

Chapter 17

Polegate and Willingdon (Inset Map Nos. 48 & 49)

Context

17.1 Polegate and Willingdon are adjacent but distinctly different communities located at the foot of the South Downs to the north of Eastbourne. The Victorian town of Polegate lies on an East-West ridge and is situated to the North of the much older village of Willingdon, although the two settlements are interwoven West of Eastbourne Road. The strength of local opinion for their distinct identities is however recognised. The designated Conservation Area within old Willingdon Village, together with the character of development in the Wannock area is acknowledged as distinct from that of Polegate, and this will be reflected in development control decisions. Both communities have been extensively developed over the years and are mainly residential in nature with a high proportion of elderly residents. Polegate's population is approximately 7,800 and Willingdon's is about 5,900, although a review of Parish Council boundaries is taking place. Given their proximity to Eastbourne, many of the residents are dependent upon that town for employment, shopping and other services.

Strategy

17.2 The Structure Plan sets out broad policy guidance for future development in the Polegate/Willingdon area. It recognises that the Polegate/Willingdon area is a location where major peripheral development may take place to contribute towards the new strategic housing allocations required for 2006-2011 together with a major new high quality business park.

17.3 In the light of the Structure Plan policies and the Local Plan development distribution strategy, the objectives for the Polegate/Willingdon area are to:-

- (1) *strengthen Polegate and Willingdon's residential and employment roles;*
- (2) *revitalise Polegate town centre and strengthen its role as a main shopping centre, through enhancing its accessibility and the quality and range of its shops and services;*

(3) *provide land for around 850 new homes, including affordable and small unit accommodation, with appropriate transport provision, infrastructure, community services and facilities;*

(4) *provide for a major new high quality business park to serve both Polegate and Willingdon, as well as the wider area;*

(5) *maximise opportunities arising from the opening of the A27 Polegate By-pass and the A22 New Route to improve the quality of the environment in the area and the quality of life for its residents;*

(6) *ensure that new development respects the character and quality of the local environment and that the impact on the area's landscape setting is minimised.*

(7) *maintain and enhance village shops away from Polegate Town Centre.*

17.4 In recognition of the close inter-relationship between Polegate, Willingdon and Eastbourne in terms of transport, infrastructure and community services, a Planning Forum will be established. This will comprise principally representatives from Wealden District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council with the objective of liaising on common issues and co-ordinating land use planning matters in a way which helps facilitate the Local Plan strategy.

Housing Allocations

17.5 The distribution strategy outlined in chapter 2 shows that Polegate's contribution to the requirement for new development amounts to about 850 dwellings. In line with Government guidance in PPG3, a search sequence to identify new housing sites has been followed, however the Council's Urban Capacity Study has been unable to identify opportunities for brownfield development or other suitable sites within the existing built up area of Polegate and Willingdon. A number of potential residential sites exist but already benefit from a valid planning permission or a resolution to grant permission subject to completion of a planning agreement. Accordingly, greenfield urban extensions will be

necessary to meet the Plan's distribution strategy.

17.6 Most of the proposed new housing at Polegate will not be able to be built until major improvements to the A27 trunk road have been carried out. This may not be until near the end of the Plan period (see Chapter 9 and paragraph 17.54 below). Improvements to the county road network and public transport will also be required prior to the occupation of the new houses. The requirement for developer contributions towards such improvements and other accessibility measures are set out in the relevant policies.

Urban Extensions

17.7 To meet the requirement for about 850 dwellings, residential development is proposed in two locations, firstly on land west of the A22 to the north-west of Polegate, and secondly on land east of Shepham Lane on the north-east edge of Polegate.

17.8 Land to the north of Polegate and to the west of Shepham Lane is not a favoured location for future growth. Development in that open area would have a damaging and intrusive impact on the landscape setting of Polegate within the gap of valued countryside separating the town from Hailsham. Concerns about the traffic impact on the A2270 Eastbourne Road have also led to the conclusion that land to the south-east of the town between Polegate and Willingdon should not be developed.

17.9 The two proposed housing allocations are discussed below.

Land West of the A22, Polegate

17.10 This housing allocation is located on the north-west side of Polegate and comprises land to the west of the A22 and north of the A27, as shown on the Proposals Map. The site is not subject to any specific planning or statutory environmental designations and benefits from being within walking distance of Polegate town centre. Figure 17.1 illustrates how the site could potentially be developed and some of the key principles to which development will be expected to adhere are set out below.

17.11 Overall the site has the potential to accommodate in the order of about 600 dwellings assuming a density of about 35 dwellings per

hectare. The precise number of dwellings, site layout and the phasing of development in relation to the provision of community facilities will however need to be confirmed in the light of an environmental assessment submitted by the developer and other relevant studies undertaken at the planning application stage. In accordance with other policies of this Plan, about 30% of all of the new homes would need to be affordable and about 20% would need to comprise small 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings.

17.12 In recognition of the elevated nature of the northern part of the site and the proximity of the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the development boundary has been carefully drawn to limit the extent of built form on the higher and more visually exposed slopes and to ensure retention of existing valuable tree screening. Subject to the findings of a full environmental and landscape assessment, which would need to be submitted as part of any planning application for the site, the extent of the developable area may need to be reduced at certain points to limit the impact of development. Any landscape assessment will also need to specifically consider views into and out of the site and the overall impact of the development on the setting of the AONB, having regard to layout, design and landscaping proposals. It will also need to specifically address the measures, including landscaping, design and layout, needed to mitigate against impacts on the setting of the nearby listed Wootton Manor and its associated historic parkland. The Garden History Society will be consulted prior to the granting of any planning permission for the site.

17.13 Equally, the final position of the development boundary could be affected by the alignment of one of the options for the A27 West Polegate Trunk Road Improvements. Subject to ministerial approval of the principle of the A27 West Polegate Improvements, the outcome of subsequent public consultations on possible options which the Highways Agency currently plans to undertake in 2005 and the Secretary of State's final decision, a slight adjustment in the total housing numbers may be necessary to accommodate an alignment or associated landscaping areas.

17.14 The scale of development proposed on the site together with development elsewhere in Polegate, warrants provision of a new primary school, a multi-purpose community hall and a doctors' surgery. These facilities should be grouped together to form a new neighbourhood

centre, possibly incorporating a local convenience shop and a central amenity space, on the site west of the A22 which accounts for the majority of housing growth in Polegate. Although primarily a focal point for the new community, the neighbourhood centre should also be accessible for the existing nearby community, which means that a location close to the A22 and the primary point of site access would be appropriate. Figure 17.1 identifies a location alongside the A22 which would allow the opportunity to create a grouping of inter-linked low density buildings in an arcadian wooded setting.

17.15 Developer contributions would also be required to provide enhanced facilities off-site. Additional secondary school places will be required at Willingdon Community School, together with a new all-weather sports pitch to off-set the loss of any playing field space resulting from expansion. Developer contributions for special needs educational places and for improving local library provision will also be required. The Education Authority also require sufficient land within the site to enable the South Downs Community Special School to be co-located with the new primary school. The development will also require improvements to the capacity of the sewerage system, including new connections to the Hailsham Wastewater Treatments Works and additional pumping station capacity.

17.16 The scale of development would also generate a need for new public open space in the order of about 4.4ha, which in accordance with Policy LR2 of this Plan should be provided on-site as part of the development. It is proposed that of this total, about 3.3ha should be laid out as playing fields with the remainder scattered throughout the development in the form of informal and equipped children's play space and a new landscaped linear park following the course of the tributary which crosses the site in an east-west direction and feeds into the Polegate Brook Street Stream. Given the topography of the site and the need for careful positioning of the development boundary, there are clear landscape advantages in locating the playing fields at the northern edge of the site. This will limit built development on the highest and therefore most visually prominent part of the site when viewed from the south and the Sussex Downs AONB. It would also avoid development visually encroaching in to the distinct and new landscape to the north of the ridge in the vicinity of Cophall, which is important for the countryside setting of Polegate. For these reasons the site

for the open space is specifically identified on the Proposals Map and allocated separately under Policy PW4, although it is a requirement of the Plan that this space is provided at the developer's expense as part of the residential development on land to the west of the A22 in accordance with an agreed programme of works.

17.17 Access to the site will be from the A22, on the basis that this road will be reclassified as a local road once the A27 West Polegate trunk road improvements are in place. Clearly, in the event of the Secretary of State favouring an "on-line" improvement, then further consideration would need to be given to the feasibility of alternative access arrangements. For a development of this size, East Sussex County Council will require two vehicular access points, which must be at least 80m apart and 80m from nearby junctions on the A22. Most likely, these will need to take the form of signalised junctions, with appropriate integrated pedestrian and cycle facilities for the crossing of the A22. The design and layout of these junctions will need to be determined in the light of the transport assessments and safety audits undertaken by the developer prior to the submission of a planning application.

17.18 The Highways Agency has advised that it would oppose any access to the development directly from the trunk road or an access from any subsequent trunk road improvement. To manage the impact of additional development generated traffic on the local routes in to Eastbourne as well as on the trunk road itself, neither the Highways Agency nor East Sussex County Council would permit any occupation on the site or the permanent use of the A22 access points as shown on Figure 17.1 until completion of the A27 West Polegate Trunk Road improvements and other trunk road junction improvements identified in Policy TR3. Further guidance will be prepared in conjunction with the Highways Agency and East Sussex County Council to address the timing and level of payments of developer contributions towards all highway infrastructure improvements and other accessibility charges.

17.19 Although the site is relatively close to Polegate town centre, there are no direct pedestrian or cycle links currently available and the A22 which is an important route into Eastbourne acts as a barrier to movement. To maximise sustainable transport choices, provision will therefore need to be made for improved facilities. As a minimum, this will need to include an "off-carriageway" pedestrian and

cycleway alongside the A22, which the Highway Authority has indicated can be achieved within the highway boundary. Opportunities for improving direct pedestrian linkages to the town centre via the residential areas of Brookside Avenue and Gosford Way should also be taken (as indicated in Figure 17.1), although some property acquisition may be required. These linkages would also offer more convenient access to bus routes along the B2247 Hailsham Road/Station Road and towards the proposed Polegate Business Park north of Dittons Road (Policy PW3). Any developer will need to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Local Highway Authority the adequacy of any measures proposed to connect with the town centre as part of their planning application. Bus priority measures along the A22 and A2270 together with financial contributions towards enhanced services will also be required to improve public transport accessibility to the site. Provision will need to be made for all relevant accessibility improvements prior to the occupation of any dwellings on the site.

17.20 The strength of local support for a new parkway station on land west of the A22 and the need therefore to safeguard a suitable site is recognised. However, at present no agreement has been reached with the Strategic Rail Authority, Network Rail or the train operators on the feasibility of providing such a station or on how such a facility would be financed given that there is little justification to require developer contributions. There are a number of technical issues which need to be addressed, particularly in relation to the proximity of the existing Polegate Station as well as track signalling and timetabling constraints. Equally, studies would need to be undertaken to address concerns about the consequences for the existing Polegate Station and the proposed station at Stone Cross if a parkway station were to be developed on the site, as well as issues of access and traffic impact associated with a major parkway proposal. In the event of a feasibility case being proven and subject to the consideration of the likely impacts, an adjustment to the housing development areas on the site would be necessary to reserve a suitable site and area for car parking.

17.21 The land west of the A22 lies well beyond the indicative flood plain as defined by the Environment Agency, although as the site is traversed by a number of minor watercourses a full risk assessment will be required to determine the extent of the 1:100 year flood plain associated with any of these watercourses. This

will confirm the extent of any buffer zones to be kept free from development, although normally the Environment Agency require at least a 5m clearance to assist in flood flow conveyance, watercourse maintenance and to provide a corridor of wildlife habitat.

17.22 As the site drains in a south-easterly direction, particular attention will need to be given to surface water drainage to ensure that it does not increase the rate of run-off and hence the risk of flooding downstream, either in Polegate, Willingdon or Eastbourne. This may necessitate the provision of appropriate on-site compensatory storage measures as part of the development, possibly including a system of swales and ponds linked to amenity open space, as well as other off-site works and improvements. The developer will be required to carry out a full flood risk assessment in accordance with PPG25 and to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency. Planning permission will not be granted for the development unless appropriate measures can be agreed to ensure that the development would not be at risk of flooding and would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

17.23 Trees, tree belts and important hedgerows will need to be retained and strengthened for the benefit of the new community and to help assimilate the new development in to the existing distinctive landscape structure. Whilst the development boundary proposed has been drawn to follow existing natural features, including hedgerows, watercourses and contours, substantial new boundary planting will also be required to ameliorate and minimise both the visual and noise impact from the railway and the A22, given the particular sensitivity of this location. This will assist in minimising the impact on the setting of the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the south and on the setting of the nearby Wootton Manor which is a grade II* listed building. It will also help to create a more defensible edge to the development, particularly to the west, where there is no certainty about possible route alignments for improving the A27.

17.24 Whilst the site is not affected by any nature conservation designations, Great Crested Newts have been found nearby and therefore there is the potential for them to be present on the site. Equally, the trees, hedgerows, ponds and ditches could potentially provide habitat for a variety of species including bats, reptiles and breeding birds. A full ecological survey undertaken during the appropriate season as part of an environmental assessment will be required

to identify whether there are any particular sensitive habitats or protected species present on the site. Areas of landscape and habitat may need to be set aside to mitigate against the impacts of wildlife. In the event of any protected species being detected on the site all necessary licences would need to be obtained by the developer prior to the commencement of any works on site.

17.25 Although the site lies outside a designated Archaeological Sensitive Area, recent construction activity at Bay Tree Lane associated with the Polegate By-pass found evidence of Medieval settlement remains. There is also documentary evidence to suggest the presence of a Roman road running parallel and along the ridge on the northern boundary of the site and the possibility of associated Roman Settlement. In view of the potential for discoveries in this area, a programme of archaeological assessment will therefore need to be agreed and implemented in accordance with best practice, with appropriate provision for the investigation and recording of any finds ahead of development.

17.26 In the past, land in the vicinity of Polegate Honey Farm has been used as a brick quarry and has been subject to subsequent infill, most likely with inert material. Detailed geotechnical surveys will be required to determine the nature of any material and to detect the presence of contamination on the site. Where necessary a strategy for the remediation of the site will need to be agreed with the Council and the Environment Agency. More recently, the site at Polegate Honey Farm has been used for a mix of commercial activities such as coach parking, builders yard, scrap metal dealing, some of which have been unlawful. The Council would require the cessation of these commercial activities prior to the first occupations on the site. Noise amelioration measures will also be required alongside the route of the Polegate-Lewes railway which bounds the southern edge of the site.

17.27 As stated in paragraph 17.18, development west of the A22 would have to be phased to coincide with the completion of the A27 West Polegate Trunk Road Improvements, which is unlikely to be until late in the Plan period. Neither the Highways Agency nor East Sussex County Council as highway authority would permit any occupation on the site ahead of the trunk road improvements. Further details on the nature of the trunk road improvements required to facilitate development in Polegate (as well as at Hailsham) are set out in chapter 9 and

in paragraph 17.54 below. Further guidance will be produced in partnership with the relevant highway authorities to address the timing and level of payments for developer contributions in relation to the trunk road improvements and other accessibility requirements.

Policy PW1

Land west of the A22 as defined on the Proposals Map, is allocated for housing and associated uses. Proposals for new residential development will be permitted subject to provision being made for all of the following:

- (1) Approximately 600 dwellings of which around 180 shall be affordable and around a further 120 shall comprise small units;**
- (2) A new neighbourhood centre to include a multi-purpose community hall, health centre and local convenience store, together with a new single form entry primary school and associated playing fields, totalling 2.3ha;**
- (3) Public open space, comprising playing fields to be sited on land allocated under Policy PW4 together with children's open space and amenity space in accordance with the Plan's standards, including a new linear landscaped park alongside the tributary which feeds into the Polegate Brook Street Stream;**
- (4) Two vehicular access roads from the A22 in accordance with highway authority standards;**
- (5) Safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to Polegate town centre, to include improved off-carriageway facilities alongside the A22 and appropriate crossings over the A22 and A27;**
- (6) The retention and strengthening of existing important trees, tree groups and hedgerows, and new landscaping introduced where appropriate, including substantial planting along the boundaries of the site as shown on the Proposals Map and as determined through appropriate environmental and landscape assessment;**
- (7) Appropriate mitigation measures, including landscaping and screening, to minimise the effects of noise and vibration**

from the railway line and to mitigate the effects of road traffic noise on future occupiers of the development, to be determined through a detailed noise survey and assessment submitted in conjunction with any planning application for the site;

(8) A scheme (based on the results of field evaluation carried out to the satisfaction of the County Archaeologist) detailing how the archaeology of the site is to be accommodated, either by preservation in situ or by record;

(9) Appropriate flood defence measures as determined by a flood risk assessment carried out to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency;

(10) Appropriate measures to mitigate against the effects on any protected species or habitat if detected by a full ecological survey carried out to the satisfaction of English Nature;

(11) A scheme for the remediation of any contamination which may be present on the site as determined by detailed site surveys undertaken in accordance with best practice;

(12) An agreed scheme for the cessation of all commercial activities in the vicinity of Polegate Honey Farm, to be implemented prior to any occupation on the site.

Developer contributions will be required in accordance with the Plan's policies to secure the provision of appropriate on and off-site community facilities, transport and other accessibility and infrastructure improvements. These will include a new primary school, special needs education places, additional secondary school places and an all weather pitch, a multi-purpose community hall, library improvements, public open space, a doctor's surgery, drainage works, measures for the implementation and/or improvement of the Quality Bus Corridor along the A22/A2270 together with improved bus services along that route, improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and improvements to the trunk road junctions as identified in Policy TR3.

No part of the development shall be occupied until completion of the A27 West Polegate Trunk Road Improvements for which developer contributions may be required, together with

improvements to the trunk road junctions as identified in Policy TR3.

Land east of Shepham Lane

17.28 This site is located between the new Bypass and Dittons Road, as shown in Figure 17.2. It lies to the east of Shepham Lane where development is capable of being reasonably well contained and would be less intrusive and damaging to the gap of countryside between Polegate and than development on land to the west. The site has the benefit of existing woodland and hedgerows on its northern side. These will be strengthened by substantial new planting to create a new urban edge to Polegate. By restricting any development on the north side of the tree belt, a gap of countryside will be retained between the proposed housing and the Bypass. This will help to maintain the countryside setting for Polegate and will provide a buffer between the residential properties and the By-Pass. The proposed Polegate Business Park will be situated immediately to the east.

17.29 Figure 17.2 illustrates in further detail how the site might be developed and some of the key principles to which development will be expected to adhere are set out below. Overall the site could accommodate up to about 250 dwellings at a density of about 35 dwellings per hectare, although the precise number of dwellings and issues of layout and phasing will need to be confirmed in the light of an environmental assessment and other relevant studies which the developer will need to submit along with their planning application. In accordance with other policies of this Plan, about 30% of all the new homes would need to be affordable and about a further 20% would need to comprise small 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings.

17.30 The scale of development proposed at Shepham Lane will warrant two new vehicular access points to the site, one from Shepham Lane and one from Dittons Road, as shown on the Proposals Map. The design and layout of these junctions will be determined in the light of the transport assessments and safety audits undertaken by the developer. The Highway Authority will require the existing Shepham Lane/Dittons Road junction to be upgraded to a new roundabout and the section of Shepham Lane between that junction and the site entrance to be improved within the existing highway boundary to ensure a minimum carriageway width of 5.5m and footways of preferably 2m in width on either side.

17.31 Traffic calming measures will be required on the B2247 Dittons Road and in Polegate town centre to encourage traffic to use the A22 New Route and the A27 for all trips other than local destinations. Improvements to the geometry of the entry and exit roads at the A22 New Route/B2247 Dittons Road roundabout, now the responsibility of East Sussex County Council, will also be required to accommodate the additional traffic generated by all of the developments in the area. The Local Highway Authority will require these measures to be completed before the first dwelling on the site can be occupied.

17.32 As with all other sites in the Polegate and Hailsham areas, the development of land at Shepham Lane will necessitate improvements to the A27 trunk road, which will involve modifications to the existing trunk road junctions around Polegate as well as a major trunk road improvement to the west of Polegate. Conditions will be imposed on any grant of planning permission to ensure that none of the dwellings on the site at Shepham Lane are occupied until completion of the trunk road junction improvements as identified in Policy TR3. Developer contributions will be required towards the cost of those trunk road junction improvements and may also be required in respect of the West Polegate Improvements. Further guidance will be produced in partnership with the highway authorities to address the timing and level of payments for such contributions and other charges relating to accessibility improvements required for the local transport network.

17.33 New and improved pedestrian/cycle routes will be required to link the site with the proposed Business Park, Polegate town centre, and the Cuckoo Trail. To improve pedestrian and cycle connections to facilities in south Polegate and Willingdon, including to Willingdon Community School, upgrading of the footpath through Polly Arch, off Lynholm Road, will be required to enhance its attractiveness as a more direct and convenient route. This would include new lighting, surfacing and landscaping but would not necessitate demolition of the Arch itself.

17.34 In accordance with Policy LR2 of this Plan, appropriate provision for public open space, including playing fields and children's play areas would need to be made within the development. Overall the development would generate a need for about 1.8ha of open space which should be appropriately sited within the development boundary of the site possibly alongside or

combined with the new open space to be provided as part of the business park development. Developer contributions will also be required towards the cost of providing a new primary school, doctor's surgery and community hall to meet the needs generated by the development. These will be provided on land west of the A22 as part of the development allocated in Policy PW1. In view of the phasing restrictions relating to the development of that site these facilities will not be available until late in the Plan period. The Council will therefore work closely with all relevant service providers to establish whether some of the development at Shepham Lane might be able to take place in advance of these new facilities being available. Any advance occupations will only be permitted subject to satisfactory arrangements for meeting education, health and other infrastructure needs in the interim being agreed with the relevant service providers. Contributions will also be required towards the cost of upgrading other facilities elsewhere to meet the needs of the development, including Willingdon Community School. The development will require improvement to the capacity of the sewerage system, including new connections to the Hailsham Wastewater Treatment Works and additional pumping station capacity.

17.35 Existing trees, tree groups and important hedgerows will need to be retained for the benefit of the residents and to help assimilate the new development into the landscape. New landscaping will also have to be introduced, with substantial buffers, particularly on the northern part of the site to minimise the impact of the development on the surrounding countryside and along the eastern boundary with the proposed business park. As Great Crested Newts are known to be present nearby, any planning application must be accompanied by a full ecological survey undertaken by a licensed surveyor to detect whether there are any protected species or habitats present on the site. Where necessary, all relevant licences must be obtained prior to the commencement of any works on the site and appropriate mitigation measures would need to be agreed, which may include translocation.

17.36 While the site lies outside of the indicative 1 in 100 year flood plain as defined by the Environment Agency (see Figure 13.1), any developer will be required to undertake a flood risk assessment in accordance with Appendix F of PPG 25 and the policies in chapter 13 of this Plan. This will need to demonstrate that the development itself would not be at risk from

flooding and that it would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. Particular attention will need to be given to surface water drainage for the development to ensure that it does not increase the rate of run-off to the Pevensey Levels which is designated both as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and as a Ramsar site. Any planning application would need to be accompanied by a full assessment which has demonstrated to the satisfaction of English Nature that there would be no risk to the ecological value of the Levels.

Policy PW2

Land east of Shepham Lane, Polegate, as shown on the Proposals Map is allocated for housing. Proposals for new housing development will be permitted subject to provision being made for all of the following:

- (1) approximately 250 dwellings of which around 75 shall be affordable and around a further 50 shall comprise small units;
- (2) two new access roads to the site, from Shepham Lane and from Dittons Road, as indicated on the Proposals Map, together with improvements to Shepham Lane and its junction with Dittons Road within the existing highway boundary and improvements to the geometry of the entry and exit slip roads at the A22 New Route/B2247 Dittons Road roundabout;
- (3) safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to the proposed Business Park and improved pedestrian and cycleway connections to Polegate town centre and the Cuckoo Trail, together with improvements to the route through Polly Arch;
- (4) the retention and strengthening of existing hedgerows, trees and tree groups and new landscaping introduced where appropriate, including substantial new planting along the boundaries of the site, as shown on the Proposals Map;
- (5) public open space comprising playing fields, children's open space and amenity space within the site in accordance with the Local Plan standards;
- (6) appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of traffic noise from the Polegate

Bypass to be determined in the light of noise surveys and assessments;

- (7) **Appropriate measures to mitigate against the effects on any protected species or habitat if detected by a full ecological survey carried out to the satisfaction of English Nature; and**
- (8) **Appropriate flood defence and surface water drainage measures as determined by full risk assessments carried out to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency and English Nature.**

Developer contributions will be required in accordance with the Plan's policies to secure the off-site provision of appropriate community facilities, transport, accessibility and other infrastructure improvements. These will include new primary, special needs and secondary school places and an all weather pitch, library improvements, a doctor's surgery, a new multi-purpose community hall and offsite drainage measures. Contributions towards off-site transport measures will also include traffic calming measures for Dittons Road, Polegate town centre and improvements to the B2247/A22 New Route junction.

No part of the development shall be occupied until the improvements to the trunk road junctions identified in Policy TR3 have been completed. Developer contributions will be required towards the cost of those improvements and may be required towards the cost of the A27 West Polegate Trunk Road Improvement.

Business

17.37 Within the Polegate and Willingdon area, the majority of business activity is concentrated on the Chaucer Industrial Estate at Dittons Road and in Polegate town centre. Many of Polegate and Willingdon's residents work in Eastbourne, given the proximity of the town and the limited range of local employment opportunities.

17.38 The approved Structure Plan and the existing Wealden Local Plan include a commitment to find a site for a new high quality business park in the Polegate area to serve the South Wealden/Eastbourne area. Having considered the supply of business land in the

Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne areas overall, together with the requirements of the property market, a need for some 7 hectares of land at Polegate (to provide up to 25,000m² of business development) has been identified. Details of the site allocation are addressed below, whilst further information on the need for this scale of development is set out in a separate background paper on Business.

Polegate Business Park

17.39 The Polegate Business Park allocation comprises land north of Dittons Road, south of the new A27 By-pass, immediately to the west of the A27 and A22 New Route roundabouts. The site is capable of being relatively well contained by existing and substantial new landscaping and earth mounding. Given its good access and proximity to the strategic road network, it would also be an attractive location for business investment, with good prospects for early implementation.

17.40 The intention is to create a high quality modern business park in a landscaped setting, which will help to broaden Wealden's economic base and serve the needs of Polegate/Willingdon and the wider area. Some of the key principles to which the development would be expected to adhere to are set out below and are illustrated in Figure 17.2.

17.41 Vehicular access to the site would be from Dittons Road, just west of the Dittons roundabouts, as shown on the Proposals Map and in Figure 17.2. The Highway Authority will require this access to take the form of either a new roundabout or a junction incorporating a right-turn lane into the site, although the precise form will need to be determined in the light of transport assessments and safety audits undertaken by the developer prior to the submission of a planning application.. Traffic calming measures will be required on the B2247 Dittons Road and in Polegate town centre to discourage business traffic from using local roads. Improvements to the geometry of the entry and exit slip roads at the A22 New Route/B2247 Dittons Road roundabout, now the responsibility of East Sussex County Council, will also be required to accommodate the additional traffic generated by the Business Park and other new developments in the area. The local highway authority will require these measures to be completed before any part of the business park can be occupied.

17.42 Business development at Polegate would also be dependent upon improvements to the A27 trunk road, including a major improvement to the west of Polegate, for which developer contributions may be required. As the business park has been a long standing commitment of the Structure Plan, studies have been undertaken jointly with the Highways Agency and East Sussex County Council (see separate background paper) to ascertain whether some of the development could be built and occupied ahead of completion of all of the necessary trunk road improvements. The studies demonstrated that a substantial proportion of the business park (in the order of 50%) could in fact be phased ahead of the A27 West Polegate Trunk Road Improvements provided that the improvements to the existing trunk road junctions, as detailed in Policy TR3 are completed and appropriate levels of developer contributions made. Planning conditions will be imposed to ensure that no part of the development is occupied until the appropriate level of trunk road improvements and other transport measures have been undertaken.

17.43 New and improved pedestrian and cycle links will also be required to improve connections with the existing Chaucer Industrial Estate and to join up with the footpath and cycle network to the south. As with the housing allocation at Shepham Lane, upgrading of the footpath through Polly Arch will also be required to improve pedestrian connections to the residential areas south of the railway.

17.44 Further guidance will be prepared in conjunction with the relevant highway authorities to address the timing and level of payments of developer contributions and other charges relating to highways infrastructure and accessibility improvements.

17.45 In line with the Structure Plan, business uses will be predominantly those falling within Class B1 of the Use Classes Order, that is a mixture of offices, high-tech and light industrial, which is both quiet and clean. General industrial and warehousing uses and other similar sui generis commercial uses would not be compatible with the overall concept of a high quality business park and will not be permitted except where ancillary to the main B1 use. The Polegate Business Park could provide jobs for about 600 people. This scale of development warrants the inclusion of some public open space or recreational space within the development, possibly alongside or combined with the new open space to be provided as part of the adjacent residential development. This should take the

form either of a multi-purpose all weather pitch, a landscaped amenity park or an indoor sports hall. Developers will be expected to demonstrate that the nature and scale of their proposal take account of local deficiencies.

17.46 The Council will seek a high quality of building design and materials in a planned landscaped setting. Existing trees, tree groups and important hedgerows should be retained and significant landscape buffer areas will need to be created and planted to help protect the amenities of existing and future residents along Dittons Road and at Shepham Lane. New extensive landscape buffers will be especially important to screen views to the development from the bypass and to limit its impact on surrounding countryside.

17.47 As with the residential allocation east of Shepham Lane, a flood risk assessment will be required to confirm the precise extent of the developable area and to ensure that any necessary defence measures are incorporated as part of the development. Particular attention will need to be given to the treatment of surface water drainage, to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on the downstream Pevensey Levels Site of Special Scientific Interest and Ramsar site. Any planning application would need to be accompanied by a full assessment which has demonstrated to the satisfaction of English Nature that there would be no risk to the ecological value of the levels. Developer contributions will also be sought towards improving capacity of the sewerage system, including connections to the Hailsham Wastewater Treatment Works and additional pumping station capacity. The diversion of overhead cables within the site will also be required.

17.48 The site lies close to an area where Great Crested Newts have been found. Any planning application must therefore be accompanied by a full ecological survey as part of an environmental assessment to detect whether there are any protected species or habitats present on the site. Where necessary, all relevant licences must be obtained prior to the commencement of any works on the site and appropriate mitigation measures would need to be agreed, which may include translocation.

Policy PW3

Land north of Dittons Road, Polegate, as defined on the Proposal Map is allocated for a high quality Business Park. Proposals for

new business development falling within Use Class B1 will be permitted provided all of the following criteria are met:-

- (1) the design of the buildings and the proposed materials are consistent with achieving a high quality business park environment;**
- (2) a planned landscaped setting is incorporated as an integral part of the Business Park's design, with existing trees, tree groups and important hedgerows retained and substantial new planting to all boundaries as shown on the Proposals Map;**
- (3) a new access road is provided from Dittons Road, as indicated on the Proposals Map, together with improvements to the geometry of the entry and exit slip roads at the A22 NewRoute/B2247 Dittons Road roundabout;**
- (4) provision is made for new and improved pedestrian and cycleway links to the town centre, to the Chaucer Industrial Estate and to connect with existing rights of way, including the upgrading of the route through Polly Arch;**
- (5) Provision is made for public open space or recreational space within the site to meet the needs generated by the future occupiers of the development;**
- (6) Provision is made for appropriate measures to mitigate against the effects on any protected species or habitats, if detected by a full ecological survey carried out to the satisfaction of English Nature; and**
- (7) Provision is made for appropriate flood defence and surface water drainage measures, determined by full risk assessments carried out to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency and English Nature.**

Developer contributions will be required in accordance with the Plan's policies for offsite highways, transportation and accessibility measures including improvements to the A27 trunk road junctions identified in Policy TR3, traffic calming measures for Dittons Road and Polegate town centre and improvements to the B2247/A22 New Route Junction

Contributions will also be required for other infrastructure works including foul and surface water drainage.

No part of the development shall be occupied until the improvements to the A27 trunk road junctions around Polegate as set out in Policy TR3 are completed. Any development in excess of 12,500m² shall not be occupied until completion of the A27 West Polegate Trunk Road Improvements, for which developer contributions may be required.

Shopping

Polegate Town Centre

17.49 Polegate's main shopping centre, as defined on the proposals map, is essentially linear in nature, concentrated on the High Street and is tightly enveloped by established residential neighbourhoods. This generally limits the opportunities for commercial development without the redevelopment of residential property, and the boundary of the main shopping centre reflects this. The existing shopping centre north of the railway is however capable of expansion and improvement. The boundary of the main shopping centre has been drawn to include the existing shoppers' car park specifically to allow for such opportunities should they arise in the future provided that there is no overall loss in the number of parking places.

17.50 Most of Polegate's High Street frontage between Station Road and the railway, together with a small section immediately south of the railway, has been defined as a Primary Shopping Frontage. This frontage should remain predominantly in retail use at least at ground floor level, in accordance with Policy SH2 to ensure that Polegate's role as a main shopping centre is not undermined.

Town Centre Opportunities

17.51 The very considerable influence of Eastbourne with its large supermarkets will continue to limit the likelihood of major expansion of shopping facilities in Polegate town centre. The new housing development proposed will however help stimulate some further investment and modest improvements to the existing

shopping provision. The District Council will continue to support the work of the Polegate Regeneration Group in revitalising the town centre. This will include looking at ways of improving the town centre environment such as traffic calming, new surfaces, furniture and planting.

17.52 The District Council owns land at Brook Street which could offer some opportunities for redevelopment for town centre uses, such as new community facilities or car parking, possibly in conjunction with relocation of the Brook Street allotments. Opportunities for this land will be investigated during the Plan period as part of the Council's review of its Asset Management Plan.

17.53 The problems of on street parking in residential roads within the town centre are recognised. Whilst the Highway Authority has relaxed parking restrictions along Black Path which has provided some relief, further consideration may need to be given to providing additional spaces. Given the limited opportunities within the town centre, provision may need to be in the form of a park and ride site, serving both rail commuters and shoppers, possibly in conjunction with a facility to serve Eastbourne.

Willingdon

17.54 Local Village shops, often with Sub-Post Office facilities, play an important role in providing principally for food and day to day goods and Village Pubs are an integral part of the community. Loss of these local services will be resisted.

Transport

Trunk Road Improvements and New Development

17.55 As set out in chapter 9, to enable the trunk road network to accommodate the level of traffic that would be generated by proposed developments at Polegate and Hailsham substantial improvements to the A27 would be required. These would include the A27 West Polegate Trunk Road Improvement, together with the improvement of the existing trunk road junctions around Polegate. Since construction of the West Polegate Improvement is unlikely to commence until late in the Plan period, priority

has been given to phasing most new housing development at Hailsham.

17.56 The development of a new business park at Polegate in association with the new By-pass has been a commitment of the Structure Plan since 1992. It is therefore considered appropriate to facilitate an early start of the site to meet an identified need, particularly having regard to the lack of available business development sites in the area at present. The joint transport studies confirmed that up to 12,500m² of business development could take place subject to improvement of the trunk road junctions identified in Policy TR3. Completion of the remainder of the business park, would be dependent upon completion of the major trunk road improvement west of Polegate.

17.57 The housing allocation on land west of the A22 (Policy PW1) is dependent on the A27 West Polegate Trunk Road Improvement both for access and to provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional development generated traffic on the trunk road network. Policy PW1 therefore restricts occupancy of any of the new homes on that site until completion of the trunk road improvements. The housing allocation on land east of Shepham Lane (Policy PW2) is not dependent upon the West Polegate Improvements for access. Subject to the completion of the trunk road junction improvements set out in Policy TR3 and the resolution of other issues relating to the timing of community facilities, the site at PW2 can therefore in principle be developed ahead of the West Polegate Improvement. All developments in Polegate, as at Hailsham, are expected to contribute towards the cost of the trunk road junction improvements and contributions may be required towards all or part of the costs of the West Polegate Improvement. Further guidance will be produced on how these contributions will be calculated once further information is available from the Highways Agency.

17.58 While the trunk road improvements will have implications for the timing of new housing and business development at Polegate, there is also a possibility that approval for the A27 West Polegate Improvements may not be granted by the Secretary of State. Similarly, the Secretary of State could refuse to confirm orders for the scheme following a public inquiry. These scenarios would have major implications and would require a re-assessment of options for the Plan.

Other Transport Improvements to Serve New Development

17.59 The County Council, as local highway authority has advised that a number of improvements to the County road network and public transport services will be required to serve new developments in the area. The key measures include:

- (1) New access roads to connect the sites to the wider network;
- (2) Improved footpath and cycleway connections;
- (3) Traffic calming on Dittons Road and in Polegate town centre;
- (4) A new high quality bus corridor along Eastbourne Road together with enhanced bus services between Hailsham and Eastbourne;
- (5) Improvements to the geometry of the entry and exit roads at the A22 New Route/B2247 Dittons Road roundabout.

Local Transport Plan and Other Initiatives

17.60 The District Council supports proposals in the East Sussex and Eastbourne Urban Area Local Transport Plans for traffic and environmental management schemes for Polegate High Street. The Eastbourne Urban Area Local Transport Plan also seeks to improve public transport interchange facilities at Polegate Station although no details are given. The District Council will work in partnership with all relevant agencies and bodies to examine possible options for achieving such improvements during the Plan period.

Services and Infrastructure

Education

17.61 A new primary school, to serve the housing development at Polegate is proposed on land to the west of the A22. It is intended that the new school will be located alongside other community facilities to create a new neighbourhood centre within the housing allocation west of the A22. Policy PW1 requires

sufficient land within the housing allocation west of the A22 to be set aside for the new school and developer contributions will be required from both of the housing allocations at Polegate to fund its provision.

17.62 The Education Authority has advised that there is a possible requirement for additional church aided primary school places to serve Polegate, Willingdon, Hailsham and the wider Eastbourne area. The need for a new school and suitable sites will be investigated in conjunction with Eastbourne Borough Council during the next review of this Plan preparation of the Local Development Framework.

17.63 Expansion of the Willingdon Community School from 6 form-entry to 7 form-entry together with a new all-weather playing pitch will also be required to serve the new residential developments allocated in this plan. Contributions to fund additional secondary school places will be sought from developers in accordance with Policies PW1 and PW2.

17.64 The Education Authority has advised that there may be a need for a new secondary school to serve the Eastbourne/South Wealden catchment beyond 2010-11. This issue will be considered as part of the work on the Council's Local Development Framework, in consultation with the County Council and Eastbourne Borough Council.

Health Care

17.65 At present there are three doctors' surgeries serving the Polegate and Willingdon area. The Eastbourne Downs NHS Primary Care Trust (PCT) has advised that the scale of new development proposed at Polegate would necessitate an additional surgery to be provided. Policy PW1 requires land to be set aside for the surgery within the housing allocation west of the A22 and developer contributions will be required from both of the housing allocations at Polegate to fund its provision. The PCT has also expressed a preference to relocate one of the existing surgeries which has inadequate accommodation to the new surgery to create a larger combined facility. Sufficient land is available within the housing allocation for this purpose.

Drainage

17.66 Southern Water, the relevant drainage authority, has advised that there is not sufficient capacity within the drainage system to

accommodate the scale of development proposed at Polegate. Accordingly, an additional rising mains to the Hailsham South Waste Water Treatment Works will be required, along with new pumping stations. Policies PW1-PW3 therefore identify a requirement for developer contributions towards the cost of these off-site works. Upgrading of the treatment works at Hailsham will also be required. This upgrading is scheduled within Southern Water's capital works programme.

Power/Utilities

17.67 The supply of water and power is a statutory responsibility of South East Water, EDF Energy Networks Ltd and British Gas. No significant constraints have been identified in meeting the needs generated by new development at Polegate. Some localised reinforcement works will be necessary to upgrade the existing supply networks and new site connections will also be necessary which may require some diversions. These works will need to be requisitioned under the appropriate statutory procedures and will be subject to standard connection charges, both of which are outside the scope of planning control.

Recreation and Leisure

17.68 In accordance with National Playing Fields Association (NFPA) standards there is a considerable shortfall of outdoor recreational facilities in the Polegate and Willingdon area. Appendix 4 of this Plan identifies that an additional 18 hectares of recreational open space is required to address this shortfall. As noted in Chapter 12, a local assessment of need and an audit of existing recreational facilities is currently being undertaken in accordance with PPG17 (Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, July 2002).

17.69 In accordance with the draft Plan's policies the new housing allocations will generate a need for an estimated 6 hectares of public open space. It is the policy of this Plan that any open space required to meet the needs of the expanding population is provided as an integral part of new development. In the case of the housing allocation on land east of Shepham Lane there are no particular constraints on how the new open space should be sited and Policy PW2 therefore allows the developer flexibility in bringing forward a suitable layout and design

within the limits of the development boundary. The situation is quite different for the housing allocation on land west of the A22. As noted in paragraph 17.16 there are compelling landscape reasons for selecting a particular location for the open space required to serve that development. Land north of Polegate Honey Farm is therefore defined separately on the Proposals Map as an allocation for public open space under Policy PW4, to be provided at the developer's expense as part of the new housing on land west of the A22.

Policy PW4

Land north of Polegate Honey Farm as defined on the Proposals Map is allocated for public open space to comprise formal playing fields and pitches.

Willingdon Levels

17.70 The adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998 includes a policy covering part of the Willingdon Levels extending from Eastbourne Park up to Lynholm Road south of the former railway line. That Policy supports proposals for recreational uses which maintain and enhance the open character of the area. No proposals have been brought forward.

17.71 The visual qualities of the area are lessened by electricity pylons and cables, borrow pits and it is now dissected by the A22 New Route. However, there may be opportunities to improve the rural environment through surface water drainage schemes in association with low key recreational or nature conservation projects. Any development should retain the open and rural character of the area to retain the valued gap of countryside currently separating Polegate, Willingdon and Eastbourne.

17.72 Similar considerations may apply to those parts of the Levels to the south west of the railway line should opportunities arise. However the character of that area, which is predominantly agricultural is different from the more degraded landscape to the north and proposals would therefore need to be considered on their merits.

Policy PW5

Within the Willingdon Levels Recreation Policy Area as shown on the Proposal Map, the Council will seek to enhance the character and quality of the open rural landscape. Proposals for low key recreational development will be permitted subject to provision being made for all of the following:-

- (1) proposals have an acceptable impact on the drainage in the area and the adjoining area of levels known as Eastbourne Park;**
- (2) proposals maintain and enhance nature conservation interests;**
- (3) proposals increase public access into the area;**
- (4) long distance views across the open landscape are protected.**

Map

