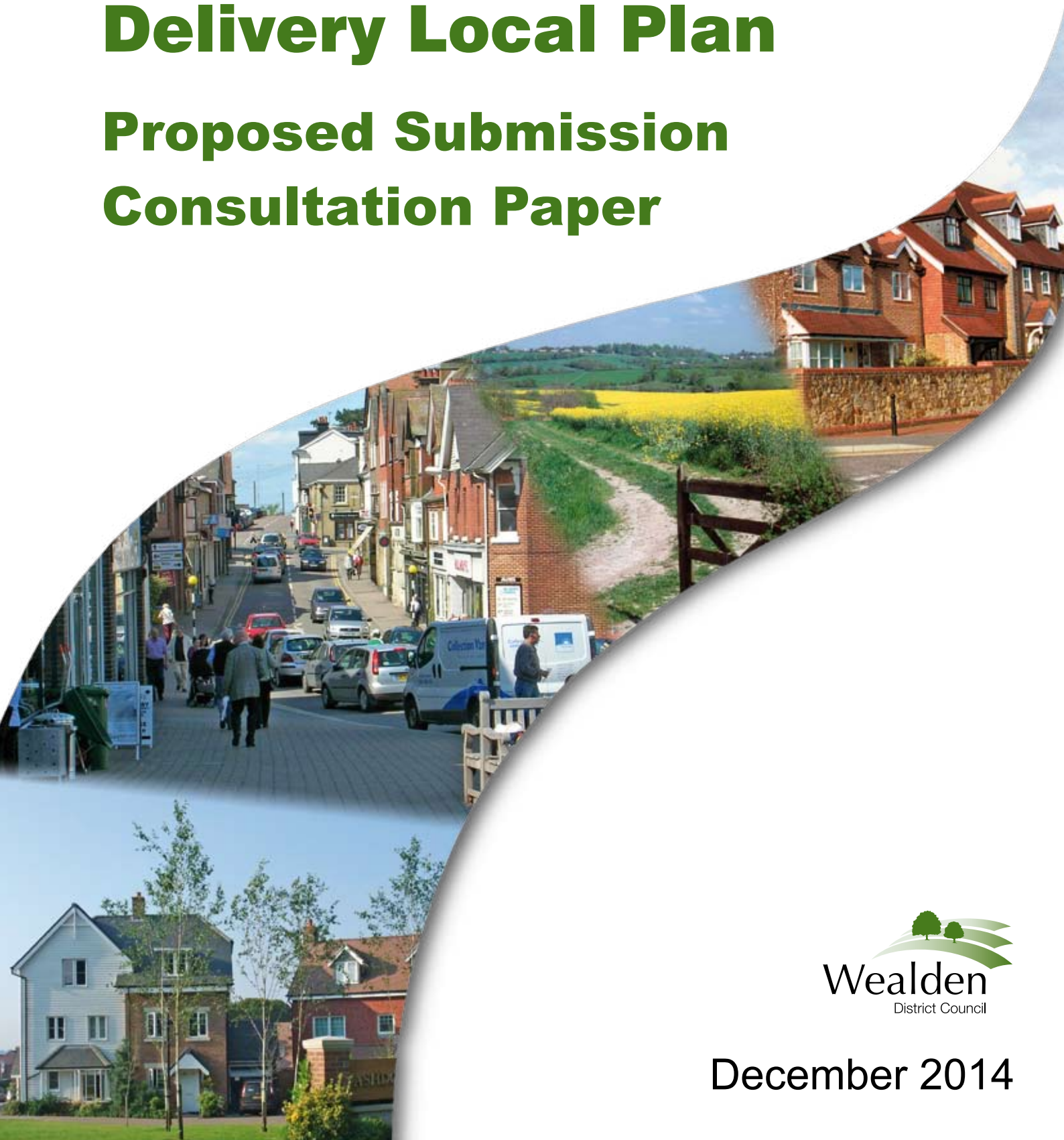
Wealden District Council Local Plan

Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan

Proposed Submission Consultation Paper



Wealden District Council

December 2014

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You may also visit the offices Monday to Friday, to view other Local Plan documents.

A copy of the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan and associated documents can be downloaded from the Planning Policy pages of the Wealden website, www.wealden.gov.uk/planningpolicy or scan the QR code below with your smart phone.

If you, or somebody you know, would like the information contained in this document in large print, Braille, audio tape/CD or in another language please contact Wealden District Council on 01323 443322 or info@wealden.gov.uk

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Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 This document is the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan, which reviews the Wealden District (Incorporating the South Downs National Park) Core Strategy Local Plan Policy WCS8 concerning affordable housing. This Local Plan is limited to affordable housing provision and the adopted Core Strategy Policy WCS8 concerning affordable housing, and does not affect any other Core Strategy policy.

1.2 The Policy within this document relates to the area of Wealden District which does not include the South Downs National Park. The adopted Core Strategy Policy WCS8 relating to Affordable Housing will therefore remain relevant for the part of the South Downs National Park which is within Wealden District, until it is superseded by a relevant Local Plan produced by the South Downs National Park Authority.

1.3 This document is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal Report, which includes an assessment of reasonable alternatives. You may comment on this document by incorporating your response to the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan, or alternatively you may e-mail your response to the Sustainability Appraisal Report direct to ldf@wealden.gov.uk. Please provide your contact details in your e-mail, and the relevant points of the Sustainability Appraisal you are commenting upon.

1.4 This document refers to a number of background documents, that have been used to inform the Local Plan. These documents may be found on the Council's website www.wealden.gov.uk and include:

- The Core Strategy Local Plan, Adopted February 2013
- The Strategic Sites Local Plan (Submission Version), March 2014
- Community Infrastructure Levy Revised Draft Charging Schedule Consultation Document , September 2014
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan, September 2014
- Updated Community Infrastructure Levy viability evidence base, August 2014
- Core Strategy Background Paper 2: Managing the Delivery of Housing, August 2011
- Strategic Sites Background Paper: Housing, March 2014
- Wealden Housing Viability Assessment, 2009
- Wealden Housing Needs Assessment, 2010

1 Introduction

2 Affordable Housing Policy

2.1 Similar to other areas of the South East, Wealden District is an area of relatively high housing demand and high levels of owner occupation. Although there are quite marked variations in house prices between different parts of the District, there is a general consequence that many first time buyers, key workers and lower income households find it extremely difficult to gain a foothold in the local housing market.

2.2 In 2009, the Council commissioned a housing needs survey concerning the nature and extent of our local housing need. This has confirmed an annual affordable housing need of 812[(1)]. Even when re-lets and alternative mechanisms of meeting housing need are taken into account this figure is substantial and highlights the importance of delivering the maximum number of affordable dwellings from new housing growth that will take place within the District.

2.3 We have also commissioned specialist research which has looked at the viability of housing provision, including affordable housing, within Wealden District. This has demonstrated that there is potential for new market housing developments to provide an element of affordable housing. That evidence also confirmed that there is a potential for smaller housing sites and sites within more affluent areas to support a higher proportion of affordable housing. In this respect, sites allocated in subsequent Local Plans will have potential to consider alternative provision of affordable housing depending on location, size, density, site conditions and infrastructure requirements.

2.4 The Council has identified that the provision of affordable housing is a high priority policy objective. However, it is recognised that site and market conditions can vary both between sites and in certain circumstances, particularly where abnormal costs or other circumstances apply, it is possible that there may be viability issues on specific sites. Where it can be proven that affordable housing cannot be achieved, due to economic viability, we are required to be flexible in terms of meeting stated targets. In such exceptional circumstances, it will be the responsibility of the developer to provide substantial and verifiable evidence to demonstrate that the requirements of Policy AFH1 cannot be met. This will need to be tested by means of a rigorous site specific economic viability assessment based on an "open book" approach and used to determine a revised appropriate level of provision.

Local Plan Objective

To help meet affordable housing needs of the District by securing and delivering a significant proportion of affordable housing from developments with market housing, whilst ensuring the overall viability of the development is not prejudiced and that a mix of tenure is provided that meets the needs of the local area and create balanced communities.

1 Affordable housing need does not directly translate to the amount of new affordable housing required

AFH1 Affordable Housing

New housing developments, including affordable housing, will be expected to provide for a mix of dwelling size, type and tenure that meet the identified housing needs of the local area. New housing developments must make the most effective use of the land, taking into account the character of the local area.

Affordable housing is required on development sites of 5 or more dwellings (net) or if the development sites have less than 5 dwellings, but with a net gain in dwellings, and a site area of 0.16 hectares or more. Affordable housing is required at a level of 35% of the number of dwellings in any scheme. Where sites are allocated in a Local Plan, that document may specify a different, and potentially higher, housing target having regard to the findings of the associated viability assessment and any site specific considerations.

Affordable housing provision should incorporate a mix of tenures. The Council will negotiate the exact tenure split on each site. However, the presumption is for development sites of 49 dwellings (net) or less that around 80% of the total number of affordable homes provided will be for social rented accommodation with the remainder being for intermediate accommodation. For development sites of 50 dwellings (net) or more around 40% of the total number of affordable homes provided will be for social rented accommodation, 40% will be affordable rent and 20% intermediate accommodation.

Where it can be proven that affordable housing cannot be achieved, due to economic viability, there will be flexibility in meeting stated targets. In such exceptional circumstances, it will be the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate that the requirements of the policy cannot be met and the closest alternative target that can be achieved taking into account viability and need.

The affordable housing will be integrated into the development and be indistinguishable in design terms from the market housing on the site.

Affordable housing should be delivered on site, however, in exceptional circumstances Wealden District Council will accept a commuted sum or free serviced land in lieu of on site provision. These circumstances may include provision where a Registered Provider finds it uneconomic or impractical to provide the units in the scale or form agreed. Any financial contributions will be pooled and used to enable affordable housing provision within Wealden District.

2.5 Advice on the detailed operation of this policy, the definition and nature of local housing needs to be met, and the mechanisms for delivery of affordable housing will be set out in a supplementary planning document.

3 Superseded Policies

3.1 Adopted Core Strategy Local Plan Policy WCS8, and associated text in paragraphs 7.10 to 7.14 is superseded for Wealden District, excluding the part of Wealden District within the South Downs National Park.

3 Superseded Policies

4 Monitoring

4.1 A key element of the Local Plan is the delivery of the Policy and Objective. A robust monitoring and implementation framework is required to ensure that envisaged outcomes are achieved. The Council has produced a Monitoring and Implementation Framework for the adopted Core Strategy. The review of the Core Strategy Policy WCS8 requires an update of the Monitoring and Implementation Framework with regards to affordable housing provision. This is also linked to the Sustainability Appraisal Objective 1, [(2)] which also requires a monitoring framework. The monitoring will be incorporated into the Annual Monitoring Report, and will identify if the policy is working, and if not why not.

Monitoring Framework

Name	Description	Target
Strategic Affordable Housing target	Affordable housing completions as a percentage of all completions	35%
Affordable housing target	Number of developments with a net gain in 5 or more dwellings, or a site area of 0.16ha or over achieving 35% affordable housing	75%
Tenure	Proportion of tenure as a percentage of all completions	No target

4.2 Action will be required if targets are not achieved. The action requirements for the affordable housing targets are identified in Table 2.

Monitoring Actions

Issue	Action
Affordable housing completions as a percentage of all completions is less than 35%	Review data if target is consistently not met over two year consecutive period to find issues and seek to resolve. If not able to be resolved/ explained then review policy.
Number of developments with a net gain in 5 or more dwellings, or a site area of 0.16ha or over, achieving 35% affordable housing is less than 75%	Review policy if target is not met consistently over two year consecutive period.

2 Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

4 Monitoring

5 Glossary

Affordable Housing – Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should:

- meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices; and
- include provisions for the home to be retained for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for any subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Social rented housing - Owned by Local Authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the Local Authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

Affordable rented housing - Let by Local Authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

Intermediate affordable housing - Homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing. The definition does not necessarily exclude homes provided by private sector bodies or provided without grant funding. Where such homes meet the definition above, they may be considered, for planning purposes, as affordable housing. Those homes that do not meet the definition, for example, 'low cost market' housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

(Source: National Planning Policy Framework)

Background Paper - A document providing more detailed information, regarding the subject area.

Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule - Identifies a levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money can be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the Council, local community and neighbourhoods require. The amount of charge is dependent upon viability of development sites. Provision of affordable housing affects the viability of development sites and therefore has a direct impact upon the charge that can be levied.

Core Strategy Local Plan- The Core Strategy Local Plan was adopted in February 2013. It sets out the overall vision for Wealden and how the places within it should develop,

strategic objectives based on the key issues to be addressed, a delivery strategy to achieve these objectives, and a monitoring and implementation framework.

Development Plan - As set out in section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, an areas development plan consists of Development Plan Documents contained within the Local Plan. The documents set out policies for the use and development of land. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless there are good reasons not to.

Development Plan Documents (DPDs) – Statutory planning documents, produced by the planning authority, that form part of the Local Plan. They contain spatial planning policies and strategies that will guide development in conjunction national policy. The documents include the Core Strategy, Site Allocations Document and, where needed, Area Action Plans. There will also be an adopted Proposals Map which illustrates the spatial extent of policies. The documents are subject to rigorous procedures and an independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate.

Hectares - A unit of measurement for an area. Usually used for site areas.

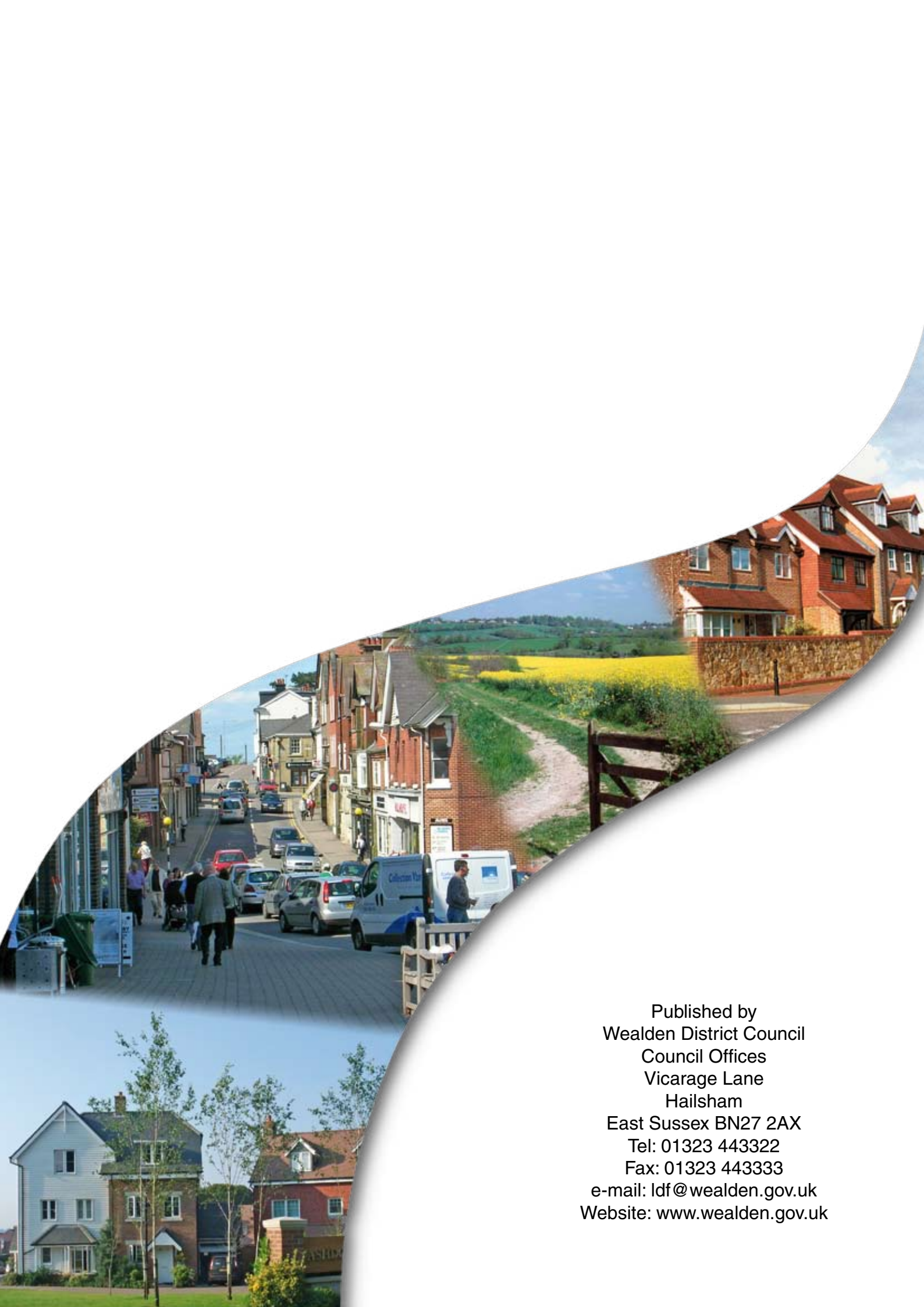
Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) – A formal document setting out what physical, social and green infrastructure is required to support and enable the development proposed in the Local Plan.

Local Plan (LP) – The collective name given to all policies and documents that will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the local authority area. These include the Development Plan Documents.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – The National Planning Policy Framework published in 2012 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable Councils can produce their own distinctive Local and Neighbourhood Development Plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

Sustainability AppraisalReport– A report which incorporates requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. The Report identifies scope and objectives of the Local Plan and assesses reasonable alternatives to the Plan against agreed Sustainability Appraisal Objectives.

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives - Objectives agreed by the Council, in consultation with prescribed bodies, contained within Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.



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