics of the particular settlement. They are only drawn after a careful examination and consideration of such features on the ground. Development boundaries will often exclude existing development on the periphery of the town or village; this represents a clear statement of policy that normally no further development should be permitted in order to preserve the landscape and environmental quality of such fringe areas. It is in these areas that the gaps and open nature of development are often a major contributing feature to the overall rural character of the area.

3.12 In defining development boundaries the Council has had regard to:

- a) the land required as part of the distribution of development strategy to meet housing, business and other development needs;
- b) conserving designated areas of national and local importance by reason of their landscape, archaeological, geological, ecological or historical character, and their settings;
- c) protecting the individual character and settings of the towns and villages and the surrounding countryside;
- d) preventing development which would lead to the coalescence of settlements and the loss of their individual identities;
- e) preventing development in fringe areas where gaps and the open nature of development contributes to the rural character of the area;
- f) protecting recreational areas and other public or private open spaces; and
- g) the need to follow physical features on the ground wherever possible (e.g. walls, roads, watercourses, field boundaries etc).

Policy GD1

Within the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, new development will be permitted provided that it is in accordance with the other policies and proposals in the Plan.

Policy GD2

Outside the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, development will be resisted unless it is in accordance with specific policies in this Plan.