

Chapter 9

Transport

Introduction

9.1 An efficient transport system is vital to support a healthy economy and to maintain a quality of life for the people who live and work in the District. As a predominantly rural area, Wealden has a relatively limited network of main roads and railways (see Figure 9.1). This has had consequences for investment in the local economy, the ability of residents to access employment and leisure opportunities and for the quality of the environment.

9.2 For many people, particularly those living outside of the towns, the car is the only practical means of transport for journeys to work or for shopping, leisure and other services. Car ownership in the District exceeds the national average, with about 90% of all households in the District now owning one or more cars. However, for those without a car, access to jobs, services and social facilities is limited by the availability of public transport services.

9.3 Road traffic in East Sussex has increased significantly during the past decade, a trend which is leading to increasing levels of congestion and longer journey times. More than 40% of Wealden's work force commutes to places of work outside of the District, with over two-thirds of those trips being made by car. Increasing traffic flows and congestion are major concerns for the quality of the environment and for the quality of life of local residents, as well as affecting local businesses.

9.4 In recognition of similar concerns throughout the Country, the Government is committed to reducing the need to travel, especially by private car in its Transport White Paper. It aims to achieve this through restricting new development to locations that are or can be well served by public transport and which have good connections for pedestrians and cyclists. These principles are embodied in PPG13, Transport and the Future of Transport White Paper 2004 together with regional and strategic planning policies, as set out in Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG 9) and in the Structure Plan.

9.5 Within Wealden, transport matters are primarily the responsibility of East Sussex County Council, who as highway authority deal with

maintaining and improving the road network, implementing traffic management measures and supporting public transport services. The County Council also has responsibility for the production of the Local Transport Plan, a five-year plan devised in consultation with local communities to co-ordinate investment in integrated local transport measures. Local Area Transport Strategies, which build on the Local Transport Plan, are prepared by the County Council in partnership with the relevant District, Town and Parish Councils in consultation with their local communities. Such strategies with their action plans have been prepared for Crowborough, Heathfield, Uckfield and Polegate/Willingdon (the latter as part of the Eastbourne Area Strategy). Work on a strategy for Hailsham commenced in 2004.

9.6 The provision of public transport services rests with the relevant train and bus operating companies. The Highways Agency, which is an Executive Agency of the Government's Department for Transport, is responsible for the management of the trunk road network, which includes the A27/A259 and a small section of the A22 within the area covered by this Plan. This responsibility includes the procuring of major improvements to the trunk road network, which is managed through the Targeted Programme of Improvements (TPI). This Plan also takes account of the recommendations of the Government's South Coast Corridor Multi Modal Study (SoCoMMS), which addressed the transport problems along the South Coast between Southampton and Ramsgate, together with the Secretary of State's subsequent decisions on its conclusions.

9.7 As the local planning authority, Wealden District Council can nevertheless play an important role in influencing future travel patterns through the control of the scale, form and location of new development. Planning policies can help to reduce the need to travel, reduce the length of journeys and make it easier for people to access jobs, shopping and leisure facilities by public transport, walking and cycling. As the principal provider of public car parks in the District, the Council can also ensure that parking provision is managed in a way that reduces demand while reflecting the economic needs of the area, including the revitalisation of its town centres. The Council can also use its role in co-ordinating the Community Strategy with the Local Strategic Partnership to ensure that local views and

concerns are brought to the attention of the relevant agencies and bodies. Well-being powers under the Local Government Act 2000 may also offer opportunities for developing innovative solutions for addressing transport issues.

Strategy

9.8 Wealden District Council's vision for transport is for an efficient and sustainable system, which meets the needs of the economy and the requirement for better access to jobs, services and facilities, while respecting the environment and fostering safe and healthy communities. This vision accords with Government and regional planning and transport policies and strategies, as well as the policies of the Structure Plan, the Local Transport Plan and Local Area Transport Strategies. The local community's views, expressed through the preparation of the Community Strategy, emphasise concerns over the volume and speed of traffic, traffic congestion and the lack of public transport.

9.9 The policies and proposals of this Plan are predicated on integrating transport and land use, through siting new development in locations which can be well served by a range of modes of transport and resisting development that would create or exacerbate unacceptable traffic conditions. Improving the balance between homes and jobs will also help reduce the necessity for significant levels of commuting between towns which is currently a major contributor to road congestion.

9.10 Wealden's residents are concerned about the ability of the District's roads to carry yet further traffic. Nevertheless, the District has to accommodate further housing and business growth and the Plan's distribution strategy seeks to minimise the transport impact of this growth through an approach which generally gives preference to new sites which are accessible by a choice of means of transport, concentrating on the Low Weald towns. Development in these towns will warrant substantial improvements to the transport network in the southern part of the District.

9.11 It is a fundamental requirement of this Plan that all new development should provide for the travel demand that it creates, including transport infrastructure and services, which as a

general principle, should be funded by developers.

Transport Objectives

9.12 The transport objectives of this Plan are to:

- (1) *Promote a safe, efficient and sustainable transport system, that will facilitate the movement of people and goods essential to the needs of the local economy and the residents of the District;*
- (2) *Support improvements to the strategic road and rail network where they would have clear economic, social or environmental benefits or would contribute to achieving other objectives of the Plan;*
- (3) *Minimise the need to travel, especially commuting by car, through ensuring that new development is well related to existing settlements and is accessible by a choice of means of transport, making the most effective use of existing public transport infrastructure and services;*
- (4) *Seek to ensure that new development does not unacceptably increase congestion or pollution or prejudice road safety;*
- (5) *To encourage alternative means of travel with less environmental impact by retaining and supporting the provision of convenient, safe and attractive routes for cyclists and pedestrians;*
- (6) *Ensure that the needs of people with mobility difficulties are taken into account in the design of new development and infrastructure;*
- (7) *Supporting traffic management and other measures which improve road safety, reduce congestion or pollution;*
- (8) *Ensure adequate provision is made for off-street car parking, especially serving town and village centres and new developments, consistent with supporting local economies and respecting the local environment.*

New Development and Transport Principles

Development proposals that generate significant numbers of journeys will not be permitted in locations accessible only by car.

Accessibility

9.13 To promote sustainable patterns of development, the existing towns and larger villages and service centres will be the focus for most new development. This will ensure that jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and other services are easier to reach for the majority of people, helping to reduce the need to travel by car. It will also make more effective use of existing public services and facilities, including public transport infrastructure.

9.14 While it is accepted that in Wealden, the car will continue to play an important role for many journeys, development in locations accessible exclusively by car will be resisted. New development, especially that likely to generate significant numbers of journeys, should be accessible by a choice of realistic and safe transport alternatives, including by public transport and by foot or bicycle to encourage less environmentally damaging forms of travel. This is particularly important to help those who do not have regular use of a car.

Policy TR1

New development should be located so as to reduce the need to travel, especially by car. In particular it should:

- (1) be accessible by a choice of means of transport other than the car;**
- (2) be well related to the existing pattern of land use, and for new residential development be well related to jobs, shops, schools and other community facilities;**
- (3) make efficient use of existing transport capacity, infrastructure and services;**
- (4) encourage walking and cycling as a means of transport, through site layout, design and the provision of new routes;**
- (5) not encourage traffic onto unsuitable roads.**

Transport Requirements of All New Development

9.15 The Council is committed to reducing the undesirable effects of transport, including its effects on the environment and on local communities. In line with Structure Plan policy, the Council considers that all development proposals should provide fully for the access demands they create, including the demand for travel by modes other than the car. New development should not create or perpetuate unacceptable transport conditions, and should be accessible to everyone by a choice of means of transport.

9.16 Policy TR2 sets out the criteria against which all development proposals will be judged in terms of their transport implications. Where development would have significant transport implications, planning applications will need to be accompanied by a comprehensive Transport Assessment. This should demonstrate the accessibility of the proposed development by all modes of transport. It should also assess the impact of the additional travel which would be generated by the development, including the capacity of existing services and infrastructure to accommodate it, and give details of the measures proposed to overcome any anticipated transport problems.

9.17 All major development comprising business, retail, leisure or services, or other development likely to generate significant amounts of travel, should also be accompanied by a Travel Plan. This should set out the measures and targets which will be adopted by the developer to reduce the need to travel by private car and to encourage a greater proportion of journeys to be made by other more environmentally-friendly modes of transport. The need to submit a Travel Plan will be determined in accordance with the advice set out in PPG13, Transport, and the advice of East Sussex County Council, as the local Transport Authority.

9.18 Where appropriate, planning conditions will be imposed or Section 106 planning obligations sought to secure measures required to improve access to a development or to overcome anticipated transport problems. Developer contributions will be calculated in

accordance with guidance to be prepared jointly by the relevant highway/transport authorities and the District Council. For the major housing and business allocations, the relevant policies set out details of those transport improvements that would need to be provided.

Policy TR2

New development should provide for the travel demands that it creates and should maximise the potential for access by public transport, cycling and walking. In particular, it should, where relevant:

- (1) not adversely affect road safety or otherwise create or perpetuate unacceptable traffic or environmental conditions, including resulting traffic congestion, parking in surrounding areas, or associated traffic noise and pollution;
- (2) provide a satisfactory means of access in accordance with approved standards;
- (3) incorporate safe, convenient, well lit and attractive pedestrian and cycle access both within and to the development, including the provision of links to local services and to the wider network. These should be segregated from vehicular traffic wherever possible, and incorporate appropriate road crossing facilities, where relevant;
- (4) provide covered and secure cycle parking facilities in accordance with the Council's approved standards together with suitable changing facilities for cyclists where significant cycle access may be achieved;
- (5) provide for bus access to and within the development, where justified and practicable, including new or improved bus services together with bus stops, shelters and relevant information;
- (6) incorporate traffic management/speed reduction measures that promote road safety both within development and, where necessary, in the surrounding area, particularly in locations close to schools and concentrations of elderly people;

(7) make provision for access for people with mobility difficulties, including people with disabilities, the elderly and people with young children;

(8) make provision for servicing and manoeuvring space and provide appropriate parking, not to exceed the Council's Approved maximum standards (see Policy TR5).

Planning applications for developments which would have significant transport implications should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment, and where appropriate, a Travel Plan. Planning conditions will be imposed and obligations sought to secure any necessary transport infrastructure improvements required and to improve the accessibility of new developments by all modes of travel.

Highways and Traffic

The Road Network

9.19 There are no motorways within Wealden District, and less than 2% of roads are classified as Trunk Roads. The A27/A259, which connects the Sussex coastal towns with the Kent and Hampshire ports, and a small connecting section of the A22, are the only trunk roads within the District. The remainder of the A22 (London – Eastbourne road), the A26 (Newhaven – Medway Towns) and the A272 (west of Maresfield) are the main primary routes passing through the District (see Figure 9.1). Essentially, the District lies almost entirely inside a "box" of trunk roads, formed by the M25 to the north, the M23 to the west, the A21 to the east, with the A27 forming the southern edge.

The Trunk Road Programme

9.20 It is the policy of the Structure Plan that longer distance traffic, travelling to, from or through East Sussex, should be encouraged to use the "trunk road box", rather than the more environmentally sensitive routes in the heart of the County, including those within Wealden District. The trunk road network is however of variable quality, and the Structure Plan acknowledges that improvements are required if

this objective is to be achieved. See also paragraph 9.31.

9.21 The A27 Polegate By-pass has recently been completed, although improvements to the A259 between Pevensey and Bexhill and the A259 Bexhill to Hastings Western By-Pass were cancelled by the Government in 2001, in the light of the findings of the Access to Hastings Multi-Modal Study. Instead a series of measures are being implemented by the Highways Agency to improve safety on the A259 and greater emphasis is being given to improving bus and rail services to Hastings.

9.22 West of Polegate, the routes of the A27 Wilmington and Selveston By-passes, previously safeguarded by planning policies, were cancelled by the Government in 2003. The Secretary of State expressed concerns about the impact of these schemes on the Sussex Downs AONB and instructed the Highways Agency to identify other less environmentally damaging options which would nevertheless facilitate planned growth. The Highways Agency is currently considering options and subject to ministerial approval is planning to undertake public consultations on options during 2005. Further ministerial approval in the light of those consultations is unlikely to be given until 2006, after which draft orders would need to be published and appropriate statutory procedures commenced, possibly including a public inquiry. The Highways Agency estimates that subject to the minister's agreement to the improvements, construction of the new road is unlikely to commence until late in the plan period

New Development and Trunk Road Improvements

9.23 Transport studies carried out jointly with the Highways Agency and East Sussex County Council have confirmed that major growth at Polegate and Hailsham would be dependent upon substantial improvements being carried out to the A27 trunk road to the west of Polegate, hereafter referred to as the A27 West Polegate Improvements, as well as the improvement of the existing trunk road junctions around Polegate. As noted in paragraph 9.22 above, the A27 West Polegate Improvement may not commence until the latter part of the Plan period. Developer contributions may be required towards all or part of the cost of the improvements. This could apply to all new developments at Polegate and Hailsham. Further guidance will be produced in

due course, as more information becomes available from the Highways Agency.

9.24 Whilst details of the options being considered for the A27 West Polegate Improvements are not currently available, the Highways Agency has identified a number of key requirements which must be met by any scheme taken forward. Given capacity constraints on the section of the A22 to the west of Polegate which is part of the trunk road and the limited capacity available at the A22/A27 Cophall Roundabout and the A27/A22/A2270 signalised junction to the south, any option taken forward would need to make provision for the grade-separation of the Cophall roundabout and a direct link back to the A27 to the west. The possibility of other alternative developer promoted schemes coming forward cannot be entirely discounted, despite the technical constraints which limit such possibilities. These will need to be considered if they offer clear environmental or transport benefits. Any scheme would nevertheless need to be agreed by the appropriate highway authorities and be subject to the full statutory procedures.

9.25 The new housing allocations being made to meet the Structure Plan requirements are expected to be built and are intended for occupation during the period 2006-2011. Given the timing envisaged for the A27 West Polegate Trunk Road Improvement, the transport studies undertaken jointly with the Highways Agency and East Sussex County Council considered options for maximising the amount of new housing that could be built at Polegate and/or Hailsham in the earlier part of that period. The joint transport studies concluded that a significant proportion of proposed development could nevertheless commence ahead of the A27 West Polegate Trunk Road Improvement, subject to improvements being made to the trunk road junctions around Polegate. The joint studies found that development at Polegate would have a greater impact on the trunk road network than development at Hailsham. On that basis the housing allocations of this Plan are phased to focus most development initially at Hailsham, to maximise the total number of dwellings which can be achieved without being dependent upon the A27 West Polegate Improvement. As a consequence, most of the housing and some of the business development at Polegate would be phased to coincide with the completion of the A27 West Polegate Improvement. Further details on the phasing of development at Polegate are provided in chapter 17 of this Plan.

9.26 Policy TR3 identifies the trunk road junctions which need to be improved prior to any development taking place at Hailsham or Polegate ahead of the A27 West Polegate Trunk Road Improvements. Further guidance will be produced to confirm which sites at Polegate and Hailsham will be required to contribute to these improvements. Whilst Policy TR3 states that no part of any development shall be occupied until the junction improvements are completed, it will be for developers to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Highways Agency through their transport assessments whether any advance occupations could be agreed.

9.27 The Highways Agency anticipates that under the terms of Policy TR3 the following improvements will be required to the trunk road junctions:

- a) provision of a west to north filter lane at the A27/A22/A2270 signal junction and improvements to the geometry of the junction including the A27 approaches;
- b) signalisation of the A22/A27 roundabout at Cophall and improvements to the geometry of the entry and exit roads;
- c) improvements to the geometry of the entry and exit roads at the A27/A22 New Route roundabout;
- d) improvements to the geometry of the entry and exit roads at the A27/A259 roundabout.

9.28 In addition, improvements will also be required to the geometry of the entry and exit slip roads to the junction of the A22 New Route and B2247. Whilst this junction is no longer under the responsibility of the Highways Agency it continues to be listed under Policy TR3 for the sake of completeness and given its relevance to site allocation policies in the Polegate and Hailsham chapters of the Plan. The need for its improvement was identified specifically by the Highways Agency through the Joint Transportation Studies. Its improvement will be required prior to the occupation of any development at Hailsham or Polegate. Clearly any measures would need to be agreed with East Sussex county Council as the highway authority responsible and implemented under an agreement with the highway authority under section 278 of the Highways Act.

Policy TR3

Improvements to the following trunk road junctions as identified on the Proposals Map will be required to facilitate proposed housing and business allocations at Polegate and Hailsham:

- 1) the A27/A22/A2270 signal junction, including the A27 approaches;**
- (2) the A22/A27 roundabout at Cophall ;**
- (3) the A27/A22 New Route roundabout;**
- (4) the A22 New Route/Dittons Road roundabout; and**
- (5) the A27/A259 roundabout.**

All works will be agreed with the Highways Agency and carried out within the existing highway boundary. In accordance with other relevant plan policies, developer contributions will be sought to secure these improvements, which will be implemented by the Highways Agency under the terms of an agreement under section 278 of the Highways Act 1980, and no part of any relevant development shall be occupied until the improvements to the above junctions are completed.

The Primary Road Network

9.29 The A22, A26 and A272 (west of Maresfield) are primary routes that connect settlements within Wealden District with the surrounding trunk road network. The A22 has been upgraded just north of Polegate and at its approach in to Eastbourne, improving access to major development areas at Sovereign Harbour and Eastbourne Park. The scheme (known as the A22 New Route) now connects with the new A27 Polegate Bypass to the east of Polegate, providing significant relief for Polegate town centre. Traffic management measures have been implemented along the old A27 (now the B2247) and the Eastbourne Urban Area Local Transport Plan promotes management measures for the old A22 (now the A2270) through Polegate and Willingdon. The Council strongly supports any measures which reduce the dominance of the car in favour of pedestrians,

cyclists, public transport and improve the environment of the locality.

9.30 The adopted Structure Plan makes no provision for any further significant improvements to primary routes within Wealden District. The aim is to encourage longer distance traffic to use the trunk road network rather than the primary routes which pass through more environmentally sensitive areas. The Structure Plan makes clear that limited improvements to the primary road network would only be carried out where clear local safety, economic, social or environmental benefits would be achieved.

9.31 In July 2004, East Sussex County Council adopted a Review of the Road Hierarchy together with a new Freight Strategy. Those strategies recognise that some of the improvements needed for the trunk road box are unlikely to be achieved. Instead the County Council considers that there is now a need for some special localised improvements to tackle existing bottlenecks as a result of greater pressure being placed on the primary and other road network. The list of schemes proposed for investigation within Wealden included the A22 through Forest Row, Uckfield, Halland and Hailsham, selected locations on the A26 throughout the District and measures for the A271, A65 and A267. Whilst the Council supports the need for a comprehensive environmental, transport and socio-economic assessment of these schemes, the protection of the District's unique and valued environment will continue to be given high priority by this Council.

9.32 Whilst recognising the County Council's policies of traffic restraint in the High Weald and Ashdown Forest, this Council also supports further investigations into the need for bypasses on the A22 for Forest Row and Nutley. West Sussex County Council is proposing 2, 500 new homes to the west and south west of East Grinstead together with an A22 relief road in its Structure Plan. The proposed relief road could generate traffic increases in Wealden which would adversely impact on the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Ashdown Forest and villages. Careful consideration will need to be given to appropriate measures to deal with the traffic and environmental impacts.

New Development and Improvements to the Primary and County Road Network

9.33 Many of the allocations in this Plan will necessitate improvements being made to existing

roads and junctions which are currently under the responsibility of East Sussex County Council as local highway authority. As a general principle, the County Council would require those improvements to be implemented at the developers' expense prior to the occupation of the developments. Further details of the improvements required can be found within the relevant allocation policies contained with chapters 14-20.

Roadside Facilities

9.34 The provision of facilities for motorists is important both for safety reasons and to ensure an efficient transport system. The policy context for roadside services is provided by East Sussex County Council's supplementary planning guidance on roadside services, which was published in 1990. This indicates that there are no requirements for additional roadside facilities to serve the primary network, except at the A22/A27 Polegate Bypass junction. Outline planning permission has been granted for a new service area on land adjacent to Cophall Farm at Polegate, to serve this junction. The issue of roadside facilities was also considered in the County Council's Freight Strategy, adopted in July 2004. No need for new facilities was identified, although this will be reviewed as part of work on Wealden's Local Development Framework. In view of these factors, no new allocations are therefore proposed in this Plan, and the provision of further facilities to serve the primary network would not be supported.

9.35 In the case of non-primary routes, the provision of new roadside facilities will only be permitted within development boundaries. There are many roadside facilities, mainly petrol filling stations, throughout the District. These are generally responding to more localised demand, and there is little justification for the development of new facilities or the large-scale expansion of existing facilities in the countryside. Exceptionally, proposals for new petrol filling stations or the large-scale expansion of existing filling stations may also be permitted in the main business areas outside development boundaries, subject to the relevant business policies (BS1, 2 & 4) of this Plan.

Policy TR4

Proposals for new roadside facilities and the large-scale expansion of existing facilities will only be permitted to serve non-primary routes

where they are within a development boundary.

All proposals, including the small-scale expansion or redevelopment of existing roadside facilities outside development boundaries, will only be permitted, subject to the following criteria:

- (1) the layout and form of development and use of materials should respect the character and appearance of the locality and ensure an appropriate standard of amenity within the site; and**
- (2) substantial landscape planting, including buffer strips and mounding shall be provided along the site boundaries wherever practicable, prior to the completion of development.**

Car Parking

9.36 Car ownership in Wealden has increased significantly over the past decade, as elsewhere in East Sussex. In 2000, about 90% of all households in the District owned at least one car, compared with 81% in 1991. Almost half of Wealden's households own more than two cars, which is significantly greater than any other district in East Sussex, and is a reflection of the rural characteristics of the area.

9.37 While the provision of adequate car parking is an important issue for the Local Plan, Government advice in PPG 13 states that a balance needs to be struck between providing sufficient parking and minimising potential congestion caused by too many cars. The Government is concerned that car parking is taking up large amounts of land, leading to unsustainable patterns of low-density development, and that the availability of parking is encouraging people to drive rather than use public transport. To address these concerns, the Government requires local planning authorities to set maximum parking standards for each type of land use or development.

9.38 The District Council shares the Government's concerns, but recognises that for many of Wealden's residents there is no viable alternative to using the car. The availability of adequate car parking is also of fundamental importance to the role of the District's town centres as shopping and service centres, and

their future vitality and viability. The Plan therefore seeks to balance the provision of off-street car parking, especially that associated with new development in town and village centres, to a level which is consistent with supporting local economies whilst respecting the environment.

Parking to Serve New Development

9.39 For the purposes of its development control functions, the Council has approved parking standards based largely on those produced by the County Council which aim to influence travel habits rather than reduce car ownership. The standards, which are set out in Appendix 2 are designed to ensure that levels of car parking do not exceed more than that necessary to support local economies or the needs of particular developments. All development, irrespective of its size or location, will be required to adhere to these maximum standards and as a general principle should cater for its parking and servicing demands on-site.

9.40 Within the District's five main towns of Crowborough, Heathfield, Uckfield, Hailsham and Polegate, the standards allow for reduced levels of non-residential parking in areas (zones) of greater public transport accessibility, ranging from 50% to 75% of normal standards in the town centres, and 75-100% in the rest of the built up areas. The boundaries of these zones are also shown in Appendix 2. The degree to which levels of parking provision can be reduced will depend upon a range of factors. These will include the level of accessibility by non-car modes, the scope for the adoption of green travel plans, the potential for shared parking provision and most significantly the scale and nature of the development proposed.

9.41 The County Council's standards for residential development have not been adopted in all cases. It is acknowledged that these standards seek to achieve, on average, developments with no more than 1.5 off-street parking spaces per dwelling, as required by Government guidance in PPG3, Housing. However, it has to be recognised that car ownership is very high in Wealden and public transport fairly limited due to the District's predominantly rural character. The Council's standards therefore continue to require two spaces per dwelling, with the main exceptions being for flats, maisonettes and bedsits where only one space per dwelling is required.

9.42 Within the towns and town centres, the objective of seeking a reduction in the use of the car has to be balanced against the potential implications of increased on-street parking or pressures on existing town centre car parks and possible congestion. Accordingly, the Council has not adopted the use of zones for residential purposes. Instead, a more flexible approach is favoured, with reduced levels of parking only being permitted on a case by case basis subject to the location and characteristics of the site and public transport accessibility. This flexibility, together with an anticipated increase in the amount of flatted development, will help contribute towards the Government's objective of limiting car parking on average to no more than 1.5 off-street spaces per dwelling overall.

Policy TR5

New development should provide for the parking and servicing demands it creates on-site and in accordance with the Council's current approved standards. Within the towns and town centres, planning permission for development with reduced levels of parking provision will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- (1) the site is accessible by public transport, walking and cycling;**
- (2) there would be no requirement for off-site operational parking;**
- (3) the development would not result in increased pressures for on-street parking;**
- (4) there is adequate and conveniently located provision for cycle parking, in accordance with the Council's approved standards.**

Planning conditions may be imposed or obligations sought to secure or guarantee any necessary off-site parking provision or to improve access to the site by public transport, walking or cycling and where necessary towards the cost of introducing on-street parking controls.

Public Car Parking

9.43 The District Council is responsible for the provision and operation of public car parking

spaces, in a combination of short and long term public car parks throughout the District. The management of these car parks and the need for additional spaces will be kept under review throughout the Plan period. The reviews will take into account local economic circumstances, changes to transport accessibility and the local parking strategies being developed through the East Sussex Local Transport Plan.

9.44 In view of the objective of reducing reliance upon the car, emphasis will be placed on demand management to make better use of existing spaces. Additional new car parks will only be provided where there is evidence that they would be required to sustain the economic vitality of towns and villages, and where suitable sites and resources are available. The loss of existing car parking spaces which serve town centre shopping areas will normally be resisted unless appropriate alternative provision can be made elsewhere.

9.45 The Council recognises the particular problems at Polegate, where there is considerable on-street parking. As set out in chapter 17, further consideration may need to be given to providing public car parking spaces to serve the town, possibly in conjunction with a park and ride initiative.

Park and Ride

9.46 During the lifetime of the Plan, Eastbourne Borough Plan will be reviewing the need for a park and ride facility to reduce the number of cars travelling to Eastbourne, including the potential for a site at or within Wealden District's boundary. The need for such a facility, possibly combined with measures to address Polegate's problems and suitable locations will be assessed in conjunction with Wealden District Council and in consultation with the public. A transport assessment would be required for such a proposal in order to address the overall traffic impact and any specific access issues.

9.47 The Structure Plan supports the provision of a new station at Stone Cross subject to the outcome of feasibility studies. A station, together with park and ride facilities was also supported in the conclusions of the SoCoMMS. The County Council's Rail Strategy also supports construction of a new station at stone Cross together with a new public transport interchange in the Polegate area, either of which could potentially offer the opportunities for park and ride facilities. However, it is understood from the

Strategic Rail Authority that such a station/interchange at Stone Cross is not currently seen as a priority and neither is it identified as such in the Regional Transport Strategy for the South East.

Public Transport

9.48 Almost 10% of Wealden's households have no car and are dependent upon public transport for access to jobs and services. A significant proportion of households with one car, as well as younger and elderly people, are also dependent upon public transport for some of their journeys. The Council supports measures to improve public transport services and which maximise the use of public transport as an alternative to the car.

Rail

9.49 Wealden District Council has no direct responsibilities for rail services in the District. Responsibility for the planning, management and operation of the railway lies with the Government. On 15 July 2004, the Government announced a fundamental review of the rail industry. Until this time, the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) was primarily responsible for this role as well as for the letting of franchise contracts to train operating companies to run passenger services. Responsibility for the management and operation of the rail infrastructure, including track, signalling and stations rested with Network Rail. The SRA's responsibilities have now been split between the Government (Department for Transport) and Network Rail, with the Government having overall control. The Government's objectives for the rail industry are set out in its White Paper, the Future of Rail, published in July 2004. The detailed implications for routes and services in Wealden, if any, have yet to become evident.

9.50 Wealden District has a relatively limited rail service. There are four lines serving the district, all of which provide connections to London, with stations at Berwick, Buxted, Crowborough, Eridge, Frant, Pevensey, Polegate, Uckfield, Wadhurst and Westham. Although just outside the boundary of Wealden, Stonegate Station has a particularly important role for many of the District's residents living in Mayfield, Heathfield and surrounding villages.

9.51 Almost 38% of Wealden residents never travel by train and less than 3% of journeys to work or for leisure purposes are made by train. Although rail travel will not be a viable option for everyone, it can nevertheless fulfil an important role as an alternative to the car. As a member of the East Sussex Community Rail Partnership, the Council would therefore welcome measures which improve services and facilitate greater use of rail travel. The movement of freight, by rail, is also supported where appropriate.

9.52 In the case of the Uckfield to London Line, the Council welcomes the introduction of new rolling stock and the introduction of through services to London. However, it believes that the decision not to proceed with the electrification of the line at this stage should be kept under review as circumstances change, as well as the case for reinstating a double track. It is recognised that further studies may be required to assess the environmental and transport implications of any future improvements, including the demands for additional parking requirements to serve the line.

9.53 The Eastbourne Urban Area Local Transport Plan incorporates proposals to improve public transport interchange arrangements at Polegate Station. This is supported in the Rail Development Strategy for East Sussex adopted by East Sussex County Council in November 2002. Subject to detailed design, the Council supports such measures in principle where they will bring clear benefits in service delivery and efficiency.

9.54 While the Council does not have a direct influence on the funding and provision of rail services, it can promote new development in locations accessible by rail to encourage greater use of public transport. It can also ensure that new development does not prejudice the improvement of existing routes, the reinstatement of routes or the provision of new stations, consistent with Structure Plan policy and the Rail Strategy for East Sussex.

9.55 The Structure Plan and the County Council's Rail Strategy identify 3 possible routes where the reinstatement of rail services is being investigated. In line with Structure Plan policy, these are safeguarded in Policy TR8 of this Plan, pending the outcome of the relevant investigations.

9.56 The Regional Transport Strategy supports further investigation into the

reinstatement of the Lewes to Uckfield line, together with a connection between Eridge and Tunbridge Wells as part of the preparation of the South East Plan. The Council strongly supports the reinstatement of these two links, as not only would they provide important local transport routes, but they would also offer a viable alternative route from the south coast to London. The opening of the Lewes to Uckfield route is also considered fundamental to access to Crowborough and its surrounding villages and will help to promote modal shift in line with Government policy. The route could also create the opportunity to transport more freight by rail, particularly to and from the port of Newhaven. The Council is aware that the reinstatement of these two links is not a priority at this stage, but is urging the appropriate authorities to keep the situation under review.

9.57 The Structure Plan requires the route of the Polegate-Pevensey rail link (also known as the Willingdon Chord) to be safeguarded. The possibility of the provision of this link was also included in the SoCoMMS as well as the Rail Strategy for East Sussex. While the link is not highlighted as being a priority in those documents, the need to reassess the case for the link is recognised, which is supported by the District Council.

Policy TR6

Development which would prejudice the reinstatement of the following railway lines, as shown on the Proposals Map, will not be permitted:

- (1) the former Uckfield to Lewes Line;**
- (2) the Polegate to Pevensey rail link; and**
- (3) the former Eridge to Tunbridge Wells Line.**

9.58 The Structure Plan states that investigations about the feasibility of providing a new station in the Stone Cross area, which could also serve North Langney and Eastbourne Park are continuing. A new station and interchange in this area, including park and ride facilities is also favoured in the SoCoMMS, although the East Sussex Rail Strategy does not highlight it as a priority. While the Council supports a new station in this area in principle, specific provision within the Plan can only be made once the outcome of those investigations are known and a suitable location can be identified. As the area under consideration straddles the boundary with

Eastbourne Borough, any proposal would need to be brought forward in conjunction with Eastbourne Borough Council, together with the Government and Network Rail in consultation with relevant train operating bodies and the local community.

Buses

9.59 Less than 2% of all journeys to work or for leisure purposes within the District are made by bus. Despite the rural character of the District, the Council considers that there is potential for greater usage of bus services, and would support measures to improve integration with rail services and improved bus facilities, including access to bus stops. Although the funding and provision of bus services is not directly the responsibility of the District Council, this Plan seeks to promote greater use of buses, through controlling the location of new development and requiring major developments, generating significant travel demands, to provide for bus access to, and where appropriate within the development. This may include contributions towards subsidising new or improved bus services, as well as towards infrastructure such as bus shelters and bus lanes.

9.60 A key initiative of the Eastbourne Urban Area Local Transport Plan is the designation of the A2270 (formerly the A22) as a Quality Bus Corridor, from the District's boundary with Eastbourne Borough to its junction with the A27/A22. This is one of four new corridors being promoted in the LTP, where the objective is to improve and promote increased use of bus services, through the implementation of bus priority measures. Any new development along the A2270 will need to be consistent with implementing the Quality Bus Corridor, and where appropriate, planning obligations may be sought under Policy TR2 to contribute to its implementation.

Policy TR7

Bus priority measures will be introduced wherever possible along the A2270 Eastbourne Road as defined on the Proposals Map. New developments which create travel demands along this route should be designed to facilitate and, where appropriate, provide bus and pedestrian access to the route and/or enhance its effectiveness. Planning obligations will be sought in appropriate cases to ensure that development makes

appropriate contributions to the implementation, improvement and maintenance of the route.

Walking and Cycling

9.61 Walking and cycling are the ideal forms of travel for many shorter journeys, and provide the most environmentally-friendly and healthiest way of travelling. Within Wealden, walking is the second most popular mode for journeys to work or for leisure purposes, accounting for more than 17% of trips. Cycling is less popular, accounting for less than 3% of journeys made within the District. Both offer significant potential to replace short car trips, particularly daily trips to school or work within the towns and villages.

9.62 The Structure Plan, the Local Transport Plan and the Cycling and Walking Strategies for East Sussex see encouraging more short journeys on foot or bicycle as fundamental to their sustainable transport strategy, and seek to promote new and improved facilities. Measures such as giving pedestrians and cyclists greater priority in traffic management schemes and the provision of new routes are promoted, including a strategic network of cycleways linking to the National Cycle Network.

9.63 Progress towards achieving these aims has been made, with improvements to the Cuckoo Trail and Forest Way, and the signing of quiet lanes through the Pevensy Levels. Consideration is also being given to establishing a new "Greenway" from London to the coast and onwards to Paris (via cross-Channel ferry services), which would involve extending the Cuckoo Trail north of Heathfield.

9.64 As set out in Policy TR2, all proposals for new development will be required to make adequate provision for pedestrian and cycle access. A summary of the approved cycle parking standards for the main land uses is set out in Appendix 2.

9.65 In the case of large development sites, particular attention will also be given to the design and layout of the development, to ensure that it maximises the potential for walking and cycling. Where possible, routes should be segregated from vehicular traffic and the shared use of pedestrian and cycle space should be avoided. Development that would result in the severance or loss of existing footpaths,

bridleways or cycleways will not be permitted, unless alternative provision is made, which would be equally convenient and attractive for users. It is also important that development does not prejudice the provision of missing links in the pedestrian and cycle network. Opportunities for network improvements will be largely identified in association with major development proposals, but the need to complete the National Cycle Network will also be a consideration when determining planning applications.

Policy TR8

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in the severance or diversion of existing pedestrian, cycle or bridleway routes, adversely affect the amenity or prejudice the enhancement of such routes or the provision of missing links in the network unless alternative provision is made, which would be equally convenient, safe and attractive for users.

Walking and Cycling Initiatives: Safe Routes to School and Home Zones

9.66 Home Zones are residential neighbourhoods where measures are implemented to reduce the dominance of the car and create safe and pleasant local environments for people to live in. Measures can include reduced speed limits, traffic calming and the reallocation of road space for pedestrians, cyclists and children. The Government is piloting the concept of Home Zones, with a view to extending Home Zones throughout the Country. The first Home Zone to be implemented in Wealden is at the Town Farm Estate, Hailsham.

9.67 The Council will work closely with East Sussex County Council to identify appropriate locations for the establishment of additional Home Zones within Wealden District. The adoption of Home Zone principles will be supported in new development as well as in existing neighbourhoods.

9.68 Pilot Safe Routes to School projects are also underway in the County, including in the Willingdon area. The aim of these projects is to encourage more families to walk children to school, or to cycle, and to reduce the number of journeys being made by car. The intention is to extend the concept to other schools throughout the County. The Council will work in conjunction with the County Council to develop Safe Routes

to School and to ensure that new development facilitates or enhances safe routes and does not reduce safety.

Policy TR9

Planning permission will not be granted for development proposals that would have an adverse impact on existing or proposed 'Safe Routes to Schools' or 'Home Zone' schemes unless remedial measures can be undertaken to ameliorate any harm.

Map

THIS PAGE IS NOT NEEDED BUT DO NOT TRY TO DELETE!!