Wealden
District Council

Wealden
Local Plan



REGULATION 19

Proposed Submission

September 2026

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Wealden
District Council

01
Introduction



Wealden
Local Plan

Introduction

Wealden Proposed Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19)

1.1 Wealden District Council (WDC) has prepared a new local plan for Wealden District, excluding the area within the South Downs National Park. The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is the local planning authority responsible for preparing planning policy and determining planning applications within the National Park.

1.2 The Local Plan looks ahead to 2042 and sets the vision, objectives and spatial strategy and planning policies for the district. It identifies where development is expected and provides the framework for deciding planning applications and coordinating investment in infrastructure, services and facilities. Once adopted, the Local Plan will replace all existing local plan policies and form part of the statutory development plan for the district. National planning legislation requires that planning decisions be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise[1].

1.3 The Local Plan seeks to meet the district's housing, employment and infrastructure needs, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment. It aims to ensure that growth is delivered in a sustainable manner, supported by appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities, and contributes to addressing climate change and improving the health and wellbeing of communities.

1.4 This Proposed Submission Local Plan is published under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012[2]. Representations are invited on its legal compliance and soundness[3]. The Council will submit the Local Plan, together with supporting evidence and representations received, to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

What has informed this Proposed Submission Local Plan?

1.5 The preparation of this Local Plan has been informed by extensive public consultation, engagement with stakeholders and infrastructure providers, and a comprehensive evidence base.

1.6 The 'Direction of Travel' consultation ran from 23 November 2020 and 18 January 2021[4] and sought views on key planning issues and four broad growth approaches:

- Option 1 – Focused Growth including Large Extensions to Existing Sustainable Settlements;
- Option 2 – Semi-Dispersed Growth to Existing Sustainable Settlements and Larger Villages;
- Option 3 – Dispersed Growth; and
- Option 4 – New Settlement(s) Growth.

1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

2 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

3 See the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), December 2024at paragraph 36

4 Wealden Local Plan Direction of Travel Consultation (November 2020)

1.7 The Direction of Travel consultation generated 1,702 responses from 304 individuals and organisations. These informed the preparation of the Local Plan published for consultation in March 2024[5].

1.8 In March 2024, the Council consulted on its first full Regulation 18 draft Local Plan. It included a draft spatial strategy, site allocations and policies on climate change, the natural and historic environment, housing, infrastructure, design, the economy and town centres. It proposed 15,729 net new dwellings between 1 October 2023 and 31 March 2040 together with 84,850 sqm of employment floorspace.

1.9 The March 2024 Regulation 18 consultation generated 12,210 comments from 1,516 individuals and organisations. The issues raised have informed this Proposed Submission Local Plan. A summary of the representations received and the Council's response to them is set out within the Consultation Statement[6].

1.10 A further focused Regulation 18 consultation ran from 6 February 2026 and 30 March 2026[7]. It tested the proposed growth strategy and associated policies following publication of the December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The responses received informed this Proposed Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) and are summarised within the Consultation Statement[8].

1.11 'Call for Sites' exercises invited landowners, developers and others to submit land for potential development. The resulting Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) updated during Local Plan preparation, including to reflect national policy changes, informed the spatial strategy and site allocations.

1.12 Engagement with infrastructure providers, statutory bodies, neighbouring authorities and other key stakeholders, together with evidence supporting the Plan helped identify opportunities and constraints affecting the spatial strategy, site allocations and policies in this Plan.

Legislative and Policy Framework

1.13 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and provides the framework for preparing and maintaining Local Plans to meet community needs and support sustainable development.

1.14 The Council has complied with the relevant plan-making legislation and had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and guidance from relevant statutory bodies. The Plan includes the strategic and non-strategic policies needed to address Wealden's circumstances and is supported by proportionate and robust evidence. Relevant plans, programmes and strategies have been considered through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process[9].

5 Wealden Local Plan Direction of Travel Sub-Committee Report (11 March 2021)

6 Wealden Local Plan Consultation Statement (Regulation 19), September 2026

7 Draft 'Focused' Wealden Local Plan (Regulation 18), February 2026

8 Wealden Local Plan Consultation Statement (Regulation 19), September 2026

9 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report (Update), January 2024

1.15 During the preparation of this Local Plan, national planning policy has evolved, including changes to the standard method for assessing housing need and revisions to the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS)[10]. These changes have informed the development of the Plan's housing, traveller and spatial strategy policies and have been taken into account during its preparation.

1.16 The Government introduced a new plan-making system in March 2026 and a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in August 2026[11]. Transitional arrangements allow plans that have reached an advanced stage to continue to examination and adoption under the legacy system. This Local Plan has therefore been prepared and proposed to be submitted under that system. Relevant national planning policy changes have been considered where appropriate but the Plan's legal and procedural basis remains the legacy framework.

Sustainable Development

1.17 The planning system promotes sustainable development by pursuing economic, social and environmental objectives that support a strong economy, healthy and inclusive communities, and the protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment.

Figure 1 Sustainable Development Goals



1.18 The NPPF requires local plans to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development by promoting growth that meets identified needs, aligns homes, jobs and infrastructure, protects and enhances the environment, and supports climate change mitigation and adaptation[12]. These principles inform the spatial strategy and policies.

10 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), December 2024

11 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), August 2026

12 See paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

Ambitions for Wealden

1.19 The preparation of a Local Plan provides an opportunity to translate the ambitions and priorities of the Council and its partners into a spatial framework for the district. The Local Plan has been informed by the Wealden District Council Strategy 2023-2027[13] and other relevant plans and strategies, including those for economic development[14], health and wellbeing[15], transport[16], and climate change[17]. Together, these provide the strategic context for policies relating to economic growth, healthy communities, connectivity, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. These documents provide important strategic context and help ensure that planning policies support wider ambitions relating to economic growth, health and wellbeing, connectivity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and environmental enhancement.

1.20 The Council has also worked closely with a range of partner organisations, service providers and public bodies throughout the preparation of the Local Plan. As a result, the Plan seeks not only to address development needs but also to support the coordinated delivery of infrastructure, services and investment required to ensure that communities can thrive during the plan period.

Evidence Base

1.21 The Local Plan is supported by a proportionate, robust and up to date evidence base covering social, economic and environmental matters. It includes studies prepared by the Council and its consultants, together with information from infrastructure providers, statutory consultees and other organisations. The evidence has informed the Plan's vision, objectives, spatial strategy, site allocations and policies and will form part of the submission documentation considered at examination. The evidence base supporting the Local Plan is available on the Council's website[18].

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment

1.22 The Council has undertaken a Sustainability Appraisal incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) and a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to meet the environmental assessment requirements for the Local Plan.

1.23 The purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the Local Plan contributes to environmental, social and economic objectives. The SA assesses the likely effects of the Plan and reasonable alternatives and is undertaken as an iterative process that informs the preparation and refinement of planning policies, site allocations and the spatial strategy.

1.24 The initial SA Scoping Report accompanied the Direction of Travel consultation in 2020/21. It was updated following legislative, policy and baseline evidence changes, including

13 The Wealden District Council Strategy 2023 - 2027

14 Wealden Economic Development Strategy 2023 - 2033

15 Health and Wellbeing Strategy: A Refresh 2026 -2029

16 East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4

17 Wealden Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2025 - 2030

18 Local Plan Evidence Base

the Census 2021, consulted upon between 26 June and 7 August 2023 and published in January 2024[19]. SA reports have accompanied and informed each subsequent stage of Plan preparation.

1.25 The district contains two internationally designated habitats sites: the Pevensey Levels Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar Site, and Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA). These sites are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)[20]. As competent authority, WDC must assess whether the Local Plan, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, could have a significant effect on the integrity of these protected sites.

1.26 The HRA first screens for likely significant effects. Where they cannot be ruled out, an Appropriate Assessment examines the potential impacts and identifies any necessary avoidance or mitigation measures. The HRA[21] accompanying this Proposed Submission Local Plan assesses the potential effects of the Plan's spatial strategy, site allocations and planning policies on internationally designated habitats sites.

Equality and Fairness Impact Assessment and Health Impacts

1.27 The Council has undertaken an Equality and Fairness Impact Assessment (EFIA) to consider how the Plan's policies may affect different groups within the community, meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, minimise any potential adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics and promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

1.28 The NPPF requires planning policies and decisions to promote health and wellbeing and address health inequalities. The Council has therefore integrated Health Impact Assessments (HIA) into the SA, so the implications for health outcome, healthy lifestyles and access to services and facilities are considered alongside social, economic and environmental effects.

Strategic Cross-Boundary Matters and Collaboration

1.29 The Council has engaged constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with neighbouring authorities, infrastructure providers, prescribed bodies and other relevant organisations. This work has informed the development of the Local Plan and its evidence base, helped identify and address strategic cross-boundary matters and is documented in the Strategic Cross-Boundary Matter Topic Paper, joint evidence and other supporting documents.

1.30 Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) or Co-operation Statement have been prepared with relevant authorities and organisations where appropriate. These documents record areas of agreement, matters requiring ongoing discussion and the progress made in considering strategic issues that extend beyond the district's boundaries. The Statements form an important part of the evidence supporting the Local Plan.

1.31 Although the new plan-making system removed the statutory Duty to Co-operate prepared under that framework, national policy continues to require effective engagement on strategic matters. The Council will continue this work, as necessary, and in future monitoring and Plan review.

19 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report (Update), January 2024

20 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

21 Wealden Local Plan HRA (September 2026)

How to Make Representations

1.32 The period to make representations on the Wealden Proposed Submission Local Plan will run from 21 September to 5pm on 2 November 2026. At this stage of plan preparation, representations are invited on whether the Local Plan is legally compliant and whether it satisfies the tests of soundness set out in national planning policy.

1.33 Representations may address the Plan's policies, site allocations and proposals, supporting evidence and accompanying assessments.

1.34 After the representation period closes, the Council will summarise the representations received before submitting the Local Plan, supporting evidence and representations to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

1.35 Details of the supporting documents and guidance on how to make representations are available on the Council's Local Plan Consultation webpage[22].

1.36 Our preferred way to respond is through our online portal at https://consult.wealden.gov.uk/kse/.

1.37 You can also complete our response form and send it:

- by email to planningpolicy@wealden.gov.uk; or
- by post to Planning Policy, Wealden District Council, Vicarage Lane, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 2AX

1.38 You may provide a representation in writing and send in using the contact information above. Although please do consider using the online portal or response form as this helps structure your representation in a way that is most useful for the examining Inspector.

1.39 Please note that we will not acknowledge forms or letters received by post.

1.40 Please use the above email address or telephone the Planning Policy team on 01892 602008, if you would like any further information, help or assistance.

22 Local Plan Consultation webpage

Where can I view a paper copy?

Table 1 Locations where you can view the documents.

	Address	Opening Hours
Wealden District Council	Council Offices, Vicarage Lane, Hailsham, East Sussex. BN27 1AX	Monday – Friday 09.00am – 17.00pm
East Sussex County Council	County Hall, St Annes' Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1UE	Monday – Thursday 08.00am – 17.00pm Friday 08.00am – 16.30pm
Crowborough Library	Pine Grove, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1DH	Monday 12.30am – 17.00pm Tuesday 10.00am – 17.00pm Wednesday 10.00am – 14.00pm Thursday – 11.00am – 18.00pm Friday 10.00am – 17.00pm Saturday 10.00am – 17.00pm
Forest Row Library	The Community Centre, Hartfield Road, Forest Road, East Sussex RH18 5DZ	Monday 14.00pm – 17.00pm Tuesday Closed Wednesday 10.00am – 13.00pm Thursday – 14.00pm – 17.00pm Friday 13.00pm – 16.00pm Saturday 10.00am – 13.00pm
Hailsham Library	Western Road, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 3DN	Monday – 12.00noon –17.00pm Tuesday – 12.00noon – 17.00pm Wednesday – Closed Thursday – 10.00am – 18.00pm Friday – 10.00am –17.00pm Saturday – 10.00 – 17.00pm
Heathfield Library	21 High Street, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 8LU	Monday 10.00am – 13.00pm Tuesday 10.00am – 17.00pm Wednesday Closed Thursday – 14.00pm – 18.00pm Friday 10.00am – 16.00pm Saturday 10.00am – 13.00pm
Uckfield Library	Library Way, High Street, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1AR	Monday 10.00am – 13.00pm Tuesday 10.00am – 16.30pm Wednesday 14.00am – 16.30pm

	Address	Opening Hours
		Thursday – 10.00am – 18.00pm Friday 10.00am – 16.30pm Saturday 10.00am – 16.30pm
Wadhurst Library	High Street, Wadhurst, East Sussex TN5 6AP	Monday 14.00am – 16.30pm Tuesday Closed Wednesday 10.00am – 13.00pm Thursday Closed Friday 14.00am – 16.30pm Saturday 10.00am – 13.00pm
Crowborough Town Council	Council Offices, Pine Grove, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1DH	Monday – Thursday 09.00am – 17.00pm Friday 09.00am – 16.30pm
Forest Row Parish Council	The Community Centre, Hartfield Road, Forest Row, East Sussex RH18 5DZ	Monday – Friday 09.00am – 16.00pm
Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council	73 High Street, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 8HU	Monday – Friday 09.30am – 13.00pm 13.30pm – 15.00pm
Horam Parish Council	The Horam Centre, 3 Bank Buildings, Horam, East Sussex TN21 0EH	Tuesday – Thursday 09.30am – 12.30pm Friday 10.00am – 13.00pm
Maresfield Parish Council	Parish Office, Social Club Building, Churchfields, High Street, Nutley, East Sussex TN22 3NA	Monday – Friday 09.00am – 14.00pm
Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council	The Old Manor House, High Street, Mayfield, East Sussex TN20 6AL	Monday and Friday 09.00am – 11.00am Wednesday 09.00am – 12.00pm
Pevensey Parish Council	Ethel Wood Community Centre, 129 Coast Road, Pevensey Bay BN24 6NS	Monday – Thursday 09.00am – 14.00pm
Polegate Town Council	49 High Street, Polegate, East Sussex BN26 6AL	Monday – Friday 09.00am – 13.00pm
Uckfield Town Council	Civic Centre, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1AE	Monday – Thursday 09.00am – 17.00pm Friday 09.00am – 16.00pm
Willingdon and Jevington Parish Council	Council Office, The Triangle, Willingdon, East Sussex BN20 9PJ	Monday – Friday 09.00am – 13.00pm

1.41 You can view all relevant documents online. Paper copies of the local plan and other key documents such as the Sustainability Appraisal are also available for inspection at the above locations.

Next Steps and Local Plan timetable

1.42 Following the close of the period for representations, the Council will prepare the submission documents and send the Plan, supporting evidence and representations to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

1.43 The Planning Inspector will assess the Plan's legal and procedural compliance and whether it is 'sound'. Following the Inspector's Report and any recommended main modifications, the Council will proceed to adopt the Local Plan.

1.44 The latest timetable for or the preparation, examination and adoption of the Local Plan is set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS), which is available on the Council's website[23].

23 Local Development Scheme January 2026

Wealden
District Council

02
Key Characteristics



Wealden
Local Plan

Our District

2.1 Wealden District covers over 322 square miles (835 square kilometres) in the South East, close to London and within easy reach of Europe. It is the 46th largest local authority, one of the largest local authority areas in the South East, and the largest local planning authority in East Sussex.

2.2 The district contains 75 defined settlements, ranging from the larger towns of Hailsham, Crowborough, Uckfield, Heathfield and Polegate to larger villages such as Forest Row, Horam and Wadhurst, alongside many smaller villages and hamlets. Just over half of residents (55%) live within the district's towns, while the remaining 45% live in more rural areas. Wealden's high-quality environment, landscapes and heritage make it an attractive place to live, work and visit.

2.3 Wealden District Council is responsible for planning, including both plan-making and development management functions, across 39 of the district's 42 parish areas. The SDNPA is the local planning authority for the parishes of Alfriston, Cuckmere Valley and the East Dean and Friston. Several parish areas also extend across both local planning authority boundaries. The district's towns, villages and parishes each have their own distinct character, history, heritage and sense of community.

2.4 Wealden's towns and large villages provide local services, facilities and employment opportunities, helping to reduce the need to travel further afield. However, the district also forms part of a wider functional area and benefits from its proximity to a number of larger regional centres, including Royal Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks to the north; Eastbourne to the south; Lewes and Brighton and Hove to the southwest; East Grinstead, Horsham and Crawley to the northwest; Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill to the west; and Bexhill and Hastings to the southeast. These centres provide wider employment, retail, leisure, cultural, healthcare and educational opportunities, shaping the pattern of movement, service use and economic activity across the South East.

London Road, Forest Row



Figure 2 Regional Context



Population Change

2.5 Wealden's population has grown in recent decades and is expected to continue growing, mainly through migration from elsewhere in the UK and, to a lesser extent, from overseas.

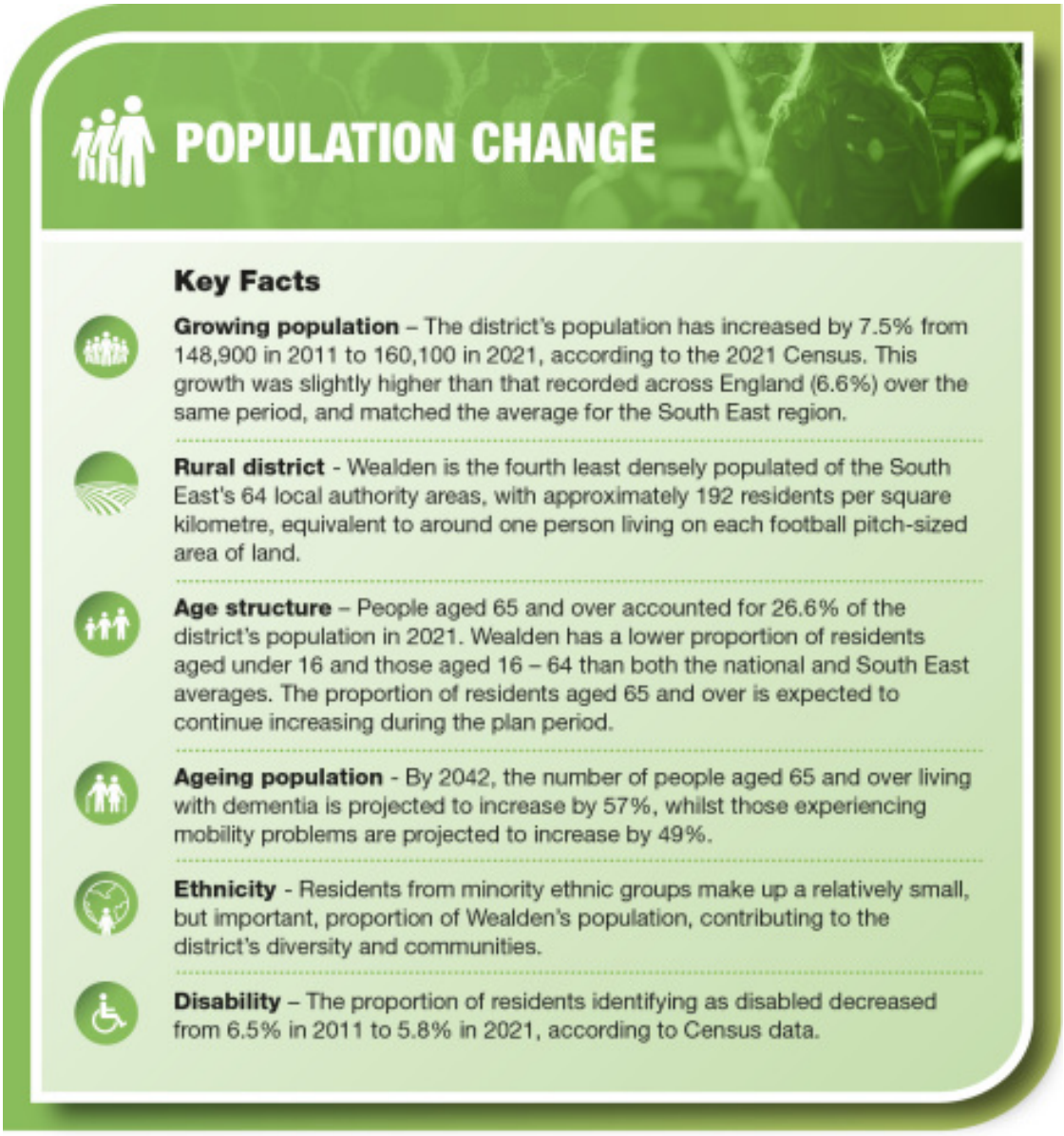
2.6 Population growth and longer life expectancy are changing Wealden's age profile. The number of residents aged 65 and over is projected to grow significantly, while the working-age population (16 to 64 years) is expected to increase modestly and the under 16 population to decline slightly. This shift is already evident, with the population aged 65 and over increasing by 24.2% between 2011 and 2021.

Walshes Park, Crowborough



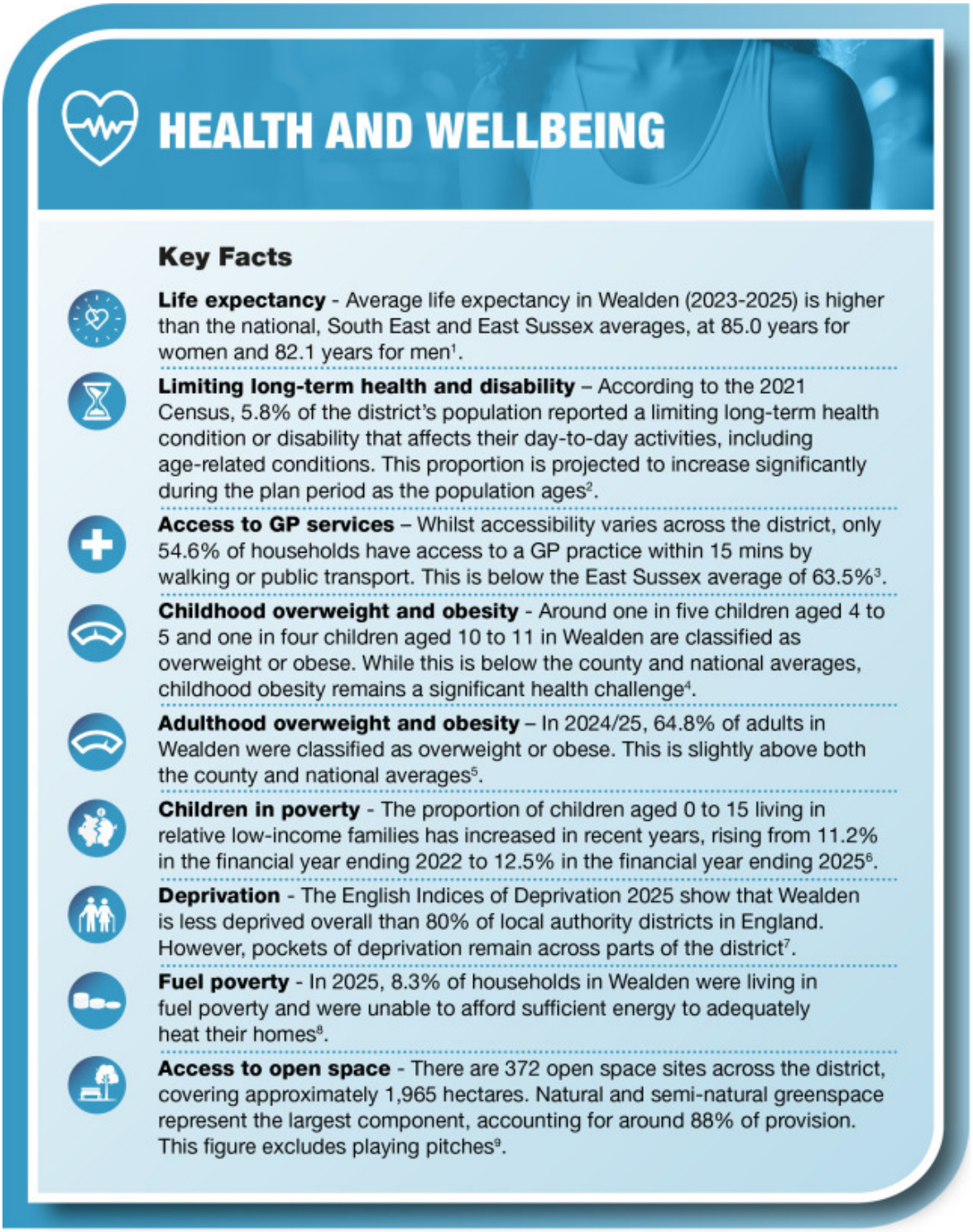
The new Sports Hub at Hellingly





Health and Wellbeing

2.7 Health and wellbeing are influenced not only by individual choices and behaviours but also by wider determinants, including social, economic and social factors, including where people live and work, their age and life circumstances. High-quality places can help address obesity, mental health conditions, physical inactivity and the needs of an ageing population.



Housing

2.8 Strong housing demand, driven by population growth, the district's attractive environment and accessibility to major employment centres, has increased house prices and private rents, particularly in the north of the district. The gap between household incomes and housing costs,

creates affordability pressures, particularly for younger people, first-time buyers and lower income households. A range of housing options, including affordable housing, is therefore needed for existing and future residents.

Old Hop Gardens, Hailsham



Woodpecker View, Crowborough





HOUSING

Key Facts

Households – The 2021 Census recorded 68,300 households with at least one resident within Wealden District . By March 2025, the number of properties liable for Council Tax had increased to 75,240[11].

Housing Tenure - In 2021, around 91% of homes in the district were in the private sector. Owner occupation accounted for 77% of housing stock (with or without a mortgage), while 13.5% was privately rented and 8.4% was socially rented.

Housing Type – Detached dwellings (43.7%) and semi-detached dwellings (31%) make up the majority of the district's housing stock. Purpose-built flats account for only 8.7% of homes.

Vacant Dwellings – In 2025[12], there were 1,905 vacant dwellings in Wealden District, of which 672 had been vacant for the long term.

Council housing – In 2024, MHCLG data shows that the Council owned 3,098 dwellings. Of these, 93.3% were social rented homes and 6.7% were affordable rented homes. The majority have one or two bedrooms.

Social and affordable housing – In 2024, Registered Providers owned a further 3,397 dwellings within the district. Combined with Council-owned stock, this provides 6,495 social and affordable homes, representing approximately 8.7% of the district's housing stock.

Housing mix - Wealden has a lower proportion of one, two and three bedroom homes, including flats, than the national, regional and sub-regional averages. This can make it more difficult for younger households to access home ownership and for older residents to downsize.

Housing stock distribution - Settlements in the north of the district generally contain higher proportions of larger four and five-plus bedroom properties, while those in the south, particularly Hailsham and Polegate, have higher proportions of smaller two-bedroom homes.

Local house prices - House prices in the south of the district, particularly around Hailsham and Polegate, are generally lower than in the north of the district, around Crowborough and areas close to Tunbridge Wells. The median house price across all property types in Wealden District was £380,000 in 2025.

Housing affordability - Housing affordability has deteriorated significantly in Wealden since 1998. In 2025, the median house price was equivalent to 10.75 times median workplace-based annual earnings, compared with 9.58 across the South East region and 8.19 across England and Wales[13].

Housing completions - Net housing completions in the district averaged 764 dwellings per annum between 2013/14 and 2024/25[14].

Homelessness – In 2024/25, 515 households in Wealden District were owed a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act[15].

[11] ONS, 2023. Census 2021
[12] Valuation Office Agency, Council Tax Statistics, May 2026
[12] MHCLG, 2025. Live Tables on dwelling stock including vacants
[13] ONS, House price to workplace-based earnings ratio, March 2026
[14] Wealden District Council Authority Monitoring Report (AMR), 2024/25
[15] MHCLG, Table of Homelessness, 2025

Transport and accessibility

2.9 Wealden's rural character creates distinct challenges in terms of transport and accessibility, particularly in connecting communities with jobs, services and facilities. Bus and rail services connect some settlements to nearby towns and larger regional centres such as Eastbourne, Brighton and Tunbridge Wells, but services can be infrequent, especially during evenings and onward connections are often poor. East Sussex County Council is seeking to improve provision through initiatives such as the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP2)[24], and the expansion of Flexibus services.

2.10 The district has railway stations at Frant, Wadhurst, Uckfield, Buxted, Crowborough (Jarvis Brook), Eridge, Pevensey, Westham, Polegate and Berwick, providing links to London and regional centres. However, there is no direct rail connection between northern and southern Wealden, limiting internal rail connectivity, and major settlements including Hailsham and Heathfield have no station.

2.11 Limited public transport means that rural communities tend to rely on private vehicles. In 2021[25], 89.4% of Wealden's households had access to at least one car or van, compared with 80.8% across East Sussex and 76.5% across England.

2.12 The district is connected to the Major Road Network (MRN) primarily through the A22 and A26 corridors, which provide north-south links between Eastbourne, Tunbridge Wells and East Grinstead, with onward connections to Gatwick Airport and London via the M23 and M25. Several key junctions and sections of these routes are operating at, or approaching, capacity and experience congestion during peak periods. Improvements to the southern A22 are being progressed through the MRN funding programme to reduce congestion and support public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling.

2.13 The A27 Strategic Road Network corridor provides east-west connectivity between Eastbourne, Lewes and Brighton. National Highways has completed recent improvements and is exploring longer-term options to address congestion between Polegate and Lewes, although major interventions are unlikely to be delivered within the plan period.

2.14 Beyond the main A-roads, the more rural roads are narrow and slower, increasing journey times and limits connectivity across parts of the district.

2.15 Locating homes, jobs, services and facilities in accessible locations can reduce travel demand and support walking, cycling and public transport. This would help cut congestion, carbon, air and noise pollution whilst supporting healthier lifestyles.

2.16 East Sussex County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4)[26] provides the strategic framework for transport investment. The Local Plan supports its aim for "an inclusive transport system that connects people and places; that is decarbonised, safer, resilient, and supports our natural environment, communities and businesses to be healthy, thrive and prosper".

2.17 East Sussex County Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)[27] prioritises improvements where walking and cycling could increase, particularly around planned

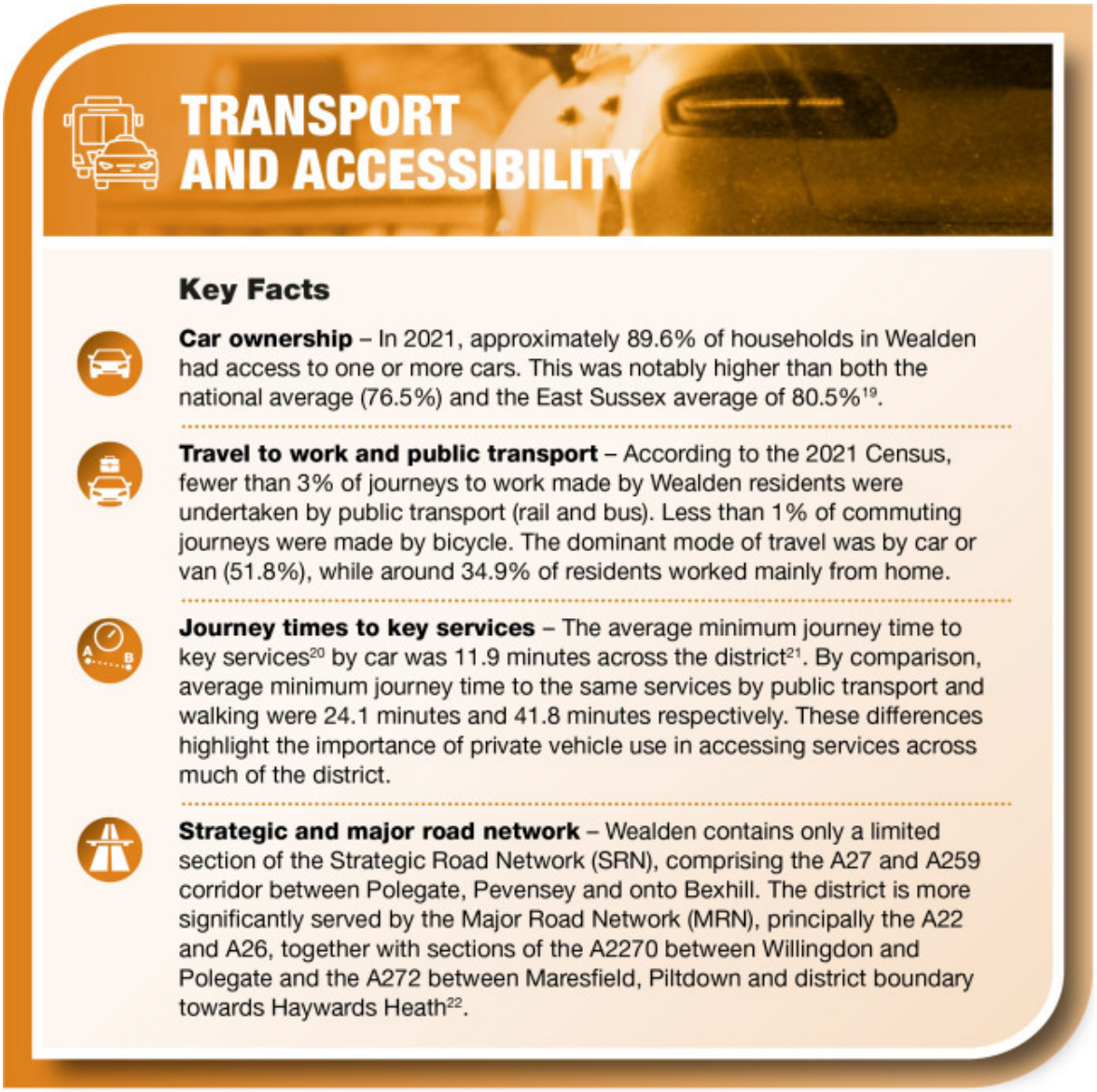
24 East Sussex County Council Bus Service Improvement Plan 2 (BSIP2), May 2025

25 ONS, Car or Van Availability, March 2023

26 East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4, October 2024

27 East Sussex County Council Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), October 2020

housing growth and among those who do not currently travel actively. Schemes are identified in and around Hailsham, Polegate, Crowborough and Uckfield. The LCWIP is expected to be updated, providing further opportunities to integrate development proposed through this Local Plan with enhanced walking and cycling networks.



[19] ONS, Census 2021
[20] The key services incorporate employment centres, primary schools, secondary schools, further education, GPs, hospitals, food stores and town centres.
[21] Department for Transport, Journey Time Statistics, 2019
[22] Major Road Network, Department for Transport

Economy

2.18 Wealden's economy has performed relatively strong in recent years despite its rural nature and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and is expected to remain resilient over the plan period.

2.19 Wealden supports manufacturing, professional services, construction and land-based industries including viticulture, tourism and the visitor economy. Compared with England, it has particular strengths in agriculture, construction, tourism, accommodation and food services,

arts and other services, although many of these sectors are characterised by relatively low productivity and wage levels.

2.20 Wealden has a resilient economy characterised of mainly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and a highly qualified workforce, although employment growth has remained below the national average over the past decade.

2.21 Wealden has a net outflow of workers to higher-paid jobs, particularly in Eastbourne, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Lewes and Mid Sussex, although workers also commute into Wealden from Eastbourne, Rother and Lewes. More employment land and premises within the district could help to retain a greater proportion of the local workforce.

2.22 Around half of Wealden's employment is concentrated within its five main towns, particularly Crowborough, Uckfield and Hailsham, and to a lesser extent Polegate and Heathfield. In 2023, the district has approximately 8,540 active businesses[28] and over 20 industrial estates, with strong demand for industrial and manufacturing premises.

2.23 The East Sussex Economic Prosperity Strategy (2024)[29] and the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (2026) identifies limited employment land and premises, which represents a significant constraint on growth. Much of the existing employment stock dates from the 1980s and 1990s and no longer meets modern business needs.

2.24 Demand for employment space is strongest in Uckfield, Hailsham and Polegate, where demand is exceeding available supply. This is reflected in industrial vacancy rates below 5%, indicating a highly constrained market. Industrial rents increased by approximately 53% between 2015 and 2025 and continue to exceed East Sussex and national averages.

2.25 Despite recent high-quality developments, few available sites and premises can accommodate medium and large-scale businesses.

2.26 Housing growth will also support economic prosperity by helping to address labour supply issues, supporting the construction sector and enabling greater levels of home and flexible working.

2.27 Agriculture, viticulture and tourism are important sectors and provide opportunities for future economic prosperity, but labour supply challenges exacerbated by relatively low-wage levels, high housing costs and an ageing workforce threaten employers and the district's long-term prosperity.

Rathfinny Wine Estate



28 ONS, Business Demography, November 2024

29 East Sussex Economic Prosperity Strategy, September 2024

ECONOMY

Key Facts

Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) - Wealden's FEMA aligns closely with its Housing Market Area (HMA), with particularly strong economic relationships between Wealden and Eastbourne, and between Wealden and Royal Tunbridge Wells.

Employment opportunities - Hailsham, Crowborough and Uckfield contain the largest concentrations of employment within the district, followed by the Polegate/Willingdon area. Around half of all employment is located within the district's urban areas, with the remainder dispersed across rural locations.

Business density - Wealden has a high level of business activity, with 94 businesses per 1,000 working-age residents in 2024.

Business stock and survival - The number of businesses in Wealden increased by 9% over the ten-year period to 2024. Whilst this is below the rates recorded for England (27%) and the South East (19%), business survival rates are broadly consistent with the national average[25].

Employment rate - In March 2026, the employment rate for residents aged 16 to 64 was 80.5%[26], exceeding both the national and South East averages.

Qualifications – According to the 2021 Census, 32.6% of residents aged 16 and over held qualifications at Level 4 or above. Whilst slightly below the South East and national averages, this exceeded the East Sussex figure of 31.3%. Only 14.9% of residents had no qualifications, which is significantly lower than both the regional and national averages[27].

Commuting pattern and earnings - Median full-time earnings for Wealden residents were £751 per week in 2024[28], broadly in line with the national average, above the East Sussex average and below the South East average (£780). However, median workplace earnings within Wealden stood at £671 per week, around £80 lower than resident earnings. This gap indicates significant levels of out-commuting to higher-paid jobs outside the district. Workplace earnings are also lower than both the regional (£754) and national (£733) averages, reflecting the district's concentration of lower-value economic sectors.

Employment sectors – Key employment sectors within Wealden include agriculture, forestry and fishing, real estate, health and social care, and financial and insurance activities.

Economy output - In 2023, Wealden contributed approximately £3.3 billion[29] to the economy; equating to a Gross Added Value (GVA) of £19,769 per head. Whilst this is below the South East and national averages, it is broadly comparable to the East Sussex average of £20,839 per head.

Working-age population - Between 2011 and 2021, Wealden's working-age population declined by 2.5%. This compares with a decrease of 2.0% across the South East and 1.8% nationally over the same period.

Labour market demand - Wealden's job vacancy rate is currently 1.8%, significantly below both the South East average (6.3%) and the UK average (3.7%). It is also below the district's long-term average vacancy rate of 3.4%. Vacancy rates have generally declined since 2012, reflecting sustained demand for employment space and the absorption of available employment premises.

Tourism Economy - Tourism is an important component of the local economy. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the sector supported approximately 8,743 jobs and was responsible for around 18.2% of employment within the district. In 2019, Wealden received approximately 5.97 million visitor trips, including 0.47 million overnight stays. By 2024, the district recorded around 5.28 million visitor trips, generating approximately £193.3 million of visitor expenditure.

[25] ONS, 2023, Business demography, UK
[26] ONS, 2025, Annual Population Survey
[27] ONS, Census 2021
[28] ONS, 2024, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
[29] ONS, 2023, Gross Value Added

Town Centres

2.28 Wealden's town and village centres compete with larger centres including Royal Tunbridge Wells, Eastbourne, East Grinstead, Lewes, and Brighton and Hove. Their role and function in serving local communities and the wider area is therefore particularly important.

2.29 The Town Centre Study (2026)[30] found that Wealden's town centres are generally performing well despite recent economic and social pressures. Low vacancy rates and a strong mix of independent businesses and national operators have supported their resilience. Challenges remain in maintaining vitality and vibrancy, attracting visitors, adapting to changing consumer behaviours, and retaining commercial floorspace.



Climate Change

2.30 Climate change is a cross-cutting challenge for the Local Plan. More frequent and intense rainfall events, storms, flooding and periods of extreme heat are expected, and past

30 Wealden Town Centre Study, January 2026

and current emissions will affect the climate for decades to come. The Plan must therefore support both emissions reduction and adaptation by communities, infrastructure, buildings and the natural environment.

2.31 Green infrastructure and nature recovery can store carbon while enhancing biodiversity, managing flood risk and water and mitigating the effects of increasing temperatures.

2.32 In July 2019, the Council declared a climate emergency and committed to achieving a carbon-neutral district by 2044 at the latest. Delivery will require more energy efficient buildings, a shift from fossil fuels, increasing renewable and low-carbon energy and sustainable travel and movement.

2.33 The Council's Climate Change Strategy (2025-2030) and Action Plan[31] address communities, buildings, energy use, transport, resources and waste, nature and health, the green economy and governance. These themes inform the Local Plan policies and proposals.

Wind Turbine near Polegate



Solar panels on Horam Village Hall



31 Wealden District Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2025 to 2030

CLIMATE CHANGE

Key Facts

Availability of water - Wealden District is classified as an area of 'serious water stress', reflecting wider challenges affecting much of the South East of England.

Water environment and flooding – Within Wealden, the coastline extends from the eastern edge of Sovereign Harbour in Eastbourne to Normans Bay on the boundary with Rother District and includes Pevensey Bay. The remainder of the district's coastline falls within the SDNP. The district contains five main river catchments, including the Medway, Shortbridge Stream, River Uck, River Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels. Fluvial flood risk is most significant on the Pevensey Levels, although parts of Uckfield, Crowborough, Forest Row, Horam, Hailsham and Polegate are also affected, alongside more rural areas. Pevensey Bay is additionally susceptible to coastal flooding.

Air quality - Road traffic is the dominant source of air pollution within the district, followed by emissions from the domestic sector[32]. Whilst carbon emissions continue to decline, no areas within Wealden currently exceed the objectives set out in the UK Air Quality Strategy.

Greenhouse emissions – In 2023, residential buildings accounted for approximately 29.4% of greenhouse gas emissions within the district, whilst commercial, industrial and public sector buildings were responsible for a further 10%. Transport was the largest emitting sector, accounting for 41.5% of emissions. Reducing energy consumption and supporting more sustainable patterns of movement will therefore be important in addressing climate change.

Renewable energy – As of October 2025, there were nine operational renewable energy developments within Wealden, comprising eight ground-mounted solar photovoltaic schemes and one onshore wind development consisting of three turbines. Together, these sites have an installed capacity of 63.8MW. A further 16 schemes have planning permission and are awaiting implementation, primarily comprising solar photovoltaic developments (ground and roof mounted) and battery energy storage facilities[33].

Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) - The number of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles registered in Wealden increased significantly between 2011 and 2023. However, despite this growth, ULEVs still account for a relatively small proportion of vehicles, with approximately 9,900 registered within the district in August 2023.

[32] Wealden District Council Authority Monitoring Report (AMR), 2024/25, December 2025
[33] Renewable Energy Planning Database: quarterly extract. July 2025. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/renewable-energy-planning-database-monthly-extract

The Natural Environment

2.34 Wealden has a diverse and varied landscape shaped by geology, soils, topography, land cover, hydrology, climate and historic and cultural development. Its landscapes and distinctive settlement pattern support ecosystem services, recreation, tourism and the rural economy, and contribute to the district's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit.

2.35 Wealden has an extensive network of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites. Ashdown Forest and the Pevensey Levels are European Sites protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017[32]. The district also contains one of the highest concentrations of ancient woodland in England, with around 3% of England's ancient woodland, an irreplaceable habitat that supports rare and threatened species.

2.36 Beyond designated sites, Wealden supports a wide range of habitats and UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Species. These species are recognised as being amongst the most threatened and requiring conservation action. Whilst many are associated with designated sites, important populations also occur throughout the wider countryside.

2.37 The BAP Priority Habitats within the district are generally concentrated within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs), which offer the greatest potential for habitat restoration, enhancement and creation and for strengthening ecological networks beyond designated sites.

2.38 The Environment Act 2021 requires most qualifying development to deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), leaving biodiversity measurably better before development takes place.

2.39 At a local level, Sussex Nature Recovery has worked with East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council in adopting a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which provides a strategic framework for nature recovery across the area, including Wealden[33]. The LNRS helps identify priorities and opportunities for habitat creation, restoration and enhancement, helping to guide future action by public bodies, landowners and local communities.

2.40 In 2025, the Council declared a biodiversity crisis[34] and committed to use the planning system to restore biodiversity, improve ecological connectivity and strengthen ecosystem resilience.

2.41 In support of this commitment, the five-year Wilder Wealden project[35], in partnership with Sussex Wildlife Trust is creating and enhancing nature recovery networks through habitat restoration, improving water quality and collaborating with landowners, communities and other stakeholders. The project directly supports the LNRS and contributes to wider ambitions for nature recovery across East Sussex.

32 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

33 Sussex Nature Recovery

34 Wealden District Council, Full Council, 14 May 2025

35 Wilder Wealden Project, September 2025

Ashdown Forest



The Cuckoo Trail at Hellingly





Quality of the built environment

2.42 The quality of the built environment shapes how places look, feel and function. Well-designed places can improve quality of life by supporting health, wellbeing, safety, inclusion and community cohesion.

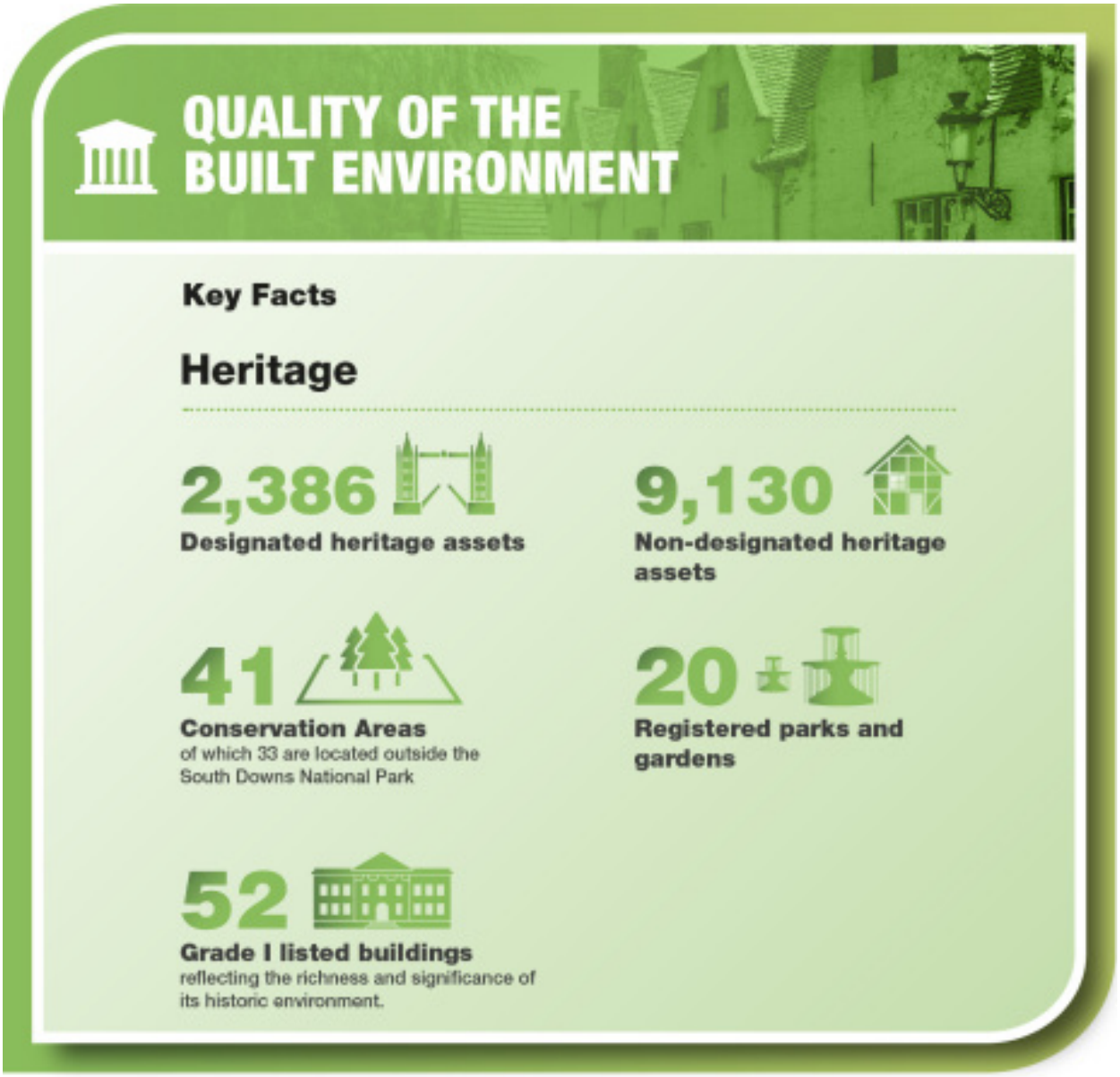
2.43 Wealden is fortunate to contain a network of well-defined towns and villages, alongside a rich and varied historic environment across both urban and rural areas. The district's built heritage contributes significantly to its local distinctiveness, helping to define its identity and differentiate its places from those elsewhere in the country. Each settlement has its own character, history and architectural qualities, reflecting the evolution of the district over time.

Michelham Priory



Pevensey Castle




QUALITY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT
Key Facts
Heritage
2,386
Designated heritage assets
9,130
Non-designated heritage assets
41
Conservation Areas
of which 33 are located outside the South Downs National Park
20
Registered parks and gardens
52
Grade I listed buildings
reflecting the richness and significance of its historic environment.

Wealden
District Council

03
Vision & Objectives



Wealden
Local Plan

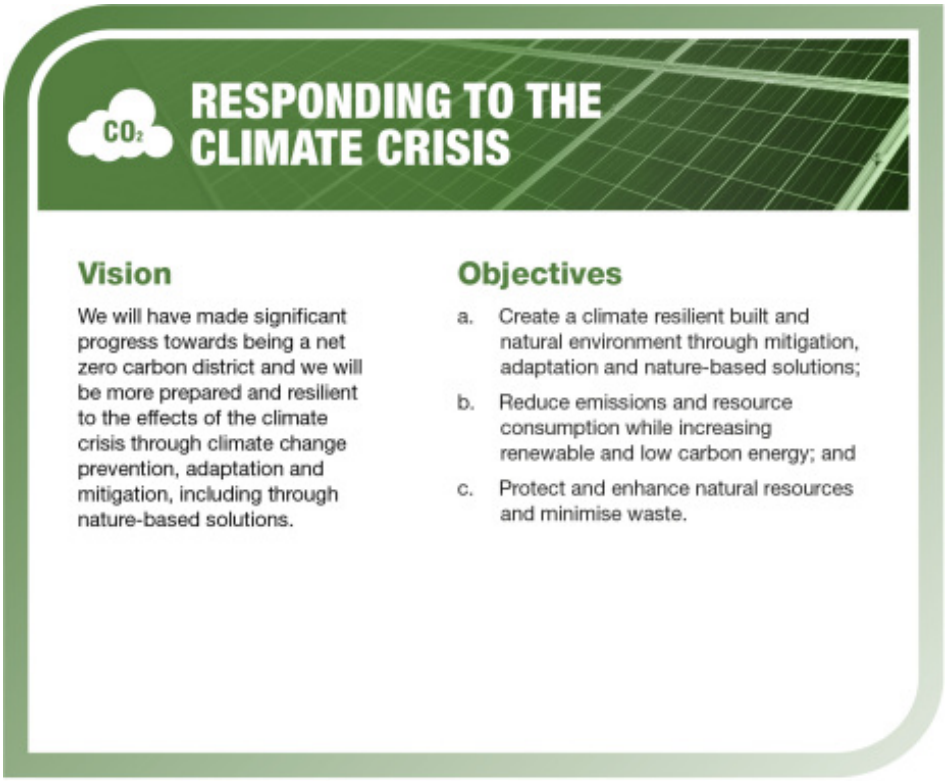
Introduction

3.1 This chapter sets out the vision and objectives for Wealden District to 2042. Informed by the evidence base, the Council's ambitions, and consultation feedback, they provide the framework for the Local Plan's spatial strategy, policies and for its monitoring and delivery.



Mini Vision and Objectives

3.2 Our 'mini' visions and Local Plan objectives are set out below.



Vision

We will have made significant progress towards being a net zero carbon district and we will be more prepared and resilient to the effects of the climate crisis through climate change prevention, adaptation and mitigation, including through nature-based solutions.

Objectives

a. Create a climate resilient built and natural environment through mitigation, adaptation and nature-based solutions;

b. Reduce emissions and resource consumption while increasing renewable and low carbon energy; and

c. Protect and enhance natural resources and minimise waste.



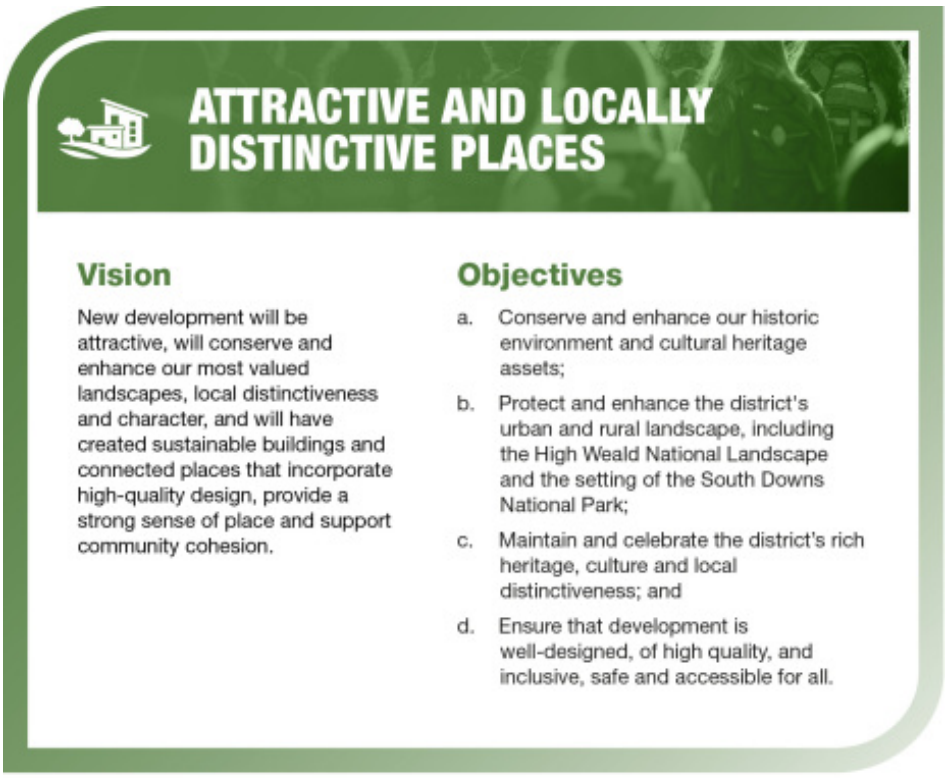
Vision

We will have conserved, restored and enhanced habitats and species, allowing them to thrive, halting species decline and contributing to nature recovery at a landscape scale. Our biodiversity rich and beautiful countryside, coastal and water environments will continue to define the district, and opportunities for people to access and engage with nature close to where they live will have been enhanced.

Objectives

a. Protect, restore, enhance and connect habitats, species geodiversity, green and blue infrastructure, delivering biodiversity net gain and improving access to nature; and

b. Protect and improve the quality and ecological function of our water environments.



ATTRACTIVE AND LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE PLACES

Vision

New development will be attractive, will conserve and enhance our most valued landscapes, local distinctiveness and character, and will have created sustainable buildings and connected places that incorporate high-quality design, provide a strong sense of place and support community cohesion.

Objectives

a. Conserve and enhance our historic environment and cultural heritage assets;

b. Protect and enhance the district's urban and rural landscape, including the High Weald National Landscape and the setting of the South Downs National Park;

c. Maintain and celebrate the district's rich heritage, culture and local distinctiveness; and

d. Ensure that development is well-designed, of high quality, and inclusive, safe and accessible for all.



DELIVERING NEW HOMES FOR ALL

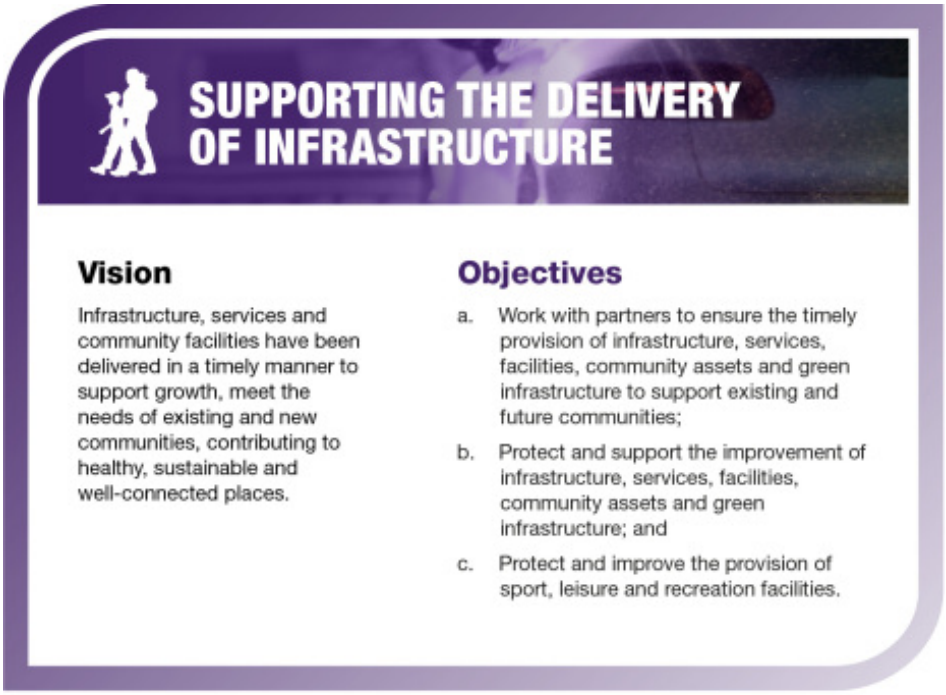
Vision

We will have delivered new homes in the most accessible and sustainable locations and in a way that enhances and respects the distinctive qualities of our district

Objectives

a. Deliver high-quality, well-designed and energy-efficient new homes that meet local needs; and

b. Boost the provision of affordable and specialist homes, ensuring that suitable homes are available for all sections of the community.



SUPPORTING THE DELIVERY OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Vision

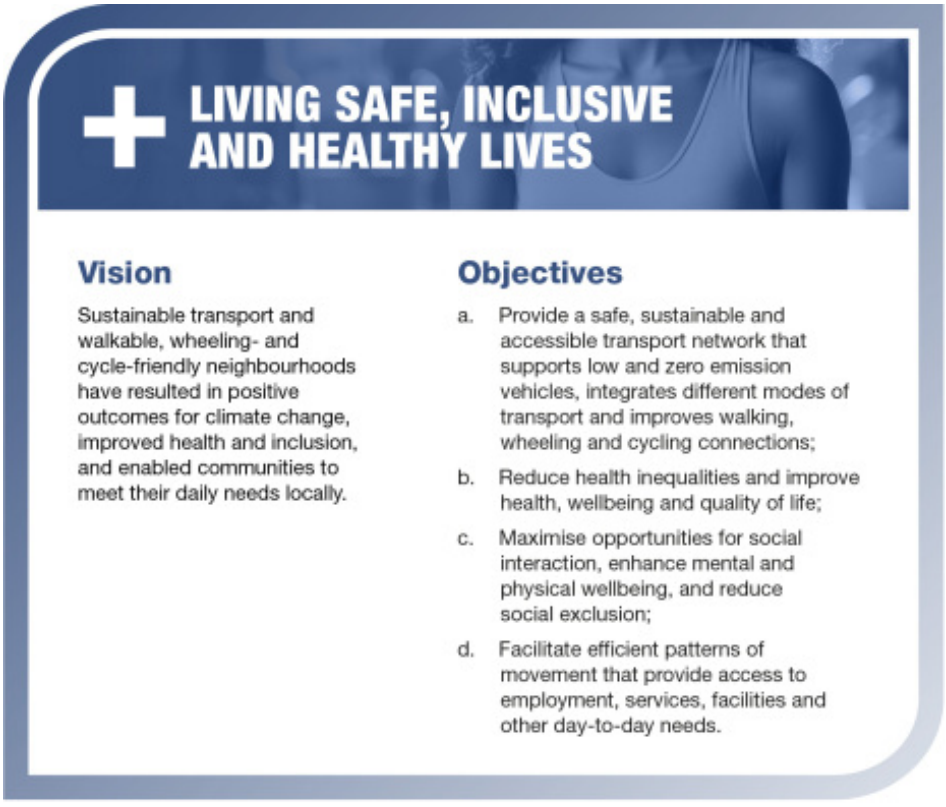
Infrastructure, services and community facilities have been delivered in a timely manner to support growth, meet the needs of existing and new communities, contributing to healthy, sustainable and well-connected places.

Objectives

a. Work with partners to ensure the timely provision of infrastructure, services, facilities, community assets and green infrastructure to support existing and future communities;

b. Protect and support the improvement of infrastructure, services, facilities, community assets and green infrastructure; and

c. Protect and improve the provision of sport, leisure and recreation facilities.



LIVING SAFE, INCLUSIVE AND HEALTHY LIVES

Vision

Sustainable transport and walkable, wheeling- and cycle-friendly neighbourhoods have resulted in positive outcomes for climate change, improved health and inclusion, and enabled communities to meet their daily needs locally.

Objectives

a. Provide a safe, sustainable and accessible transport network that supports low and zero emission vehicles, integrates different modes of transport and improves walking, wheeling and cycling connections;

b. Reduce health inequalities and improve health, wellbeing and quality of life;

c. Maximise opportunities for social interaction, enhance mental and physical wellbeing, and reduce social exclusion;

d. Facilitate efficient patterns of movement that provide access to employment, services, facilities and other day-to-day needs.



VIBRANT TOWN AND LOCAL CENTRES

Vision

Our towns and village centres will be supported by both existing and future communities and will continue to contribute positively to the character and identity of the district. They will function as vibrant and attractive destinations, providing a focus for community life, services, businesses and visitors.

Objectives

a. Ensure that new and existing communities can easily access and support town and local centres through sustainable modes of transport, including public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling;

b. Maintain and strengthen the role and function of town and local centres by supporting a diverse range of town centre uses; and

c. Ensure that development makes a positive contribution to the distinctive character, appearance and public realm of town and local centres.



SUPPORTING A SUSTAINABLE AND PROSPEROUS ECONOMY ALLOWING PEOPLE TO LIVE WELL

Vision

We will have a prosperous and resilient local economy, provided new sites and opportunities to meet the needs of existing and future businesses, and have well-paid jobs, supporting the prosperity of our communities.

Objectives

a. Support a prosperous, resilient, inclusive and diverse economy that provides opportunities for all;

b. Provide, retain, and enhance employment areas and premises to support investment, business growth, innovation and productivity;

c. Align workforce skills with employer needs, support increases in productivity and wages and reduce the need for out-commuting;

d. Support business start-ups, rural diversification and the transition to sustainable and circular business practice; and

e. Strengthen the district's tourism, cultural and visitor economy offer and improve sustainable access to attractions.

Wealden
District Council

04
Spatial Strategy



Wealden
Local Plan

Introduction

4.1 This chapter establishes the spatial strategy for the district between 2026 and 2042, including the settlement hierarchy, the scale and distribution of housing and economic growth, and the approach to infrastructure and environment constraints. It directs homes, jobs, infrastructure and investment to sustainable locations, supports the vitality of settlements and the efficient use of land, and protects and enhances the natural, built and historic environment.

4.2 The strategy has been informed by the Council's evidence base, including assessments of housing and employment needs, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints and sustainability considerations. It provides the basis for the distribution of development and investment across the district over the plan period, contributing to the Council's environmental, social and economic objectives.

Defining our Spatial Strategy

4.3 The spatial strategy has been developed to deliver the Local Plan vision and objectives and to meet the requirements of national planning policy. It balances housing, employment and infrastructure needs, with the district's environmental and physical constraints, including nationally and locally important landscapes, biodiversity sites, heritage assets and flood risk.

4.4 The spatial strategy has been informed by:

- the vision and objectives of our local plan;
- national planning policy and guidance;
- the Council's evidence base, including assessments of housing, employment and infrastructure needs;
- demographic and economic forecasts;
- the needs of different groups within the community;
- the capacity of settlements to accommodate growth;
- the availability and suitability of land for development;
- infrastructure capacity and delivery requirements;
- environmental considerations, including landscape, biodiversity and flood risk;
- the character and heritage of settlements; and
- the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment.

4.5 Further detail on the preparation, assessment and justification of the spatial strategy is provided in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper (September 2026), Sustainability Appraisal (September 2026) and relevant technical evidence.

4.6 The spatial strategy directs most development to the district's market towns, locations adjoining neighbouring regional centres and other settlements with good access to services, facilities, employment and sustainable transport. It supports town centres, employment growth, rural businesses and the visitor economy; focuses strategic employment along the A22, A26 and A27 corridors; and directs development to locations where existing or planned infrastructure can support growth. Outside settlement boundaries, opportunities are more limited to protect the countryside, settlement character and valued landscapes. Within the High Weald National Landscape, growth is focused on the most sustainable locations while conserving its natural

beauty and special qualities; the strategy also protects the setting of the South Downs National Park.

Infrastructure

4.7 The delivery of key infrastructure, including education, health, social care and water infrastructure, is dependent on a range of delivery partners. The spatial strategy seeks to direct development to locations where infrastructure capacity exists, or where growth can support the delivery of new or improved infrastructure. The Plan also seeks to protect, enhance and provide community facilities to meet the needs of existing and future communities. The infrastructure required to support the Local Plan is set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2026)[36].

The Concept of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods[37] and its application in Wealden

4.8 The Local Plan supports well-connected, inclusive and sustainable communities where day-to-day services, facilities, employment and open space are accessible by walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. The way this principle is applied will reflect local circumstances: market towns can support a broader range of uses, while villages and rural areas will reply more on improved connectivity and links to higher order settlements.

4.9 The Council will support development that improves access to services, facilities and employment through its location, layout and design, and will work with partners to secure active-travel and public-transport improvements where opportunities arise.

36 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) September 2026

37 The 20-minute neighbourhood guide, Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), March 2021

Figure 3 Features of a 20-Minute Neighbourhood



4.10 The Council will work with partners to support improvements to active travel and public transport infrastructure where opportunities arise, helping to improve access to services, facilities and employment across the district.

Policy SS1 Spatial Strategy for Wealden

Policy SS1: Spatial Strategy for Wealden

1. During the plan period to 2042, development will be directed in accordance with the spatial strategy by:

   a) focusing the majority of housing, employment and infrastructure growth within, and where allocated, adjoining the most sustainable settlements, having regard to access to employment, services, facilities, public transport and opportunities for active travel;

b) supporting the vitality of towns and villages and creating complete, compact and connected neighbourhoods through an appropriate mix of homes, employment, infrastructure, community facilities, services and open spaces;

c) conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, including the High Weald National Landscape, the setting of the South Downs National Park, and the character of the countryside.

2. Development boundaries are identified on the Policies Map. Within them, development will be supported in principle, where it accords with this Plan, makes efficient use of land, responds positively to local character and distinctiveness, and provides or contributes towards the infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to support it.

3. Sustainable economic prosperity will be supported by providing employment development, protecting and enhancing strategic and non-strategic employment sites, and maintaining the vitality and viability of district, service and local centres in accordance with the policies of this Plan.

4. Outside development boundaries, land will be treated as countryside and development will be permitted only where it is supported by a specific policy in this Plan or national policy.

Achieving Sustainable Housing Growth Introduction

4.11 The spatial strategy seeks to provide a deliverable supply of homes in sustainable locations, meeting a range of housing needs and supporting healthy, well-connected communities. The distribution of growth reflects access to employment, services, facilities, public transport and opportunities for active travel, together with site availability, infrastructure capacity and the need to conserve and enhance the district's natural and historic environment, including the High Weald National Landscape and the setting of the South Downs National Park.

4.12 The policies and site allocations in this Plan are intended to provide a deliverable supply of housing to meet identified needs throughout the plan period whilst supporting the creation of sustainable, healthy and well-connected communities.

4.13 Figures 5 and 7 illustrate the settlement hierarchy, principal transport corridors, environmental designations and broad locations of housing and employment growth. The figures are illustrative and should be read with the strategic policies and Policies Map.

Wealden's Housing Need

4.14 Using the standard method, Wealden's Local Housing Need is 1,465 dwellings per annum, equivalent to 23,440 homes between 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2042.

Unmet Housing Need from Neighbouring Local Authorities and Cross-Boundary Cooperation

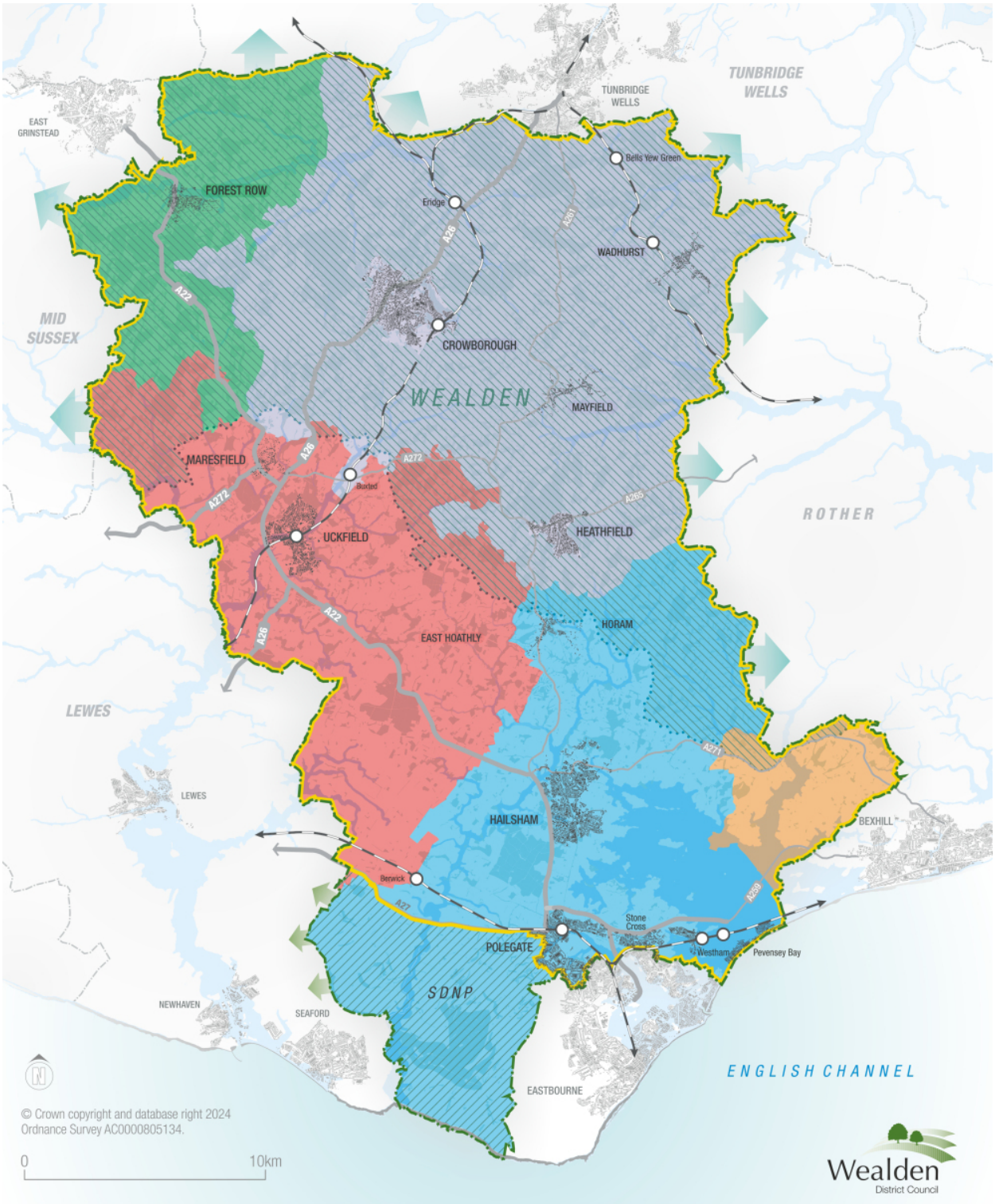
4.15 The Council has engaged with neighbouring authorities and other relevant organisations on strategic cross-boundary matters throughout the preparation of this Local Plan. In particular,

the Council has considered housing market relationships and whether unmet housing needs arising elsewhere should be addressed within Wealden.

4.16 The Local Housing Needs Assessment (2026) identifies overlapping housing market relationships, the strongest with Eastbourne and Tunbridge Wells, and West Sussex, Mid Sussex, Lewes, Rother and Sevenoaks. These relationships have informed cross-boundary engagement on housing needs and strategic planning matters.

4.17 The Council has considered neighbouring authorities' unmet housing needs through ongoing cross-boundary engagement. Having regard to the district's own unmet need, the availability of suitable and deliverable sites, infrastructure considerations and environmental constraints, the Plan does not provide for unmet housing need elsewhere. The Council will continue constructive engagement on strategic planning matters through Plan implementation and review.

Figure 4 Wealden District Housing Market Area (HMA)



Housing Evidence Base

4.18 The spatial strategy and its approach to meeting housing needs is informed by the Local Housing Needs Assessment (2026)[38], the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)[39], Comprehensive Site Review[40], Sustainability Appraisal[41], and other technical studies. Together, this evidence identifies housing needs, suitable and deliverable sites, development capacity, infrastructure requirements and environmental constraints, and has informed the housing policies and site allocations in the Plan.

Sustainable Settlements and the Settlement Hierarchy

4.19 The Sustainable Settlements Study (2026) Addendum[42], assesses settlements by their role, services, accessibility and public transport provision. Types 1 to 4 settlements are the primary focus for development and will have development boundaries. The hierarchy does not determine growth levels by itself, distribution also reflects suitable land, environmental and heritage constraints, flood risk, infrastructure capacity and the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Table 2 Settlement Hierarchy

Settlement category	Settlement
Type1 settlements (Town)	Crowborough, Uckfield, Hailsham and Heathfield
Type 2 settlements (Settlements that geographically relate to a regional centre out with Wealden District)	Polegate, Willingdon, Stone Cross, Westham, Pevensey, Pevensey Bay
Type 3 settlements (Primary village)	Forest Row, Horam, Mayfield, Wadhurst.
Type 4 settlements (Secondary village)	Bells Yew Green, Berwick Station, Blackboys, Broad Oak Buxted, Cross in Hand, East Hoathly, Eridge, Five Ash Down, Framfield, Frant, Groombridge, Hartfield, Herstmonceux, Isfield, Laughton, Lower Horsebridge, Maresfield, Ninfield, Nutley, Rotherfield
Type 5 settlements(Neighbourhood settlement)	Cade Street, Chelwood Gate, Coleman's Hatch, Danehill, Five Ashes, Hadlow Down, Halland, Hellingly, High Hurstwood, Lower Dicker, Little Horsted, Mark Cross, Maynards Green, Punnetts Town, Rushlake Green, Selmeston, Upper Dicker, Upper Hartfield, Windmill Hill, Withyham

38 The Wealden Local Housing Needs Assessment Update (2026)

39 Wealden Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (September 2026)

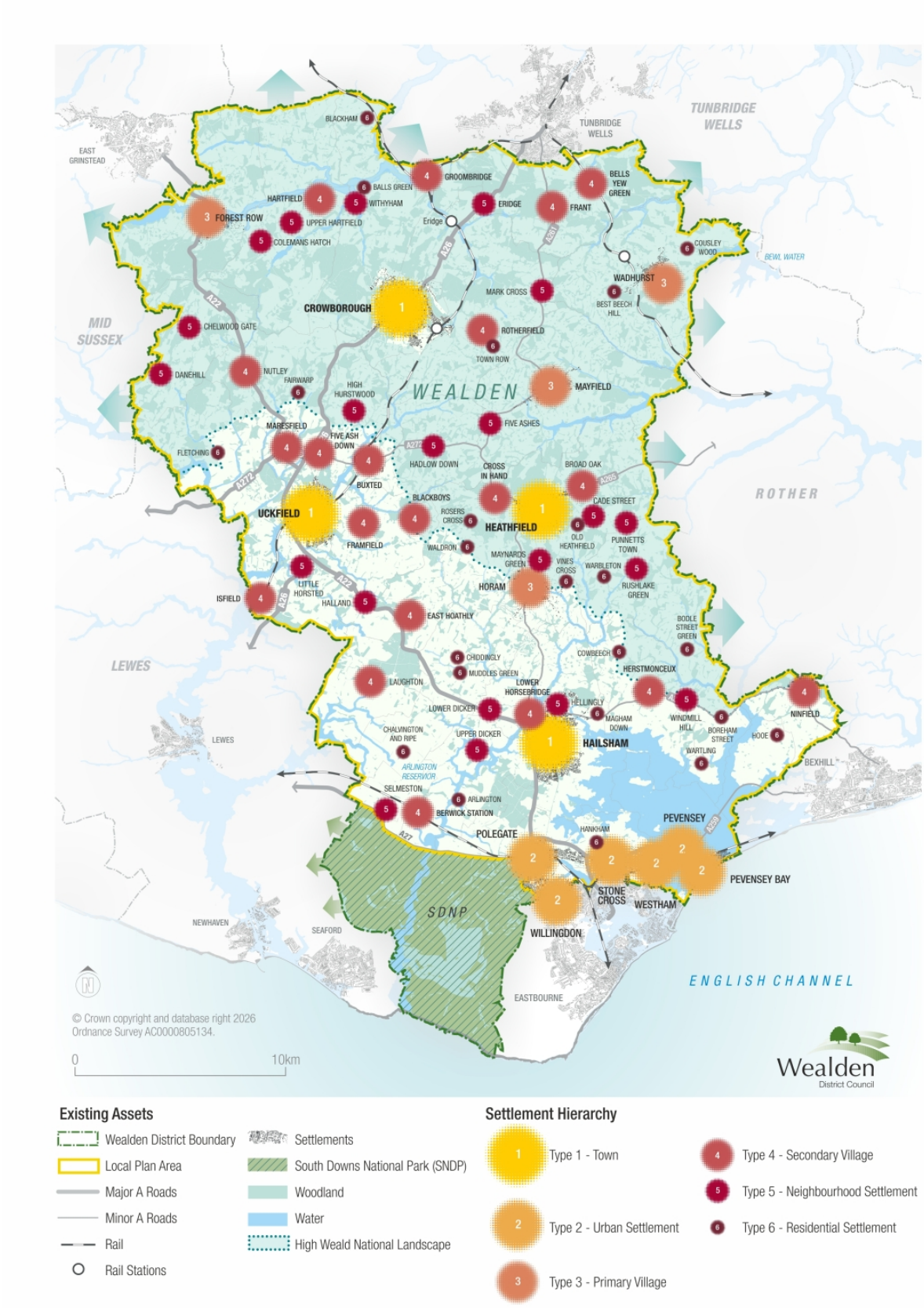
40 Wealden District Comprehensive Site Review (September 2026)

41 Wealden Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (September 2026)

42 Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy (September 2026)

Settlement category	Settlement
Type 6 settlements (Residential settlement)	Arlington, Balls Green, Best Beech Hill, Blackham, Bodle Street Green, Boreham Street, Chalvington & Ripe, Chiddingly, Cowbeech, Cousley Wood, Fairwarp, Fletching, Hankham, Hooe, Magham Down, Muddles Green, Old Heathfield, Rosers Cross, Town Row, Vines Cross, Waldron, Warbleton, Wartling

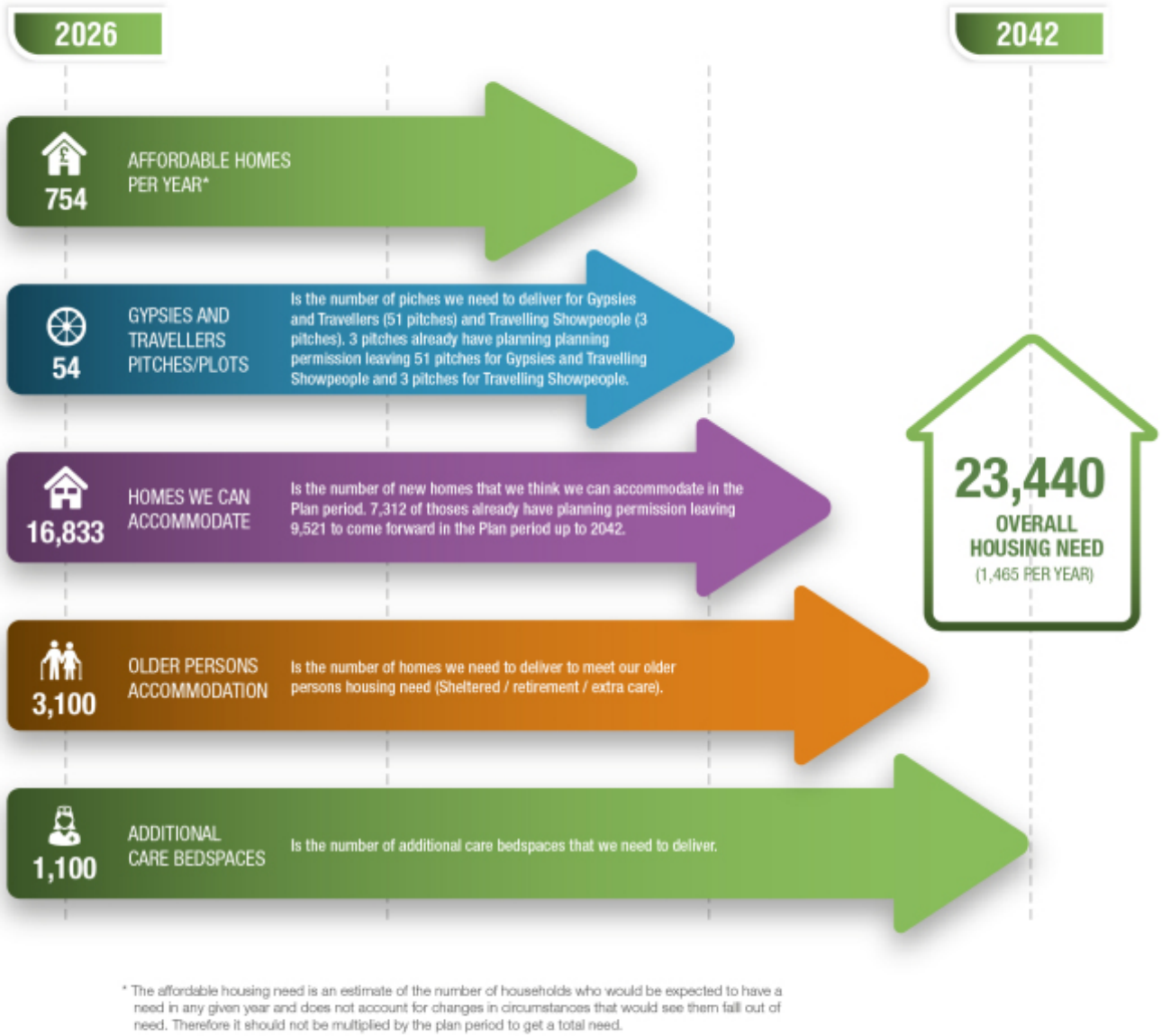
Figure 5 Wealden District Settlement Hierarchy



Current and Future Housing Supply

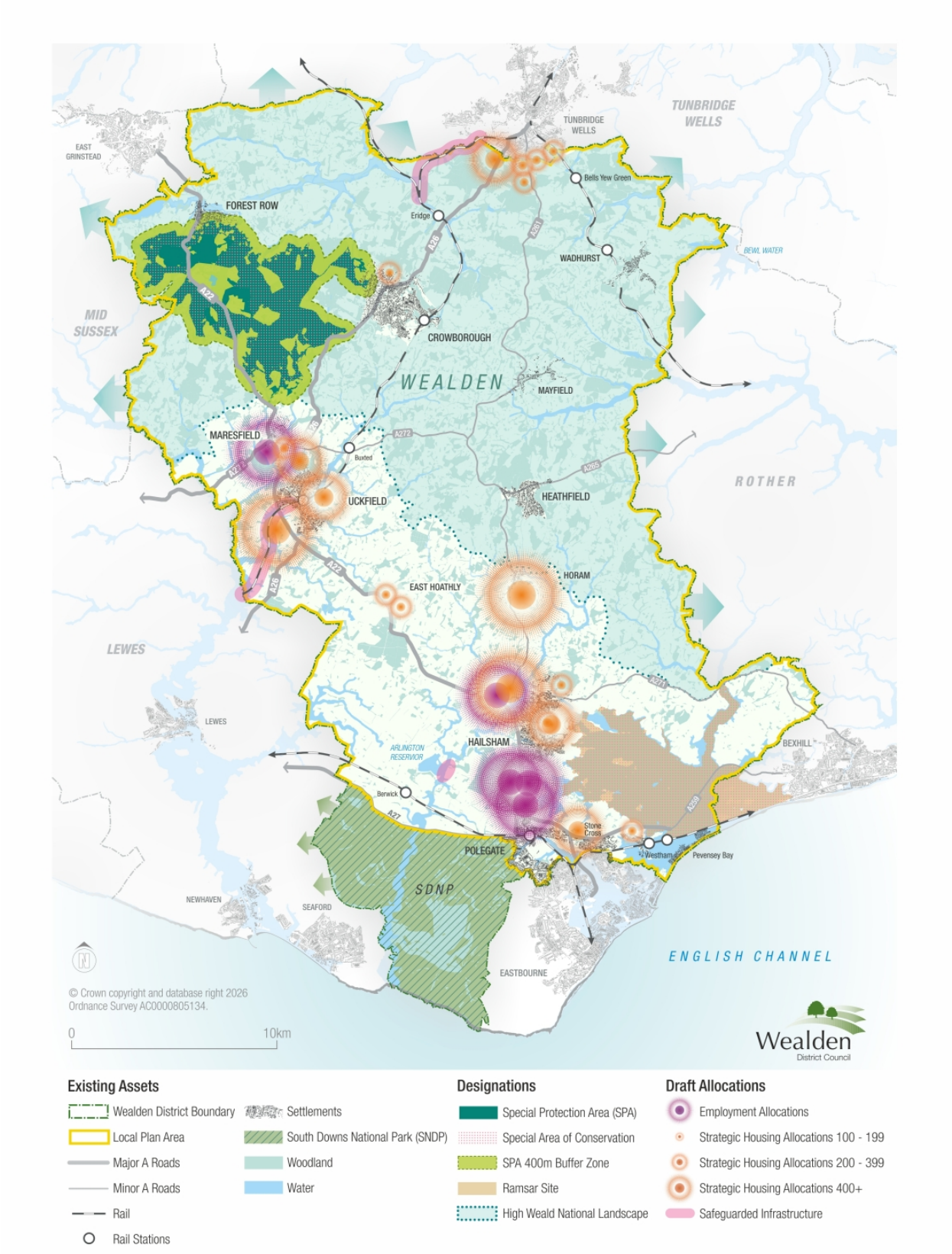
4.20 The Plan identifies a housing supply of 16,833 dwellings between 2026-2042, equivalent to 1,052 dwellings per annum. This is 6,607 dwellings below the identified local housing need of 23,440 homes. The shortfall reflects the limited availability of suitable and deliverable sites in sustainable locations, having regard to the High Weald National Landscape, the setting of the South Downs National Park, biodiversity designations, protected habitats, flood risk and infrastructure constraints.

Figure 6 Wealden Development Needs



* The affordable housing need is an estimate of the number of households who would be expected to have a need in any given year and does not account for changes in circumstances that would see them fall out of need. Therefore it should not be multiplied by the plan period to get a total need.

Figure 7 Key Diagram



4.21 The overall housing supply comprises existing commitments, windfall development and Local Plan allocations, as set out below.

Table 3 Housing supply for the Local Plan

Source of housing supply	Number of dwellings
Commitments (net) as of 1 April 2026	7,312
Windfalls	1,188 (Small Sites) 536 (Large Sites)[43]
Local Plan Site Allocations	7,797
Total housing supply	**16,833**
Dwellings Per Annum	1,052

Provision and Location of Homes

4.22 Policy SS2 sets out the amount and broad distribution of housing growth across the district. The Policies Map identifies development boundaries and housing allocations that will contribute towards meeting housing needs over the plan period.

Policy SS2 Provision of Homes

Policy SS2: Provision of Homes

1. A minimum of 16,833 net dwellings will be delivered between 1 April 2026 and 31 March 2042 through:

- existing commitments;
- site allocations identified in this Plan under Policy SA1 (Housing and Mixed-Use Site Allocations); and
- windfall development.

2. Housing development will be directed to the district's most sustainable settlements and will normally be located within defined development boundaries, as shown on the Policies Map.

Supporting text

4.23 The distribution of housing growth reflects the spatial strategy and evidence base. Most development is directed to the district's main towns (Type 1 settlements) and settlements closely related to the main towns and neighbouring centres, including Eastbourne (Type 2 settlements) and Royal Tunbridge Wells. Type 3 and Type 4 settlements also accommodate development where this is consistent with the settlement hierarchy and environmental and infrastructure considerations.

43 Large windfall sites comprise developments of 5 or more net dwellings. Small windfall sites comprise developments of fewer than 5 net dwellings. This reflects the site size threshold used in the SHELAA. Further information on this is provided within the SHELAA (September 2026) at Appendix 2.

4.24 The Local Plan is supported by a housing trajectory in Figure 8 which identifies the anticipated delivery of homes throughout the plan period to 2042. The trajectory demonstrates how the housing requirement will be met through a combination of existing commitments, allocations and windfall development, and provides a framework for monitoring delivery and maintaining an adequate supply of housing land over the plan period.

Figure 8 Wealden Local Plan Housing Trajectory: 2026- 2042



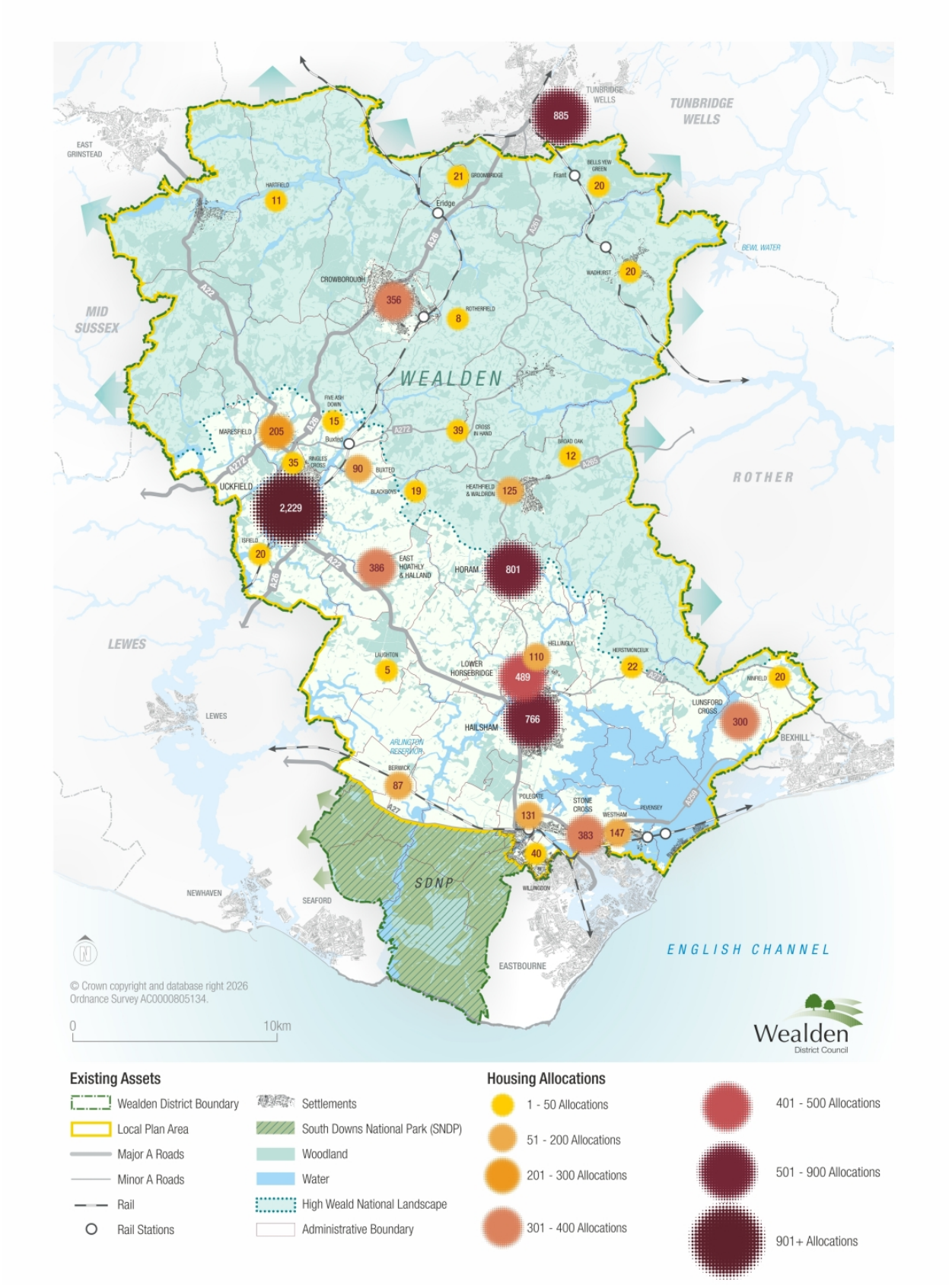
Table 4 Distribution and amount of housing growth up to 2042 on a Parish basis

Parish	Committed Dwellings (Net) as of 1 April 2026	Local Plan Allocated Dwellings (Net)	Total
Arlington	10	0	10
Berwick	33	87	120
Buxted	255	140	395
Chalvington with Ripe	7	0	7
Chiddingly	16	0	16
Crowborough	302	341	643
Danehill	6	0	6
East Dean and Friston	0	0	0
East Hoathly with Halland	206	386	592
Fletching	6	0	6
Forest Row	51	0	51
Framfield	429	609	1,038
Frant	91	905	996
Hadlow Down	6	0	6
Hailsham	1,312	696	2,008
Hartfield	16	11	27
Heathfield and Waldron	62	176	238
Hellingly	727	669	1,396
Herstmonceux	144	22	166
Hooe	1	0	1
Horam	175	801	976
Isfield	5	20	25
Laughton	23	5	28

Parish	Committed Dwellings (Net) as of 1 April 2026	Local Plan Allocated Dwellings (Net)	Total
Little Horsted	340	1,300	1,640
Long Man	1	0	1
Maresfield	124	205	329
Mayfield and Five Ashes	14	0	14
Ninfield	86	320	406
Pevensey	3	0	3
Polegate	608	131	739
Rotherfield	34	8	42
Selmeston	4	0	4
Uckfield	970	339	1,309
Wadhurst	31	20	51
Warbleton	2	0	2
Wartling	1	0	1
Westham	504	530	1,034
Willingdon and Jevington	701	40	741
Withyham	6	36	42
	7,312	7,797	15,109
Plus windfall	(Small Sites)		1,188
	(Large Sites)		536
	TOTAL		16,833

4.25 Settlements with similar roles and functions have different capacities for growth. The distribution therefore reflects accessibility, relationships with higher-order settlements, site availability, infrastructure capacity and environmental constraints, including landscape, flood risk, heritage and habitat considerations. This explains why some settlements, such as Horam and East Hoathly, have greater opportunities to accommodate more growth than more constrained locations of a similar size and role such as Forest Row and Mayfield.

Figure 9 Wealden District Housing Allocations



Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople – Accommodation Needs

4.26 National policy requires local planning authorities to assess and plan for the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

4.27 The East Sussex Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (2022)[44] identifies a need for 51 Gypsy and Traveller pitches and 3 Travelling Showpeople plots between 2021 and 2040.After accounting for subsequent permissions and delivery at Whitesmith and Milton Gate, the remaining need is for 45 Gypsy and Traveller pitches and 3 Travelling Showpeople plots.

4.28 The Council will monitor needs beyond 2040 to the end of the plan period in 2042.

4.29 Policy SS3 and SA2 sets out the approach to provision and site allocations.

Policy SS3 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople - Accommodation Needs

Policy SS3: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople - Accommodation Needs

1. Provision will be made for 45 Gypsy and Traveller pitches and 3 Travelling Showpeople plots to meet the identified residual accommodation needs of the district to 2040,through the site allocations in Policy SA2 and, where appropriate, suitable windfall proposals that accord with the policies of this Plan.

Site Identification and Delivery

4.30 Policy SA2 allocates a mix of new and extensions to existing sites to meet the identified need. Together, they are intended to meet the identified accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople over the plan period, whilst supporting existing communities and family networks. Sites are classified as deliverable where they are expected to come forward in the early years of the plan period and developable delivery is anticipated later.

4.31 The Council will continue to monitor needs and the delivery of allocated sites throughout the plan period to ensure that sufficient provision is maintained.

Achieving Sustainable Economic Prosperity and Increasing Local Job Provision and Skills

Town Centres and Retail

4.32 Wealden's District, Service and Local Centres play an important role in supporting communities by providing access to shops, services, leisure opportunities and employment. The Council's evidence indicates that additional retail floorspace capacity is likely to arise over the study period to 2040 as a result of population growth and expenditure patterns.

44 East Sussex Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment, May 2022

Retail Provision and Town Centres

4.33 The Wealden Town Centre Study (2026)[45] identifies potential capacity for additional convenience and comparison retail floorspace across the district to 2040. Table 5 summarises the estimated retail floorspace capacity from the Town Centre Study (2026) for additional retail floorspace over the study period.

Table 5 Net quantitative 'capacity' for new retail floorspace in Wealden (2025-2040)

Goods	2030 (sq m net)	2035 (sq m net)	2040 (sq m net)
Convenience	3,700 - 4,700	5,600 – 7,200	7,600 – 9,700
Comparison	2,500 – 3,900	5,400 – 8,500	7,600 – 11,900
Total	**6,200 –8,600**	**11,000 –15,700**	**15,200 – 21,600**

4.34 These capacity forecasts do not in themselves indicate a need for additional retail allocations. The Council's evidence demonstrates that existing centres have sufficient capacity to accommodate future retail growth, including through the occupation of vacant units and redevelopment opportunities within centres. Although vacancy rates vary between centres, overall performance remains positive and existing vacant floorspace is considered capable of accommodating much of the forecast retail capacity. Consequently, no specific retail site allocations are proposed and any additional retail floorspace should be directed to District, Service and Local Centres in accordance with Policy TC1.

Policy SS4 Retail Provision and Town Centres

> **Policy SS4: Retail Provision and Town Centres**
>
> 1. Provision will be made over the plan period to 2042 for 7,600-9,700 sqm of convenience retail floorspace; and 7,600-11,900 sqm of comparison retail floorspace, directed to District, Service and Local Centres identified in Policy TC1.

4.35 The latest Wealden Town Centre Study (2026) confirms the appropriateness of the District, Service and Local Centre hierarchy set out in Policy TC1 and supports the continued application of a town centre first approach to retail development.

4.36 The Council's approach is to focus retail growth and investment within existing centres, supporting their vitality and viability whilst making effective use of existing premises, vacant units and redevelopment opportunities. This approach aligns with the Council's Economic Development Strategy and supports the long-term sustainability of Wealden's centres.

45 Wealden Town Centre Study 2026

Economy

4.37 Supporting sustainable economic prosperity and job creation is a key element of the spatial strategy. The Council's Employment and Economic Study (2026)[46] identifies the need for additional employment floorspace to support the district's economy and labour market over the plan period to 2042.

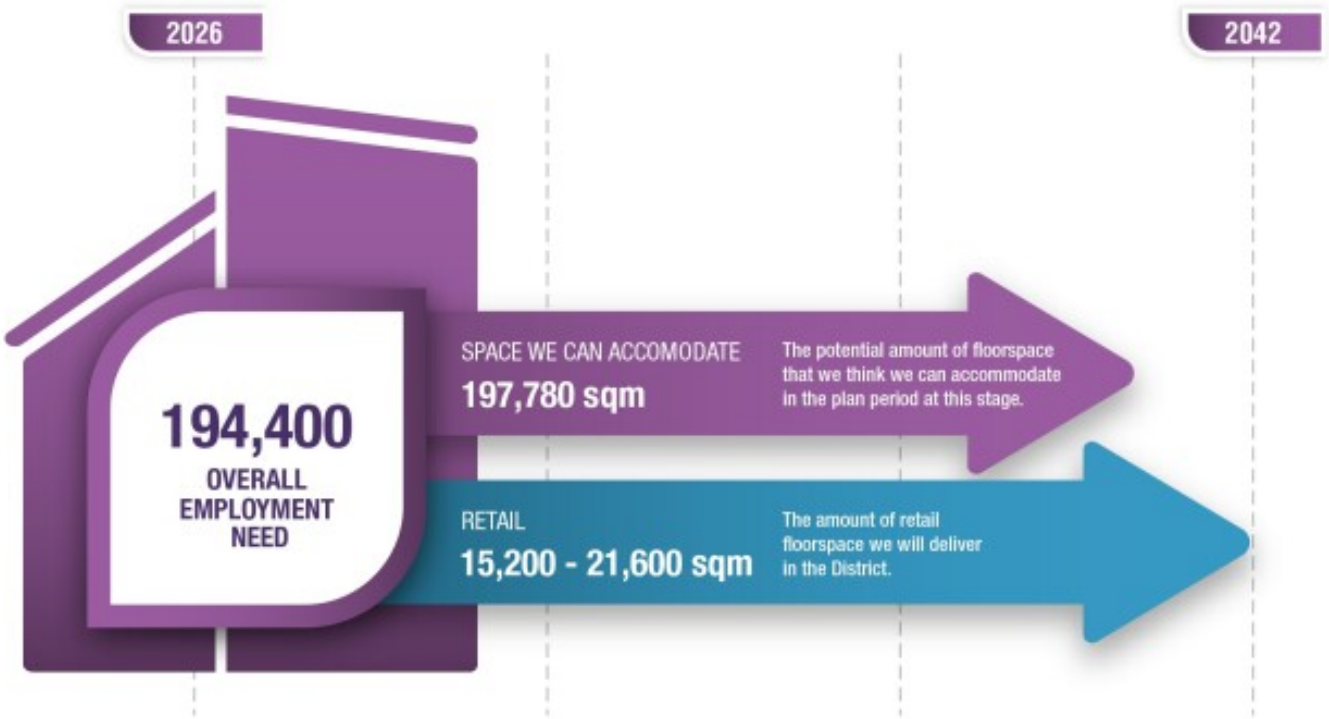
4.38 The evidence identifies demand for both office and industrial/warehouse floorspace. Whilst demand for new office development remains relatively limited, there is an ongoing need for modern and flexible employment premises. Demand for industrial and warehouse accommodation remains strong, with low vacancy rates indicating a continuing requirement for additional employment space.

4.39 The Employment and Economic Study (2026) identifies the following employment floorspace requirements for the period 2025-2042:

Table 6 Recommended Employment Need in Wealden between 2025 and 2042

	Office	Industrial and Warehouse	Total
Hectares (Ha)	3.2	44.6	47.8
Floorspace (Sqm)	16,100	178,300	194,400

Figure 10 Wealden Commercial Development Needs



46 Employment and Economic Study (2026)

4.40 Existing employment commitments will contribute towards meeting these requirements. The Council's employment allocations and wider planning policies seek to ensure that sufficient employment land and floorspace is available to support economic growth and business investment throughout the plan period.

Provision of Employment Space

4.41 Policy SS5 sets out the Council's employment floorspace requirements to 2042. Delivery will be supported through a combination of existing commitments, strategic employment allocations and the protection and enhancement of existing employment areas.

Policy SS5 Provision of Employment Floorspace

Policy SS5: Provision of Employment Floorspace

1. The Council will support the provision of at least 197,780 sqm of employment floorspace within Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8 by 2042 through:

a) the allocations and strategic employment commitments identified in Policy SS6;
b) the retention, intensification, redevelopment, upgrading and expansion of existing employment sites and premises, including strategic employment sites identified in Policy EC2;
c) supporting rural economic development in accordance with Policy EC4; and
d) the provision of office development (Use Class E(g)(i)) within District, Service and Local Centres in accordance with Policy TC1.

Distribution and Type of Employment Space

4.42 The Employment and Economic Study (2026) identifies a continued need for industrial and warehouse floorspace across the district, together with more limited demand for new office development. The evidence highlights the importance of providing employment land in accessible and sustainable locations that support business growth and investment.

4.43 The A22 and A27 corridors, including the settlements of Polegate, Hailsham and Uckfield, play an important role in the district's economy and has accommodated significant employment development in recent years. The employment evidence also identifies demand for employment space in the north of the district, particularly around Uckfield and Crowborough.

4.44 The evidence indicates a shortage of modern employment premises, including smaller units and grow-on space to support businesses as they expand. The provision of new employment floorspace can help meet these needs, whilst also supporting the recycling of existing premises for start-up and smaller businesses.

4.45 In response, strategic employment sites allocated in this Plan will make a significant contribution towards meeting identified employment needs. These allocations have been selected to support sustainable economic growth and provide opportunities for a range of employment uses across the district.

4.46 The committed employment sites are included within Policy SS6 as, once developed, they will form part of the district's portfolio of strategic employment sites. In accordance with

Policy EC2, these sites will be safeguarded for employment uses in recognition of their important contribution to the district's economy and employment land supply.

Policy SS6 Strategic Employment Allocations

Policy SS6: Strategic Employment Sites

1. The employment sites and strategic employment commitments identified at Table 7 will contribute towards the district's employment floorspace requirement.

2. Development at these sites will be restricted to Use Class E(g), B2 and B8. Retail and other main town centre uses, excluding offices, will not be permitted.

3. Once developed, the sites will form part of the strategic employment site portfolio and be safeguarded in accordance with Policy EC2.

4.47 The employment sites allocated together with existing commitments identified in Table 7 below and other opportunities for development on existing employment sites, will contribute towards meeting the district's employment floorspace requirement and supporting economic growth over the plan period.

Table 7 Existing Large Employment Commitments (over 5,000 sqm)

Large Employment Commitments	Employment Floorspace (net)
Land at Natewood Farm, Polegate Road, Hailsham	5,999 sqm
Land West of Uckfield, Uckfield	12,511 sqm
Mornings Mill Farm, Eastbourne Road, Lower Willingdon	8,600 sqm

Ensuring Comprehensive Development

4.48 The Council will support the efficient and timely delivery of housing and employment development. Where sites are in multiple ownerships or form part of a larger development area, proposals should demonstrate how the comprehensive development of the whole site will be achieved, including the coordinated delivery of infrastructure, access, open space, affordable housing and other policy requirements.

4.49 Masterplans and design codes prepared in accordance with Policy DE2 can assist in coordinating development and infrastructure delivery, particularly on larger strategic sites.

4.50 The subdivision of larger sites may be appropriate where this would accelerate delivery, provided that it does not prejudice the comprehensive planning, infrastructure provision or wider objectives of the site.

4.51 To support delivery, the Council may impose planning conditions requiring development to commence within a shorter period than the standard implementation timeframe where this would expedite delivery without harming viability or deliverability.

Policy SS7 Ensuring Comprehensive Development and Housing Delivery

Policy SS7: Ensuring Comprehensive Development

1. Development proposals shall demonstrate the comprehensive and coordinated development of a site and not prejudice the delivery of the wider area by:

a) demonstrating how site-wide infrastructure, affordable housing, open space, sustainable transport, access, sustainable drainage and other policy requirements, will be delivered, including through phased delivery where appropriate;

b) using masterplans and design codes for larger or more complex sites in accordance with Policy DE2; and

c) enabling the subdivision of larger sites where this would accelerate housing or employment delivery without undermining the comprehensive development of the wider site.

2. The Council will consider the use of planning conditions requiring development to commence within a shorter period than the standard implementation timeframe where this would support delivery and would not threaten viability or deliverability.

Supporting text

4.52 The subdivision of larger sites may be supported where it would accelerate delivery and would not compromise the comprehensive planning and delivery of the wider site. Development proposals should demonstrate how site-wide requirements, including infrastructure, affordable housing, open space, access, sustainable transport, drainage and any necessary mitigation measures, will be delivered.

4.53 The Council may use shorter implementation periods where this would support the timely delivery of development without affecting its viability or deliverability

Climate Change

4.54 The Local Plan has an important role in shaping new and existing developments in ways that reduce carbon emissions and help communities become more resilient to climate change. Even with concerted action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, changes to the climate are expected to continue. There is therefore a responsibility to minimise emissions whilst ensuring that the built and natural environments, infrastructure and communities are able to adapt to future impacts.

4.55 Alongside reducing emissions, it will be important to maximise natural processes that remove carbon from the atmosphere, known as ‘carbon sequestration’. Green infrastructure and nature recovery have a major role to play in this, whilst also helping to mitigate the effects of extreme temperatures, reduce flood risk, and address biodiversity loss. These measures can also contribute to improved health and wellbeing and support more resilient communities.

4.56 Many of the actions needed to address climate change, including improving energy efficiency, ensuring development is ‘zero carbon ready’, reducing the need to travel, incorporating sustainable design measures and increasing green infrastructure can deliver wider benefits. These include lower energy costs, improved health and wellbeing, enhanced environmental quality and opportunities to support the growth of a low-carbon economy.

4.57 The Council is committed to reducing the district's carbon footprint and supporting the transition towards a net zero carbon district. Policy SS8 sets out the overarching approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation whilst detailed policy requirements are presented later in the Climate Change chapter of the plan.

Policy SS8 Responding to Climate Change

Policy SS8: Responding to Climate Change

1. Development proposals should support the transition to a net zero and climate resilient district by incorporating mitigation and adaptations measures, proportionate to the scale, nature and location of the proposal.

2. Proposals should, where appropriate to their scale and nature:

a) minimise energy demand and improve operational energy efficiency through design and construction;
b) incorporate renewable and low-carbon energy generation and, where feasible, support the transition to zero carbon ready development;
c) reduce whole-life carbon emissions through the re-use of land, buildings, materials and the efficient use of natural resources;
d) improve the energy performance of existing buildings where alterations or refurbishment are proposed;
e) support carbon sequestration, nature recovery and ecological resilience through multi-functional, connected green infrastructure, habitat restoration and improved land management practices;
f) support sustainable and regenerative agricultural and horticultural practices that improve soil health, productivity and carbon storage;
g) locate and design development to reduce the need to travel and prioritise walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport, shared transport opportunities, and facilitate the transition to low-emission vehicles;
h) support behavioural change, digital connectivity and flexible working practices that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and
i) improve local air quality.

<u>Climate Change Adaptation</u>

a) incorporating climate resilient design, construction methods and materials, including through site layout, building design, passive cooling measures and green infrastructure to minimise overheating;
b) minimise water consumption and promote the efficient use of natural resources;
c) avoid, manage and, where possible, reduce flood risk and coastal change impacts, taking account of existing watercourse, flow routes and drainage features, and incorporate sustainable drainage systems to provide flood attenuation, water quality and biodiversity benefits;

d) protect, enhance and connect habitats to support species adaptation and ecological resilience; and

e) deliver wider environmental benefits particularly within Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and ecological networks.

4. Development proposals should demonstrate how mitigation and adaptation measures have informed their design and delivery.

Health and Wellbeing

4.58 Planning can influence health and wellbeing by shaping where and how people live, travel, access services, interact with their communities and experience the natural environment.

4.59 Attractive, safe and inclusive places with access to services, facilities, green and blue infrastructure and opportunities for active travel can help support physical and mental health outcomes and improve quality of life.

4.60 The Council will support healthy neighbourhoods that enable active lifestyles, social interaction and access to nature through local living principles, improving opportunities for walking, wheeling and cycling.

4.61 The East Sussex County Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)[47] identifies a number of local health challenges, including obesity, an ageing population, levels of car dependency, access to healthcare services and health inequalities in some communities. The Local Plan responds through an integrated approach to planning for health and wellbeing.

4.62 This strategic policy, together with other Plan policies, places resident's health and wellbeing at the heart of all our planning decisions in Wealden.

Policy SS9 Health, Well-being and Quality of Life

Policy SS9: Health, Well-being and Quality of Life

1. Development must support healthy, inclusive and safe communities, promote physical and mental wellbeing and help reduce health inequalities.

2. Proposals must demonstrate, proportionate to their scale and nature, how they will:

a) provide high quality, inclusive and accessible places that support healthy living for people of all ages and abilities;

b) create well-connected neighbourhoods with good access to services, facilities, employment, green and blue infrastructure, and active and sustainable travel;

c) provide safe, attractive and accessible public spaces that support social interaction, community cohesion and recreation;

d) incorporate multifunctional green and blue infrastructure and provide access to nature to support health, wellbeing and climate resilience;

e) provide appropriate private and public amenity space;

47 ESCC Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – Wealden District Profile. Available at: https://www.eastsussexjsna.org.uk/area-profiles/wealden-district-area-profile

f) support healthy eating and food security, where appropriate, by enabling food growing and local food production;

g) avoid, minimise and mitigate adverse health and wellbeing impacts, including those arising from air quality, noise, pollution and crime and deficiencies in open space, recreation and sports provision; and

h) support local employment, skills and training opportunities, where appropriate.

3. Where required, a Health Impact Assessment must demonstrate how adverse health impacts will be avoided, minimised or mitigated and positive health and wellbeing outcomes maximised through the design and delivery of the development.

Supporting text

Health Impact Assessments (HIA)

4.63 Health Impact Assessments (HIA) provide a structured approach to identifying the potential health and wellbeing effects of development and help maximise positive outcomes while mitigating adverse impacts.

4.64 A proportionate HIA will be required for major development proposals and other developments likely to have significant health impacts, normally including:

- residential developments of 30 dwellings or more;
- employment development of 1,000sqm or more and major infrastructure proposals;
- education, healthcare, social care, leisure, community, hot food takeaways, betting shops and other developments where health impacts are likely to arise;
- development within areas experiencing significant health inequalities or where a proposal may affect vulnerable groups; and
- development which may give rise to significant cumulative health impacts in combination with other committed, allocated or completed development.

4.65 The scope and level of assessment should be proportionate to the scale, nature and location of the proposal and informed by local health characteristics. The need for, and extent of, a HIA should be agreed with the Council at the earliest stage of the development process.

4.66 HIAs should be undertaken in accordance with the East Sussex HIA Toolkit[48]. Recommendations arising from the assessment should be incorporated into the proposal and demonstrate how adverse impacts have been addressed and positive outcomes maximised. The Council may prepare further guidance on HIA requirements, thresholds and assessment methodologies where necessary.

Green Infrastructure

4.67 Green Infrastructure (GI) is a network of multifunctional green and blue spaces and other natural features. It supports climate change mitigation and adaptation, nature recovery, health and wellbeing, active travel, flood risk management and high-quality places.

48 East Sussex County Council Health Impact Assessment Toolkit

4.68 Wealden's GI network includes parks and gardens, woodlands, farmland, hedgerows, rivers, lakes and ponds, public open spaces, sports facilities, rights of way, cycleways, designated sites and priority habitats[49]. These assets provide environmental, social and economic functions benefits across the district.

4.69 A well-connected and multifunctional GI network strengthens ecological connectivity within and beyond the district and helps habitats and species adapt to climate change. It can provide carbon storage, flood attenuation, urban cooling, cleaner air and water, recreation and active travel, while supporting health, local character and economic prosperity.

4.70 Delivery, enhancement and long-term stewardship should be informed by Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework[50] and the Council's evidence base, including opportunities to protect existing assets, strengthening connections between them, improve access to green space, support nature recovery and deliver multifunctional benefits at strategic and local scales. New development can play an important role in contributing to an integrated and resilient green infrastructure network that benefits both people and nature.

Policy SS10 Green Infrastructure

Policy SS10: Green Infrastructure

1. All development should protect and enhance existing green and blue infrastructure (GI) and, where opportunities exist, create additional multi-functional and accessible GI that benefits people, nature and climate resilience.

2. Proposals should, where relevant to their scale and nature:

   a) integrate GI into the design and layout, reflecting local character and connecting the site with settlements, the wider countryside and the existing GI network;
   b) maximise opportunities to enhance and deliver ecosystem services;
   c) address any green infrastructure deficiencies in the area;
   d) Deliver multi-functional benefits including providing opportunities for people to interact with nature, encourage recreation, sport, active travel and accessible green space for people of all ages and abilities, without harming biodiversity, landscape or heritage assets;
   e) incorporate GI measures that support sustainable drainage, flood risk management, carbon sequestration and urban cooling;
   f) where appropriate, provide opportunities for growing healthy food, including through allotments and other community schemes;
   g) support economic prosperity and sustainable tourism through the provision and enhancement of green infrastructure;
   h) comply with any national green infrastructure standards.

3. Relevant development proposals must secure positive green infrastructure outcomes proportionate to their scale, location and nature and demonstrate how provision will be managed and maintained over the long term.

49 Priority habitats are Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, as amended. HPIs were first identified as priority habitats in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

50 Natural England Green Infrastructure Network

4. Where on-site provision is constrained by the scale or nature of development, proposals should maximise feasible measures such as green roofs, green walls and wildlife nesting or roosting features.

Supporting text

4.71 While GI and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) are distinct concepts, there are clear links between them and many features can contribute to both objectives. The extent to which GI contributes to BNG under certain circumstances, is reflected through the Defra Biodiversity Metric. For example, a green space managed primarily for recreational or amenity purposes may make an important contribution to a multifunctional GI network but may provide limited biodiversity value. In contrast, habitats such as native species-rich hedgerows, woodland, wildflower grassland and other ecological enhancements can contribute both to the green infrastructure network and to the delivery of biodiversity net gain. Development should therefore seek opportunities to deliver multifunctional green infrastructure that provides benefits for nature, climate resilience, recreation, health and wellbeing.

Wealden
District Council

05
Climate Change



Wealden
Local Plan

Introduction

5.1 This chapter sets out policies for net zero development, existing buildings, sustainable design and construction, carbon sequestration, renewable and low-carbon energy, water efficiency, flood risk and sustainable drainage. Together, these policies support mitigation, adaptation and resilience across new and existing development in Wealden.

5.2 Addressing climate change is a statutory requirement under the Climate Change Act 2008[51] and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004[52]. It is also a core land-use principle of the NPPF (December 2024), which requires local planning authorities to shape development that contributes to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, improves climate resilience, and supports renewable and low-carbon energy generation[53].

5.3 Wealden District Council has committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions district-wide by 2044, aligning with wider national targets. The adopted Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2030[54] establishes the framework for short-term and medium-term actions, and the Local Plan supports its implementation through robust, proportionate and effective planning policies.

5.4 The policies within this chapter seek to support and facilitate the Council's decarbonisation plans and address climate change impacts as well as support the Council's Climate Emergency actions (Figure 11). They build on Policy SS8 (Responding to the Climate Crisis), which sets the overarching policy direction for development in Wealden in relation to climate change. All developments will be expected to contribute to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, as relevant.

51 Climate Change Act 2008

52 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

53 Paragraph 161 of the NPPF (December 2024)

54 Wealden Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030

Figure 11 Wealden's Climate Emergency Actions



Net Zero Development

5.5 Given the Council's ambitions to be a net zero carbon district by 2044, the Local Plan seeks to set ambitious net-zero carbon standards for new development. This approach is in line with the Planning and Energy Act 2008[55], which allows local planning authorities to set local energy efficiency standards above the minimum standards provided by the Building Regulations and as confirmed by the government in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)[56].

5.6 Policy CC1 (Net Zero Development) sets overarching requirements for new development. It establishes the performance-based standards including Energy Use Intensity (EUI)[57] and space heating targets, drawing on national climate legislation, the NPPF, the Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030, and industry best practice from UK Green Building Council (UKGBC)[58], Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)[59], CIBSE[60] and Low Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI)[61].

5.7 The standards set out in Policy CC1 will manage operational energy performance though the energy hierarchy (Figure 12), which is technically robust and designed to lead to better building outcomes through an improved focus on building fabric and the ability to monitor performance, to address the performance gap issue.

5.8 In addition, embodied carbon is a significant contributor to carbon emissions; however, current national policy does not refer to embodied carbon and there are generally low levels of understanding about the impacts from new buildings[62].

55 Planning and Energy Act 2008

56 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG): Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 6-012-20190315

57 Energy Use Intensity (EUI): the use of EUIs would provide an absolute metric in kWh/m²/yr. EUI is independent from carbon and can be easily verified by the building/ homeowner/ tenant after completion, and accounts for both regulated and unregulated energy

58 New Homes Policy Playbook | UKGBC

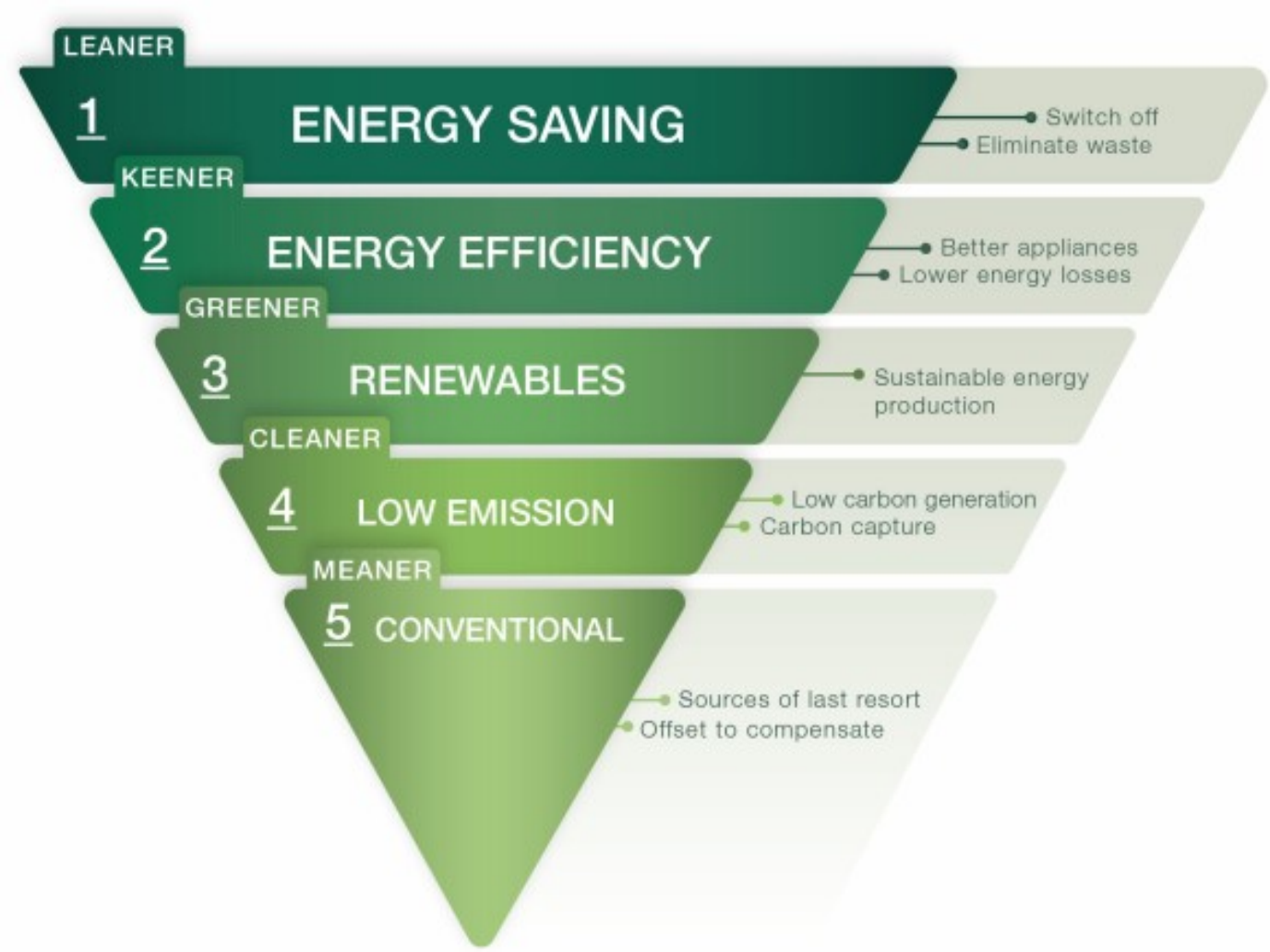
59 2030 Climate Challenge | RIBA

60 CIBSE guidance to deliver net zero carbon buildings

61 LETI (2019). Net Zero Operational Carbon - 1 Pager

62 RTPI/TCPA The Climate Crisis: A Guide for Local Authorities on Planning for Climate Change, January 2023. Box 5, page 23

Figure 12 The Energy Hierarchy



5.9 There are a number of industry-led frameworks and guidance documents recommending that developments demonstrate actions taken to reduce embodied carbon, through whole life carbon assessment, and setting recommended targets for embodied emissions such as the UKGBC's Net Zero Carbon Buildings Framework[63] and the LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide[64]. These are supported by the Royal Town Planning Institute's (RTPI) and the Town and Country Planning Association's (TCPA) Climate Crisis Guide[65].

5.10 Policy CC1 sets out how new build residential and non-residential development within Wealden will meet the challenge of achieving net zero.

63 UK Green Building Council, February 2021. The New Homes Policy Playbook

64 London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) Climate Emergency Design Guide, January 2020

65 RTPI/TCPA The Climate Crisis: A Guide for Local Authorities on Planning for Climate Change, January 2023. Box 5, page 23

Policy CC1 Net Zero Development Standards - (New Build)

Policy CC1: Net Zero Development Standards (New Build)

1. All development proposals must demonstrate a clear pathway to delivering net zero operational carbon on site. This will be achieved through ultra-low energy building fabric, efficient design, low-carbon heating systems, and on-site renewable energy generation.

2. Developments must utilise landform, layout, orientation and landscaping to minimise energy demand, consumption and maximise passive design opportunities.

3. The policy requirements below must be met in full unless robust evidence demonstrates that technical, viability or conflicting policy constraints make an alternative solution preferable. In such cases, the applicant must show:

a) that all reasonable steps have been taken to comply with the policy;
b) the delivery of the maximum feasible net-zero outcome(s); and
c) that the building(s) remains "carbon-ready by design", with priority given to meeting the stated EUI and space-heating targets.

Energy Hierarchy

4. In all cases, applicants must apply the energy hierarchy throughout design, construction and occupation, reducing demand first, then using low-carbon heat and renewable energy. District heat network connections heat pumps, solar PV and storage must be included where feasible.

Building Fabric

5. New buildings must be designed to achieve a maximum space-heating demand of 15 kWh/m²/year, verified through predictive energy modelling and supported by post-completion monitoring.

Energy Efficiency (EUI Targets)

6. All development should achieve the following sector specific energy use intensity (EUI) targets at the design and construction stage:

a) Residential development: 35 kWh/m²/year; and
b) Non-residential development: 55 kWh/m²/year.

7. All development should have a validated, predictive energy modelling approach and this must be agreed with the local planning authority and applied consistently across all building types. This modelling should be carried out as part of any detailed planning application process, then re-confirmed at the pre-commencement and, where applicable, pre-occupation stages, based on as-built information.

Embodied Carbon

8. Whole-life and/or embodied-carbon calculations, proportionate to the stage of design and the level of detail reasonably available at that stage, must be submitted at both the

outline and detailed planning application stages. Full lifecycle modelling is strongly encouraged at the detailed planning application stage[66].

9. Exemplary performance aligned with LETI benchmarks will be particularly supported for all development as set out below:

a) 500 kgCO /m² upfront carbon for residential (300 kgCO /m² from 2030); and
b) 600 kgCO /m² upfront carbon for non-residential (350 kgCO /m² from 2030).

Performance Gap

10. New buildings must evidence measures to ensure actual energy performance aligns with design-stage predictions through testing, monitoring and verification.

Viability

11. The applicant must provide evidence to demonstrate every feasible and viable option has been explored to fully achieve the net zero target on site. Only in exceptional circumstances, where any shortfall is identified, should appropriate mitigation be used and formally agreed with the local planning authority.

Supporting text

5.11 All development must submit a proportionate energy statement at the outline and detailed planning application stages, which would need to be reconfirmed at the pre-commencement stage and validated at the pre-occupation stage. In all cases, the Energy Statement must specify the following:

a) total energy demand (kWh/yr);
b) EUI (kWh/m^2/yr);
c) space-heating demand (kWh/m^2/yr);
d) total renewable generation (kWh/yr); and
e) the calculation methodology used.

5.12 In addition, the Energy Statement must also include a Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) methodology, secured by planning conditions or through a planning obligation (Section 106), to verify operational performances.

5.13 To reduce carbon emissions from new buildings, the policy requires a fabric-first approach, prioritising energy efficiency through high-performance building envelopes before relying on renewable technologies. This ensures buildings minimise heat loss, reduce operational energy demand, and avoid future costly retrofits, in line with the energy hierarchy. This is commonly known as the 'fabric first' approach (Figure 13).

5.14 The local planning authority expects all proposals to strive to achieve the space heating demand and Energy Use Intensity (EUI) targets set out in Policy CC1 (Net Zero Development Standards (New Build)) and that any compensation occurs through the delivery of renewable energy provision. The types of renewable/low carbon energy generation technologies will be

66 Currently the RICS Whole Life Carbon Assessment for the Built Environment Professional Statement 2017 but other methodologies will emerge and develop over time.

dependent on the development proposal. However, any proposed technologies must be robustly justified.

5.15 Where viability concerns are perceived to limit delivery of the standards set out in Policy CC1 (Net Zero Development Standards (New Build)), robust justification must be provided, and the Council will expect applicants to have factored in the following when determining the price paid (or to be paid) for land for development:

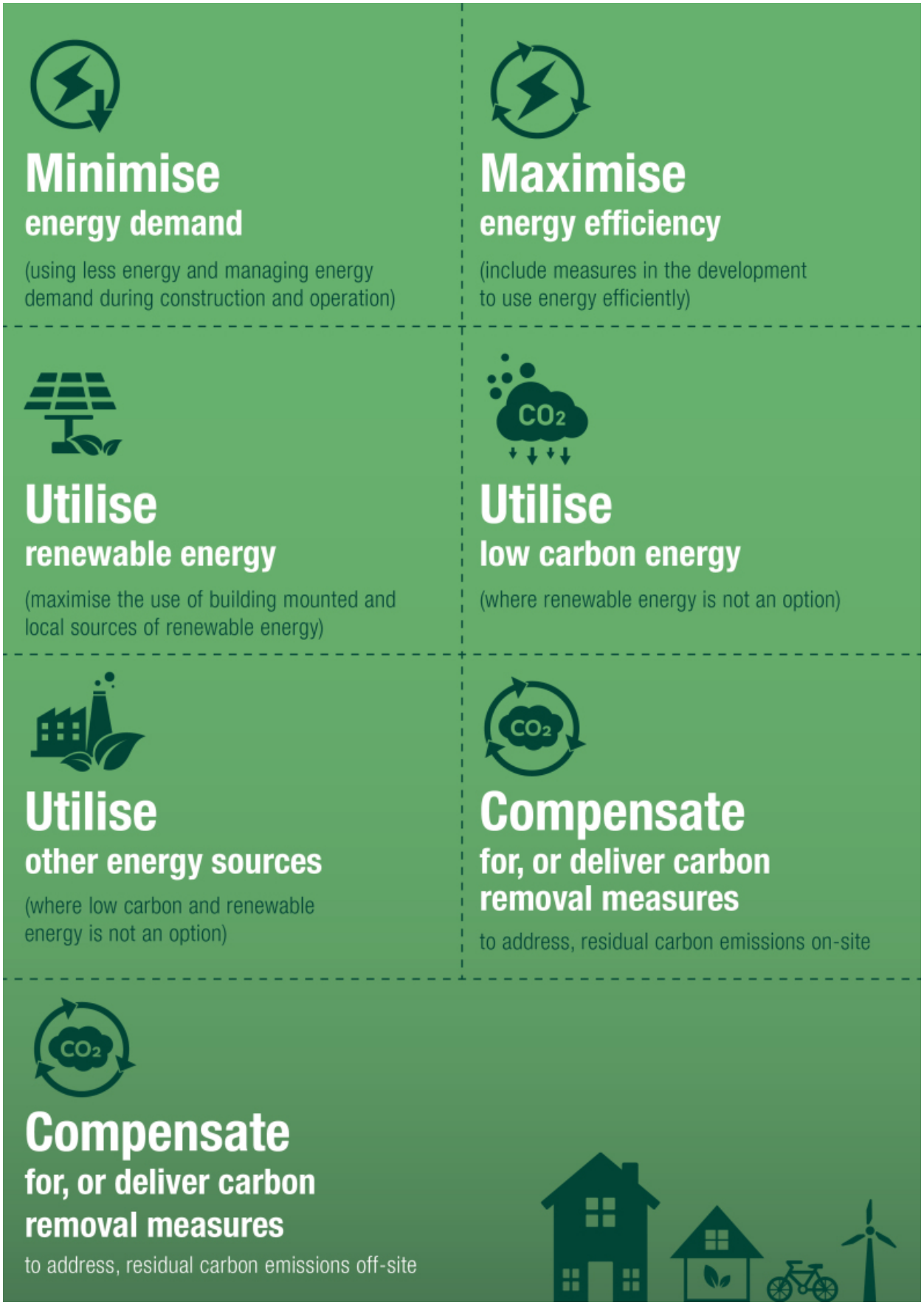
a) All the relevant policy requirements, including affordable housing and CIL; and
b) Any contributions required to mitigate the impact of development (for example, in relation to infrastructure).

5.16 The policy provides some flexibility for instances where technical, viability or other policy reasons hinder the ability to deliver the full net zero requirement. Under these circumstances, applicants will need to ensure that developments remain 'net-zero ready' through high fabric standards and compatibility with low-carbon heating.

5.17 The Council strongly encourages applicants to refer to, and use in the preparation of their proposals, industry guidance and best practice on delivering net zero operational carbon projects such as the following documents from LETI[67] to support best-practice design and performance monitoring.

67 Operational Modelling Guide (2023); Embodied Carbon Case Studies (2023)report; and Client Guide for Net Zero Carbon Buildings (2021)

Figure 13 How developments should meet the energy hierarchy



Reducing Energy Consumption in Existing Buildings

5.18 Policy CC2 (Reducing Energy Consumption in Existing Buildings) recognises that most buildings occupied in the coming decades already exist; many built to outdated energy standards. Retrofitting existing buildings is therefore essential to reducing carbon emissions. Although planning has limited influence over works that fall under permitted development, proposals requiring planning permission involving a change of use, retrofit, redevelopment or extension provide clear opportunities to improve energy performance.

5.19 This policy aims to reduce carbon emissions and embodied energy by prioritising the retention, refurbishment, and efficient use of existing buildings. The reuse of existing structures typically generates far lower carbon emissions than demolition and rebuild, due to the preservation of embodied carbon within existing materials and structures. The Council therefore seeks to encourage sensitive retrofit, energy efficiency improvements, and circular economy principles in all relevant development proposals.

Policy CC2 Reducing Energy Consumption in Existing Buildings

Policy CC2: Reducing Energy Consumption in Existing Buildings

1. All development proposals must demonstrate a clear pathway to delivering net zero operational carbon on site. This will be achieved through ultra-low energy building fabric, efficient design, low-carbon heating systems, and on-site renewable energy generation.

2. Where development proposals involve a change of use, retrofit, redevelopment, or extension, applicants are strongly encouraged to improve the energy efficiency of the existing building. This includes improvements to the building fabric, heating systems, airtightness, and insulation, proportionate to the scale and nature of the works.

3. Development proposals that utilise existing built structures and result in improved overall EPC ratings will be supported in principle, subject to other relevant planning policy considerations. Planning applications should provide a pre-development EPC and demonstrate the anticipated EPC rating post-development.

Major Development

4. Major developments[68] involving the refurbishment of 10 or more dwellings are expected to achieve Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) Domestic Refurbishment 'Excellent'. Where this cannot be achieved for viability reasons, the highest alternative BREEAM standard must be demonstrated and justified by the applicant.

Supporting Text

5.20 New development proposals must clearly demonstrate that the reuse of existing buildings has been fully explored before demolition is considered. Retention of the existing fabric helps maintain embodied carbon and reduces construction waste. Applicants should evidence this by undertaking a Building Reuse Assessment which should set out the following:

68 'Major' development is defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

- the structural condition of the building;
- opportunities for adaptation or retrofitting;
- constraints that prevent retention (e.g. severe structural instability, non-viability or insurmountable design limitations); and
- justification for demolition, where proposed and unavoidable, supported by proportionate expert assessments (e.g. structural surveys).

5.21 Applicants should also submit a 'Circular Economy Statement' to explain how materials from any demolition will be:

- recovered;
- reused on site where feasible; and/or
- recycled / diverted from land use where reuse is not possible.

5.22 Support will generally be given to planning applications where the proposal is for refurbishment. Demolition should be a last resort and planning applications that do not robustly justify demolition will not be supported. Where demolition is deemed necessary/acceptable, the local planning authority will expect a clear plan for the reuse of materials such as brick, concrete, steel, tiles and timber within the development.

5.23 Energy efficiency improvements should be integral to all proposals involving existing buildings. Measures should be proportionate to the scale and nature of works but should always seek to reduce energy demand wherever feasible.

5.24 Applicants should also detail within their proposals a schedule of the proposed energy efficiency works together with technical details or specifications of insulation levels, air tightness measures, and heating system performance. Measures should be practical and proportionate to the type and scale of development.

5.25 Developments affecting listed buildings or conservation areas should still aim for improvements, but the Council will consider heritage sensitivities in conjunction with Policy HE6 (Climate Change and the Historic Environment) of this Local Plan on the retrofitting of heritage assets.

5.26 The Council strongly supports development proposals that will demonstrably improve the overall energy performance of existing buildings. Using pre-development and post-development Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) ratings enables consistent measurement of improvement. Applicants should submit the following as part of their planning application:

- a valid pre-development EPC of the existing building;
- a predicted post-development EPC, using recognised assessment tools; and
- a short explanatory note outlining:

o how works will deliver the improved EPC rating,

o any factors limiting greater improvement (design, heritage, viability, etc.).

5.27 EPCs and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) provide a further regulatory context. MEES requires privately rented homes to achieve EPC E or above, and the Clean Growth Strategy sets a target for as many homes as possible to reach EPC C by 2030–2035. EPC/MEES improvement should be achieved wherever feasible, and any uplift should be commensurate with the scale of the proposed works. In mixed-use schemes or multi-unit

buildings, applicants should clarify how assessments apply to individual units or the entire building.

5.28 For major development involving the refurbishment of 10 or more dwellings, the Council requires higher levels of environmental performance through BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment. An initial BREEAM Pre-Assessment demonstrating how 'Excellent' will be achieved should be submitted with the planning application and identify the:

- key credits targeted; and
- design measures needed (e.g. thermal improvements, waste management, daylighting, material specifications).

5.29 Where achieving 'Excellent' is not viable, applicants must demonstrate this through a viability assessment and provide a fallback assessment showing the highest possible rating that can be achieved and justification for why 'Excellent' cannot be delivered. 'Excellent' is the default expectation and should only be departed from where clearly justified. Any alternative rating must be achieved to a high standard and evidenced through formal assessments. Post-construction BREEAM certification will be secured by planning condition.

5.30 Applicants are encouraged to use recognised best-practice guidance including LETI's Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide and PAS 2035:2023[69] and PAS's Retrofitting dwellings for improved energy efficiency – Specification and guidance[70].

5.31 To support effective delivery of Policy CC2 (Reducing Energy Consumption in Existing Buildings) the Council will:

- secure relevant energy-efficiency and BREEAM outcomes through planning conditions;
- require post-completion evidence such as BREEAM certificates or updated EPCs; and
- monitor EPC improvements and energy-efficiency measures as part of annual monitoring frameworks.

Sustainable Design and Construction

5.32 Policy CC3 (Sustainable Design and Construction) sets the approach to sustainable design and construction across all new development in the district. It responds to the built environment's contribution to carbon emissions, resource use and climate risks, including increased flood risk. The policy should be read alongside the other policies in this chapter.

5.33 This policy ensures that developments optimise energy efficiency, reduce embodied carbon, minimise waste, support adaptation to climate risks, and avoid locking in unsustainable forms of development. It also requires applicants to integrate green and blue infrastructure, recognising the multifunctional benefits these features provide, including biodiversity enhancement, surface water and flood risk management, urban cooling, and improved wellbeing.

5.34 Policy CC3 below supports the delivery of national climate and energy objectives, including the Future Homes Standard and relevant parts of the Building Regulations. It provides a locally appropriate framework that elevates minimum standards by encouraging low-impact materials, circular economy principles, and design that anticipates future operational needs.

69 Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide | LETI

70 Retrofitting dwellings for improved energy efficiency – Specification and guidance

5.35 The policy further emphasises the importance of accreditation tools such as BREEAM and the Home Quality Mark, which enable transparent, verifiable assessment of sustainability performance. These tools complement the policy by providing measurable benchmarks that ensure consistency and high-quality outcomes across the district.

Policy CC3 Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy CC3: Sustainable Design and Construction

1. All development proposals must demonstrate high-quality sustainable design principles, use high-performance, low-impact, and sustainably sourced materials (including those with strong thermal performance), and reduce the reliance on carbon-intensive products such as concrete. Locally sourced materials should be prioritised where possible to reduce transport-related emissions.

2. All development proposals must protect and enhance natural resources, including soil, water, energy, and raw materials. Water-efficiency measures—such as rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling, and efficient fixtures—must be integrated across the development.

3. Green and blue infrastructure must be integrated into site layouts and building design, including green roofs, green walls, permeable surfaces, habitat creation, and natural shading. Artificial grass should not be used due to its negative ecological impacts.

4. Where feasible, low-carbon heating technologies must be installed. Where this is not viable, developments must be designed to operate at lower flow temperatures to allow for future retrofitting with heat pumps. Applicants must fully justify their chosen heating or cooling approach.

Overheating and Ventilation

5. Development proposals must minimise overheating risk using Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) guidance, including any subsequent updates[71] and future climate projections, and apply the cooling hierarchy before relying on mechanical systems as described below:

a) Minimise internal heat generation through energy-efficient design;
b) Reduce heat gain using orientation, shading, high-albedo materials, fenestration, insulation, and green/blue infrastructure;
c) Manage internal temperatures through thermal mass and high ceilings;
d) Apply passive ventilation; and
e) Use active cooling measures, such as mechanical ventilation, as a last resort.

Accreditation

6. Proposals for non-residential developments should achieve at least BREEAM ‘Excellent’ and aim for ‘Outstanding’.

7. Proposals for residential schemes should aim for a Home Quality Mark (HQM) 4-Star rating.

71 CIBSE AM10 Natural ventilation in non-domestic buildings (2026) and CIBSE guidance to deliver net zero carbon buildings

8. Schemes should maximise credits related to energy efficiency, environmental performance, and climate resilience.

Supporting text

5.36 Planning applications should demonstrate, through design evolution and supporting assessments, how existing structures, materials, and site features have been retained wherever feasible. Sustainable design should be embedded from the outset and reflected in site layout, orientation, massing, and the arrangement of internal spaces.

5.37 Proposals should use high-performance materials with low embodied carbon profiles, including those supported by Environmental Product Declarations (EPD)[72]. Locally sourced and responsibly procured products should be used, where possible, to reduce transportation emissions and support resource efficiency. Developments are expected to minimise the use of carbon-intensive materials such as concrete unless justified through a whole-life carbon assessment.

5.38 Integrating green and blue infrastructure improves biodiversity, reduces flood risk, and contributes to climate resilience. Development should incorporate green roofs, green walls, permeable surfaces, natural shading, and habitat-forming planting as appropriate to the site. Landscaping schemes must demonstrate how they contribute to wider ecological networks and provide long-term management arrangements where appropriate.

5.39 To support the transition to net-zero, developments must prioritise low-carbon heating technologies such as heat pumps and district heating. Where immediate installation is not viable, systems must be designed to operate at lower flow temperatures and enable future retrofit without significant alteration. Applicants should provide justification for the selected heating and cooling strategy, informed by whole-life carbon and technical feasibility statement.

5.40 Schemes must follow the cooling hierarchy, prioritising passive design, shading, thermal mass and natural ventilation before mechanical or active cooling is considered. Where mechanical cooling is proposed, evidence must be provided to demonstrate that passive measures have been maximised and that mechanical systems are efficient and proportionate. Active cooling measures, including air conditioning and mechanical ventilation with cooling (MVAC), should be relied upon only after all passive and low-energy measures have been exhausted and this must be robustly justified as part of the planning application.

5.41 Residential and non-residential schemes must undertake overheating assessments using relevant CIBSE guidance and future climate scenarios. These assessments must identify design risks and demonstrate that proposed mitigation measures are robust, resilient, and effective for long-term climate conditions.

5.42 Environmental accreditation schemes provide independent verification of sustainability performance. Non-residential schemes achieving BREEAM 'Excellent' and aspiring to 'Outstanding' will ensure high performance across energy, materials, water, and resilience. Residential development should aim for Home Quality Mark ratings equivalent to policy

72 An EPD is a verified, standardised document that transparently communicates the life-cycle environmental impacts of a product or service.

expectations. Planning applications should demonstrate how credits relating to energy performance, climate resilience, and resource management have been maximised.

5.43 To ensure that the aims of Policy CC3 (Sustainable Design and Construction) are fully addressed, a Sustainability Statement will be required for development proposals of 5 (net) dwellings or more (including flats) and all non-residential development over 500sqm gross internal floorspace. These statements must clearly set out how each criterion of the policy has been met, referencing design principles, material choices, water and energy strategies, carbon reduction measures, green infrastructure, and heating/cooling approaches. The statement should be submitted at the initial planning application stage and updated, where necessary, at the reserved matters stage or when discharging planning conditions to reflect finalised design details.

Carbon Sequestration

5.44 Land-use change, habitat degradation, and soil disturbance can release stored carbon, undermining climate objectives. Protecting existing carbon stores is often more effective than attempting to capture carbon after it has been released.

5.45 Policy CC4 (Carbon Sequestration) protects existing carbon stores and enhances nature-based carbon sequestration across the district. Soils, woodlands, wetlands, hedgerows, species-rich grasslands and other semi-natural habitats play an important role in meeting local and national carbon reduction targets. Development must avoid unnecessary disturbance to carbon-rich environments and maximise opportunities to create or enhance carbon-storing habitats.

5.46 The policy supports development that protects existing natural carbon stores, enhances nature-based sequestration wherever feasible, and ensures that these benefits are secured for the long term. This approach aligns carbon reduction with biodiversity enhancement and landscape improvement, delivering multiple environmental gains through well-designed development.

5.47 The policy aligns with national planning policy, which acknowledges that undeveloped land can act as a carbon store. It supports wider policies in the Local Plan that protect habitats, trees, and ecological networks, where carbon sequestration is considered inherent within those policies. It ensures that applicants address carbon storage at an early stage and incorporate landscape-scale approaches wherever possible.

Policy CC4 Carbon Sequestration

Policy CC4: Carbon Sequestration

1. Development proposals must protect existing carbon stores, wherever possible, and demonstrate how nature-based carbon sequestration has been maximised in a manner appropriate to the site and its context.

2. Development proposals will be supported where it is demonstrated that:

   a) Soil health is protected and enhanced, with disturbance minimised to safeguard soil biodiversity and carbon storage capacity;

b) It delivers a net increase in nature-based carbon sequestration through the retention, protection, enhancement, or creation of carbon-storing habitats; and
c) Measures to increase carbon storage are compatible with the site's natural environment and ecological characteristics.

3. Where development proposals affect land containing identified carbon stores, applicants must:

a) Assess the proposal's impact on existing carbon stores;
b) Show how opportunities to maintain, protect, and enhance carbon sequestration have been maximised;
c) Provide a proportionate evaluation of carbon sequestration impacts and opportunities; and
d) Submit an appropriate long-term management plan to secure and maintain carbon storage and sequestration benefits.

Supporting Text

5.48 The Council expects applicants to assess the carbon sequestration characteristics of their site at an early stage and design proposals that safeguard and improve these natural assets. Applicants should avoid development layouts that require the removal of carbon rich habitats and minimise soil stripping, compaction and excavation. Development proposals should demonstrate appropriate storage of soils during construction, re-use on site where feasible, and measures to prevent contamination or erosion.

5.49 Development proposals should demonstrate that design alternatives have been fully explored to protect on-site natural carbon assets and incorporate retained carbon-rich features into scheme design and layout where possible (e.g. through blue-green infrastructure networks and habitat creation). Where the loss of carbon stores is unavoidable, applicants must provide strong justification and propose compensatory measures that deliver meaningful and lasting sequestration benefits.

5.50 Development proposals should be designed to enhance carbon sequestration in a manner appropriate to the site's landscape character, biodiversity value, and ecological function. Nature-based solutions should complement existing site conditions rather than impose habitat types that are ecologically unsuitable.

5.51 Where development affects land known or likely to contain carbon stores, applicants must provide a proportionate Carbon Sequestration and Soil Assessment. The level of detail should match the scale and potential impact of the proposal.

5.52 Nature-based carbon sequestration is dependent on sustained, appropriate management. Applicants must therefore provide a long-term management plan that ensures the survival and continued sequestration function of new and enhanced habitats. Management Plans should include:

- A minimum 30-year management period, aligned with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements;
- Prescriptions for soil conservation (e.g. no-dig areas, restricted vehicle access and organic matter enhancement);

- Maintenance of newly planted trees, hedgerows, or grasslands;
- Hydrological management for wetlands;
- Mechanisms for monitoring and corrective action (e.g. restocking trees and re-establishing failed habitats); and
- Clear responsibilities for implementation, including handover arrangements for large sites.

5.53 The Council may secure delivery and long-term management plans through planning conditions or planning obligations (Section 106 agreements).

5.54 The level of assessment required to demonstrate policy compliance will depend on the scale of development; the sensitivity of the site; whether carbon-rich soils or habitats are present and the potential magnitude of impact. Small-scale development on previously disturbed land may require only a simple statement addressing soil handling and habitat protection. Conversely, large sites or proposals affecting carbon-rich habitats will require a more detailed assessment and management plan.

5.55 The policy should be read, and implemented, alongside the Natural Environment policies of this Local Plan, which collectively ensure the retention and enhancement of habitats that provide long-term carbon storage, as well as biodiversity benefits.

5.56 Applicants are encouraged to refer to Natural England's Carbon Storage and Sequestration by Habitat (NERR094)[73], which identifies ecosystems with the greatest sequestration value, including woodlands, scrub, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, lakes, and wetlands.

Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy

5.57 Policy CC5 (Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy) enables renewable and low-carbon energy infrastructure while ensuring that development is delivered responsibly and sensitively. The Council supports clean energy generation to meet national decarbonisation commitments, improve energy resilience, and contribute to local climate objectives. Renewable energy development must be located, designed, and operated in ways that avoids unacceptable impacts on the landscape, the sensitive natural and historic environments, agricultural land, and local communities.

5.58 Clear policy expectations for solar PV and onshore wind ensure that proposals align with the Council's Clean Energy Opportunities and Implications Study[74] and Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (Renewable Energy Development)[75], helping direct development to suitable areas and avoid the most sensitive landscapes and highest-value agricultural land.

73 Carbon Storage and Sequestration by Habitat 2021 - NERR094

74 Climate Change and Renewable Energy Evidence Base – Project 2: Clean Energy Opportunities and Implications Study, December 2024

75 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment: Renewable Energy Development, February 2024

Policy CC5 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Policy CC5: Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy

1. Development proposals for renewable and low-carbon energy generation, including associated infrastructure, must avoid significant adverse impacts on:

a) the local landscape character, the High Weald National Landscape and the setting of the South Downs National Park.
b) biodiversity;
c) residential amenity of existing and future occupiers of nearby property, including noise, shadow flicker, vibration and visual impacts (i.e. glare);
d) agricultural land use and activity; and
e) heritage assets.

Where such impacts cannot be avoided, development proposals must demonstrate that the impacts have been fully mitigated and that any residual effects are acceptable in planning terms.

2. All development proposals must demonstrate the maximisation of renewable energy output, taking into account site constraints and wider development plan policies.

3. All relevant development proposals must demonstrate the potential for the co-location of heat users and waste-heat recovery where applicable.

4. A clear decommissioning plan must be submitted with any development proposal for energy generation, including site restoration to its previous use or an agreed alternative compatible use.

Ground-Mounted Solar PV

5. Development proposals for ground-mounted solar PV must:

a) explain the site selection methodology and demonstrate that the site falls within land identified as potentially suitable in the Council's Clean Energy Opportunities and Implications Study (December 2024)[76] or is otherwise justified in terms of location;
b) apply a minimum 10–15 metre buffer around installation areas and nearby roads;
c) positively respond to any potential glint and glare impacts, taking account of the criteria and findings within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment – Renewable Energy study[77].
d) avoid the most agriculturally valuable land unless clear evidence shows no alternative locations are suitable and impacts can be fully mitigated.

Onshore Wind

6. Proposals for the expansion of existing wind farms or new turbines will be supported where:

76 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment: Renewable Energy Development, February 2024

77 Climate Change and Renewable Energy Evidence Base – Project 2: Clean Energy Opportunities and Implications Study, December 2024

a) they are located within areas identified as potentially suitable in the Council's Clean Energy Opportunities and Implications Study (December 2024), or where they are appropriate extensions into surrounding viable sites;
b) they explain the site selection methodology and detail wind speeds, economic feasibility, and grid connections;
c) proposals apply a minimum 600 metre buffer around installation areas and nearby settlements; and
d) proposals apply appropriate buffer zones around roads equal to wind turbine tip height + 10%[78].

District and Communal Heat Networks

7. Proposals for low-carbon heat networks will be supported where they demonstrate connection potential, energy efficiency, and long-term viability.

8. All proposals of more than 10 dwellings or 1,000 m² must support the establishment of district heat networks through connections, safeguarding infrastructure corridors, the provision of connection points, or other measures appropriate to the development where located in Crowborough, Uckfield, Hailsham and Polegate, unless it is demonstrated to be technically or economically unfeasible and the development delivers an alternative low-carbon heating solution.

9. All proposals for development must explore opportunities for future connection and expansion, including compatibility with heat pumps and waste-heat recovery.

Community Energy Schemes

10. Community-led renewable energy proposals will be supported where there is demonstrable local support and appropriate governance structures are in place.

Energy Storage

11. There is a presumption in favour of energy storage where development meets one or more of the following criteria:

a) it is co-located with existing or proposed renewable energy development where feasible;
b) demonstrably alleviates grid constraints or supports Wealden's renewable energy supply; or
c) enables additional renewable generation to be deployed.

Supporting Text

5.59 All renewable and low-carbon energy proposals must show from the outset how significant adverse impacts have been avoided. Where harm cannot be avoided, applicants must detail mitigation strategies and demonstrate that remaining impacts are acceptable in planning terms.

Maximising renewable energy output

78 As defined by the DECC Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy methodology.

5.60 Applicants must demonstrate clearly, through a Renewable Energy Statement, that the design has optimised renewable energy generation or recovery, taking into account:

- equipment layout and orientation;
- technical efficiency;
- grid connection opportunities;
- site-specific constraints;
- co-location opportunities; and
- scalability or development potential.

Heat co-location and Waste-Heat Recovery

5.61 Where applicable (particularly for data centres, industrial sites, heat networks, energy-from-waste facilities, and large commercial premises), proposals must:

- identify heat sources and potential heat users within the viable radius;
- provide a technical assessment of waste-heat recovery potential, including flow temperature, heat load profiles, and peak capacities;
- demonstrate the feasibility of supplying heat to a heat network now or in the future; and
- engage early with network operators for areas where district heat networks are emerging.

Ground mounted solar PV

5.62 Planning applications for ground mounted solar PV must include a Renewable Energy Statement demonstrating a sequential approach to site selection, favouring previously developed land, then lower-quality agricultural land and finally the co-location with existing infrastructure (e.g. roads, substations, industrial estates).

5.63 An Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) must also be submitted as part of the planning application process and must:

- follow the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment – Renewable Energy (2024) study;
- include Zone of Theoretical Visibility analysis;
- assess glint and glare on dwellings, roads, rail corridors, aviation receptors, the High Weald National Landscape and the South Downs National Park; and
- consider cumulative impacts with other solar farms.

5.64 The Council expects applicants to avoid the most agriculturally valuable land (ALC Grades 1-3a) and submit an up-to-date Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey where uncertainty exists or information/data is lacking. Applicants will need to demonstrate the feasibility of agricultural co-use (e.g. sheep grazing) where Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land is exceptionally proposed.

Onshore wind

5.65 Applicants for onshore wind proposals should provide a:

- wind resource assessment (long-term average wind speeds at relevant hub heights);
- economic feasibility analysis; and
- grid connection details.

5.66 In terms of the 600-metre minimum buffer from settlements, this distance is defined as the edge of the built-up area boundary.

5.67 To support proposals for onshore wind turbines, applicants must submit the following technical assessments:

- LVIA, addressing cumulative impacts with existing turbines;
- Noise Impact Assessment, using ETSU-R-97[79] methodology or successor standards;
- Shadow Flicker Assessment, considering receptor locations within 130° either side of north;
- Ecological surveys (including bird and bat activity where appropriate); and
- Aviation and telecommunications safeguarding assessment.

District and Communal Heat Networks

5.68 District and Communal Heat networks will be supported where they:

- demonstrate clear connection potential (existing or planned);
- use low-carbon heat sources (e.g., heat pumps, waste heat, geothermal, biomass where appropriate); and
- are energy efficient and viable over the long term.

5.69 Major developments of 10+ dwellings or 1,000 m^2+ floorspace must:

- connect to an identified heat network zone (Crowborough, Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate); or
- contribute to establishing or expanding one, through:

o safeguarding routes for heat pipes;

o on-site energy centres;

o financial or in-kind contributions (as appropriate to local policy); and

o future-proofing for connection where immediate linkage is not viable.

Community Energy Schemes

5.70 Community-led energy development proposals will be supported where they:

- have demonstrable local support (e.g. community ballots, letters of intent, cooperative formation);
- operate through transparent and accountable governance structures;
- reinvest benefits into the local community; and
- meet the general criteria for environmental and amenity protection.

Energy Storage

5.71 Energy storage development proposals are supported where it:

- is co-located with renewable energy generation, enabling grid stability;
- demonstrably alleviates grid constraints (supported by statements from the District Network Operator (DNO) or National Grid Energy System Operator (ESO)); and
- enables additional renewable energy deployment.

Decommissioning and site restoration

79 Assessment and rating of noise from wind turbines: guidance

5.72 All planning applications for renewable and low-carbon energy schemes must include a Decommissioning and Restoration Plan setting out:

- how equipment will be dismantled and removed;
- waste handling and recycling strategy;
- land restoration proposals (to previous use or an alternative agreed compatible use);
- long-term soil recovery measures; and
- timescales and responsibilities for implementation.

5.73 The Council may secure this through a planning condition or planning obligation (Section 106 agreement) for larger schemes.

Water Efficiency

5.74 Policy CC6 (Water Efficiency) establishes the approach to improving water efficiency across new development in the district. Wealden is identified as an area of serious water stress[80] meaning that enhanced water efficiency is essential to securing long-term resilience for residents, ecosystems and infrastructure.

5.75 Given Wealden's water-stress designation, climate change, population growth and ecological sensitivity, development must achieve higher water efficiency standards and integrate water-saving measures into all types of development.

5.76 This approach supports climate-change adaptation and reduces pressure on local water resources. It complements the Council's wider objectives for sustainable development, green and blue infrastructure, and resilience to drought. The policy encourages water reuse, rainwater harvesting and low-consumption systems so that developments contribute to managing supply constraints.

5.77 By requiring efficient fixtures, encouraging on-site water recycling and guiding developments to think strategically about water, the policy aims to secure long-term water resilience, minimise stress on natural systems and enable the district to adapt to the impacts of a warming climate.

Policy CC6 Water Efficiency

Policy CC6: Water Efficiency

1. All new development proposals, including retrofit and refurbishment, must demonstrate the incorporation and maximisation of water-reuse, recycling, and rainwater-harvesting measures as part of an integrated water-management strategy to reduce demand on mains supply.

2. All new residential development must be designed and constructed to achieve a minimum water-consumption standard of 110 litres/person/day, or any higher water-efficiency standard in force at the time of the planning application.

3. All proposals for non-residential development must maximise water efficiency in accordance with the mandatory BREEAM Water Consumption (Wat 01) credits and, where feasible, should seek to achieve the Wat 01 exemplary credit, which requires

80 Water stressed areas – final classification 2021. July 2021.

exceptional potable-water reductions through ultra-efficient sanitary components and/or rainwater or greywater recycling systems.

Supporting Text

5.78 All new development should adopt an integrated approach to water management that prioritises water reuse, recycling, and rainwater harvesting alongside efficient fixtures and fittings. Incorporating these measures at the design stage allows developments to minimise potable water demand and reduce vulnerability to future water-scarcity risks.

5.79 For non-residential development, water efficiency should be maximised in accordance with the BREEAM Water Consumption (Wat 01) assessment methodology, which assesses sanitary-water consumption and awards credits based on performance. Applicants should demonstrate how their proposals achieve the highest feasible level within the mandatory water-credits category, including through the specification of efficient components and, where appropriate, rainwater or greywater systems.

5.80 For BREEAM's Wat 01 performance thresholds, the exemplary credit is awarded when a building achieves at least a 65% improvement in potable water consumption compared to the baseline. Proposals which achieve this threshold will be particularly supported.

5.81 To ensure transparency and deliverability, applicants must evidence compliance with the policy through a Sustainability Statement or Design and Access Statement. These should set out the design measures taken to reduce potable water use, provide relevant calculations or BREEAM outputs, and demonstrate how the proposed approach remains resilient under future climate-change scenarios, including hotter, drier summers and increased pressure on water resources.

Flood Risk

5.82 Policy CC7 (Managing Flood Risk) manages flood risk across the district in line with national policy and Wealden District Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs)[81]. As climate change increases the frequency and severity of flooding from rivers, surface water, groundwater and tidal sources, new development must be planned and designed to remain safe for its lifetime.

5.83 The policy ensures that development is directed to the areas of lowest flood risk following the Sequential Test, and where necessary, the Exceptions Test. It reflects climate-change allowances that increase predicted flood levels and emphasises the importance of site-specific Flood Risk Assessments for development in areas at risk.

5.84 The policy also promotes resilient design through flood-resistant and flood-resilient construction, appropriate land levels, and the safeguarding of flood storage and conveyance routes. The policy recognises that poorly designed development can increase risk elsewhere and therefore requires that proposals do not worsen existing conditions.

81 Wealden District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs)

5.85 By providing a robust framework for assessing and mitigating flood risk, the policy ensures that development contributes to long-term climate adaptation, avoids unacceptable impacts and supports sustainable land-use planning across the district.

Policy CC7 Managing Flood Risk

Policy CC7: Managing Flood Risk

1. All development proposals must demonstrate that flood risk has been fully considered in the design and layout of the development to ensure that adverse impacts are avoided where possible and mitigated where necessary.

2. All development should not create or increase flood risk elsewhere and must ensure that flood risk is properly managed on site.

3. The following requirements apply to all development proposals:

   a) Development must be located in the lowest flood risk areas reasonably available, applying the Sequential Test in accordance with national planning policy.

   b) Where development is proposed in higher flood risk areas, applicants must justify site selection with evidence that no reasonably available lower flood risk alternatives exist for the same commensurate development and use.

   c) Where required by national planning policy, the Exception Test must be applied and passed.

   d) Applicants must demonstrate wider sustainability benefits and provide a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) proving the development will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Flood Risk Assessments

4. A site-specific FRA is required for all development located in areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3, critical drainage areas, or areas at risk of surface-water flooding.

5. FRAs must incorporate the most up to date climate-change allowances, demonstrate safe access/egress, and assess flood storage, displacement, groundwater and surface-water interactions.

Floodplain Compensation

6. Where development is acceptable in principle in accordance with this policy and national planning policy but would result in the loss of flood storage or affect areas of functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b), level-for-level and volume-for-volume compensatory storage must be provided.

7. Compensation storage must be located as close as possible to the area of loss and maintain existing flow paths.

8. All new development close to rivers should, working with river partners, consider opportunities to improve, enhance and restore floodplain and river environments, including opportunities to create, enhance and improve the linking of green/blue infrastructure.

Culverting and Watercourses

9. Culverting of watercourses will not be permitted unless there is no practical alternative and it is essential for access or public safety.

10. The enhancement and re-naturalisation of watercourses is strongly encouraged.

Resilient and Resistant Design

11. Development must incorporate flood-resistant and flood-resilient design and construction measures appropriate to the level and type of flood risk posed.

12. Land levels, building thresholds, materials and drainage systems must be designed to ensure occupant safety throughout the lifetime of the development.

Pevensey Levels and Cuckmere Catchments

13. Where schemes are located within either the Pevensey Levels catchment or the River Cuckmere catchment, developers will be expected to undertake early discussions with the Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board.

Supporting Text

5.86 Early engagement is essential for managing flood risk effectively. Relevant development proposals should be discussed with the Council, alongside the Environment Agency, the Water Service Provider(s), the Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board (where applicable), and the Lead Local Flood Authorities, preferably at pre-application stage. This ensures that site-specific flood-risk and drainage considerations can be integrated into the design process from the outset.

5.87 All development must demonstrate that existing and future flood patterns from all sources of flooding have been assessed using the latest climate-change allowances. Development proposals should identify the need for flood-risk mitigation and resilience measures as early as possible in the design process.

5.88 A sequential, risk-based approach must be applied to steer development to areas of lowest flood probability, both at site-selection stage and within the site layout. Flood-risk vulnerability classifications set out in national guidance[82] must be followed. Where development cannot reasonably be located in areas of lower risk, and wider sustainability objectives justify the location, the Exceptions Test may be applied.

5.89 Where proposals are located close to watercourses, applicants must also consider the relevant Land Drainage Act 1991 and Flood and Water Management Act 2010 Byelaws.

5.90 Where land raising is proposed as part of flood-risk mitigation, applicants must consult the Lead Local Flood Authority and the Environment Agency at the earliest stage. Any land-raising scheme must be robustly evidenced, demonstrate no increase in flood risk elsewhere, and, where located within the functional floodplain, provide level-for-level compensatory flood storage without causing adverse on-site or off-site impacts. Within the Pevensey Levels catchment, early engagement with the Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels Water Level Management Board is expected.

5.91 Development should not rely solely on existing flood-risk management infrastructure. Defences can fail, overtop, or deteriorate over time, particularly under future climate conditions. Development proposals must therefore demonstrate appropriate resistance and resilience

82 See the Planning Practice Guidance: Flood Risk and Coastal Change

measures and assess residual risks, including breach scenarios and the implications for safe access and egress.

5.92 Developers should refer to the relevant Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) undertaken by the Council, which provides detailed guidance on applying the Sequential and Exception Tests and preparing site-specific Flood Risk Assessments. For non-strategic sites, applicants must use the SFRA to apply the Sequential Test and provide evidence that all reasonably available alternative sites have been properly considered.

Sustainable Drainage (SuDS)

5.93 Policy CC8 (Sustainable Drainage) requires Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to manage surface water sustainably, reduce flood risk and enhance water quality. As climate change increases rainfall intensity and runoff volumes, SuDS help prevent surface-water flooding and ensuring long-term resilience, and provide other benefits such as:

- reducing the risk of flooding from surface water run-off;
- reducing the risk of sewer flooding during heavy rainfall;
- recharging groundwater to help prevent drought;
- preventing water pollution by filtering runoff;
- providing valuable habitats for wildlife; and
- creating and providing green and blue spaces for people.

5.94 SuDS can be used in new developments and retrofitted into existing developments. They can also be designed for constrained spaces, such as permeable paving in parking spaces or rainwater gardens as part of traffic calming.

5.95 The policy reflects the national direction towards mandatory SuDS for new development[83] and aligns with the local evidence base, including the Strategic Flood Risk Assessments. SuDS are not only a flood-risk management tool but also provide benefits for biodiversity, groundwater recharge and placemaking.

5.96 Policy CC8 (Sustainable Drainage) ensures that drainage design is considered early in the planning process, follows the SuDS hierarchy and incorporates sufficient space for multi-functional SuDS features. It also ensures that water quality is protected, particularly in sensitive catchments such as the Pevensey Levels SAC/Ramsar site.

5.97 By embedding SuDS within site design, the policy supports greener, more resilient developments that contribute positively to climate adaptation, ecological enhancement and reduced downstream impacts.

Pevensey Levels Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar Site

5.98 The Pevensey Levels is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar site, recognised for its rare wetland habitats and species, including the Lesser Whirlpool Ramshorn Snail (Anisus vorticulus), aquatic invertebrates, and breeding wildfowl. The SAC's conservation objectives[84] for planning purposes include maintaining or restoring the population of Anisus vorticulus to favourable conservation status, preserving the supporting

83 The review for implementation of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, January 2023

84 Pevensey Levels SAC Conservation Objectives. Natural England. November 2018.

habitat—particularly the grazing marsh and ditch systems—and preventing deterioration or significant disturbance to the site's qualifying features.

5.99 These objectives also help to underpin the ecological character, and protection aims of the Ramsar site. The Ramsar designation[85] reflects the international importance of the Pevensey Levels for wetland biodiversity, including its complex ditch network, lowland wet grassland, and traditional pastoral land use. Although Ramsar sites do not have statutory conservation objectives in the same way as SACs, their protection is supported through overlapping designations such as the SSSI status and through water level management practices that maintain hydrological integrity and ecological function.

5.100 The Pevensey Levels is highly sensitive to changes in water quality and hydrology. Development within or adjacent to the hydrological catchment must therefore be carefully managed to avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of both the SAC and Ramsar designations.

5.101 Policy CC8 (Sustainable Drainage) requires developments to reduce flood risk and protect water quality including the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar site. A higher policy requirement therefore applies to sites within or adjacent to the Pevensey Levels Hydrological Catchment area. Policy CC8 (Sustainable Drainage) will also provide wider benefits to the natural environment and people.

Policy CC8 Sustainable Drainage (SuDS)

Policy CC8: Sustainable Drainage (SuDS)

Sustainable Drainage Requirements

a) Development proposals must incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and, where the development proposal falls within or adjacent to the Pevensey Levels hydrological catchment, demonstrate that surface water management will not adversely affect the integrity of the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site.

b) All development proposals must:

i Integrate SuDS as a fundamental part of site design unless demonstrated to be inappropriate due to site-specific constraints;

ii Provide sufficient space within the site layout to accommodate SuDS features (where delivered on-site) and provide access for the effective and sustainable maintenance of SuDS over the lifetime of the development. SuDS features should generally be located in communal areas;

iii Ensure SuDS are multi-functional, contributing to flood risk reduction, and where possible water quality improvement, biodiversity enhancement, and green/blue infrastructure;

iv Deliver discharge rates agreed with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and the Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board (WLMB), where relevant, considering site-specific conditions;

v Follow the discharge hierarchy:

- Rainwater re-use (e.g. harvesting); then

85 Pevensey Levels Ramsar Site – Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS). Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), March 1999

- Discharge into the ground;
- then Discharge to a surface water body;
- and then Discharge to a surface water sewer or other drainage system.

vi Be designed and implemented in accordance with the latest local, regional and national guidance on SuDS, including early engagement with the LLFA. Infiltration-based drainage should be considered where viable, but it is recognised that infiltration may not be appropriate in some circumstances due to underlying geology and hydrogeology.

vii Ensure that the site's drainage system includes a clearly defined and viable point of discharge, with appropriate connectivity to the wider drainage network. Proposals should demonstrate how surface water will be taken from the site to an agreed outfall location, in consultation with the LLFA.

viii For phased developments, applicants should provide a strategic drainage approach across all phases. Where possible, consideration should be given to the cumulative impacts of proposed neighbouring or close by development.

Water Quality and Treatment

c) All development proposals located outside the Pevensey Levels hydrological catchment area, and where no part of the site discharges to the Pevensey Levels hydrological catchment area must:

i Ensure surface water passes through a minimum of two treatment stages, referencing the Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) SuDS Manual and pollution hazard indices to support appropriate treatment design.

Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site Protection

d) All development proposals within or adjacent to the Pevensey Levels hydrological catchment, as defined in Figure 14 below, must engage with the Pevensey and Cuckmere WLMB and other relevant bodies at the earliest stage and:

i Provide sufficient detail of surface water drainage schemes at the outline stage if a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is triggered, specifically where hydrology is identified as a potential impact pathway;

ii Demonstrate that drainage proposals will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC/Ramsar site;

iii Incorporate SuDS that enhance water quality and ecological resilience;

iv Ensure any SuDS scheme involves a minimum of three treatment stages and where necessary, include additional treatment stages to avoid harm to the SAC/Ramsar site; and

v Avoid direct discharge of untreated surface water into the Pevensey Levels.

e) The Council will support development that incorporates strategic-scale mitigation, including the use of off-site sustainable drainage systems designed to collectively address the impacts of multiple sites and deliver comprehensive flood and water quality management. Developments must take precautions to ensure that no invasive non-native species are introduced, and if already present ensure they are not allowed to spread.

Supporting Text

5.102 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be multi-functional, incorporated into site design from the outset, and tailored to site-specific conditions. SuDS are expected to contribute to green and blue infrastructure, climate resilience, and nature recovery, with naturalistic and infiltration-based systems used wherever feasible. Developers must refer to the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage[86].

5.103 Infiltration may be constrained in parts of the district due to geology and groundwater levels. Developers should consult British Geological Society mapping and local infiltration-feasibility data when designing SuDS. Where infiltration is not viable, discharge rates must be agreed with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and, where relevant, the Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board (WLMB). The appropriateness of infiltration will be determined by a range of techniques including groundwater monitoring over the winter months. Lack of infiltration potential does not remove the requirement to reduce surface-water runoff volume.

5.104 Early engagement with the LLFA, WLMB, and other statutory bodies is essential to ensure drainage strategies are appropriate, deliverable and compliant with the national standards. Phased developments must provide a strategic drainage approach across all phases, with clear demonstration of drainage connectivity and secure discharge points.

5.105 A SuDS management and maintenance plan must be submitted for all development incorporating SuDS, detailing permanent arrangements for inspection, repair, and replacement. For major development, LLFA approval is required for the design and long-term maintenance of SuDS prior to commencement of development. For small-scale development, the use of the LLFA's SuDS Decision Support Tool is strongly encouraged.

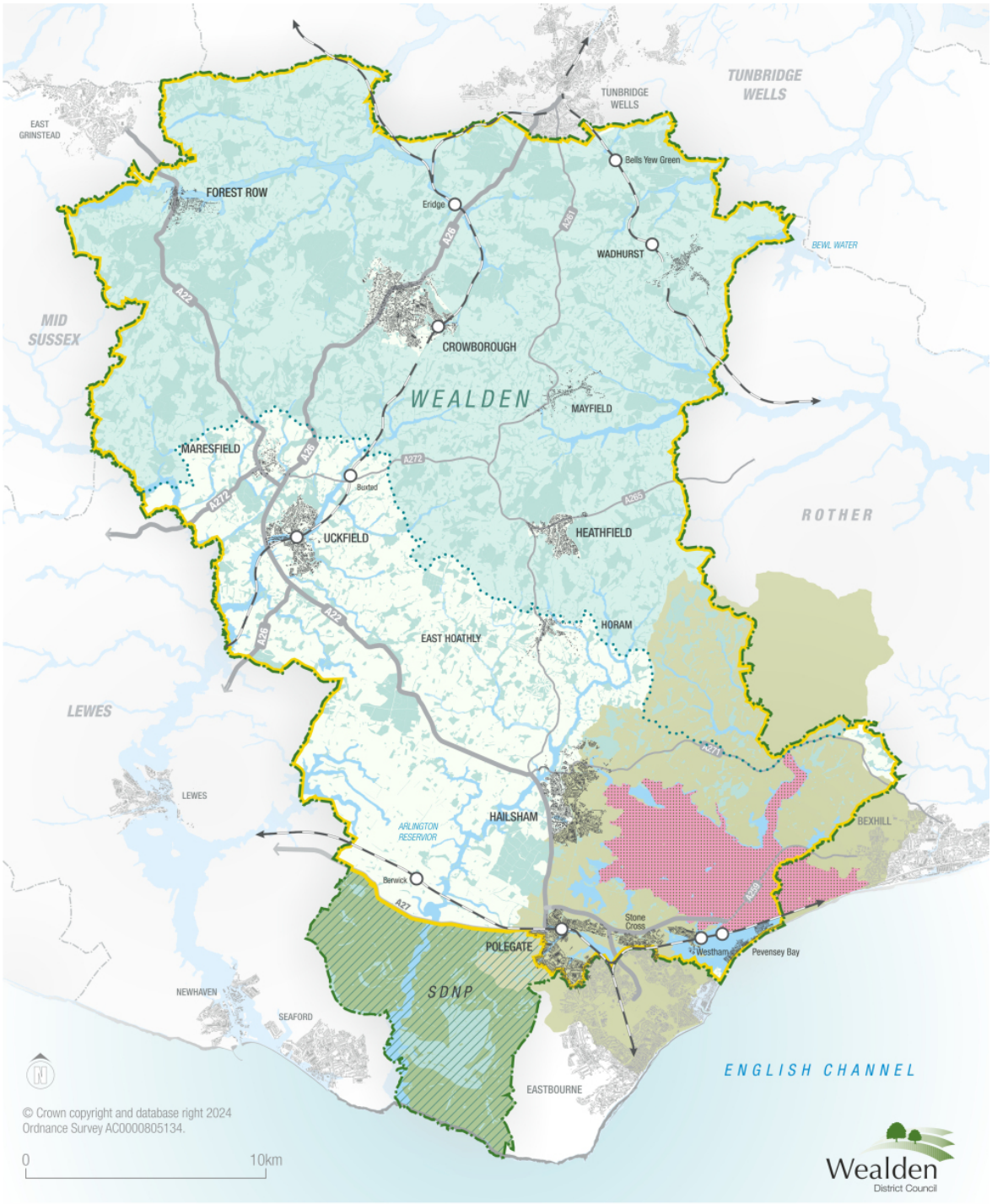
5.106 Within the Pevensey Levels catchment, SuDS must deliver enhanced treatment to prevent nutrient and pollutant loading to sensitive water bodies. A minimum of three treatment stages is required within the hydrological catchment, with additional stages where needed to protect the SAC/Ramsar site.

5.107 Where a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is triggered, applicants must provide sufficient detail on surface-water drainage at the outline planning application stage, particularly where hydrology is identified as an impact pathway.

5.108 Paragraph 182 of the NPPF (2024) emphasises water quality as a functional benefit. The Council recognises the importance of strategic planning for SuDS in the Pevensey Levels and, in line with Natural England's advice, supports opportunities for SuDS that enhance climate resilience, nature recovery, and green and blue infrastructure. Early collaboration with stakeholders is encouraged to maximise these benefits.

86 National Standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), DEFRA Guidance, July 2025

Figure 14 Pevensey Levels Hydrological Catchment Area



Wealden
District Council

06
Natural Environment



Wealden
Local Plan

Introduction

6.1 Wealden District's distinctive natural environment is central to its strong sense of place, identity, economy, health and wellbeing. Its landscapes, habitats and species provide important benefits, including biodiversity, food and energy production, flood management, climate change mitigation and adaptation, pollution and recreation.

6.2 The district's natural environment is considerably diverse. It ranges from the highly wooded High Weald National Landscape to the rolling chalk hills of the SDNP, which is also a nationally designated landscape. In between this, there is the low weald landscape and the internationally important Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar site. Our towns and villages that sit within our landscape and traditional land use patterns and forms of built development also provide a strong and distinctive sense of place.

6.3 The presence and distribution of different landscape types, natural habitats and land-use are influenced by underlying geology, soils, landform and drainage. Land-use across the district is predominantly pasture, with areas of arable cropping. Between the land that is farmed, there is a visible distribution of semi-natural land cover. These include woodlands, heathland, freshwater habitats, wetlands and marshes and grassland habitats. The district is heavily wooded, particularly in the north, within the High Weald. Natural England's woodland inventory shows that 61% of all woodlands in the district are Ancient Woodland[87].

6.4 The importance of this range of habitats for biodiversity is recognised through international, national and local designations covering around 24% of the district.

6.5 Both the Ashdown Forest and the Pevensey Levels are internationally designated. The Ashdown Forest is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), designated as one of the largest continuous blocks of lowland heath in the southeast of England, and is also a Special Protection Area (SPA), due to its breeding populations of Dartford warbler and nightjar. Pevensey Levels is a Ramsar site and is also a SAC due to it being one of the largest and least fragmented low-lying wet grassland systems in the southeast as well as supporting the largest UK population of lesser whirlpool ramshorn snail.

Planning for the Natural Environment

6.6 The planning system helps conserve and enhance the natural environment and protect it from harm. An ecosystems approach supports this by considering natural systems as a whole, including designated sites, protected species, natural capital and the services provided by geology, soil, air, water and living things.

6.7 Ecosystem services provided by the natural environment include the food we eat, the water we drink, plant materials used for fuel, building materials and medicines. It also includes services such as climate regulation, natural flood defences, carbon storage, the pollination of crops by insects and even the inspiration we take from the natural environment and wildlife, that support conservation, wellbeing and economic development.

6.8 An ecosystems service approach supports sustainable development by strengthening nature, improving quality of life, increasing settlement resilience to current and future pressures

87 Ancient Woodland is defined as any area that has been continuously wooded since at least 1600 AD. It is defined in the NPPF as an irreplaceable habitat and is a material planning consideration.

and contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation. It also supports the Plan's vision for protecting the natural environment and increasing biodiversity.

6.9 On the basis that an ecosystem approach and green infrastructure is multi-faceted and given the many benefits it provides, we have provided an overarching strategic policy for green infrastructure, see Policy SS10 (Green Infrastructure). The policies in this chapter therefore provide further detail on how we will achieve the protection, conservation and enhancement of our natural environment.

National Policy and Local Nature Recovery Strategies

6.10 The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan[88] and The Environment Act 2021[89] set goals and establish new mechanisms for supporting nature recovery such as a national Nature Recovery Network (NRN). NRN's will focus efforts on restoring and enhancing wildlife-rich places and to deliver these through spatial strategies for nature called Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). LNRS are designed as tools to identify local priorities for nature and to target resources in a more coordinated, practical and focused way.

6.11 The East Sussex LNRS[90] identifies local priorities and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas where action for nature recovery should be taken. The Council will use its policies, projects and landholdings, where appropriate, to support a coordinated approach to nature recovery.

6.12 The Council is committed to working with Sussex Nature Partnership, adjoining local authorities, partners and stakeholders, developers and landowners, to identify opportunities for nature and to deliver multiple benefits.

Biodiversity, geodiversity and nature recovery

6.13 Nature recovery is important for improving biodiversity, geodiversity, nature, ecological networks and green infrastructure. The NPPF identifies protecting and enhancing the natural environment as part of achieving sustainable development, including by improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently and minimising waste and pollution. A healthy and functioning natural environment is critical to sustainable development and to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

6.14 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) requires local planning authorities, so far as is consistent with their functions, to have regard to conserving biodiversity. The Environment Act 2021 strengthens this duty by requiring authorities to consider the enhancement of biodiversity. Section 41 of the Act identifies habitats and species which are of principal importance for biodiversity in England, which the Council will seek to protect and enhance across the district[91].

6.15 The Environment Act further strengthens biodiversity protection by setting binding environmental targets and requiring qualifying development to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain. Biodiversity Net Gain has been mandatory since January 2024 and is detailed in Policy NE2 (Biodiversity Net Gain) of the Local Plan.

88 A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment, Updated February 2023

89 The Environment Act 2021

90 East Sussex and Brighton and Hove LNRS, June 2026

91 Habitats and Species of Principal Importance in England - Guidance by DEFRA

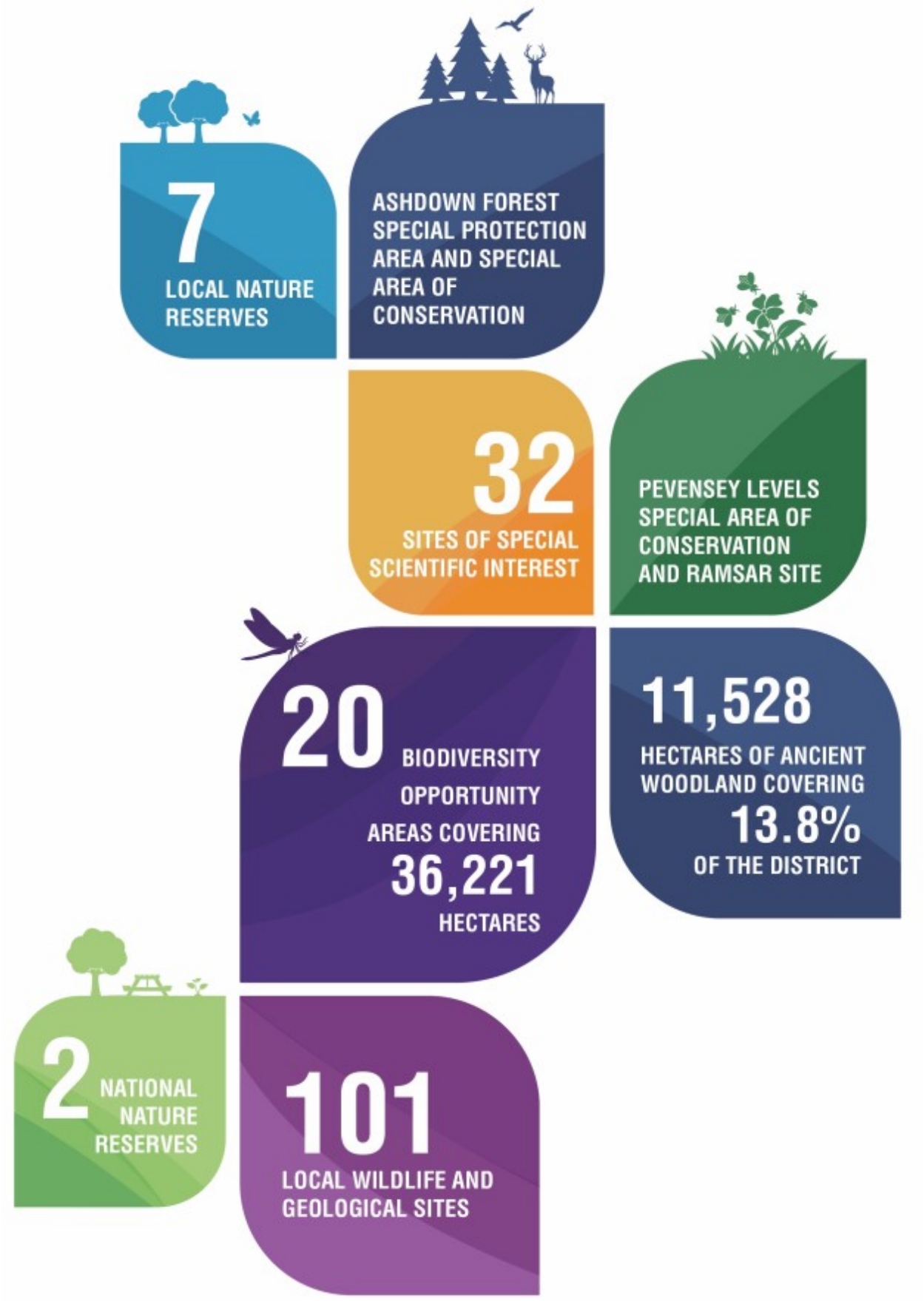
Protect sites, habitats and species

6.16 The district contains a range of protected and valued habitats and species that should be protected and enhanced, including the internationally designated Ashdown Forest and Pevensey Levels, SSSIs, National Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites.

6.17 In addition, the district also supports:

- Priority habitats including ancient woodland; coastal and floodplain grazing marsh; coastal saltmarsh; coastal vegetated shingle; deciduous woodland; ghyll woodland; intertidal chalk; intertidal mudflat; lowland calcareous grassland; lowland fen; lowland heathland; lowland meadow; traditional orchard; wood-pasture and parkland; reed bed and saline lagoon; ponds and hedgerows; and
- Protected, priority and notable species including European protected species (bats, hazel dormouse, and great crested newt – with Wealden being within a known stronghold for the latter); species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act; Section 41 species; notable birds and other rare species, as well as the Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996.

Figure 15 Wealden's Protected Habitats and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas



6.18 The NPPF states that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and an appropriate compensation strategy exists. Irreplaceable habitats are those that would be technically difficult or take a very significant time to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. Some irreplaceable habitats are defined within the NPPF.

6.19 Designated nature conservation sites and priority habitats / species are of significant value, but the wider ecological network of habitats and species is also critical for biodiversity and nature recovery. Habitat fragmentation and deterioration threaten that network, particularly in the context of climate change.

6.20 Soil is a valuable natural resource that supports food production, biodiversity and carbon storage, and development should protect and enhance soils from design through to construction. Ancient woodland soils are particularly valuable because they contain much of their ecological value and have developed complex ecological interactions over hundreds of years, making them vulnerable to long-lasting direct and indirect impacts.

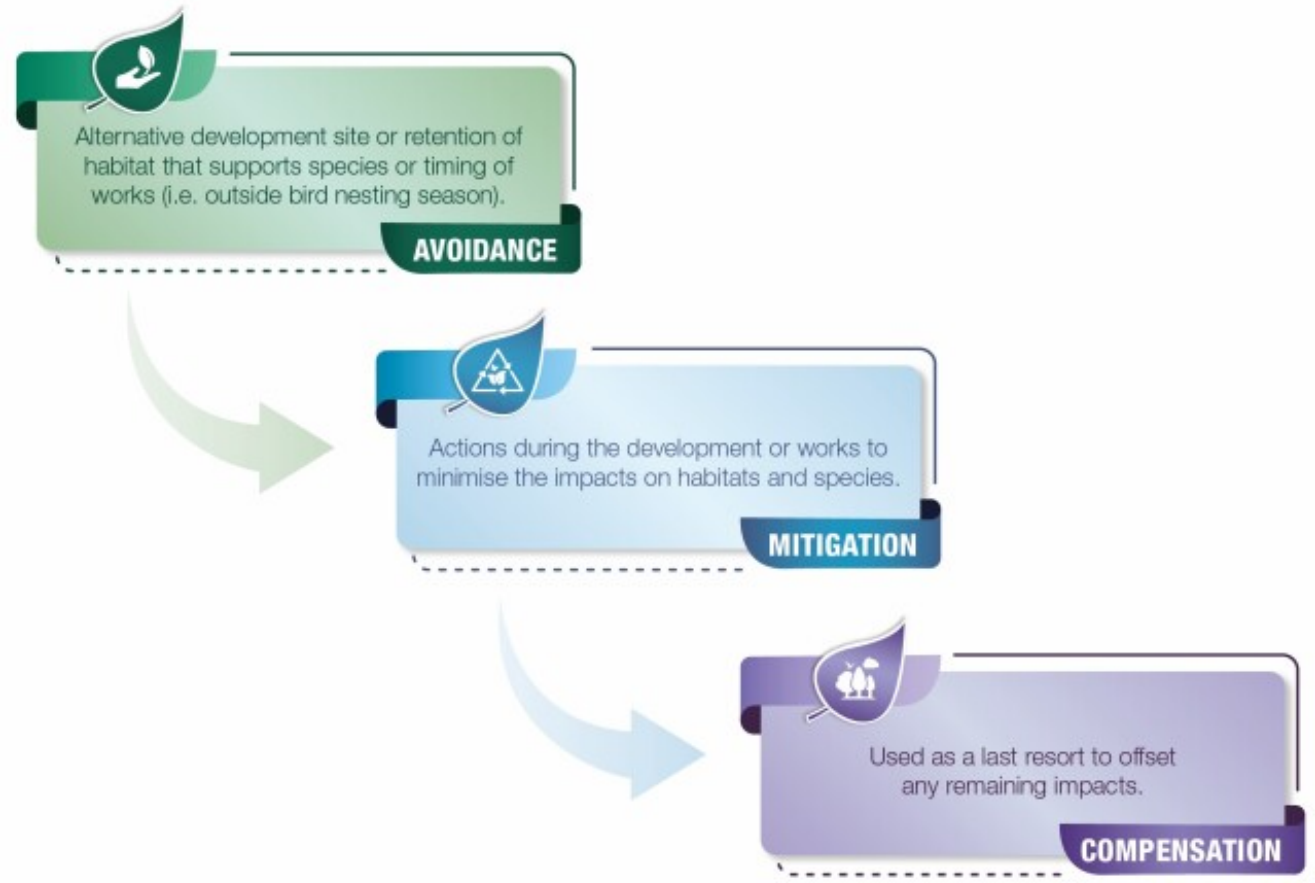
Mitigation hierarchy

6.21 Creating, enhancing and protecting wildlife corridors and stepping stones improves ecological connectivity and facilitates species movement, which could help in light of the impacts on species from climate change. Stepping stones are pockets of habitat that facilitate the movement of species across otherwise inhospitable landscapes.

6.22 When considering the effects of a proposal on habitats, species and the overall ecological network, development must follow the mitigation hierarchy of avoid, mitigate, restore and compensate as per figure 16 below[92].

92 Adapted from Avoidance, Mitigation & Compensation - Buildings, planning and development - Bat Conservation Trust (bats.org.uk)

Figure 16 Mitigation Hierarchy



6.23 Compensation should always be a last resort. Following the mitigation hierarchy is crucial to avoid overall negative impact on biodiversity and to ensure biodiversity net gains are properly calculated. Biodiversity net gain is additional to the above hierarchy.

Contributing to nature recovery and biodiversity improvements

6.24 All development can contribute to nature recovery and biodiversity improvements by avoiding habitat fragmentation, maintaining or strengthening ecological connections, and where appropriate, supporting the objectives identified in the adopted East Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). This will ensure that biodiversity overall is improved and will focus net gains within areas where they are likely to offer the most benefit.

6.25 The planning process ensures that the mitigation hierarchy is followed and that developments are meaningfully contributing to nature recovery within the district and, where possible in the wider area, working with our neighbouring authorities to ensure a coherent and connected natural environment.

6.26 Policy NE1 sets out the Council's approach to protecting, restoring and enhancing biodiversity, geodiversity and nature recovery following the hierarchy of designated sites approach[93]. It requires proposals to protect biodiversity assets, avoid fragmentation, strengthen

93 ODPM Circular 06/2005 provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system.

ecological networks and support a functional natural environment that contributes to the health and wellbeing, biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaption.

Policy NE1 Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery

Policy NE1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery

1. The district's biodiversity resources will be protected, restored and enhanced. This will be achieved by:

a) Giving appropriate weight to the statutory purposes of qualifying features and conservation objectives of the hierarchy of internationally, nationally, regionally and locally designated sites, priority habitats, protected species, and irreplaceable habitats;

b) Considering biodiversity at an early stage in site identification and design and ensuring that the location and / or use of development will not undermine designated sites, priority habitats and species and irreplaceable habitats, either directly or indirectly; and

c) Ensuring that any biodiversity net gain is in addition to any mitigation or compensatory measures[94].

2. Development proposals affecting biodiversity and geodiversity will be required to apply the mitigation hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and as a last resort compensation. Development proposals that would result in significant harm to biodiversity or geodiversity which cannot be adequately avoided, mitigated or compensated for will not be supported. Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats will only be permitted where wholly exceptional reasons are demonstrated, in accordance with national policy. Where such circumstances arise, appropriate compensation measures will be required.

Local Wildlife Sites, Geological Sites and Local Nature Reserves

3. The mitigation hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensation will also apply to Local Wildlife Sites, Geological Sites and Local Nature Reserves. Development proposals will not be supported where significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided.

4. Where planning permission can be granted, having followed the mitigation hierarchy of avoidance and mitigation first, the remaining area of the site will be protected by a planning condition or planning obligation and opportunities should be taken as appropriate to provide satisfactory compensatory measures in this area for any harm caused. Where compensatory measures are required, these should be provided onsite wherever feasible and ecologically appropriate. Where this is not possible, or where greater ecological benefits can be achieved elsewhere, offsite compensation will be required.

Biodiversity and Nature Recovery

94 BS8683:2021 Process for designing and implementing BNG; BNG - Principles and Guidance for UK construction and development, CIRIA 2019

5. Development proposals affecting biodiversity and geodiversity will be expected to apply the following measures:

a) Conserve, restore, enhance and where appropriate create priority habitats and conserve and support the recovery of protected species;
b) Protect, conserve, restore, enhance and strengthen wildlife-rich habitats, ecological corridors and stepping stones to help wildlife populations grow and move;
c) Extend and buffer designated sites, irreplaceable habitats, priority habitats and where applicable support and implement measures identified within priority areas for nature recovery as set out in the adopted East Sussex LNRS.
d) Improve resilience to climate change by accounting for and sustaining ecosystem services including protecting geological value and good quality soils;
e) Ensure soil sustainability issues are identified at the earliest stage of scheme design to protect, and where possible enhance, soil quality within the site and its functions for food production (if relevant), biodiversity and carbon storage. These issues should be carried through to become part of the environmental programme for the construction phase;
f) Take all reasonable steps to minimise, avoid or fully mitigate any indirect adverse effects on habitats and species including those relating to recreation, lighting, disturbance, water quality, pollution or invasive species;
g) Maximise opportunities to deliver additional ecological and biodiversity features and support biodiversity enhancement through scheme design;
h) Secure the long-term management and maintenance of biodiversity and ecological features as relevant to a scheme and in line with priorities and measures identified in the adopted East Sussex LNRS;
i) Contribute to ecological resilience and biosecurity by prioritising natural regeneration where appropriate and, where planting is required, using native species of appropriate provenance.

6. The loss, deterioration or fragmentation of existing wildlife-rich corridors and stepping stones will be resisted. Development proposals must maintain and, where possible, restore and enhance ecological connectivity and contribute to a coherent and resilient nature recovery network.

7. Development proposals for new buildings exceeding 4 metres in height shall incorporate integrated biodiversity features for building-dependent species, including swift bricks, integral nest boxes, soffit boxes or other equivalent measures, unless it can be demonstrated that such provision would be impracticable, ineffective or inappropriate. Provision should be designed and located in accordance with current best-practice guidance (or any successor documents and guidance).

Supporting text

6.27 Development proposals should be informed by a thorough understanding of the potential impacts, direct and indirect, on habitats and species. In all cases, development proposals will be required to follow the mitigation hierarchy when considering the potential impact of the proposal on the district's habitats and species, both designated and non-designated. Applicants

are encouraged to contact the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre for protected habitats and species information within the district.

6.28 Proposals that could affect biodiversity or geology must provide sufficient information to assess the likely effects on protected sites, species, habitats, biodiversity or geology, and identify any prevention, avoidance, mitigation or compensation measures. Ecological surveys, prepared by suitably qualified professionals and informed by an Ecological Constraints and Opportunities Map, will be required where proposals affect priority habitats, areas identified in the adopted East Sussex LNRS or adjacent to sites of sites of known nature conservation importance.

6.29 Mitigation and, if required, compensatory measures will be secured through planning obligations, planning conditions or conservation covenants with priority for such measures to be provided on-site wherever feasible.

6.30 Development proposals on or near a site used by protected species, or a protected area or site for wildlife, should have regard to industry best practice guidance and to Natural England's guidance on preparing planning proposals to avoid harm or disturbance to protected species[95] and on how to avoid harming protected areas and species during development work[96].

6.31 Development applications, subject to the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, will be required to prepare an Environmental Statement. Applications for development which could have a likely significant effect on a SAC, SPA or Ramsar site will be required to be assessed under the Habitats Regulations.

6.32 In terms of considerations around soils, applicants are encouraged to refer to Defra's guidance 'Construction code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites'[97] or any subsequent guidance.

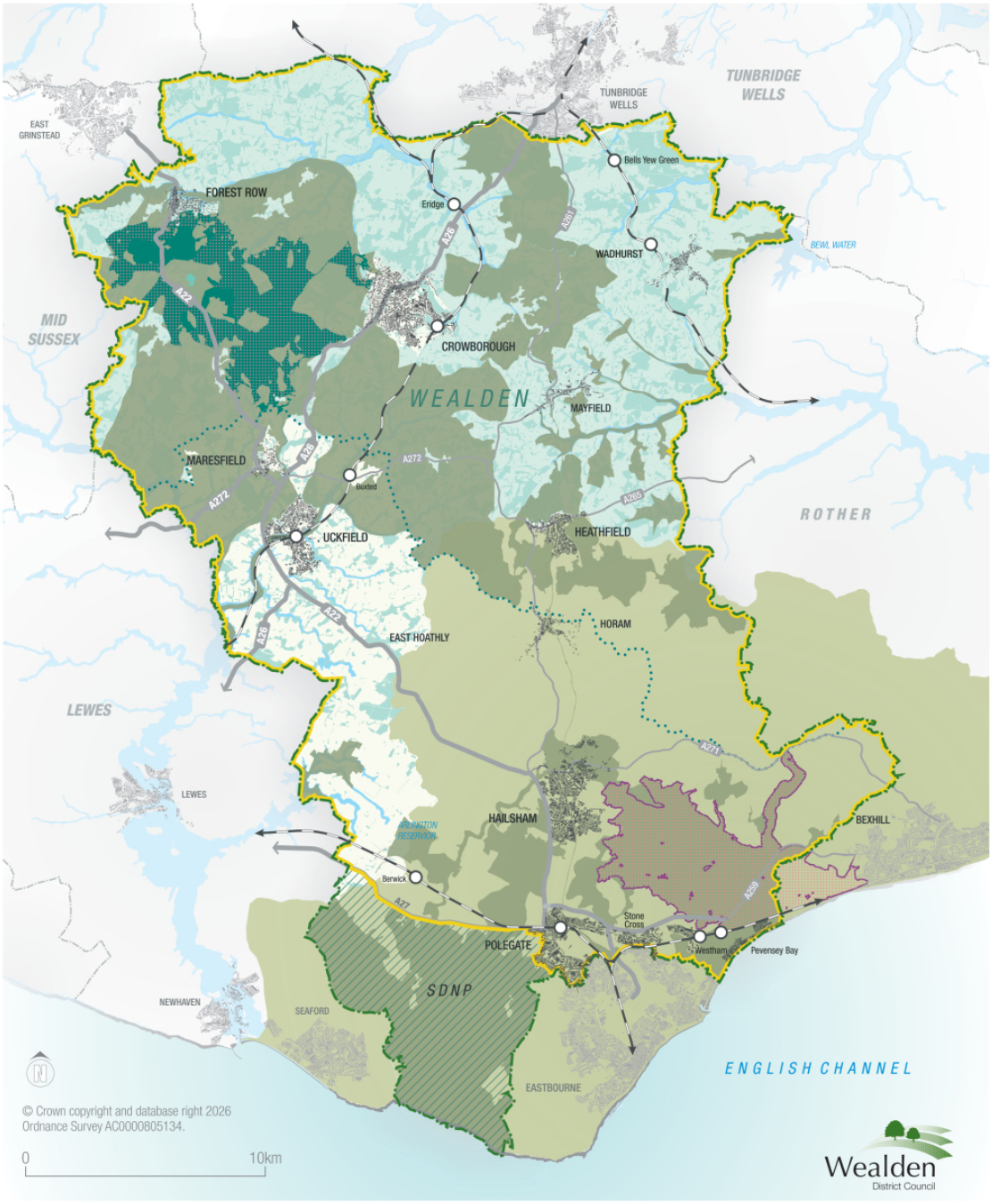
6.33 It should be noted that knowledge of valuable sites and their condition is constantly changing, and decisions will be based on the most up to date information available. The Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre can provide known species and habitat general data for development sites, where appropriate.

95 Prepare a planning proposal to avoid harm or disturbance to protected species - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

96 Construction near protected areas and wildlife - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

97 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-sustainable-use-of-soils-on-construction-sites

Figure 17 International, National and Locally Designated Sites for Biodiversity



Existing Assets

- Wealden District Boundary
- Local Plan Area
- Major A Roads
- Minor A Roads
- Rail
- Rail Stations
- Settlements
- South Downs National Park (SNDP)
- Woodland
- Water

Designations

- Special Protection Area
- Special Areas of Conservation
- High Weald National Landscape
- South Downs National Park (SDNP)
- Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
- Pevensey Levels
- Ramsar Site

This map is for guidance only and each site will be considered on a case by case basis in relation to its distance from the SPA.

Biodiversity Net Gain

6.34 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better condition than it was before by either creating or enhancing habitats. It complements the mitigation hierarchy by valuing, maintaining, enhancing and creating habitats beyond designated biodiversity sites supporting ecological connectivity and nature recovery.

6.35 The Environment Act 2021 requires development to deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain above the ecological baseline. The East Sussex LNRS helps guide offsite BNG projects where appropriate. The Council's BNG study (September 2026)[98] and Local Plan Viability Study (September 2026)[99] provides evidence that a 20% BNG requirement is viable and appropriate for most development in Wealden.

Biodiversity Metric and on/off site BNG

6.36 BNG will be measured using Defra's Biodiversity Metric. There are two Defra Biodiversity Metrics - Biodiversity Metric 4.0 for major developments and the Small Sites Metric. The Small Sites Metric is a simplified version of the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 and has been specifically designed for use on small development sites where the project chooses to do so.

6.37 Both Defra metrics measure how development or land management changes a site's biodiversity value before and after development. Developments proposals must provide sufficient biodiversity metric and habitat information to demonstrate compliance with BNG requirements. Biodiversity Gain Plan will be secured in accordance with the relevant legislation.

6.38 BNG should follow the spatial hierarchy, with delivery on-site, wherever possible. Off-site BNG (either wholly or in part) should only be used where on-site BNG is not possible or would not achieve the best ecological outcome, and developers should contact the Council to discuss suitable opportunities.

6.39 Part 6 of the Environment Act 2021 strengthens the duty to conserve biodiversity as set out in Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. It requires the enhancement, and not just conservation, of biodiversity and as a public authority, we should, in undertaking our functions, be seeking opportunities to enhance biodiversity wherever possible. At present, the Biodiversity Metric measures BNG in habitat terms and does not specifically consider species. Additional measures, such as the provision of bird, bat and insect boxes, will therefore not be included in the metric, but can provide important biodiversity enhancements.

Policy NE2 Biodiversity Net Gain

Policy NE2: Biodiversity Net Gain

1. Qualifying development proposals[100] are required to deliver a minimum overall biodiversity net gain of 20% above the ecological baseline, measured using the appropriate DEFRA biodiversity metric and UK Habitats Classifications system.

98 Wealden District Council Biodiversity Study (September 2026)

99 Wealden District Council Local Plan Viability Study (September 2026)

100 As defined in The Environment Act 2021, Schedule 14, Part 2, Paragraph 17 and subject to exemptions identified in The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Amendments and Transitional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2026 or any future amendments.

Applications must provide sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with this requirement.

2. Development must apply the mitigation hierarchy.

3. Biodiversity net gain should be delivered on-site where possible. Where this is not achievable or would not deliver the most effective ecological outcome, off-site provision will be supported where it connects to and supports the Local Nature Recovery Network.

4. Development proposals must demonstrate how the biodiversity net gain will be achieved and secured, including any habitat retention, enhancement, creation, management and monitoring measures.

5. Biodiversity net gain must be secured and managed for a minimum of 30 years after the completion of works through planning conditions, planning obligations and conservation covenants.

Supporting text

6.40 The proposals for enhancement of biodiversity will depend on the nature and scale of the development. However, a development with limited or no impact on biodiversity should still seek to demonstrate a net gain. Small-scale development proposals, collectively, could make a notable contribution to biodiversity net gain and the wider East Sussex Nature Recovery Network. The Council will use planning conditions, planning obligations or conservation covenants to require that proposals provide for works that will measurably increase biodiversity.

6.41 Applicants will be expected to use the appropriate Defra Metric to show the full calculations for both the development site and any offset location in terms of the number of biodiversity units generated, lost or required. Proposals should accord with the principles of ecological equivalence and the Defra biodiversity metric trading rules.

6.42 For small scale development proposals[101] applicants should use the Defra Small Sites Metric (and any subsequent replacements)[102] to demonstrate that the completion of the development will result in a measurable long-term net gain for biodiversity. Post development habitat units' quality calculations should take account of influences and pressures that may limit deliverable habitat quality (e.g. tree shading, proximity to development).

6.43 The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Amendments and Transitional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2026 (in force from 6 August 2026) currently provide the following exemptions for BNG (these are subject to any future amendments):

- development on sites below 0.2 hectares, are not required to deliver mandatory BNG; and
- temporary development which is five years or less old.

In addition, minor developments which remain subject to BNG can choose to go straight to off-site gains in the first instance.

101 Small -scale development proposals are those defined in the relevant Defra guidance for use of the Small Sites Metric (or any successor document).

102 It is not appropriate to use the Small Sites Metric to calculate offsite losses and gains.

6.44 Where the required biodiversity net gain cannot be fully achieved on-site, off-site measures should be located so as to maximise ecological benefits and contribute to the delivery of local nature recovery priorities, ecological networks and strategic habitat opportunities within Wealden. Applicants should demonstrate that opportunities to deliver gains on-site have been fully explored before relying on off-site provision.

6.45 Biodiversity gains delivered both on-site and off-site should be secured and managed for the required period through appropriate planning conditions, planning obligations or conservation covenants. Applications should clearly identify the body or organisation responsible for the long-term management, maintenance and funding of habitat creation and enhancement measures.

6.46 Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans should set out the management objectives, implementation measures, monitoring arrangements and remedial actions that will be undertaken where habitats are not establishing or performing as anticipated. Monitoring should be undertaken at appropriate intervals and reports provided to the Council to demonstrate that biodiversity gains are being maintained and delivered over the long term.

6.47 The Council will support the targeting of off-site biodiversity gain towards locations that strengthen ecological connectivity, enhance designated sites and priority habitats, and contribute to the aims of the East Sussex LNRS.

6.48 Where degradation of the onsite habitat has taken place between 30 January 2020 and the date of the submission of the planning application, the biodiversity pre-development value of the onsite habitat is the biodiversity value of the habitat immediately before the carrying out of these degradation activities.

6.49 Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and BNG perform distinct functions and should not be regarded as interchangeable mitigation measures. SANGs are intended to mitigate the recreational impacts of new residential development on protected habitats, whilst BNG seeks to secure measurable improvements in biodiversity. Where land is proposed to fulfil both functions, applicants will need to demonstrate that the requirements of each can be achieved without compromising the effectiveness of either measure. Any biodiversity units claimed from land also serving as SANG must be evidenced through the relevant biodiversity metric and accord with national guidance and legislation. Management and monitoring arrangements should clearly identify how both SANG and BNG objectives will be delivered and maintained over the long term.

6.50 The requirement for BNG does not change existing biodiversity protections. Therefore, current legal and policy provisions relating to development impacts on the natural environment, including protected sites and species, and priority species and habitats, all need to be considered in relation to habitat loss. A development cannot avoid this requirement by virtue of delivering net gain. The presence of protected species should continue to be assessed and addressed in accordance with relevant legislation, policy and guidance. BNG and the Biodiversity Metric calculations will be additional to this.

Woodland, trees and hedgerows

6.51 Woodland, trees and hedgerows make a valuable contribution to the district's landscape character, biodiversity, amenity, climate resilience and quality of life. They also form part of the

district's green infrastructure and Local Nature Recovery network, supporting carbon storage, flood mitigation and urban cooling.

6.52 The NPPF recognises the importance of trees and seeks net environmental gain from development. In addition, the Government's 25-year Plan to improve the Environment (2018) and its Tree Health Resilience Strategy (2018) sets out why it is important to preserve and plant trees and make a commitment to improve the extent, connectivity, diversity and condition of trees.

6.53 Wealden is heavily wooded but its woodlands face pressures from declining traditional woodland management practices, under management, inappropriate management, the introduction of new species, disease and pests, pollution and disturbance. These pressures can reduce species diversity.

6.54 Hedgerows are also important features providing the same benefits as woodlands. Mature hedgerows, including their associated trees, are an integral part of the traditional hedge system, contributing to the wooded context of the district. Changes to farming practices in the 20th century saw a decline in the extent of rural hedgerows. The Hedgerow Regulations 1997[103] and National Guidance Countryside hedgerows: protection and management Guidance 2024[104], seeks to protect hedgerows where they meet specific criteria on their length, location and species composition, and where deemed important, consent is required from the local planning authority to remove them, although there is a presumption towards retention unless strong justification can be provided. In Wealden, this includes hedgerows on farmland and open land. The Hedgerow Regulations also define 'important' hedgerows as being of particular archaeological, historical, wildlife or landscape value. The loss of hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees through natural ageing, development pressure or associated pests and diseases together with a lack of replacement, is a key challenge.

6.55 The Council can make a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to protect trees of amenity value, particularly where they are at risk. It has made more than 1,400 TPOs covering individual trees, groups of trees and woodlands.

6.56 The Council will seek to ensure that new development avoids the loss of trees which are valuable to people and the environment, maximises appropriate tree cover and protects trees and other vegetation from construction damage and any adverse impacts from increased access, wherever possible

Policy NE3 Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows

Policy NE3: Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows

Woodland, tree and hedgerow protection and creation

1. Development proposals will be supported where existing woodland is protected, retained, restored and integrated into the design of development and where opportunities are taken to deliver new planting, including tree lined streets, where appropriate. New woodland, tree and hedgerow planting should contribute to biodiversity, landscape character, visual amenity, green infrastructure, ecological networks and climate change

103 The Hedgerows Regulations 1997

104 Countryside hedgerow protection: removing hedgerows, May 2024

mitigation and adaptation in accordance with best practice guidance and relevant standing advice.

2. Development proposals will need to demonstrate that adequate measures are in place to protect woodland, trees, and hedgerows during construction and throughout the lifetime of the development.

3. Development resulting in unjustified loss of, or harm to long-term retention of trees, woodland or important hedgerows that contribute to urban or rural landscape character, biodiversity, green infrastructure, visual amenity or the historic environment will not be permitted unless:

a) The loss/harm is supported by sound arboricultural reasons, taking account of British Standard BS5837-2012 (and any subsequent revisions) by a suitably qualified professional;
b) The public benefits clearly outweigh the harm arising having regard to their quality, condition, amenity value and contribution to landscape character; and
c) appropriate replacement planting and compensation measures are secured.
d) Where loss is permitted, suitable replacement planting will be required at appropriate locations, using species and sizes, that replace or exceed the value lost. Development should increase tree and hedgerow coverage, and, where appropriate, woodland coverage proportionate to its scale and nature, guided by one native species tree per dwelling or per 100sqm of floorspace. Off-site provisions will only be accepted where on-site provision is demonstrated to be impracticable.

4. Appropriate buffers must be provided for woodlands and trees, commensurate with their ecological and arboricultural value to secure long-term protection, future growth and ecological or arboricultural function.

Implementation and management

5. Where appropriate, development proposals must provide a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) that accords with best practice standards and regulatory and legislative requirements, to secure the establishment, retention, and long-term management of new and existing woodland, tree or hedgerow planting.

Supporting text

6.57 The Council will protect existing woodlands, trees and important hedgerows. They are important components of Wealden's natural environment, landscape character, biodiversity, historic environment, green infrastructure network and climate resilience. They contribute to nature recovery, carbon storage, flood mitigation, urban cooling, visual amenity and public wellbeing. The Council will seek to protect, restore and enhance these assets and secure opportunities for new planting and woodland creation where appropriate.

6.58 Where development has the potential to affect existing woodland, trees and hedgerows, appropriate protection measures should be incorporated throughout construction and occupation. This may include the provision of suitable buffer zones, root protection areas, long-term management arrangements and measures to avoid indirect impacts such as increased access,

trampling, shading conflicts, pressure for future pruning or felling, and other effects that could compromise their long-term retention.

6.59 Development affecting woodland, trees and/or hedgerows, either within the site or in close proximity, should be supported by proportionate arboricultural survey and assessment prepared by suitably qualified professionals and undertaken in accordance with recognised standards[105] and best practice guidance. Surveys should identify existing constraints and opportunities, mitigation and management measures and inform the design and layout of development. The tree constraints identified, above and below ground should inform future site layout and design.

6.60 Applicants will be expected to seek to maximise opportunities for tree planting and woodland creation, as appropriate to the site, including the provision of tree lined streets, in relation to development proposals. Where tree planting or woodland creation is proposed as part of developments within the High Weald National Landscape, applicants are strongly advised to take account of the High Weald Management Plan. Where relevant, development proposals will be expected to provide a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) setting out arrangements for the establishment, protection, management and monitoring of woodland, tree and hedgerow planting and associated habitats.

6.61 New development should be informed by the principle of retaining existing trees, woodland and hedgerows wherever possible and incorporating them into the design and layout of development from the earliest stages[106],[107],[108],[109],[110]. Existing landscape features often provide greater biodiversity, landscape and amenity value than replacement planting and should be used to inform site design, movement routes, green infrastructure and open space networks.

6.62 The Council expects applicants to maximise opportunities for additional tree and hedgerow planting where appropriate to the scale and nature of development. This may include tree-lined streets, woodland creation, hedgerow restoration and the strengthening of ecological networks. New and replacement planting should be appropriate to its location, take account of biodiversity enhancement, local landscape character and, where suitable, comprise predominantly native species that are resilient to future climatic conditions. Native and large canopy species should be used where possible and appropriate, to deliver additional biodiversity benefits. Applicants are encouraged to refer to and take account of the Woodland Trust's Tree Species Handbook, which is also helpful for tree selection for planners.

6.63 Where the loss of trees or hedgerows is exceptionally justified, replacement planting should seek to replace or exceed the value lost. Replacement planting should normally be provided on-site. Off-site provision will only be supported where it can be clearly demonstrated that on-site replacement is not achievable.

105 Presently BS5837-2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction

106 Managing and Maintaining Woodlands: Overview Guidance 2025.

107 Plant your Future: the case for trees, March 2025

108 The UK Forestry Standard - The government's approach to sustainable forestry October 2023

109 The Woodland Trust. Tree species handbook - A technical guide for practitioners (2022)

110 The Woodland Trust. Tree Provenance in a Changing Climate (November 2020)

6.64 Applicants are encouraged to have regard to relevant Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust and other recognised guidance relating to woodland management, tree selection, tree planting, climate resilience and woodland creation when designing development proposals.

6.65 Applicants should also make use of the Woodland Opportunity Mapping Tool published by the Sussex Nature Partnership, Woodland Trust and South Downs National Park Authority[111].

Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees

6.66 Ancient woodland takes hundreds of years to establish, has complex ecological networks and is an irreplicable habitat. It is a limited resource, and both ancient woodland and its associated wildlife are vulnerable to damaging effects from adjacent and nearby land uses.

6.67 Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory shows that there are over 2,700 ancient woodlands in Wealden. Mature and ancient woodland are an essential part of the district's natural capital and a significant biodiversity resource. Woodland is also a Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan habitat.

6.68 Veteran trees are trees which are of cultural, historical, landscape and nature conservation value, because of their age, size or condition. They may stand alone or in groups within wood pastures, historic parkland, hedgerows, orchards, parks or other areas and are often found outside ancient woodlands. There are more than 1,200 veteran trees within the district[112] and are also considered an irreplaceable habitat.

6.69 Where development is proposed close to ancient woodland and/or veteran trees, or where development may result in harm directly or indirectly, the Council will require suitable buffer zones and any other measures to protect their integrity.

Policy NE4 Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees

Policy NE4: Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees

1. Development affecting ancient woodland or veteran trees including through direct or indirect impacts must:

   a) be informed by proportionate ecological and arboricultural evidence. This evidence must identify the likely effects of development and demonstrate how harm will be avoided;

   b) Provide suitable buffers and protection measures that safeguard the integrity, ecological function and long-term retention of ancient woodland and veteran trees. Buffers must be designed as semi-natural habitat and remain free from development, ancillary infrastructure and uses that would compromise their protective function.

2. The Council will normally require a minimum buffer of 25m from the edge of the ancient woodland. A smaller buffer, of no less 15m, will only be supported where robust site specific ecological and arboricultural evidence demonstrates that this would provide adequate protection. Buffer zones for ancient woodland/veteran trees (including those

111 Woodland Opportunity Mapping - South Downs National Park Authority

112 Ancient Tree Inventory - Woodland Trust

on the woodland boundary) should be at least 15 times the diameter of the tree. The buffer zone should be 5m from the edge of the tree's canopy if that area is larger than 15 times the tree's diameter.

3. Development resulting in the direct or indirect loss or deterioration of ancient woodland or veteran trees will only be permitted where wholly exceptional reasons are demonstrated, in accordance with national policy and appropriate compensation measures is secured[113].

4. The existing poor condition of ancient woodland or veteran trees will not, in itself, justify their loss or deterioration. Development will not be permitted where it relies primarily on mitigation or compensation in circumstances where wholly exceptional reasons have not been demonstrated.

Supporting text

6.70 Where developments are proposed in, or adjacent to, ancient woodland, the Council will have regard to Natural England and Forestry Commission Standing Advice for Ancient Woodlands[114].

6.71 Development proposals affecting ancient woodland or veteran trees must be informed by appropriate ecological and arboricultural surveys prepared to recognised industry standards and best practice. The assessment should identify the appropriate buffer and demonstrate that the buffer prioritises ecological mitigation and enhancement rather than the amenity of the development.

6.72 The Council will require, as a starting point, a 25m ancient woodland buffer from development. Where a smaller buffer, no smaller than 15m, is proposed this should be supported by site surveys and arboricultural evidence to demonstrate that this is acceptable. In line with Standing Advice, the buffer zone could increase beyond 25m depending upon the sensitivity of the site and its associated features. Examples are where sites include:

1. Steep slopes;
2. Ghyll streams;
3. Ancient woodland blocks close to and bordered on different sides by residential development; and
4. Woodland that represents a surviving remnant of a larger historic woodland block.

6.73 Our priority is to ensure no loss of ancient woodland occurs other than in wholly exceptional circumstances (which may include nationally significant infrastructure projects or orders under the Transport and Works Act). Remedial measures will also be sought to make good any existing damage to ancient woodland where possible, and to protect and enhance it where opportunities allow.

113 For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat (paragraph 193 (c) of the NPPF).

114 Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions and the NPPF.

6.74 Applicants are encouraged to review and take account of the Woodland Trust's publication named the Ancient and Veteran Trees: An Assessment Guide[115] whose steps can be incorporated into a woodland condition assessment or other site survey.

6.75 Applicants are also encouraged to review and take account of the Ancient Tree Forum (ATF) management advice on practical management of veteran trees[116], which provides advice on techniques for crown reducing a veteran tree, halo clearance for veteran trees; the importance of the land around a veteran tree; common sense risk management of veteran trees; the creation of decaying wood habitats; the management of veteran fruit trees and the management of veteran pollards still in a regular cycle of cutting.

6.76 In relation to veteran trees and their management, in addition to the ATF's advice, applicants should take account of the potential for the presence of protected/priority species they may support (i.e. bats and stag beetles) together with opportunities for retaining standing dead wood to support species.

Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation

6.77 Ashdown Forest is located within the High Weald National Landscape in the northwest of the district to the east of Crowborough and south of East Grinstead (in Mid Sussex District) and Forest Row. It is one of the largest single continuous blocks of lowland heath, semi-natural woodland, and valley bog in south-east England, and it supports several uncommon plants, a rich invertebrate fauna, and important populations of heathland and woodland birds. Ashdown Forest is a designated SSSI and is both a SPA and a SAC.

6.78 Ashdown Forest SAC is designated due to being an extensive example of European Northern Atlantic wet heaths and dry heath. The Ashdown Forest SPA is designated due to its ground nesting breeding bird populations of Dartford Warbler and Nightjar. Ashdown Forest is a European designated site, referred to as a Habitat Site, and therefore Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRAs) are required for development and plans that are likely to result in a significant effect on its qualifying features.

6.79 The Council has undertaken an HRA to test whether the Local Plan, in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have an adverse impact on the integrity of the Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA.

6.80 The Council's HRA has identified that net additional residential development could result in a significant effect on the Ashdown Forest SPA without avoidance and mitigation measures. Evidence from research undertaken at Ashdown Forest SPA and other SPAs in the country shows that recreational disturbance, particularly during the breeding season for the Dartford Warbler and nightjar, is a key risk, with freely roaming dogs exacerbating disturbance.

6.81 The Ashdown Forest SPA is located relatively close to several towns and villages. Its attractive, extensive open nature and the right to access most of the site means that it will inevitably draw people for recreation. An increase in residential development will lead to an increase in population within the districts and boroughs around the Ashdown Forest SPA. As

115 The Woodland Trust. Ancient and veteran trees: an assessment guide (2022)

116 Ancient Tree Forum. Practical management of veteran trees.

advised by Natural England both avoidance and mitigation measures are required to prevent an adverse effect on the integrity of the site. This includes the following:

- Avoidance Measures:
  - a 400m exclusion zone for residential development to avoid cat predation and other impacts associated with urbanisation such as fly tipping;
  - Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) – to provide alternative green space to attract visitors away from Ashdown Forest and to reduce overall visitor and recreational pressure at the Forest. In particular, the creation of space that is particularly attractive to dog walkers. Relevant development will either need to provide a SANG directly or make a financial contribution to a strategic SANG.
- Mitigation Measures:
  - Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Strategy – to deliver a strategy for visitor management at Ashdown Forest and the monitoring of the effects of avoidance and mitigation. The SAMM Strategy is funded by developer contributions and is a strategic coordinated approach in partnership with other local authorities within 7km of the Ashdown Forest SPA including Mid Sussex, Lewes, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks and Tandridge.

6.82 Avoidance and mitigation measures are necessary to ensure that the conservation objectives for Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC are met. The Council, in partnership with other local authorities, undertook visitor surveys in 2008, 2016 and 2021. The visitor surveys confirm that avoidance and mitigation for recreational development is required for a 400m – 7km zone around Ashdown Forest SPA.

6.83 In relation to the Ashdown Forest SAC, the European Heaths are sensitive to air pollutants, in particular nitrogen deposition, from an increase in traffic associated with additional development. The growth strategy set out in this Local Plan will not result in an adverse impact on the integrity of the SAC and therefore mitigation is not required. However, planning applications will need to be assessed, both alone and in combination with other plans and projects, to consider any air quality impacts and to prevent adverse effects on the integrity of Ashdown Forest SAC.

Policy NE5 Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC

Policy NE5: Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC

1. Development must avoid adverse effects on the integrity of the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, having regard to any necessary avoidance or mitigation measures, in accordance with the Habitats Regulations.

Recreational pressure avoidance and mitigation

2. Within the 400m exclusion zone of the Ashdown Forest SPA boundary (measured using a straight line from the SPA to the site curtilage), development resulting in a net increase in residential units will not be permitted.

3. Proposals for a net increase in residential development between 400m and 7km zone of influence will only be permitted where appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are secured to address recreational impacts on the Ashdown Forest SPA through:

a) The provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to the minimum level of 8ha per 1,000 net increase in population or the provision of a financial contribution to a strategic SANG that is acceptable to provide avoidance / mitigation for the development; and

b) A financial contribution to the Ashdown Forest Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Strategy.

4. The provision of SANG will be supported where they meet Natural England SANGs Guidelines, and where it does not include ancient woodland.

5. Residential development schemes located adjacent or close to the 7km zone boundary will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and may require mitigation for the SPA. A site specific HRA will be required at the application stage for sites on or close to the boundary.

6. Alternative provision(s) for avoidance and mitigation to address the impact of visitors at the Ashdown Forest will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that it will be effective and deliverable over the lifetime of the development.

Air Quality

7. Development proposals that may result in increased traffic on roads affecting the Ashdown Forest SAC must demonstrate, through a site-specific Habitats Regulations Assessment, that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Ashdown Forest SAC from air quality impacts.

Implementation and management

8. Where mitigation is required, it must be secured before occupation or use of the development, through planning obligations, conditions or other appropriate mechanisms.

Supporting text

6.84 The 400m exclusion zone applies to new residential development in close proximity to the SPA is likely to bring high risks that cannot be adequately mitigated, including recreational activity, cat predation and wider urbanisation effects, such as fly tipping.

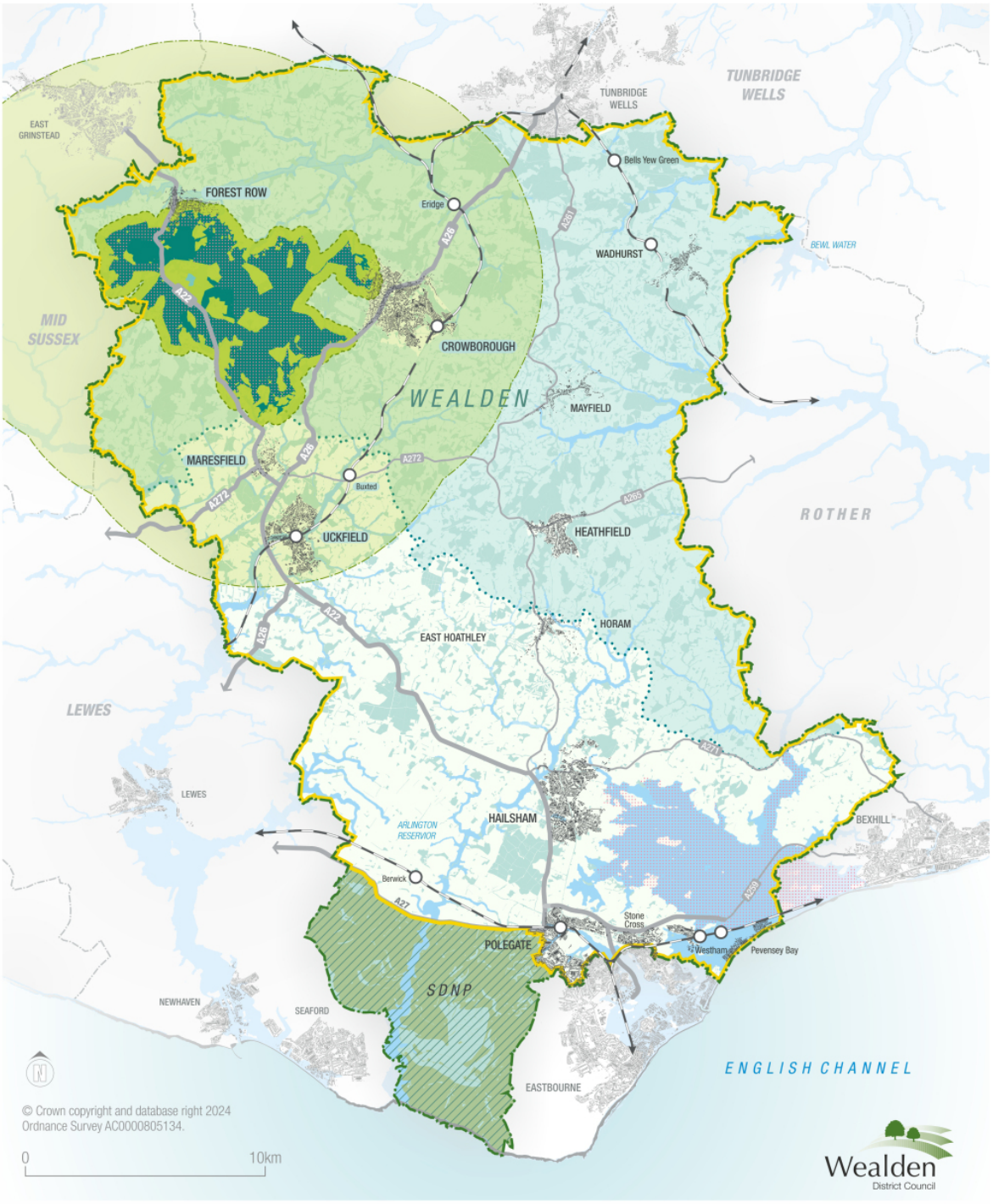
6.85 In relation to the application of the 400m zone, the distance of a site from the SPA should be measured using a straight line from the SPA boundary. The Council provides a 400-metre exclusion zone map, which should be used for guidance only. Where any part of a site's curtilage falls within 400m of the SPA, then the whole site will be treated as falling in the exclusion zone.

6.86 Both the 400m exclusion zone and the 7km zone of influence are shown on the map below and on the Council's online mapping system. Applicants should contact the Council's Development Management team in the first instance should their proposal be within, adjacent or close to either the 400m exclusion zone or the 7km zone of influence. Where this is the case, applicants will be required to submit all relevant information alongside the planning application

to enable the Council to undertake an HRA. Mitigation must be secured through planning obligations, conditions or other appropriate mechanisms before occupation where necessary.

6.87 In relation to the provision of SANGs, the Council currently has two large SANG sites, one in Crowborough and the other in Uckfield, with others proposed through site allocations within this Local Plan and planning permissions granted. Where developers are required to provide a SANG site to mitigate the impact of their development, then the SANG will be required to meet Natural England SANG Guidelines. Overall, the mitigation strategy put forward and the HRA will need to result in no adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA and SAC to meet its conservation objectives.

Figure 18 Wealden District Ashdown Forest Zones



Existing Assets

- Wealden District Boundary
- Local Plan Area
- Major A Roads
- Minor A Roads
- Rail
- Rail Stations
- Settlements
- Woodland
- Water

Designations

- Special Protection Area
- Special Areas of Conservation
- Special Protection Area 400m Buffer Zone
- Special Protection Area 7km Buffer Zone
- High Weald National Landscape
- South Downs National Park (SDNP)

This map is for guidance only and each site will be considered on a case by case basis in relation to its distance from the SPA.

Landscape

6.88 One of Wealden's principal assets is its high-quality landscape, contributing to the district's rural character as well as providing high levels of tranquillity. The quality of the landscape is reflected in nearly two thirds of the district being protected in recognition of its landscape quality. Around 53% of the district lies within the High Weald National Landscape and around 7% lies within the South Downs National Park[117].

6.89 Wealden's landscape character reflects its geology, soils, topography, land cover, hydrology, history culture and climate. These factors create a distinctive rural landscape and settlement pattern that supports the district's rural economy, ecosystem services, recreation and quality of life. The Plan seeks to maintain and enhance its character and avoid cumulative harm from incremental change.

6.90 The landscape and settlements of the district have developed over time, influenced by both our historical and current use of the land with successive cycles of reclamation and abandonment of woodland, pasture and arable land as population and agricultural pressures have changed.

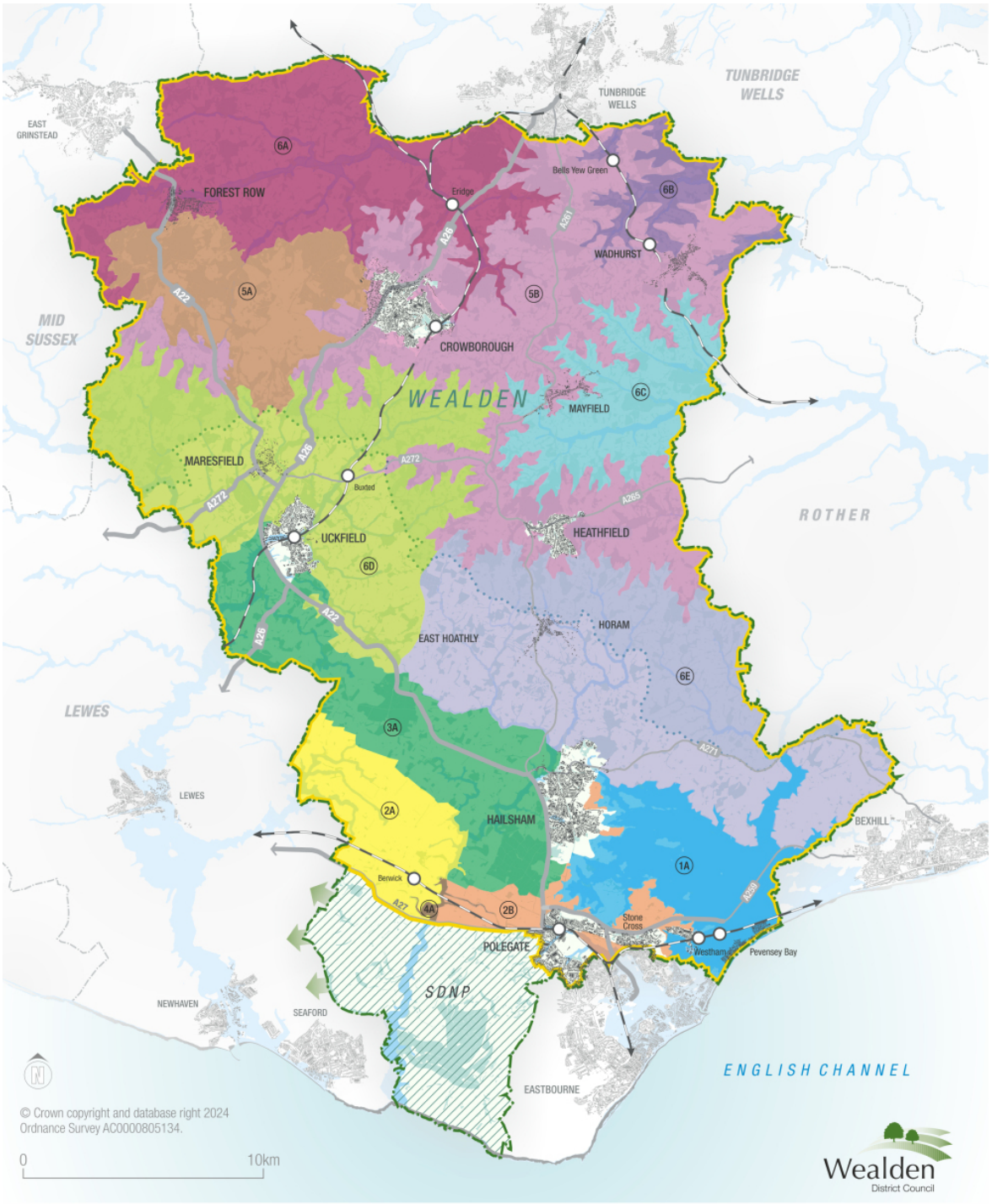
6.91 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) recognises the importance of protection, management and planning of all landscapes. Planning policy guidance also requires planning decisions to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and to protect and enhance valued landscapes.

6.92 The Council's landscape evidence base, including the East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment, Wealden Landscape Evidence Base and Landscape Sensitivity Assessments, identifies the district's landscape character types, landscape character areas, sensitivities, valued features and forces for change. This evidence provides guidance on how development can respond positively to local character[118].

117 The South Downs National Park Authority is the planning authority for the national park

118 See the Council's Landscape Evidence Base

Figure 19 Wealden District Landscape Character Areas



Existing Assets

- Wealden District Boundary
- Local Plan Area
- Major A Roads
- Minor A Roads
- Rail
- Rail Stations
- Settlements
- South Downs National Park (SDNP)

Landscape Character Area

- 1A Pevensey Levels
- 2A Laughton to Arlington Open Clay Vale
- 2B Polegate Open Clay Vale
- 3A Uckfield to Halisham Wooded Clay Vale
- 4A Cuckmere Floodplain
- 5A High Weald: Ashdown Forest
- 5B High Weald: Central
- 6A High Weald: Medway Catchment
- 6B High Weald: Teise Catchment
- 6C High Weald: Rother Catchment
- 6D High Weald: Ouse Catchment
- 6E High Weald: Cuckmere/Pevensey Catchment

Policy NE6 Landscape Character

Policy NE6: Landscape Character

1. All new developments are to adopt a landscape-led approach from the outset, proportionate to scale, nature and location of the proposal. Proposals should avoid adverse effects on the landscape character, visual amenity and local distinctiveness, before consideration is given to any mitigation measures.

2. Development will be supported where it protects, maintains, and, where appropriate, enhances the key characteristics, qualities and sensitivities of landscape character, having regard to the East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment, the Wealden Landscape Evidence Base, Historic Land Classification (HLC) and any other relevant guidance.

3. Development proposals must demonstrate, where relevant, how they have considered and responded, including any cumulative impacts:

a) To geology and soils, topography, hydrology and landform, landcover, biodiversity, ecological character, green and blue infrastructure, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and/or other areas designated for their environmental importance, and ecosystem services[119];

b) To historic character, heritage assets, cultural influences, settlement pattern, settlement setting, local identity and landscape setting;

c) To the degree of openness and sensitivity of the landscape to change, openness, tranquillity, dark night skies, perceptual character and valued views;

d) To special landscape characteristics, including field patterns, woodland, trees, hedgerows, waterbodies and other valued landscape features

e) To the existing pattern and alignment of roads, footways, cycle routes, Public Rights of Way and bridleways; and

f) To climate change mitigation and adaptation.

4. Where mitigation is required, it must be commensurate with the surrounding area and reinforce local distinctiveness and be compatible with site conditions, including historic context and underlying soils. Planting should use native species of local provenance, where appropriate and should seek to enhance the green and blue infrastructure network.

Supporting text

6.93 Development proposals should have regard to the Council's landscape evidence base supporting this Local Plan from the outset. Where proposals are likely to affect landscape character or visual amenity, the Council may require a proportionate landscape assessment. Where likely effects are significant, a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be required.

6.94 Landscape design and mitigation should respond to local character, site conditions and historic context. Planting should be appropriate to the location and function of the site. Native

119 Services provided by the natural environment which benefit people.

planting is desirable in countryside locations and on settlement edges while ornamental or non-native planting may be suitable in urban, suburban, parkland or designed landscape settings where it supports biodiversity, visual amenity and local distinctiveness.

High Weald National Landscape

6.95 The High Weald National Landscape[120] is a nationally designated landscape that is afforded the highest level of landscape protection, where great weight is given to the need to conserve its landscape and scenic beauty. The primary purpose of its designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. A significant part of Wealden lies within the designation, and its character, historic settlement pattern, wooded ridges, routeways, field patterns, ancient woodland, ghylls and tranquillity make an important contribution to the district's identity and quality of life.

6.96 The High Weald AONB Management Plan[121] identifies the distinctive features of the High Weald landscape and sets out the objectives for protecting, conserving and enhancing its locally distinctive features. The Management Plan also considers wider environmental issues, the rural economy and communities. The Management Plan provides an assessment framework which must be undertaken when evaluating the siting, layout and design of development, including materials.

6.97 The setting of the High Weald National Landscape is also an important consideration. For example, development and other activities may have an impact on the economic, social or ecological value of the landscape or its natural processes such as hydrology or pollination, as well as affecting views into and out of the protected landscape.

6.98 Within Wealden, parts of the High Weald National Character Area go beyond the National Landscape boundary. In these locations, the landscape can share similar characteristics and landscape value as the National Landscape, as it transforms into a different character.

Policy NE7 The High Weald National Landscape

Policy NE7: The High Weald National Landscape

1. Development within, or affecting the setting of, the High Weald National Landscape, as defined on the policies map, will only be permitted if it conserves and enhances its landscape and scenic beauty, having regard to the character of the landscape, its special qualities, its character components and functions as set out in the High Weald AONB Management Plan (or any successor document). Development should not detract from the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the High Weald National Landscape, including views into and out of the High Weald National landscape, in relation to its location, siting, scale or design.

2. Development within the High Weald National Landscape should:

   a) Be appropriate in scale, extent, nature and location;

   b) Be consistent with, and where appropriate support delivery of, the High Weald AONB Management Plan;

120 The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is still currently the term used in national planning policy and in legislation.

121 The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029

c) Have regard to the High Weald Housing Design Guide, where relevant;
d) Apply a landscape-led design approach that reflects the High Weald character and local distinctiveness;
e) Respond positively to the historic pattern and character of settlements;
f) Protect tranquillity and dark night skies; and
g) Seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the High Weald National Landscape.

3. In accordance with national policy, major development within the High Weald National Landscape will not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest.

4. Development proposals must submit proportionate information to assess the impact on the High Weald National Landscape, its setting and special qualities. This should take account of the High Weald AONB Management Plan, High Weald Housing Design Guide and other relevant landscape and visual evidence.

Supporting text

6.99 The High Weald AONB Management Plan is a material consideration in planning decisions, and the Council expects developers to have regard to the Management Plan from the outset of a scheme's conception. Development proposals within the National Landscape, or affecting its setting, should be informed by this evidence particularly where proposals influence views into or out of the designation, settlement edges, tranquillity, dark night skies, historic landscape character or the perception of rurality. Applications should demonstrate how the scheme conserves and enhances landscape and scenic beauty. Consideration should also be given to the High Weald Housing Design Guide and High Weald Colour Study[122] that support the Management Plan and applicants are strongly advised to consult these documents at the earliest possible stage of scheme design.

6.100 The Council has also had regard to leading case law relating to development within AONB/National Landscape areas[123]. This Court of Appeal case recognised that the requirement to give "great weight" to conserving and enhancing designated landscapes under what is now paragraph 189 of the NPPF (December 2024), depending on the circumstances of the case, could provide a "clear reason for refusing" planning permission under paragraph 11(d)(i) of the NPPF. The judgment also affirmed the pragmatic approach required with interpretation of planning policy.

6.101 For the purposes of applying national policy, whether a proposal constitutes major development within the High Weald National Landscape will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the nature, scale and setting of the proposal and its potential impact on the designation. However, the Council acknowledges that there may be cases where small scale development is necessary in or adjoining the High Weald National Landscape, for example where it helps to maintain economic or social well-being. In these instances, the Council will

122 High Weald Housing Design Guide and High Weald Colour Study

123 See Monkhill Ltd v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government & Anor (Rev 1) [2021] EWCA Civ 74 (28 January 2021).

work with applicants and the High Weald Unit to ensure appropriate and acceptable development is achieved.

6.102 Applicants should use a landscape-led approach from the earliest stage of site selection, layout and design. Proposals should respond positively to local landscape character, historic settlement form, landform, views, materials, boundary treatments, lighting and opportunities for landscape and biodiversity enhancement.

6.103 Development close to the edge of the High Weald National Landscape has the potential for adverse impacts on the qualities of the landscape, including its setting, and applicants will need to take full consideration of this.

6.104 Applications should be supported by proportionate information to enable the Council to assess effects on the High Weald National Landscape, its setting and special qualities. Where proposals are likely to have significant landscape or visual effects, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or equivalent landscape evidence considering the proposal against all relevant High Weald AONB Management Plan objectives will be required.

South Downs National Park

6.105 The administrative area of Wealden District contains a small part of the South Downs National Park (SDNP). The local planning authority for this area is the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). The development plan for this area is the South Downs Local Plan and any relevant Neighbourhood Development Plans. The SDNP boundary is marked by the A27 and beyond the escarpment of the South Downs the character area forms a gradual transition to the landscape of the Low Weald.

6.106 Standing on top of the Downs, a significant proportion of the Low Weald and Pevensey Levels landscape can be viewed and as a result the setting of the National Park needs to be considered. Conversely, parts of the Low Weald benefit from views of the iconic South Downs and the district's residents are easily able to access this vast accessible green resource.

6.107 The South Downs National Park is a nationally designated landscape of the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Although the National Park lies outside parts of the Local Plan area, development within Wealden can affect its setting, special qualities and the way it is experienced.

6.108 The South Downs National Park Landscape Character Assessment (August 2020)[124] details the landscape character of the National Park, including the formative influences that have shaped the landscape as well as updates to previous classifications. The assessment identifies issues that can impact the different character areas within the National Park as well as broad management objectives and landscape guidelines for each character area.

6.109 Wealden District Council will work in partnership with the SDNPA to conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the SDNP and this policy considers development within the setting of the SDNP.

124 South Downs Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), August 2020

Policy NE8 Setting of the South Downs National Park

Policy NE8: Setting of the South Downs National Park

1. Development affecting the setting of the South Downs National Park will only be permitted where it does not detract from, or cause detriment to, the visual and special qualities (including dark skies), tranquillity and essential characteristics of the National Park.

2. Development should be sensitivity located and designed so that its location, scale, form and design avoid adverse effects and, where effects cannot reasonably be avoided, minimise them on transitional open land, views into, out of and across the National Park, and the relationship between the National Park, adjoining countryside and nearby settlements.

3. Development must consider individual and cumulative effects on the National Park's setting and should have regard to the South Downs National Park Local Plan, the South Downs Partnership Management Plan and other relevant adopted planning documents and strategies, as relevant.

Supporting text

6.110 The statutory purpose for National Parks is set out in the Environment Act 1995. Section 61 provides for the two purposes of National Parks:

i To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area; and

ii To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

6.111 The setting of the SDNP is characterised by its open rural landscapes, panoramic views, undeveloped skylines, dark skies, tranquillity, historic landscape features, ecological networks and the strong visual and functional relationship between surrounding countryside and the National Park. These characteristics contribute to the Park's special qualities and natural beauty and should be conserved and enhanced. The conservation and enhancement of the landscape contributing to the setting of the SDNP will be actively supported, particularly as defined in the South Downs National Park Landscape Character Assessment (August 2020) and South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment, (and any successor documents).

Agricultural Land

6.112 The NPPF expects local planning authorities to take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land, which is land in Grades 1, 2, and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC), Grade 1 being the highest. Agricultural land which falls into these categories is considered to be the most flexible, productive, and efficient in response to inputs. Grades 3b and 4 and 5 are not considered BMV agricultural land. Soils are a finite resource and provide other important 'ecosystem services' including

food production, carbon storage water management, biodiversity, and as a buffer against pollution.

6.113 Site specific surveys on agricultural land within the district carried out since 1988[125] shows the vast majority is classified as Grade 3b or lower. Of the agricultural land within the district that has been subject to detailed site specific survey, over 2,849 hectares of agricultural land within the district is classified as Grade 3b or lower. This equates to around 3.5% of the total area of Wealden. In contrast, just over 940 hectares is classified as Grade 1-3a (the BMV agricultural land), equating to around 1.15% of the district.

6.114 These figures indicate that the majority of the agricultural land surveyed within the district is not considered to be BMV.

6.115 The High Weald AONB Management Plan has identified a number of other issues affecting farming and the use of agricultural land[126].

6.116 Agricultural land quality is not determined by Agricultural Land Classification alone. The 'economic and other benefits' such as infrastructure, fragmentation, and access, as well as the contribution land may make to wider ecosystem services and natural capital are important considerations in relation to the effects of development on agricultural land and the districts landscape character. Policy NE9 (Agricultural Land) seeks to protect the BMV and high-quality agricultural land taking these factors into account, while recognising that development may sometimes be necessary, so therefore seeks to direct development to poorer agricultural land where the development of agricultural land is necessary.

Policy NE9 Agricultural Land

Policy NE9: Agricultural Land

1. Where development of agricultural land is necessary, applicants should use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to those of higher quality, unless this would conflict with other sustainability objectives and policies within the Local Plan.

2. Where site-specific ALC studies are not available and the quality of agriculture land is uncertain, applicants will be required to provide sufficient information to enable the agricultural land classification of a site to be determined.

3. Planning applications that would result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land will need to robustly justify why the loss of the agricultural land is acceptable and also assess the impact of the loss of all agricultural land on the wider farming resource, natural capital, and ecosystem services.

Supporting text

6.117 Where development is proposed on land currently in agricultural use, applicants should make use of the most up-to-date ALC information available. Where land quality is uncertain,

125 Agricultural Land Classification detailed Post 1988 ALC survey 1990. Maps and reports for detailed Post 1988 ALC surveys done in 1990. Available at: www.publications.naturalengland.org.uk/

126 This includes the fragmentation of farm holdings; declining agricultural skills and knowledge; the increasing costs of maintaining grazing infrastructure; the loss of green fields to development and infrastructure, or other land uses such as woodland and the loss of high value grasslands and hedgerows through land use change, or inappropriate management.

or where existing information is insufficient to determine whether the site comprises BMV agricultural land, the Council may require a proportionate site-specific agricultural land quality assessment.

6.118 Where development would result in the loss of BMV land, applicants should justify why the loss is necessary and demonstrate how agricultural land quality has informed site selection, layout and design. This should include whether lower quality land has been considered in preference to higher quality land. Consideration should be given to the direct and indirect effects of development on agricultural holdings, including severance, fragmentation of land ownership or management units, impacts on farm infrastructure and access arrangements, and implications for the long-term viability of farming businesses as well as cumulative impacts of development proposals on agricultural land resources.

6.119 Agricultural land provides a range of benefits beyond food production, including carbon storage, biodiversity, water management, landscape character and cultural value. Development proposals affecting agricultural land should have regard to these wider ecosystem services and natural capital functions and seek to avoid or minimise adverse impacts where possible.

Environmental Protection Policies

6.120 National policy requires planning policies and decisions to prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of air, water, light or noise pollution and that wherever possible development should help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality.

Light pollution and dark skies

6.121 Minimising light pollution is important in protecting and enhancing Wealden's natural environment, health, wellbeing and quality of life. National policy requires that new development is appropriate for its location and to limit the impact of artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes, nature conservation and biodiversity. The PPG states the need for the right light, in the right place, and for it to be used at the right time.

6.122 Wealden is currently the 20th darkest district in England. Whilst levels of darkness differ across the district, areas such as the Pevensey Levels and undeveloped areas within the countryside benefit from high levels of darkness. The SDNP, located to the south of the district, is designated an International Dark Sky Reserve (IDSR).

6.123 Lighting can cause harm where it is excessive, poorly designed and located, badly installed or poorly maintained, particularly near sensitive receptors, such as dark skies, habitats and protected species. New development must avoid harm to dark night skies, sky glow, glare, light spill or biodiversity and local character.

Policy NE10 Light Pollution and Dark Skies

Policy NE10: Light Pollution and Dark Skies

1. Development proposals involving external lighting must avoid unnecessary light pollution and demonstrate that lighting is necessary, appropriate for its intended purpose

and designed to minimise adverse effects on amenity, wildlife, heritage assets, landscape character, dark skies[127], and the natural environment.

2. External lighting must be designed in accordance with relevant best-practice guidance and should minimise light spill, glare, sky glow and ecological impacts through appropriate siting, intensity, light source, colour temperature, height, direction, shielding and controls.

3. Development proposals, regardless of scale and location, should avoid the installation of external lighting where it is not necessary. Where lighting is required, applicants must demonstrate that adverse impacts have been avoided or, where this is not possible, minimised and mitigated.

4. Lighting schemes should incorporate energy-efficient technology and control mechanisms, including dimming, timers, sensors or switch-off arrangements, to ensure lighting is only used when needed.

5. Development that would result in unacceptable light pollution, including harm to dark skies, tranquillity, wildlife, heritage assets, residential amenity or sensitive landscapes, will not be supported unless the harm can be adequately avoided, minimised or mitigated.

Supporting text

6.124 Policy NE10 applies to development involving external lighting, specific lighting schemes requiring planning permission or listed building consent, and proposals where building design may result in significant light spill from internal lighting.

6.125 Artificial lighting can affect residential amenity, wildlife, heritage assets, landscape character, tranquillity and dark night skies. Particular care will be required within or near the High Weald National Landscape, land contributing to the setting of the South Downs National Park and its Dark Sky Reserve, the Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA, Pevensey Levels SAC, and other sensitive rural, ecological or heritage locations.

6.126 Development proposals should have regard to national policy on light pollution and dark skies, as well as recognised best-practice lighting guidance, including relevant guidance from the Institute of Lighting Professionals[128] and guidance on bats and artificial lighting[129].

6.127 To ensure that dark night skies are protected and enhanced, installation of lighting should be avoided and, where lighting is demonstrated to be necessary, the design and installation should be such that adverse impacts are avoided or, if not achievable, mitigated to the greatest possible extent.

6.128 Proposals will need to fully consider the overall visual impact that the lighting will have on the landscape. This may include ground surface reflectivity, the number of lights, the daytime intrusion and the general overall footprint of the lighting. It is also necessary to consider the visibility of the lights from the surrounding landscape.

6.129 Light spill from internal lighting, particularly from large areas of glazing, rooflights and open elevations, can also contribute to light pollution. Building design should therefore reduce

127 High Weald National Landscape – Planning Technical Advice Note: Dark Skies in the High Weald

128 Guidance Note 1 for the reduction of obtrusive light 2021 | Institution of Lighting Professionals (theilp.org.uk)

129 Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting | Institution of Lighting Professionals (theilp.org.uk)

internal light spill through appropriate layout, glazing design, screening, controls or other mitigation measures.

6.130 Habitats, particularly woodlands and hedgerows, should not be treated as a 'natural shield' to lighting, because illumination itself can itself harm habitats and species. Lighting should avoid spill into sensitive habitats, particularly if nocturnal species are present. Direct illumination of bat roosts and key foraging areas and/or commuting routes must be avoided.

6.131 Where outdoor lighting is proposed, a proportionate statement will be required to justify why the lighting is needed and to show that all reasonable measures have been taken to mitigate skyglow and light intrusions.

6.132 The position and orientation of sensitive receptors should be taken into account at the earliest stages of any scheme design and in consideration of the development location. Applicants will be required to provide sufficient information on the likely impacts of any potential light pollution from a development, clearly showing how the development has sought to avoid light pollution as far as possible and how any mitigation measures will be implemented. This information can be included within the Design and Access Statement or as a standalone report.

Noise Pollution

6.133 Wealden is mainly rural with areas of recognised tranquillity and nationally and locally significant landscapes where noise can have a disproportionate impact because ambient noise levels are low. The district also contains urban areas where concentrations of development may affect residential amenity, health, wellbeing and quality of life.

6.134 The planning system has a role in seeking to ensure that new noise-sensitive development, such as housing and schools, is not located close to existing sources of noise and vibration, including industrial uses and noise generated by transport. It should also ensure that potentially noise-creating uses, such as some industrial processes or some recreational activities, are not located where they would likely cause a nuisance.

6.135 Policy NE11 (Noise Pollution) ensures that noise issues, mitigation and acoustic measures are considered early and incorporated into the development design at an early stage, so that proposals do not harm the natural environment or residential amenity.

Policy NE11 Noise Pollution

Policy NE11: Noise Pollution

1. Development proposals must protect amenity, health, tranquillity and the natural environment from unacceptable noise impacts. Particular regard will be given to residential occupiers, noise-sensitive uses, areas of tranquillity, nationally designated landscapes, designated nature conservation sites and other sensitive receptors.

2. Proposals for noise sensitive development[130] must clearly identify and assess adverse effects from existing or permitted sensitive receptors. Proposals for noise generating development[131] must assess adverse effects on existing or permitted noise sensitive receptors, including the natural environment.

3. Where evidence of an Observed Adverse Effect Level noise impact are identified, development must be located, designed and operated to:

a) prevent any present and very disruptive Significant Observed Adverse Effect Levels[132];

b) avoid any present and disruptive Observed Adverse Effect Levels; and

c) mitigate and reduce any present and intrusive Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Levels[133]; and

d) secure acceptable internal and external acoustic environments.

4. Noise impacts should be addressed through good design, layout, separation distances, building orientation, landscaping, acoustic attenuation and operational controls. Noise barriers should be sensitively designed and integrated into the landscape. Mitigation should not rely on closed windows to achieve this.

5. Development that would result in unacceptable noise impacts on amenity, health, tranquillity, designated landscapes, designated nature conservation sites or other sensitive receptors will not be supported unless the impacts can be appropriately avoided, minimised and mitigated.

6. Where relevant, planning conditions will be used to ensure that mitigation measures are satisfactorily implemented.

Supporting text

6.136 The NPPF requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that new development is appropriate for its location, taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions, and the natural environment. This should be achieved by mitigating, and reducing to a minimum potential, adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development.

6.137 Development proposals that are likely to generate noise, or be affected by existing noise sources, must be supported by a Noise Impact Assessment prepared by a suitably qualified and competent person, as defined by the NPPF.

6.138 Information is available in Defra's latest Explanatory Note to the Noise Policy Statement for England[134]. Reference should be made to this guidance (or any subsequent guidance) prior

130 Land uses where sensitive receptors are concentrated, including residential, schools and nurseries, hospitals, care facilities, and certain public amenities.

131 Land uses that have the potential to generate levels of noise capable of resulting in adverse effects on the health and quality of life of sensitive receptors, including commercial and industrial land uses, sports and leisure facilities, and places of entertainment (bars, pubs, clubs, music venues, etc.).

132 This is the level of noise exposure above which significant adverse effects on health and quality of life occur.

133 This is the level of noise exposure above which adverse effects on health and quality of life can be detected.

134 Noise Policy Statement for England.

to, and, where appropriate, in the submission of a planning application and development proposals should seek to achieve the aims set out in the Statement.

6.139 There is also further information and guidance contained in the PPG. This guidance provides noise and vibration criteria for developers where new proposals are being made that will generate noise or vibration, are in a noisy location, or are in a noise-sensitive area, to ensure that the potential or existing noise/vibration levels in the area are acceptable. As a starting point, development should seek to avoid increasing background noise levels and should ensure that any increase would not result in unacceptable adverse effects on health, amenity or the natural environment.

6.140 There are other statutory provisions for noise beyond planning legislation, including the Control of Pollution Act 1974, which deals with site construction noise, and legislation such as the Environmental Protection Act 1990, which deals with statutory nuisance. Any matters in respect of noise generated by minerals and waste related activity should be referred to East Sussex County Council. Where appropriate, construction activities should also be managed to minimise temporary noise impacts on nearby occupiers and sensitive receptors. The Council may secure mitigation measures through planning conditions or a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

6.141 If the proposed development cannot be made acceptable from a noise perspective, the applicant should consider whether the existing noise-generating or noise-sensitive use that would be affected by the new development could be adapted (i.e. soundproofed). Where this includes the use of off-site measures, the applicant is responsible for ensuring that the measures are implemented and must provide agreement from the owners of the off-site property.

Air Quality

6.142 Poor air quality can harm human health and biodiversity. Air quality in Wealden is generally good, with no Air Quality Management Areas and areas where pollutants levels exceed the UK Air Quality Objectives. However, air quality issues may arise from development that generates significant traffic, introduces sources of pollution or exposes people to existing pollution.

6.143 The planning system can improve air quality by directing development to sustainable locations, reducing the need to travel and supporting walking, cycling and public transport. It also helps prevent development from contributing to or being affected by, unacceptable levels of air pollution. This is a particular issue for Ashdown Forest's lowland heathland habitat which gives the area its SAC status, and its sensitivity to nitrogen deposition from vehicles. Guidance on the assessment of air quality impacts on sensitive habitats and sites designated for their nature conservation value has also been published by the Institute of Air Quality Management (2020)[135].

135 Available at: air-quality-impacts-on-nature-sites-2020.pdf (iaqm.co.uk)

Policy NE12 Air Quality

Policy NE12: Air Quality

1. Development proposals should protect and, where possible, improve air quality having regard to national air quality objectives, the latest Air Quality Strategy for England, the Air Quality and Emissions Mitigation Guidance for Sussex, and any relevant local air quality objectives or successor guidance. Development proposals will only be supported where:

   a) It would not result in adverse impacts on sensitive receptors, including human health, residential amenity, sensitive habitats and species or any sites designated for nature conservation from any sources of emissions to air, either alone or cumulatively;

   b) They are not located where they would be at unacceptable risk from, or be adversely affected by existing sources of odour, dust and/or other forms of air pollution.

2. Air quality impacts on sensitive receptors must be avoided and otherwise minimised and mitigated through the location, layout, design, construction and operation of development. This includes impacts arising during construction and over the lifetime of the development.

3. Where mitigation is required, it will be secured through planning conditions, planning obligations or other appropriate mechanisms, having regard to the scale, nature and likely effects of the development.

Supporting text

6.144 The Council recognises the potential impact of poor air quality on human health, biodiversity, designated habitats and local amenity. Development proposals should therefore avoid unacceptable air quality and odour impacts and, where possible, contribute to improving air quality through their location, design, construction and operation.

6.145 Applicants should refer to the PPG[136] and recognised best-practice guidance, including guidance published by Environmental Protection UK, the Institute of Air Quality Management[137] and the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, where relevant. For consistency, where an Air Quality Assessment is required, applicants are encouraged to agree the scope and methodology with the Council's Environmental Health service at an early stage. Assessments should be prepared using the above guidance and be proportionate to the scale, nature and likely effects of the proposal.

6.146 Development proposals are required to include a detailed Air Quality Assessment, where:

1. Major development is proposed and has the potential, including when combined with the cumulative effect of other approved developments and site allocations, to have significant adverse impacts on air quality; or

136 Air quality - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

137 Available at: Guidance – IAQM

2. The development could result in significant adverse impacts and is within, and in close proximity to a sensitive habitat and/or species, including any site designated for its nature conservation value; or
3. The development would introduce or intensify sensitive uses within an area that is known to experience existing poor air quality conditions.

6.147 Applicants are also advised to refer to the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) 'Advisory Note: Ecological Assessment of Air Quality Impacts' (2021)[138], which sets out:

- the serious adverse biochemical impacts that various air pollutants may have on sensitive habitats; and
- the serious impacts of excessive nitrogen deposition on sensitive habitats, such as ancient woodland.

6.148 Where an Air Quality Assessment identifies potential significant adverse impacts on sensitive receptors, an Emissions Mitigation Assessment should form part of the overall assessment and set out the measures needed to prevent or reduce unacceptable impacts, including impacts on future occupiers or users of the site.

6.149 Where an Air Quality Assessment identifies potential significant adverse impacts on internationally or European designated nature conservation sites, an HRA will be required to demonstrate that the proposal would not adversely affect site integrity, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

6.150 Development proposals should also promote opportunities for walking, cycling, public transport and congestion management measures such as travel plans (and initiatives) to reduce traffic levels and improve air quality and demonstrate a shift towards the use of sustainable and low emission modes of transport (including EV).

Water Environment and Water Infrastructure

6.151 Wealden District is located in an area of serious water stress and therefore development must be planned to minimise its impact on water resources and water quality and to provide resilience against the impacts of climate change including security of water supply. Maintaining and enhancing the water quality of above and below groundwater bodies is not only important for water supply but can also provide valuable habitats for species and a desirable amenity and recreational resource.

6.152 A growing population and an increase in development will add additional pressure for the existing sewerage and wastewater systems, which ultimately discharges into rivers and other waterbodies. Additional flows can be mitigated to some degree by water efficiency measures within a development. However, the biological load transferred to water treatment works will likely increase with a population increase. This will need to be addressed through technological improvements at wastewater treatment works, as well as the potential expansion of existing treatment works or development of new treatment works.

6.153 New development can also impact on water quality through the creation of diffuse pollution from surface water runoff, which is a significant factor in compromising the water quality standards that are required under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive)

138 Available at: Air-Quality-advice-note.pdf (cieem.net)

(England and Wales) Regulations 2017[139]. The Regulations establish a statutory framework for the protection of ground water and inland surface water, estuaries, and coastal waters. Development could also create the loss of floodplain and impact Source Protection Zones. Development within these areas can reduce the quantity and quality of water available for water abstraction.

6.154 Wealden District is covered by the South East River Basin District and the South East River Basin Management Plan (RBMP), prepared by the EA and published in 2022[140]. The RBMP provides a framework for protecting and enhancing the benefits provided by the water environment and highlights the areas of land and bodies of water that have specific uses that need special protection. These include waters used for drinking water, bathing, commercial shellfish harvesting, and those that sustain wildlife species and habitats. The plan ensures that these areas have legally binding objectives in place to enhance water quality and prevent deterioration of water bodies.

6.155 South East Water supplies water across the whole district and developers should review the company's Water Resources Management Plan (2020-2080) for an overview of how water will be managed in the region into the future. Southern Water supplies wastewater services across the district and its Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan(s) provides a framework for how the company's plans and investment will be integrated alongside those of organisations that have responsibilities relating to drainage, flooding, land management, land use planning and protection of the environment, including the Council.

6.156 The Environment Act also sets out measures to secure long-term, resilient water and wastewater services as well as reforming elements of abstraction licensing to link more tightly to the 25 Year Environment Plan goal of restoring water bodies to as close to their natural state as possible.

6.157 The planning system has a role in seeking to ensure that water resources are managed in a sustainable way, including taking account of the impacts of climate change, as well as in protecting the quality of the water environment. National planning policy seeks to ensure that local plans make sufficient provision for water supply and wastewater infrastructure as well as taking account of the long-term implications for water supply from climate change alongside preventing new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution and that wherever possible development should help to improve water quality.

6.158 Policy NE13 (Water Environment and Water Infrastructure) sets out our policy approach to protecting and sustainably managing the water environment in Wealden to ensure benefits for both nature and our residents.

Policy NE13 Water Environment and Water Infrastructure

Policy NE13: Water Environment and Water Infrastructure

Water environment

139 The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017.

140 South East river basin district river basin management plan: updated 2022

1. Development will only be permitted where it would not result in an unacceptable risk to, or adversely affect, the quality, quantity, levels and ecology of surface water and groundwater, watercourse, aquifers, and reservoirs.

2. For proposals affecting groundwater, Source Protection Zones (SPZs), aquifers or private water supplies, it must be supported by proportionate evidence demonstrating how contamination risks and other impacts on water resources have been avoided or, where necessary, fully mitigated. Applicants must have regard to the Environment Agency's Groundwater Protection guides and any relevant successor guidance.

3. Proposals will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that impacts will be avoided or fully mitigated and that all mitigation for potential contamination of groundwater supplies or aquifers can be agreed, implemented and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

4. Development adjacent to, over or in a watercourse needs to take into account the objectives and measures outlined in the South East River Basin Management Plan, or any successor document.

5. Development affecting the water environment will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that any risks to groundwater, surface water bodies, wetlands, designated sites and other sensitive aquatic environments have been avoided or appropriately mitigated.

6. Work beneath the water table will not be permitted unless there is a comprehensive ground water management scheme agreed for the construction, operation, restoration, and ongoing management of the development.

Water Infrastructure

7. Development proposals must demonstrate that there is adequate existing water infrastructure, including foul and surface drainage and drinking water provision or that necessary infrastructure enhancements can be delivered to serve the development over its lifetime.

8. Development should connect to a public sewage treatment works, wherever feasible. Where it is not feasible, proposals must be supported by sufficient information to assess any potential implications for the water environment.

9. Proposals for new, or the expansion of existing or expended water supply, wastewater treatment facilities or associated networks will be supported where there is a demonstrated need and any adverse land use, environmental or amenity impacts are minimised or appropriately mitigated.

10. Necessary infrastructure provision will be secured through planning conditions and/or planning obligations.

Supporting text

6.159 The Council will support development proposals where the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater resources are protected from pollution and, where possible, enhanced.

6.160 Development proposals must demonstrate that there is adequate water infrastructure capacity, or that additional infrastructure can be provided in time to serve the development, without leading to problems for existing users or the water environment. Applicants should engage with the relevant statutory undertaker at the earliest opportunity to establish the proposed development's demand for water supply and wastewater infrastructure and how this can be met. This may result in the need for developers to undertake appropriate studies to ascertain whether the proposed development will lead to overloading of existing water and wastewater infrastructure.

6.161 Applicants should have regard to South East Water's Water Resources Management Plan and Southern Water's Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan in the design and construction of a development and the Council will encourage and support developments which seek to achieve relevant and appropriate requirements of these Plans. Where there is a capacity constraint and improvements are not already programmed by the statutory undertaker, applicants will need to work with the statutory undertaker/s to agree the improvements required and their delivery mechanism.

6.162 Where development is proposed within a groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ), near a private water supply, or where aquifers may be affected, applicants should provide proportionate information to demonstrate how risks to groundwater will be avoided or mitigated. This may include details of construction techniques including foundation design, drainage design, pollution prevention measures and long-term management arrangements.

6.163 Applicants proposing development proposals within a SPZ or could potentially affect groundwater should hold early discussions with the Council and the Environment Agency. Applicants should refer to the Environment Agency's Groundwater Protection guides[141] in relation to potentially hazardous development proposed within a SPZ or within 50m of a private potable groundwater source.

Contaminated Land and Land Stability

6.164 Failing to deal adequately with contaminated and / or unstable land could cause harm to people's health, controlled waters, property and the wider environment. It could also limit the safe and effective use of land for development and undermine compliance with the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017[142].

6.165 The planning system has an important role ensuring land / sites are suitable for a proposed use, taking account of ground conditions, land instability and contamination. This includes risks arising from natural hazards, former land uses, mining or other activities, and the potential environmental impacts of any remediation works.

6.166 The planning system works alongside a number of other regimes including Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Building Regulations and Environmental Permitting Regulations. Applicants may therefore need to obtain separate consents or permits in addition to planning permission.

6.167 Contamination can arise from a wide variety of activities and sources, both from human activity and natural processes / phenomenon. Contamination by previous land uses on or

141 Environment Agency and Defra. Groundwater protection Guidance (2026)

142 The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017

adjacent to the land, as well as invasive/harmful plants, may have affected soil, groundwater or surface water. National planning policy is clear that the responsibility rests with the developer and / or landowner to ensure that land is safe and suitable for its proposed use.

Policy NE14 Contaminated Land and Land Stability

Policy NE14: Contaminated Land and Land Stability

1. Development proposals on land where contamination or instability is known or suspected must demonstrate, through proportionate site investigation and risk assessment, that the land is suitable for its proposed use and that risks to human health, controlled waters, ecological receptors, and property have been identified and adequately addressed.

2. Where evidence of contamination or instability is identified, proposals must be supported by appropriate remediation, mitigation and/or stabilisation measures, agreed with the Council, to ensure that:

   a) the site is made safe and suitable for its intended use, including for future users;
   b) unacceptable risks to human health, controlled waters, ecological receptors, property and adjoining land are avoided or adequately mitigated;
   c) risks to groundwater, aquifers and other waterbodies are avoided; and
   d) remediation works themselves would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on human health, ecological receptors or the wider environment.

3. Development will not be permitted where adequate investigation has not been undertaken, where suitable remediation or stabilisation cannot be secured, or where unacceptable risks would remain after mitigation.

4. Development proposals must also ensure that land stability issues do not compromise the structural integrity of buildings or structures or adjoining the site.

Supporting text

6.168 It is important to consider ground conditions and any risks from land instability or contamination at the earliest stage of site selection, design and preparation of development proposals.

6.169 Pre-application discussions with the Council, the relevant pollution control authority and stakeholders with a legitimate interest (such as East Sussex County Council in relation to drainage and SuDS approval) are encouraged where contamination or instability is an issue.

6.170 Where land is known or suspected to be affected by contamination or instability, the application should be supported by a proportionate Site Risk Assessment. These should be prepared by a competent person and be appropriate to the scale and likely risk of the proposal. Assessment and subsequent remediation should follow the Environment Agency's Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM) Guidance[143], or equivalent/successor guidance,

143 Available at: Land contamination risk management (LCRM) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

together with relevant British Standards[144] and planning practice guidance on contaminated land[145],[146].

6.171 Site Risk Assessments should identify the nature and extent of contamination or instability, the likely risks to sensitive receptors[147], and whether further investigation, remediation or stabilisation is required. Sensitive receptors may include current and future site users, neighbouring land, controlled waters, ecological receptors, property, buildings and infrastructure.

6.172 Where contamination or instability is identified, applicants will be required to submit an Options Appraisal and Remediation Strategy in accordance with the Environment Agency's LCRM guidance (Stages 2 and 3 respectively). These should demonstrate how the site will be made safe and suitable for its intended use, how risks will be avoided or mitigated, and how remediation will be implemented, verified and maintained where necessary. Where adequate remediation or stabilisation cannot be demonstrated, or insufficient information is provided, planning permission will be refused.

6.173 Development must not cause pollution of controlled waters, including groundwater, aquifers and surface water bodies. Groundwater is an important resource, including for drinking water supply and river flows. Applicants proposing development within a Source Protection Zone, or where groundwater could be affected, should engage with the Environment Agency at an early stage and have regard to relevant groundwater protection guidance[148]. The Environment Agency has identified SPZs and maintains maps showing the three main zones: inner (zone 1), outer (zone 2) and total/source catchment (zone 3) in addition to a range of sub-zones. The main areas of SPZs in the district are located in the south around Willingdon (at the foot of the chalk South Downs) and in the north around Eridge, Groombridge, Mayfield and Forest Row.

6.174 Planning permission will only be granted when it can be clearly demonstrated that the development can proceed without unacceptable risks to human health, controlled waters, biodiversity, property, buildings, infrastructure or the wider environment from contamination or land instability.

6.175 Where necessary, planning conditions or planning obligations will be used to secure further investigations, remediation, verification, monitoring, pollution prevention, mitigation and land stability measures.

6.176 Land stability issues may arise from natural geological conditions, made ground, former extractive activities, subsidence, slope instability or high groundwater levels. Development proposals should demonstrate that land can be safely developed and occupied without causing unacceptable risks to people, property, infrastructure, adjoining land or the wider environment.

144 BS 10175: Investigation of potentially contaminated sites - code of practice; and BS 5930: Code of practice for ground investigations.

145 Available at: Contaminated land: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

146 Available at: Land contamination: technical guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

147 Sensitive Receptors - Features that are prone to damage from pollution, such as living organisms (including humans),ecological systems, land use, controlled waters, groundwater and the natural environment.

148 Environment Agency and Defra. (2023). Groundwater Protection Guidance.

Wealden
District Council

07
Historic Environment



Wealden
Local Plan

Introduction

7.1 Wealden's historic environment[149] is one of its greatest assets. It includes historic landscapes, settlements, historic buildings and features across urban and rural areas, many of which have shaped the district for centuries. The district spans three National Character Areas outside the SDNP including the High Weald, the Low Weald and the Pevensey Levels. These landscapes and their geology have influenced settlement patterns, traditional building materials and the districts historic character.

7.2 The geography and geology of the district have also influenced historic economic and agricultural uses such as the iron and hop industries. These industries have had a particular impact on the historic environment. Evidence of the iron industry here, which started in Roman times, can be found in the large iron-master houses, charcoal hearths, pits and hammer ponds of the High Weald[150]. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the hop industry was significant, resulting in the scattered distinctive oast buildings within the High and Low Weald areas, which are a particular historic feature of the district. The High Weald is an example of one of the best-preserved medieval landscapes in north-west Europe, which is reflected in the settlement patterns, farmsteads, fields and woodland.

7.3 A heritage asset is defined in the NPPF at Annex 2: Glossary (December 2024) as an asset identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest[151]. Heritage assets in Wealden vary widely in age, type and scale, from Stately Homes, country villas and workers' cottages to Anglo-Saxon castles, medieval moated sites, Second World War pillboxes, Roman roads, medieval routeways, ecclesiastical palaces and historic farmsteads.

7.4 Within Wealden there are many designated heritage assets. Designated heritage assets are those assets which are designated under the relevant legislation. They include Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens and Conservation Areas[152].

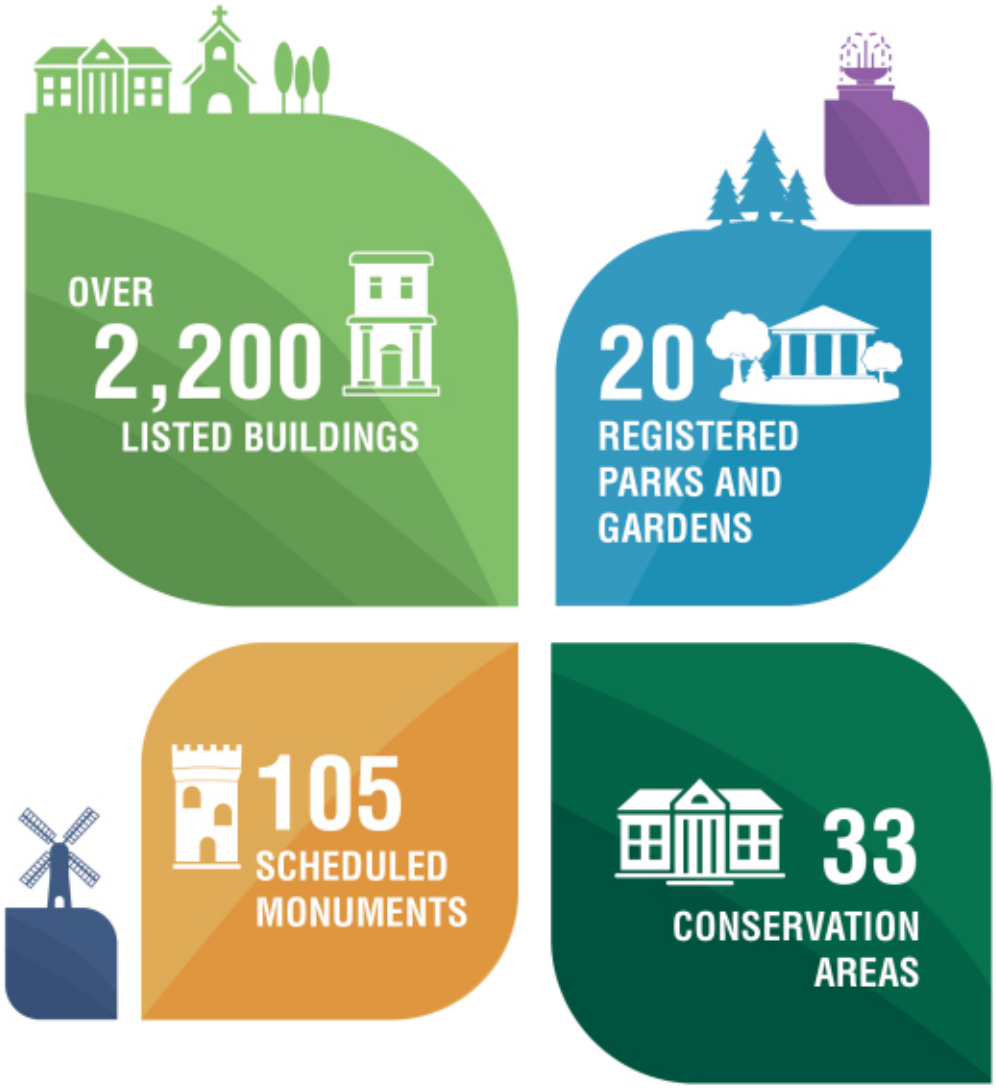
149 The definition of the historic environment in the NPPF (December 2024) is 'all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora'.

150 Natural England (2013) The National Character Area profile 122: High Weald.

151 NPPF (December 2024) Annexe 2: Glossary.

152 The figures for Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens and Scheduled Monuments include the area of Wealden that is within the SDNP, as the Register does not differentiate. However, the figure of 33 Conservation Areas relates to the part of Wealden that falls outside of the National Park only.

Figure 20 Wealden's Designated Heritage Assets



7.5 Non-designated heritage assets can also be found within Wealden, which the PPG identifies as 'buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets'[153]. These non-designated heritage assets include buildings and designed landscapes, often identified through the planning process, and also includes a

153 See the PPG at Paragraph 039 Reference ID: 18a-039-20190723

large number of sites of archaeological interest[154]. Recent development-led archaeological work in the district has revealed new and important evidence for settlement development during the prehistoric, Romano-British, and subsequent periods.

7.6 The historic environment in Wealden is facing challenges to its future, including the impacts of climate change, the potential for negative impacts from an increase in housing and employment development, and smaller scale development changes. A Heritage Strategy[155] has been prepared for the district that identifies a series of heritage themes encapsulating the significance of heritage and defining the district's local distinctiveness and character. Building on this, the heritage vision, strategic objectives and a series of recommendations have been identified for Wealden District Council to potentially take forward with key local partners to deliver in parallel with the Council's other statutory duties and objectives. Where the Heritage Strategy has recommended that there are ways in which policy and guidance can be enhanced, this has been incorporated into the policies presented below.

7.7 This chapter sets out our policies to protect and enhance Wealden's historic environment, which is central to local identity and distinctiveness. It includes an overarching strategic heritage policy and further policies addressing specific heritage assets and issues.

The Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

7.8 The district's historic environment reflects thousands of years of human activity and is irreplaceable. Its uniqueness provides a backdrop to sustainable tourism, the local economy and inward investment. It connects people to places providing identity and a sense of place and belonging. It also unlocks our history to help explain why we are the way we are, why places are the way they are, and illustrating differences in cultural and historical diversity.

7.9 The NPPF recognises that heritage assets are 'an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations[156]'. It explains that heritage assets vary in their significance, from buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance. Significance is defined in the PPG as 'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest'. In the planning context, heritage interest can be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic[157].

7.10 The setting of a heritage asset is the area in which it is experienced and understood. Its extent is not fixed and may change over time. Setting contributes to the significance of the heritage asset and to how that asset's significance is understood and appreciated.

7.11 The NPPF looks to local plans to set out a positive strategy for the conservation[158] and enjoyment of the historic environment that includes recognising the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, considering the wider social, cultural,

154 The NPPF (December 2024) identifies two categories of non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest: (1) Those that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments and are therefore considered subject to the same policies as those for designated heritage assets (2) Other non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest.

155 Wealden District Council Heritage Strategy (September 2026)

156 NPPF (December 2024) Paragraph 202.

157 PPG Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 18a-006-20190723.

158 See the PPG at Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 18a-002-20190723.

economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can provide, as well as the positive contribution to local character, distinctiveness and character of place that the historic environment can bring and that new development should make[159]. Plan-making bodies are also encouraged to identify specific opportunities for the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets, including their setting[160].

7.12 The Council will proactively conserve, protect and enhance the significance, diversity, local character and distinctiveness of its historic environment, including heritage assets and their settings and landscapes, through the positive management of development and through the management of change, for its future conservation and enjoyment. This includes not only designated heritage assets, but also locally important buildings, structures and places[161] that contribute to the area's history, character, cultural identity or landscape, including those with significance if identified through the planning process.

7.13 Non-designated heritage assets are defined in the PPG as 'buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions due to their local heritage value but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets[162]'. They include unlisted buildings, structures or parks and gardens identified as having heritage interest locally. This would also include historic public realm features, which can form an important part of the historic environment, particularly within the High Weald National Landscape[163]. The Council intends to prepare and maintain a local list of non-designated heritage assets supported by published selection criteria in due course.

7.14 The biggest challenge with non-designated heritage assets is ensuring they are recognised as such. The Council's Heritage Strategy notes that 'the majority of heritage assets within Wealden are not designated and are, therefore, non-designated heritage assets'[164]. The PPG encourages local planning authorities to keep a local list but also recognises that there are other ways of identifying non-designated heritage assets. For instance, they may be identified in Conservation Area Character Appraisals, Neighbourhood Plans, or through the development of a Local Plan. Non-designated heritage assets can also be identified through decision-making on planning applications, whether there is a local list in place or not. Both the PPG and Historic England's Advice Note 7 (HEAN7) on 'Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage', whilst advocating for the preparation of local lists, acknowledges this more informal mechanism of identifying non-designated heritage assets.

7.15 Our strategy for the historic environment seeks to ensure that development in the district is positively managed to continue to ensure the multiple benefits that derive from our historic environment for existing residents and visitors, whilst protecting and conserving the historic environment for future generations to enjoy. Policy HE1 sets out the criteria when proposing

159 NPPF (December 2024) Paragraph 203.

160 PPG Paragraph:003 Reference ID: 18a-003-20190723.

161 In Neighbourhood Plans, through the planning process or in a future Local List.

162 See the PPG at Paragraph: 039 Reference ID: 18a-039-20190723.

163 The historic public realm across the High Weald is identified in the AONB Management Plan as playing an important role in defining the rural landscape character of the HW National Landscape. See objective S3 and Planning Principle 6 of the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029.

164 See 3.2.5 (paragraph 128) of the Council's Heritage Strategy.

development that could affect the historic environment. Critically, development must demonstrate that it has addressed the criteria, to satisfy that the significance of Wealden's historic environment, including heritage assets and their settings and landscapes are protected and not diminished for future generations. This will ensure that development ultimately contributes to sustainable development by sustaining and enhancing the local distinctiveness of the historic environment in the district, and through good design and positive place-making.

Policy HE1 The Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Policy HE1: The Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

1. Development proposals affecting a heritage asset (both designated and non-designated) and/or its setting must:

a) demonstrate that appropriate work has been undertaken at an early stage to understand the significance of an affected asset and its setting, showing how this informs and justifies the design process and the design and form of the proposed development taking into account place making and local distinctiveness. This may include archaeological investigation (including above-ground archaeology, such as buildings and structures), structural survey, and/or condition schedules as appropriate to the proposals.

b) preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets and their setting, having regard to historical context, landscape and settlement character, and views within, into and out of settlements and across the wider landscape;

c) positively address the cumulative impacts of incremental change on the significance of heritage assets and their settings;

d) preserve the legibility, hierarchy and significance of locally distinctive vernacular building forms, groups of traditional vernacular buildings, historic farmstead complexes and their associated settings, features, fabric and materials;

e) demonstrate how development responds positively to local character and distinctiveness, including urban grain and layout, plot sizes, public realm, boundary treatments, building lines, roofscapes, trees, hedgerows, green spaces and the mix of building types and uses;

f) identify and fully incorporate opportunities to better reveal and enhance the significance of the historic environment;

g) ensure that the impacts of traffic, parking, lighting, noise and other environmental factors are considered at an early stage to avoid or minimise harm to the historic environment; and

h) use materials, finishes and architectural detailing that are compatible with the significance of the heritage assets and support their long-term conservation, including windows and shop fronts.

2. Development proposals affecting a non-designated heritage asset will be supported where it retains the asset and its architectural and design features and demonstrate how its significance has been conserved.

3. Particular regard should be had to the conservation of historic public realm features and other non-designated heritage assets, which individually or cumulatively contribute to local character and landscape distinctiveness, particularly within the High Weald National Landscape.

Supporting Text

7.16 This strategic policy aims to ensure that heritage is firmly at the heart of place-making and that it is considered early in the design process, and not as an afterthought[165]. Potential impacts on the historic environment need to be identified and considered early in the design of development, so that harm can be minimised or avoided. The applicant should undertake proportionate work to understand significance, including archaeological research, above-ground archaeology[166], and where relevant structural and condition surveys[167]. This evidence should inform the design and help assess cumulative impacts from incremental change[168].

7.17 Development affecting a heritage asset or its setting must be informed by a comprehensive understanding of significance. Where relevant, applicants should submit a proportionate heritage statement[169] explaining the asset's significance[170], the contribution to its setting, the proposals likely impact and how that understanding has informed the proposals design.

7.18 In order to assess significance, it is necessary to develop an understanding of the heritage asset in terms of its development, use and context[171]. In most cases, a level of research and/or analysis will be required and will often also include an understanding of their fabric and construction, or the importance of the setting to that heritage asset. The East Sussex Historic Environment Record (ESHER) is a key source of information that can inform the understanding of significance and is the minimum that should be consulted when preparing a heritage statement[172]. Conservation Area Character Appraisals[173] are also part of the evidence base and will assist, along with the Council's Heritage Strategy, in informing an understanding of significance, local distinctiveness and specific issues.

7.19 The NPPF is clear that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application (i.e. it is a material planning consideration). The weighting that can be given to the conservation of the heritage

165 See paragraph 282 of the Heritage Strategy.

166 The Rape of Hastings Architecture Survey covers our area and analyses some of our pre 1750 buildings. Also, the Wealden Buildings Study Group and their database.

167 See the Council's validation criteria.

168 Historic England (2015) Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2.

169 See Historic England (2019) Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets. Historic England Advice Note 12 at paragraphs 29-31.

170 See NPPF (December 2024) at Paragraph 207.

171 Further advice can be found in Historic England (2019) Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets. Historic England Advice Note 12.

172 East Sussex County Council Historic Environment Record

173 Wealden District Council Conservation Area Character Appraisals.

asset, within the assessment of the development proposals, will depend on the balance between the scale of harm or loss that will result from the development, and the significance of the asset. It will therefore be important to understand the significance of the asset early on and for this to inform the development of proposals for change to it. The setting of non-designated heritage assets is also a material consideration in planning decisions.

7.20 In exceptional circumstances a departure from the policy requirements in the design of new development may be justified; for example, due to flood risk mitigation requirements or solar shading and cooling requirements. Historic England Advice[174] is clear that measures to protect a building or make it more resilient to climate change should not be refused on the basis of its listing. An understanding of the significance of the heritage asset will still be required to evidence the consideration of different options to introduce climate change resilience measures.

7.21 Paragraph 218 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.

Conservation Areas

7.22 Conservation Areas are designated for their special architectural or historic interest and their character or appearance which should be preserved and/or enhanced. They often contain listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets and contribute strongly to local identity, settlement character and the wider historic environment.

7.23 Within the plan area, there are currently 33 Conservation Areas. Conservation Area Character Appraisals which accompany each designation are detailed assessments that explain the special architectural or historic interest of each Conservation Area and its significance. The Council is currently drafting Character Appraisals for each Conservation Area in the district to be followed by an associated management plan[175].

7.24 Once an area is designated as a Conservation Area, additional controls are introduced to preserve and enhance the identified special historic character and interest (i.e. control over works to trees, removal of some permitted development rights, and control over demolition of unlisted buildings). One of the biggest threats to Conservation Areas is the gradual erosion of their special architectural or historic character through inappropriate development. Where erosion of character is found to be continuing despite designation, the Council can impose Article 4 Directions, further restricting permitted development rights. Currently there is one Article 4 Direction relating to a Conservation Area in place in Wealden, in Rotherfield.

7.25 The NPPF treats Conservation Areas as designated heritage assets and directly addresses them in paragraphs 219 and 220 of the NPPF (December 2024). Given the number of Conservation Areas in Wealden District and their importance in defining local identity and distinctiveness, it is considered that a specific local policy is needed.

174 Historic England (2026) Historic England Advice Note 18 (HEAN 18) Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency and Historic England (2025) Property Flood Resilience Code of Practice.

175 Wealden Conservation Area Character Appraisals

Policy HE2 Conservation Areas

Policy HE2: Conservation Areas

1. Proposals for development within or adjoining a Conservation Area will be supported where they:

a) demonstrate that appropriate work has been undertaken at an early stage to understand the significance, character, appearance and setting of the Conservation Area, and show how this understanding has informed and justified the design process and the design of the proposed development;

b) preserve or enhance the existing special architectural or historic interest, including their character, townscape appearance, quality, and setting of a designated Conservation Area;

c) take account of and respond to the relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisal and future management strategy when considering the morphology of the area including urban grain, density, plan form, scale, hierarchy, building types, local architectural form and design detailing of the development;

d) preserve and enhance original details and historic fabric, and where possible reinstate traditional materials and details, or use new materials and finishes that respect the character and appearance of the area, including shopfronts, windows, doors and boundary treatments;

e) conserve and enhance the historic public realm in its quality and character, including public spaces, green areas and street furniture, taking into account enclosure, hierarchy of street spaces, hard and soft landscaping, green infrastructure and other special features that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area;

f) retain buildings which positively contribute to the area, including 'key buildings' identified in the Conservation Area Character Appraisals and any other non-designated heritage assets, as identified through the planning process or neighbourhood plans; and

g) result in high-quality design, better reveal the significance of the Conservation Area and are an enhancement to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Supporting Text

7.26 The Council will support proposals that preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas through appropriate design, layout, scale and density. Proposals should conserve the areas special architectural or historic significance and reinforce local distinctiveness through buildings form, materials, detailing, and public realm.

7.27 As described in policy HE2 (Conservation Areas), not all change within or within the setting of a Conservation Area is necessarily detrimental. Proposals for redevelopment within or adjoining a Conservation Area will be supported where the proposal meets criteria in the policy and the replacement building or refurbishment results in a high-quality design and takes the opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and/or its

setting or takes opportunities to better reveal its significance. Designs should make informed use of historic precedents, but this does not exclude innovation in design and contemporary approaches where it can enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or its setting.

Enabling Development

7.28 Enabling development may be acceptable where it would otherwise conflict with national policy but is necessary to secure the future conservation of a heritage asset and where its heritage benefits outweigh the harm of departing from policy. It is an exception to policy and must be fully justified in the public interest.

7.29 Enabling development should minimise the harm to the significance of the heritage asset or its setting, but it will be for the local planning authority to assess whether the benefits of the enabling development outweigh the harm of departing from national/local planning policy. The local planning authority will also have to consider the significance of the heritage asset, its optimum viable use, the nature of the policies to be breached and the severity. The NPPF (December 2024) is clear that where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset then the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

Policy HE3 Enabling Development

Policy HE3: Enabling Development

1. Enabling development that would ordinarily conflict with other planning policies, but which would secure the long-term future conservation of a heritage asset, and, where applicable, its continued use for a sympathetic purpose, will be supported only where the public benefit of securing the future of the heritage asset through such enabling development would decisively outweigh the harm of departing from the development plan or from national planning policies. Proposals for enabling development must demonstrate that:

a) There is clear evidential justification that there are no alternative ways of achieving the same outcome for the heritage asset including through sources of public and private investment;
b) The enabling development should be designed to minimise harm to the significance of the heritage asset or its setting;
c) The enabling development is the minimum necessary to address the 'conservation deficit' and to secure the long-term future of the heritage asset, supported by robust evidence; and
d) The enabling development meets the requirements set out in Historic England Good Practice Advice and is accompanied by a costed conservation management plan. The conservation benefits will be secured using planning conditions and/or under a Section 106 Planning Obligation as appropriate.

Supporting Text

7.30 The harm done by enabling development is likely to be irreversible. Therefore, the applicant needs to be able to demonstrate that they have investigated all alternative ways of securing the asset, including sources of public and private investment.

7.31 The case for enabling development must be supported by evidence of a 'conservation deficit', which is described as 'the amount by which the cost of repair (and conversion to optimum viable use if appropriate) of a heritage asset exceeds its market value on completion of repair and conversion, allowing for all appropriate development costs'[176]. Funding generated through enabling development must directly address that deficit and secure the heritage asset's future, rather than support the owner's wider financial position.

7.32 A costed conservation management plan should accompany any application for enabling development and will identify the correct level of conservation that will sustain the asset in the long term and justify the scale of enabling development proposed.

Historic Parks and Gardens

7.33 'Designed landscapes' include ornamental and recreational landscapes such as domestic gardens, institutional landscapes, cemeteries, public parks, gardens, walks and resorts, country parks, forests parkland, and estate landscapes. They vary in scale from small public park and villa gardens to extensive parkland and wider estate landscapes.

7.34 Designed landscapes are an important part of the heritage and environment of the district. There are those designed landscapes which are considered significant enough to be designated[177] and included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England, compiled by Historic England. Within Wealden, there are 20 Registered Parks and Gardens which can be found on the National Register[178].

7.35 There are also Parks and Gardens of special local historic interest. These may be identified as part of the planning process, in a future local list and in Neighbourhood Plans.

7.36 Historic Parks and Gardens are comprised of a variety of features: the open space itself, views in and out and within, the planting, water features, built features and archaeological remains. The purpose of Policy HE4 (Historic Parks and Gardens) is to clarify further in what circumstances development affecting Historic Parks and gardens and their settings, both registered and unregistered, may be acceptable.

Policy HE4 Historic Parks and Gardens

Policy HE4: Historic Parks and Gardens

1. Development proposals affecting Historic Parks and Gardens on the national register or of local significance will be supported where they:

176 Historic England (2020) Enabling Development and Heritage Assets. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 4.

177 Historic England have produced a series of parks and gardens selection guides which give an overview of the type of criteria they look for in registering a park or garden, for example the one on rural landscapes. This is available at: https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/drpgsg-rural-landscapes/

178 Historic England (2025) National Heritage List for England.

a) Maintain, conserve or enhance the special historic interest, significance, character, integrity, appearance and design and layout of these landscapes;

b) Conserve and enhance the setting of these landscapes including significant views to, from and within a historic park or garden;

c) Take opportunities to enhance or better reveal significance including the restoration or reinstatement of original buildings, structures, features, planting schemes and layouts;

d) Protect buildings or structures within the designed landscape where they form part of or contribute to the character, appearance and design of that designed landscape; and

e) Increase public access where appropriate and feasible.

Supporting text

7.37 It is expected that any application affecting a historic park, garden or its setting provides evidence of an understanding of the development and evolution, design and layout of the park, garden or other designed landscape, as well as its integral features, zones, planned views etc. For Registered Parks and Gardens, the park listing description can be an important source of information.

7.38 Fragmentation of historic parks and gardens is a considerable threat. It can be caused by a number of factors including development, neglect and changes in ownership. For those parks and gardens with public access, increased visitor numbers can also result in management strategies that affect the integrity and character of the park or garden and result in a loss of significance.

7.39 Perhaps the biggest threat to historic parks and gardens in Wealden is the pressure for new development within their setting, which may have a detrimental impact on their significance. Policy HE4 (Historic Park and Gardens) thus recognises the importance of conserving and enhancing the setting of these landscapes, including views to, from and within the parks and gardens. Landscape level impacts from Climate Change are also a threat, especially where there are watercourses, or also where planting is susceptible to changing weather patterns[179].

Archaeology

7.40 The NPPF describes a heritage asset as having archaeological interest if 'it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point'[180]. The NPPF assigns three different types of sites with archaeological interest. Firstly, there are those designated as Scheduled Monuments and deemed of national importance. There are currently over one hundred in Wealden. Secondly there are non-designated sites of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments and should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets. Thirdly there are those that are non-designated heritage assets. This policy relates to both

179 Wealden District Council Heritage Strategy (September 2026)

180 NPPF (December 2024), Annex 2: Glossary.

above and below ground archaeology and that is both within and outside archaeological notification areas.

7.41 The PPG states that it is helpful if local plans note areas with potential for the discovery of non-designated heritage assets with archaeological interest. However, in East Sussex the known sites and areas of archaeological interest within the County are included within the Historic Environment Record[181] as Archaeological Notification Areas (ANA).The Council's Heritage Strategy identifies a general view that the current extent of ANAs within Wealden does not fully reflect the deep archaeological interest of the district; and therefore, includes a recommendation that a detailed survey of the district's archaeological potential be undertaken to help to fill gaps in the record and give greater protection to this important element of the district's heritage.

7.42 There is a common misconception that archaeology relates to below-ground remains only, but buildings may also have archaeological interest as they hold evidence of past human activity and are a primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places and the people and cultures that made them.

7.43 The purpose of Policy HE5 (Archaeology) is to provide a locally specific policy that sets out how proposals that might affect archaeological sites or sites of potential archaeological interest will be assessed and that sets out the decision-making process in Wealden.

Policy HE5 Archaeology

Policy HE5: Archaeology

1. Development proposals that would result in substantial harm to, or the loss of, a Scheduled Monument, or a non-designated heritage asset with archaeological interest demonstrably of equivalent significance to a Scheduled Monument[182], will not be supported unless wholly exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.

2. Where development could directly or indirectly affect any other heritage asset with archaeological interest, it will only be supported where it demonstrates that the significance of the asset, including its setting, will be conserved and any harm is appropriately avoided, minimised or mitigated.

3. In some cases, where there is potential for impacts to heritage assets with archaeological interest, permission may be granted subject to a planning condition that no development shall take place until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation.

4. Subject to compliance with other policies in the Local Plan, development proposals will be supported where they:

   a) Preserve, protect and / or enhance archaeological remains in situ, unless the Written Scheme of Investigation shows that the preservation of archaeological remains in situ is not justified;

181 ESCC Archaeological Notification Area Maps (ANAs).

182 That are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments as per the NPPF (December 2024) at footnote 75

b) Preserve or enhance the setting of archaeological sites and heritage assets with archaeological interest; and

c) Maximise opportunities to conserve, enhance and improve the accessibility and interpretation of archaeological sites, remains and features.

5. Where it is not possible or justified to preserve in situ, developers will be required to record any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) by a suitable and approved archaeological body and in a manner proportionate to their importance and possible impact. Developers will be required to make satisfactory provision for the conservation and storage of any artefacts. Planning conditions and/or a planning obligation may be used in order to secure these requirements.

Supporting Text

7.44 All development proposals that involve excavation or groundworks within Archaeological Notification Areas or that will impact upon other areas of archaeological interest, including buildings with archaeological interest, should arrange for an initial consultation with the Historic Environment Record Officer at East Sussex County Council in order to assess the level of further work required.

7.45 The conservation of an archaeological asset in its original location (preservation in situ), for example when a site is preserved as part of a development scheme, is the preferred approach where possible. When it is not possible, the NPPF gives clear guidance that local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.

7.46 Where there is potential for impacts to heritage assets with archaeological interest, the Council may include a planning condition to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI). A WSI sets out the methodology for the proposed archaeological works[183].

Climate Change and the Historic Environment

7.47 Paragraph 164 of the NPPF (December 2024) sets out that local planning authorities should, in determining planning applications, give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic. This applies whether buildings are historic or not, but where the proposals would affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other relevant designated heritage assets, local planning authorities should also consider heritage policies within this Plan.

7.48 As stated in the Council's Heritage Strategy 'climate change poses the single greatest long-term threat to heritage, both locally and nationally. Meeting the challenges posed by climate change and other environmental crises will both require and cause substantial changes to the historic and natural environment. Historic landscapes, places and buildings have an important role to play in addressing the climate and ecological crises[184]'. It is imperative that

183 This should follow the ESCC (2019) Sussex Archaeological Standards 2019 (or subsequent replacement).

184 Wealden District Council Heritage Strategy (September 2026) section 7.4

action is taken to mitigate these impacts as far and as quickly as possible, and to adapt historic places and landscapes to the changing conditions in a way that is compatible with their heritage significance[185]. The Council's Heritage Strategy includes three recommendations on climate change and the environment focusing on policy support, exploring opportunities to restore elements of historic landscape character and strengthen traditional, low-impact forms of land management within the district, and establishing educational opportunities around retrofit and traditional buildings.

7.49 Our historic environment is particularly vulnerable to environmental change. Structures which have been standing for hundreds of years and archaeology previously buried safely underground are in increasing danger from extremes of wetting, drying and temperature fluctuation. Our diverse landscapes, including the industrial archaeology of the High Weald, designed landscapes, land and water management on the Low Weald and Pevensey Levels, and our historic coastline, are all at risk of significant change.

7.50 Changing environmental conditions will affect buildings, places, designed landscapes and archaeology, both directly through physical, biological, and chemical processes, and indirectly through the human actions undertaken to adapt to or mitigate these changes. However, the scale and nature of change will be highly variable from place to place, with little or no adaptation required for some and possible acceptance of unavoidable loss for others. Given the potential for significant impacts on our historic environment from the effects of climate change, and through adaptation and mitigation measures (to include works to reduce carbon emissions), a policy on climate change and the historic environment is required in order to detail our local approach to applications and what we require applicants to do. This policy also serves to support owners of heritage assets to undertake sensitive works to improve the performance of their buildings, in line with best practice guidance for the historic environment and heritage assets.

Policy HE6 Climate Change and the Historic Environment

HE6: Climate Change and the Historic Environment

1. Proposals relating to traditionally constructed buildings[186] which are designated and non-designated heritage assets intended to improve the energy efficiency, climate resilience or carbon performance of those assets will be supported where they:

a) Are informed by a proper understanding of the asset's significance and construction[187];

b) Conserve their significance;

c) Avoid or Minimise harm to historic fabric;

185 Wealden District Council Heritage Strategy (September 2026) section 5.3

186 Traditional Constructed Buildings Definition: Generally defined as those built before 1919 with solid walls made from a range of natural materials including stone, earth, brick, wood, and lime (mortars, renders and paints). Often referred to as being of 'breathable construction', vapour permeable or vapour open with the capacity to absorb, store and later release moisture and heat. Traditional buildings will include both designated and non-designated heritage assets, and many more buildings that are not heritage assets.

187 IHBC (2023) IHBC Guidance Notes. Retrofitting of Traditional Buildings and IHBC (2021) IHBC Toolbox Retrofitting of Traditional Buildings.

d) Demonstrate that less harmful alternatives to achieve these aims have been considered; and
e) Adopt a whole-building approach.

Supporting Text

7.51 Nationally, about 20% of our homes were built before 1919, using traditional timber-frame or solid wall construction methods and materials, and can be said to be 'traditionally constructed buildings'. Whilst high energy efficiency standards have been introduced for new homes, these standards may not be achievable or applicable to existing buildings, particularly those of traditional construction. Traditionally constructed buildings normally can and should contribute to climate change objectives through appropriate adaptation by identifying, understanding and exploring opportunities to improve their energy efficiency appropriate to their significance, fabric and type of construction. However, certain energy efficiency or retrofit measures, specifically those for modern construction, are not appropriate for traditionally built heritage assets and can lead to risks of:

- overheating, loss of ventilation pathways and poor indoor air quality;
- moisture trapping – leading to problems with condensation, mould and increase to the risk of decay of historic fabric; and/or
- hindering recovery after flood events.

7.52 A tailored, whole-building approach is therefore essential to ensure that retrofit measures enhance resilience without compromising heritage significance.

7.53 For historic buildings, a balance needs to be found between improving energy efficiency and maintaining the significance of the building, its fabric and its setting. British Standard 7913[188] 'Guide to the conservation of historic buildings' sets out best practices for inspecting, managing and maintaining traditional and historic buildings currently.

7.54 The PAS documents[189] outline a 'whole-building approach'. This approach has been reinforced by Historic England guidance, requiring a clear understanding of the building's construction, condition, context and significance to ensure that suitable energy efficiency measures are selected that do not harm the significance of heritage assets and also avoid maladaptation and unintended consequences, including taking into account moisture management as set out in BS5250: Management of Moisture in Buildings Code of Practice[190]. This also relates to the material change of use of historic buildings, such as barn conversions, where retrofit measures must remain compatible with the character and performance of traditional fabric. References to standards and guidance in this paragraph should be read as including any subsequent revisions or replacement documents.

7.55 Many buildings and sites of historic significance (e.g. designed landscapes, scheduled monuments, below ground archaeology and landscape archaeology) are also at direct risk from the effects of climate change, including both flooding and drought. In some cases, the

188 British Standards Institution (2013). Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings.

189 The Publicly Available Specifications (PAS) 2030: Energy Efficiency in Existing Dwellings, 2035: Retrofitting Dwellings and 2038: Retrofitting non-domestic buildings, require BS 7913 to be followed adopting a risk-based approach for historic and traditional buildings.

190 British Standards Institution (2021) Management of moisture in buildings.

risks are exacerbated by alterations that humans have made to the environment and landscape over time; or may be down to natural processes. It is therefore important to consider adaptation and mitigation measures that are well informed, proportionate and address the complex range of issues contributing to climate effects. Any schemes to reduce or respond to climate risks must be sensitive to the unique historic characteristics, fabric and setting of the area and/or site.

The Change of Use or Loss of Heritage Assets

7.56 The most sustainable building is often one that already exists – its carbon footprint (the embodied carbon emission of the building) has already been paid for through the materials and energy used to construct it. Historic England notes that 'by keeping historic buildings in use, we can further improve the potential to limit carbon emissions. The most sustainable building is one that already exists, because the continued repair, maintenance, use and re-use of historic buildings avoids unnecessary release of embodied carbon associated with materials, transport and processes required for demolition and new build[191]'. The inherent embodied energy and long lifespan of existing buildings means that their retention, reuse and appropriate adaptation is fully consistent with modern concepts of sustainability and with the ambitions to reduce carbon emissions.

7.57 It is recognised that in order to retain buildings, they will need to be able to adapt to new uses. This needs to be done in a way that recognises their significance, construction, and contribution to the local identity of the area and the district as a whole. An inappropriate change of use of a heritage asset has the potential to result in long-lasting damage. Whilst Policy HO15 (Conversion of Rural Buildings to a Residential Use)of this Plan addresses the conversion of rural buildings to residential use, the conversion of a historic building is a key issue within the district, for which a more focused policy is required[192]. For example, the conversion of agricultural buildings in Wealden poses a particular challenge, often dependent on the building typology. For instance, the conversion of oast houses to residential or ancillary use may require new fenestration, while the conversion of a former commercial building to residential uses may result in the loss of an active frontage. There are also often issues around inappropriate design detailing and poor use of materials proposed in applications, which if approved, could result in harm to the heritage asset. The policy sets out the local approach to applications for the change of use of heritage assets and details what information may need to be provided to secure consent.

7.58 The loss of significance of a heritage asset, whether that be via alteration or destruction or from development within its setting, is also a key issue in the district that needs to be addressed.

Policy HE7 The Change of Use and Loss of Heritage Assets

HE7: The Change of Use or Loss of Heritage Assets

Change of Use of Heritage Assets

1. The change of use of heritage assets, including conversion, will be supported where:

191 Historic England (2026) Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency. HEAN 18.

192 Wealden District Council Heritage Strategy (September 2026) paragraph 226

a) There is clear justification and evidence that the existing or historic use is no longer viable or capable of sustaining the heritage asset. Evidence may include, where appropriate, details of redundancy, marketing of the building at a realistic value or rent, viability evidence prepared to recognised industry standards, and a structural survey demonstrating the condition of the building;
b) Sufficient information is provided to understand the potential impact of the proposals on the fabric and significance of the building, including a detailed specification of the works with materials and methods, a structural survey and details of any alterations necessary to support the new use; and
c) The proposed use is considered to be the optimum viable use that is compatible with the significance of the heritage asset and causes the least harm which will secure the long-term sustainable future of the heritage asset as well as its maintenance and conservation.

Loss of Heritage Assets

2. Where it can be demonstrated that the existing use of a heritage asset is no longer viable or an alternative use cannot be found, or that the condition and layout of the existing building renders refurbishment and reuse impracticable, proposals involving the total loss or partial loss of a heritage asset will only be supported where:

a) The proposal accords with national policy relating to the conservation of heritage assets and demonstrates that any harm to significance is justified;
b) Any replacement building or development makes a positive contribution to the local character or appearance of the area; and
c) There is robust evidence that the replacement development will be delivered within an agreed timeframe following demolition. This may be subject to planning conditions and/or a Section 106 Planning Obligation, where necessary, to secure implementation.

Supporting Text

7.59 Parts 1a and b of Policy HE7 (The Change of Use or Loss of Heritage Assets) outline the evidence that may be required to enable the Council to support the change of use of a heritage asset. This will depend on the individual circumstances of each case and the evidence provided. Part 1c of the policy explains that the change of use of heritage assets will be supported where the proposed use is considered to be the optimum viable use. The PPG explains that if there is only one viable use, then that use is the optimum viable use but 'if there is a range of alternative economically viable uses, the optimum viable use is the one likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the asset, not just through necessary initial changes, but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear and likely future changes'[193].

7.60 Where a proposal would result in the partial or total loss of a heritage asset or its setting, the applicant will be required to secure a programme of recording and analysis of that asset and archaeological excavation where relevant. The information should be recorded to an appropriate standard, as set out in Historic England: Understanding Historic Buildings – A

193 PPG Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 18a-015-20190723.

Guide to Good Recording Practice[194], Sussex Standards for Historic Building Archaeology 2019[195] and the Sussex Archaeological Standards 2019[196] and submitted to the East Sussex Historic Environment Record.

194 Historic England (2016) Understanding Historic Buildings. A Guide to Good Recording Practice.

195 East Sussex County Council (2019) Sussex Standards for Historic Building Archaeology

196 Local Planning Authority Archaeological Advisors in Sussex (2019) Sussex Archaeological Standards.

Wealden
District Council

08
Housing



Wealden
Local Plan

Introduction

8.1 This Chapter sets out how the Plan will deliver high quality, well-designed and energy-efficient homes that meet local needs. It supports an appropriate and diverse mix of market, affordable and specialist housing, including accommodation for older people, people with disabilities, families with children, military affordable housing (formerly service families), Gypsies and Travellers and households wishing to build or commission their own homes. New housing will be directed to the most sustainable locations, ensuring that the right homes are provided in the right places to support people's day-to-day needs and create attractive, locally distinctive communities. New homes are to be designed to a high standard and should adapt to the needs of different households, meaning they should respond to local character and environmental constraints, and contribute to balanced and inclusive communities as well as being an appropriate size, type and tenure.

8.2 The Plan must provide a range of homes that responds to current and future needs and should therefore deliver suitable, adaptable and genuinely affordable homes in sustainable locations.

8.3 Wealden's rural areas continue to experience significant pressures for change, arising from both development pressures associated with nearby settlements and the evolving nature of the rural economy, including the diversification of agricultural enterprises. The Plan supports housing that meets identified local needs while responding to settlement character and protecting valued landscapes and ecological assets.

Housing Type and Mix

8.4 National policy requires local planning authorities to plan positively for and ensure that sufficient homes are provided to meet the identified housing needs. This includes planning for an appropriate mix of housing sizes, types and tenures, informed by local evidence and the needs of different groups within the community.

8.5 Census 2021 data shows that 77% of Wealden's housing stock are owner-occupied, over 30% of have four or more bedrooms, while one-bedroom homes represent a relatively small proportion of the overall stock[197]. Larger homes are concentrated in the owner-occupied sector and smaller homes in the social rented sector.

8.6 The Council's Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA)[198] (January 2026) considers the current and future housing needs across the district, including the size, type and tenure of homes required over the plan period. The assessment concludes that future market housing provision should place greater emphasis on smaller homes, particularly two and three-bedroom properties, to better align with the needs of newly forming households, younger people and households seeking to downsize.

8.7 The LHNA also identifies a different size profile for affordable housing. In assessing affordable housing needs, consideration was given to housing register data, demographic trends, household composition and the role of affordable housing in meeting the needs of families and other households with limited access to the housing market. The assessment

197 See the Wealden Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) (January 2026), page 106-107.

198 Wealden Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) (January 2026)

concludes that a distinct affordable housing mix is required to respond effectively to identified needs.

8.8 Policy HO1 therefore requires residential developments to provide an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes and types for market and affordable housing, informed by the Council's evidence of need.

8.9 In order to support the delivery of smaller market homes and maintain their availability within the housing stock, Policy HO1 requires one, two and three-bedroom dwellings to be designed such that they are not capable of subdivision to create additional bedrooms where this would undermine the intended housing mix. This approach seeks to support affordability objectives whilst remaining sensitive to local character and site-specific circumstances.

Policy HO1 Housing Type and Mix

Policy HO1: Housing Type & Mix

1. New residential development, including affordable housing, will be expected to provide for an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures that responds to identified housing needs and contributes to the creation of balanced and sustainable communities.

2. Residential developments providing 10 or more net additional dwellings should provide the following indicative housing mix for market housing, unless an alternative mix is justified having regard to criterion 5 of this policy:

	1-bedroom	2-bedrooms	3-bedrooms	4+ bedrooms
Market	5%	35%	40%	20%

3. On mixed-tenure developments providing 50 or more net additional dwellings, including strategic allocations, the affordable housing provision should seek to provide the following indicative mix:

	1-bedroom	2-bedrooms	3-bedrooms	4+ bedrooms
Affordable housing (rented)	35%	30%	25%	10%
Affordable housing (ownership)	20%	40%	30%	10%

4. On developments providing fewer than 50 net additional dwellings, affordable housing should generally comprise smaller homes of three bedrooms or fewer unless up-to-date evidence from the Council's Housing Register, housing needs evidence or site-specific circumstances indicate an alternative mix is required.

5. An alternative housing mix may be accepted where robust evidence demonstrates a justification to respond to up-to-date housing needs or site-specific circumstances, including:

a) local character, form and density, viability, brownfield or heritage constraints;
b) the findings of the Council's most up-to-date evidence base, including any Urban Capacity and Density Study; and
c) robust, locally specific housing needs evidence, including 'Made' or submitted neighbourhood plans or parish-level housing needs assessment.

6. Residential development proposals that fail to deliver the housing mix identified by this policy, without adequate justification, will not be supported.

5. One, two and three bedrooms market dwellings should not be designed to facilitate subdivision into additional bedrooms, unless it is necessary to provide accessible or adapted accommodation or to avoid harm to a designated heritage asset.

Supporting Text

8.10 Policy HO1 seeks to broaden housing choice by increasing the supply and retention of smaller homes. An alternative mix may be accepted where robust evidence demonstrates that it better responds to local needs, site-specific constraints or viability. The approach to housing type and mix for both market and affordable housing. The policy should be read alongside Policy HO2 (Density) and Policy HO8 (Affordable Housing), as well as other relevant policies within the Local Plan. Together, these policies seek to ensure that new residential development delivers a range of homes that respond to identified housing needs and supports the creation of balanced and sustainable communities.

8.11 Census data demonstrates that Wealden's existing housing stock contains a relatively high proportion of larger homes, while the LHNA identifies a need for a greater supply of smaller market dwellings, particularly two and three-bedroom homes. The delivery and retention of smaller homes is important in broadening housing choice, supporting affordability objectives, enabling younger households to access the housing market and providing opportunities for older residents wishing to downsize.

8.12 The housing mix requirements in Policy HO1 are informed by the Council's latest evidence, including the LHNA. Whilst the policy establishes the Council's preferred housing mix, in order to provide flexibility, an alternative mix may be accepted where robust evidence demonstrates that it responds to the local need or site-specific circumstances or local needs, including viability, where relevant.

8.13 To support these objectives, the Council may remove permitted development rights for extensions and alterations to new one, two and three-bedroom market dwellings where it is considered necessary and reasonable to do so. This will help ensure that smaller homes remain available as part of the district's housing stock over the long term and continue to contribute towards meeting identified housing needs. The use of such restrictions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the scale of the development, local housing needs and the specific circumstances of the proposal.

Density

8.14 The efficient use of land is an important component of achieving sustainable development. Residential density should make efficient use of land and help meet housing needs, particularly on previously developed and well-connected sites. The appropriate density will depend on

accessibility, local character, environmental constraints and infrastructure capacity, while securing high-quality design and positive outcomes for the natural and historic environment.

8.15 Policy HO2 establishes the framework for determining the appropriate density of residential development across the district, ensuring that land is used efficiently while delivering well-designed places that respond positively to their context.

Policy HO2 Density

Policy HO2: Density

1. Residential development must make the most effective and efficient use of land, optimising site capacity whilst delivering high-quality, sustainable and well-designed places. The density of a development will be informed by:

a) the need to make efficient use of land, having regard to its capacity;
b) the achievement of high-quality design that responds positively to local character and context, having regard to the Council's latest Urban Capacity and Density Study[199];
c) site-specific opportunities and constraints, including housing mix, topography, and the protection and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, trees and woodland, landscape character, habitats, heritage assets, and important townscape features;
d) the existing and future accessibility to services, facilities, employment opportunities and public transport, including by walking and cycling; and
e) the capacity of existing and proposed infrastructure to support the development.

2. Where a site allocation within this Local Plan specifies a density requirement, development proposals must accord with that requirement. Strategic allocations should deliver a strong and distinctive sense of place and may establish their own character and identity where this would support high-quality placemaking. Reduced densities will only be supported where exceptional site-specific constraints can be demonstrated and where it can be clearly shown that the proposed development would continue to make effective and efficient use of land.

Supporting Text

8.16 Higher densities will generally be appropriate in accessible locations where residents can access a wider range of employment, day-to-day services, facilities and public transport without relying on the private car. Lower densities may be appropriate where accessibility is limited or environmental, landscape or townscape constraints justify a less intensive form of development.

8.17 Assessments of accessibility will normally be based on existing provision. However, future infrastructure may be taken into account where its funding, approval and timely delivery are sufficiently certain. Applicants seeking to rely on future infrastructure improvements to

199 Wealden Urban Capacity Study (March 2024) and Wealden Character and Density Study (March 2024)

justify the proposed density of development will be required to provide robust supporting evidence.

8.18 Policy HO2 should be read alongside Policy CC1 (Net Zero Development Standards). The efficient use of land should be considered alongside the need to minimise energy demand and support the transition to net zero carbon development. Proposals should therefore utilise site layout, landform, building orientation, massing, green infrastructure and landscaping to maximise energy efficiency, support passive solar gain where appropriate, and create sustainable and resilient places.

Brownfield Land

8.19 National planning policy requires local planning authorities to make effective use of land and, where appropriate, prioritise the redevelopment of previously developed (brownfield) land to help meet development needs.

8.20 The Council supports the redevelopment and efficient use of suitable brownfield land for housing and mixed-use development where this would meet identified needs and deliver sustainable development. Such development supports regeneration, improves the appearance and vitality of existing settlements, and reduces pressure on greenfield land, subject to site-specific constraints and other Development Plan policies.

8.21 The Council's Brownfield Land Register[200] identifies sites considered suitable, available and achievable for residential-led development at the time of assessment and supports the proactive identification and delivery of previously developed land.

8.22 The district contains a relatively limited supply of previously developed land compared to more urban authorities. Nevertheless, opportunities exist within Wealden's towns and villages to redevelop underutilised or vacant sites and to optimise the use of suitable brownfield land. Bringing forward such sites in sustainable locations can support the vitality of existing communities, make effective use of existing infrastructure and services, and contribute towards reducing the need for development on undeveloped land over the plan period.

Policy HO3 Brownfield Land

Policy HO3: Brownfield Land

1. The redevelopment of suitable previously developed (brownfield) land for housing will be supported where proposals:

a) are located within, or well-related to, a development boundary of a settlement identified as sustainable within the settlement hierarchy;
b) make effective and efficient use of the site, having regard to its context and the principles set out in Policy HO2 (Density);
c) are accessible to services, facilities and public transport by walking, cycling and public transport; and
d) accord with other relevant policies in this Local Plan.

200 Wealden's Brownfield Land Register

2. Proposals for the redevelopment of brownfield land should optimise the use of the site whilst delivering high-quality design and protecting the character, amenity and environmental quality of the surrounding area.

Supporting Text

8.23 The Council supports the redevelopment of suitable brownfield land for housing where it can contribute towards meeting housing needs and delivering sustainable development. However, the district has an identified need for additional employment land and premises, as evidenced by the Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (January 2026)[201]. It is therefore important that the redevelopment of existing employment sites for housing does not undermine the district's economic objectives or result in the unnecessary loss of employment opportunities.

8.24 Consequently, the principle of redeveloping brownfield land for housing does not extend to employment sites that remain suitable, viable and capable of meeting business needs. Proposals involving the loss of land or buildings within Use Classes E(g), B2 or B8, will be assessed against Policy EC8 (The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism Use).

Small and Medium-Sized Housing Sites

8.25 Small and medium-sized housing can diversify housing supply, support small and medium-sized housebuilders, self-build and community-led housing and reduce reliance on large developments. They can also help increase flexibility in housing delivery and maintain supply throughout the plan period. These sites can often be delivered more quickly than larger developments and can provide a diverse source of housing supply across a range of locations.

8.26 National planning policy encourages local planning authorities to identify opportunities for small and medium-sized sites as part of their overall housing strategy. The Council has sought, where appropriate, to maximise the contribution that smaller sites can make towards meeting housing needs through site allocations, the redevelopment of suitable brownfield land and the support of windfall development in sustainable locations.

8.27 Policy HO4 supports such sites where they accord with the spatial strategy and other relevant policies of the Local Plan.

Policy HO4 Small and Medium Sized Housing Sites

Policy HO4: Small and Medium Sized Housing Sites

1. Proposals for residential development on small and medium-sized sites of up to 1 hectare will be supported, where they contribute towards meeting identified housing needs, subject to compliance with the spatial strategy and other relevant policies of this Local Plan.

2. In particular, support will be given to proposals that deliver one or more of the following:

201 Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden Update (January 2026)

a) a mix of smaller homes, particularly one, two and three-bedroom dwellings, in accordance with Policy HO1 (Housing Type and Mix);
b) self-build and custom-build homes;
c) affordable housing;
d) specialist accommodation to meet identified needs; and
e) efficient use of land in accordance with Policy HO2 (Density).

Supporting Text

8.28 For the purposes of Policy HO4, small and medium-sized housing sites are defined as sites up to 1 hectare in area as is referred to in national planning policy.

Self-Build and Custom-Build Homes

8.29 Self and custom-build housing can diversify supply and increase consumer choice. It includes homes built directly by individuals and homes commissioned from builders or developers on serviced plots.

8.30 The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended) requires local planning authorities to maintain a register of individuals and organisations seeking to acquire serviced plots of land for self and custom-build housing. The register provides an indication of demand for this form of development and helps to inform the preparation of planning policies and the Council's approach to meeting identified need.

8.31 The Council's Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register and LHNA (January 2026) identifies relatively small, but important, ongoing demand for self and custom-build housing and opportunities are expected to be delivered through a combination of stand-alone proposals, windfall sites, and through the contribution of serviced plots from larger residential developments.

8.32 Policy HO5 therefore supports stand-alone and locally led schemes and requires larger residential developments to contribute plots to meet the identified demand. The Council will also support opportunities delivered through neighbourhood planning, Community Land Trusts (CLTs) and other locally-led initiatives where these accord with the development plan.

Policy HO5 Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding

Policy HO5: Self and Custom-Build Housebuilding

1. Proposals for self and custom-build housing will be supported where they comply with the spatial strategy and all other relevant requirements of the Local Plan.

2. Residential developments of 70 or more dwellings (gross) should provide serviced plots for self and custom-build housing equivalent to at least 5% of the total number of dwellings, unless:

a) up-to-date evidence demonstrates that the requirement would result in an oversupply of self and custom-build plots relative to identified need; or

b) site-specific constraints or viability considerations demonstrate that the provision would be impracticable.

c) Self-and custom-build housing should meet identified housing needs, accord with policies HO1 (Housing Type and Mix) and HO2 (Density) and contribute to balanced and sustainable communities.

3. Where self and custom-build plots are required by this policy, a design code shall be prepared and approved by the Council to guide the development of the site. Individual plots should accord with the approved design code and any approved plot passports.

4. Self and custom-build plots secured through this policy shall be marketed to individuals or associations seeking plots for self-build or custom-build housing for a minimum period of 12 months, unless otherwise agreed by the Council. Where plots remain unsold following the agreed marketing period and appropriate evidence of active marketing has been provided, the Council may permit the plots to be developed for alternative housing purposes.

Supporting Text

8.33 The Council recognises that there may be circumstances where serviced plots required under Policy HO5 are not taken up by self-builders or custom housebuilders. Plots that remain unsold must be actively marketed for at least 12 months. Provision, marketing, delivery triggers and release to alternative housing uses will be secured through a planning obligation. The Council may notify relevant register entries and require independent verification of the material provided detailing marketing efforts and asking price at the applicant's expense.

Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) and the Subdivision of Existing Dwellings

8.34 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)[202] and the subdivision of existing dwellings can provide smaller, more affordable forms of accommodation, including for younger people, single-person households, key workers and those unable to access owner occupation or self-contained rented accommodation.

8.35 The Council's LHNA (January 2026) identifies a growing number of smaller households within the district and an increasing need for smaller forms of accommodation. The conversion and subdivision of suitable buildings can therefore play an important role in broadening housing choice and making more efficient use of the existing housing stock.

8.36 The subdivision of larger dwellings can be particularly beneficial where it secures the continued occupation and maintenance of existing buildings, including heritage assets, whilst providing additional homes without the need for new-build development.

8.37 Proposals must provide a good standard of accommodation and address residential amenity, parking, local character or the historic and natural environment impacts in accordance with Policy HO6.

202 The Housing Act 2004 defines a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) as a property occupied by multiple households who share one or more basic amenities, such as cooking, washing or toilet facilities. HMOs can take a variety of forms, including the conversion of existing dwellings and buildings to provide shared accommodation.

Policy HO6 Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) and Subdivision of Existing Dwellings

Policy HO6: Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) and Subdivision of Existing Dwellings

Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs)

1. Proposals for new Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), or the change of use of existing properties to HMOs where planning permission is required, will be supported provided that:

a) satisfactory provision is made for refuse and recycling storage, cycle parking, vehicle parking and access arrangements;
b) the proposal respects the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding area; and
c) the proposal provides an appropriate standard of accommodation for future occupiers with the provision of usable outdoor amenity space and avoids unacceptable impacts on neighbouring amenity, including privacy, noise, outlook, daylight, sunlight.

Subdivision of Existing Dwellings

2. Outside development boundaries, as defined on the Policies Map, the subdivision of dwellings to create additional residential units will be supported where:

a) the proposal complies with criterion 1 of this policy;
b) the scale, intensity, associated activity vehicle movements and domestic paraphernalia would not harm rural character, and the subdivision can be accommodated largely within the existing building with only limited alterations or extensions that preserve its character, appearance and visual integrity.

Supporting Text

8.38 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) can make an important contribution towards meeting identified housing needs by providing a source of smaller and more affordable accommodation. HMOs and subdivided dwellings must provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation, comply with Policy HO13 and the Council's adopted HMO standards[203] or any successor document, and appropriately address amenity space, privacy, noise, outlook, daylight, refuse and cycle storage, parking and shared facilities.

Rural Exception Sites

8.39 Rural exception sites enable affordable housing to meet identified needs on land that would not otherwise be released for housing. These homes should remain affordable in perpetuity, with occupancy and affordability secured through planning obligations or other appropriate legal mechanisms.

203 Wealden District Council Prescribed Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation, 2018

8.40 Many rural communities within Wealden experience high house prices and limited opportunities for affordable housing. As a result, households with a local connection may be unable to access housing within the communities in which they live, work or have family ties. The provision of affordable housing through rural exception sites can help address these needs, support the vitality of rural communities and maintain access to local services and facilities.

8.41 Rural exception sites should be informed by robust and up-to-date evidence of local housing need. Applicants should agree the methodology and scope of any local housing needs survey at an early stage. Proposals will normally be expected to be supported by a parish-level housing needs survey or equivalent local evidence that demonstrates the nature and scale of the identified need. Applicants are also encouraged to engage with the relevant parish or town council in the preparation of proposals. Existing evidence, including housing needs surveys undertaken to support neighbourhood plans, may be used where it remains up-to-date and reflects current housing needs and local circumstances. Evidence should identify the scale and tenure of housing need, local connection requirements and any relevant locational considerations.

8.42 The primary purpose of a rural exception site is to deliver affordable housing to meet identified local needs and they should normally be delivered as wholly affordable housing schemes. However, the Council recognises that in some circumstances, a limited amount of market housing may be necessary to secure the delivery of an otherwise unviable scheme. Any market housing must be the minimum necessary to make the scheme deliverable. Any market housing should remain subordinate to the affordable housing element and should not undermine the primary purpose of the rural exception site.

Policy HO7 Rural Exception Sites to Meet Local Housing Need

Policy HO7: Rural Exception Sites to Meet Local Housing Need

1. Proposals for rural exception sites providing affordable housing to meet identified local needs will be supported within or adjoining settlements identified in the settlement hierarchy, provided that:

a) an up-to-date local housing needs survey, or equivalent robust evidence, demonstrates a clearly identified need for affordable housing within the locality;
b) the size, type, tenure, mix and affordability of the proposed homes reflect the identified local housing need;
c) the development is of an appropriate scale, design and layout, relates well to the form and character of the settlement, and integrates successfully with its surroundings;
d) the site is accessible to local services, facilities and public transport, or can provide suitable and safe connections to them; and
e) where market housing is proposed, it complies with criterion 3 of this policy.

2. Affordable housing delivered through this policy shall be secured through a planning obligation or other appropriate legal mechanism to ensure that it remains available to meet local housing needs in perpetuity.

3. Market housing will only be permitted where robust viability evidence demonstrates that it is essential to deliver the affordable housing scheme, is limited to the minimum

necessary, remains subordinate to the affordable housing, and is comparable in design, scale and appearance.

4. Where viability evidence is submitted, the Council may require the assessment to be independently reviewed. The reasonable costs of such a review shall be met by the applicant.

Supporting Text

8.43 Rural exception sites must address an identified local affordable housing need that cannot reasonably be met through existing commitments, allocations or planned provision. Affordable homes will be secured in perpetuity through a legal agreement, with priority given to households meeting the local connection criteria in the Council's latest Housing Allocations Policy[204] or any subsequent replacement document. Specialist affordable housing may be included where the identified local need is evidenced and relevant policies, including Policy HO11, are satisfied.

Affordable Housing

8.44 Affordable housing is a key priority for the Council because many households cannot afford suitable market housing in Wealden. National planning policy requires the Plan to identify need and secure affordable homes through development as part of mixed and balanced communities.

8.45 The LHNA (January 2026) identifies an annual affordable housing need of 754 dwellings, with the greatest need for affordable rented housing, supplemented by affordable home ownership products to provide opportunities for households seeking to access home ownership.

8.46 The Council's Viability Assessment (September 2026)[205] has tested the delivery of affordable housing and supports the district-wide affordable housing target.

8.47 The High Weald National Landscape covers a substantial proportion of the district and contains many rural communities where housing affordability is a particular challenge. Consistent with national policy, the Council will seek affordable housing contributions from smaller developments within the National Landscape in order to support the delivery of affordable homes in rural areas.

8.48 Policy HO8 therefore seeks 35% affordable housing on qualifying sites, with the majority being social rented tenure, subject to viability.

204 Housing Allocations Policy

205 Wealden Local Plan Viability Study (September 2026)

Policy HO8 Affordable Housing

Policy HO8: Affordable Housing

Affordable housing requirement

1. Residential development[206] of 10 or more net dwellings, or 6 or more net dwellings within the High Weald National Landscape, or 0.5 hectares or more outside the High Weald National Landscape must provide 35% on-site affordable housing, unless otherwise justified by this policy.

2. If a site comes forward as two or more separate development schemes, of which one or more falls below the appropriate threshold, the Council will seek an appropriate level of affordable housing on each part to match in total the provision that would have been required on the site as a whole.

Affordable Housing Tenure

3. Affordable housing provision should provide the following tenure mix unless an alternative mix is justified by the Council's most up-to-date evidence of housing need:

- 55% social rent;
- 25% affordable rent; and
- 20% through other affordable routes to home ownership, including Shared Ownership, First Homes, Rent to Buy and other intermediate housing products.

4. Where First Homes are provided, a minimum discount of 30% from market value will be required unless a different discount is justified by national policy or subsequent Government guidance.

Viability and Exceptional circumstances

5. Where robust viability evidence demonstrates that policy-compliant provision would make the development unviable, the Council will seek the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing, giving priority to adjusting tenure mix before reducing the overall provision. The Council may require a viability assessment to be independently verified at the applicant's expense.

Design and Layout

6. Affordable housing should be designed to the same high standards as market housing, be visually indistinguishable, and be distributed and tenure integrated throughout the development to support mixed and balanced communities.

Community-Led Housing

7. Proposals for Community Land Trusts, co-housing schemes, almhouses and other forms of community-led affordable housing will be supported where they accord with other policies of the Local Plan.

206 The policy applies to Use Class C3 development, including permanent residential caravan sites and self-contained C2 accommodation. For permanent residential caravan sites, affordable housing contributions will be sought through a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision.

Supporting Text

8.49 Affordable housing secured through Policy HO8 will normally be delivered and managed by a Registered Provider and secured through a planning obligation covering provision, tenure, occupancy, nominations and long-term management. Applicants should engage with the Council and a prospective Registered Provider at an early stage.

8.50 For the purposes of implementing Policy HO8, the Council will apply the definitions of affordable housing set out in national planning policy. Where these definitions are updated through national policy or legislation, the Council will apply the most up-to-date definitions and any associated transitional arrangements.

8.51 Affordable housing should be visually indistinguishable from market housing, distributed across the development in appropriately sized clusters comprising a mix of affordable tenures, where practicable. Distribution should reflect scale, layout and phasing of development.

8.52 All affordable housing should meet, as a minimum, Building Regulation M4(2) standards in line with Policy HO12. Where homes are intended to meet the needs of people with disabilities or specific accessibility requirements, compliance with Building Regulation M4(3)(a) (or any equivalent successor standard) will be expected where justified by identified need as set out in Policy HO12.

8.53 The affordable housing tenure mix required by Policy HO8 is informed by the Council's latest LHNA (January 2026). The evidence identifies the greatest need for affordable rented housing, particularly social rented homes, reflecting the significant affordability challenges experienced by households unable to access market housing within the district.

8.54 The High Weald National Landscape covers a substantial proportion of the district and contains many smaller rural communities where affordability pressures are particularly acute. In accordance with national policy relating to designated rural areas, Policy HO8 applies a lower affordable housing threshold within the National Landscape to assist in meeting identified affordable housing needs and supporting the long-term sustainability of rural communities.

8.55 Where the application of the percentages set out in Policy HO8 results in a fraction of a dwelling, the requirement will be rounded up to the nearest whole dwelling to ensure the delivery of affordable homes.

8.56 Community-led housing, including Community Land Trusts, co-housing schemes and almshouses, can make a valuable contribution towards meeting affordable housing needs. Such schemes can provide long-term affordable housing solutions and support local communities in bringing forward development tailored to local circumstances and needs.

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople – Site Criteria

8.57 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople are distinct communities with their own cultural traditions and accommodation needs. The Planning Policy for Travellers Sites (PPTS) document (December 2024)[207] requires local planning authorities to assess accommodation needs, identify suitable sites where necessary and include criteria-based policies to guide decision-making on planning applications.

207 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), (December 2024)

8.58 The Council's Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)[208] identifies a need for additional accommodation within the district.

8.59 Policy HO9 provides criteria for assessing proposals, which has been informed by the PPTS and the GTAA, including need, accessibility, site operation, environmental effects and integration with settlements.

Policy HO9 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople – Site Criteria

Policy HO9: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople - Site Criteria

1. The following criteria will be taken into account when determining planning applications for new, extended or transit sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople:

a) the proposal addresses an identified accommodation need and is intended for occupiers who meet the relevant definitions contained within the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), or any successor document;
b) the site is reasonably accessible to settlements, services, facilities, education, healthcare and public transport;
c) provides safe access, sufficient space for vehicle manoeuvring, parking and servicing, appropriate utility and wastewater infrastructure, and adequate amenity space and operational facilities;
d) provides a satisfactory living environment without exposing occupiers to unacceptable noise, pollution, odour or other environmental impacts;
e) the scale of development is appropriate to its surroundings and would not individually or cumulatively dominate the nearest settled community or place unacceptable pressure on local infrastructure and services;
f) the site avoids areas at unacceptable risk of flooding from all sources and complies with Policy CC7 (Managing Flood Risk);
g) development within or affecting the setting of nationally designated landscapes conserves and enhances their special qualities;
h) the proposal includes appropriate landscaping and screening measures that integrate the site into its surroundings and are secured through long-term management arrangements;
i) the layout and design provide adequate amenity space, landscaping, parking, servicing and facilities appropriate to the needs of occupiers; and
j) proposals for Travelling Showpeople accommodation provide sufficient space for the storage and maintenance of equipment, animals, vehicles and trailers associated with the operation of the site.

Supporting Text

8.60 Permissions granted under Policy HO9 will normally use conditions or legal agreements to secure the site for Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople accommodation, control the

208 East Sussex Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA) – May 2022

number of pitches, plots and caravans and, where appropriate, restrict occupation to those meeting the relevant national definition. Sites will be safeguarded in accordance with Policy HO10 (Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople - Safeguarding Sites). Where proposals come forward in locations that would not ordinarily be considered suitable, the Council may consider the use of temporary planning permissions where justified by the personal circumstances of the applicant, the availability of alternative accommodation, compliance with human rights obligations and the nature and extent of any planning harm arising from the development.

8.61 The PPTS does not prescribe a minimum site or pitch size for a gypsy and traveller site. Proposals should therefore demonstrate that the layout provides sufficient space for the accommodation, parking, servicing, amenity, safety and operational needs of occupiers, informed by the 'Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Good Practice Guide (2008)' and the GTAA. Whilst the Government's Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Good Practice Guide (2008) has been withdrawn in 2015, it remains one of the few sources of design guidance on site layout and continues to provide useful guidance regarding site design and pitch requirements.

8.62 The GTAA (2022) further advised that a pitch size of at least 325 square metres is the minimum requirement and that a pitch size of 500 square metres (or 0.05ha) would comfortably accommodate the above requirements. This would include the need to accommodate hard standing for a modern-sized touring caravan of up to 8m length; car parking spaces meeting the current East Sussex standards; plus, hard standing for storage shed and drying areas, and a garden/amenity area in addition to the list above. There is also a need to provide a minimum 3m firebreak from pitch boundary and between amenity blocks, touring caravan standing and static standing.

8.63 Where more than one pitch is anticipated on a site, there may be opportunities for shared facilities between households, which could allow larger sites to accommodate more pitches than indicated above.

8.64 In terms of overall site size, the now withdrawn Good Practice Guidance notes that a maximum of fifteen pitches should be considered appropriate unless there is clear evidence to suggest that a larger site is preferred by members of the local Gypsy and Traveller community and would meet all other planning policy criteria. The GTAA (2022) indicates that smaller sites are generally more likely to be successfully integrated into their surroundings.

8.65 In terms of location, it should be noted that any Gypsy and Traveller pitch or Travelling Showpeople plot that is located within the 400m - 7km zone of influence around the Ashdown Forest SPA will require an assessment under the Habitats Regulations to be undertaken and appropriate mitigation provided as required under policy NE5 (Ashdown Forest SPA) of the Local Plan. Where development is within or adjacent to the Pevensey Levels hydrological catchment area, it will require an assessment under the Habitats Regulations and compliance with policy CC8 (Sustainable Drainage) of the Local Plan.

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople – Safeguarding Sites

8.66 Authorised permanent Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites are safeguarded as they make an important contribution towards meeting identified accommodation needs.

8.67 Policy HO10 safeguards lawful permanent Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites from redevelopment for alternative uses unless they are no longer needed or equivalent

or improved replacement provision is secured. This approach will ensure that the existing supply of pitches, plots and yards is maintained whilst allowing flexibility where sites are no longer suitable or required.

Policy HO10 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople – Safeguarding Sites

Policy HO10: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople - Safeguarding Sites

1. Authorised permanent Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites will be safeguarded for their existing use. Proposals resulting in the loss, redevelopment or change of use of such sites must be supported by robust evidence demonstrating compliance with this policy. The Council may require the independent verification of any evidence submitted, at the applicant's expense.

2. The loss of an authorised permanent Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople site will not be permitted unless:

   a) the site is no longer required to meet identified needs or is unsuitable for continued use and equivalent or improved replacement provision is secured in a suitable location, with equal or better access to services, and is available for occupation before the existing site is lost.

3. Where a site is subject to a personal planning permission or personal occupancy condition, applicants should seek the removal or variation of that condition to enable the continued use of the site by Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople before alternative uses are considered.

4. Where replacement provision is required under this policy, planning conditions and/or planning obligations will be used to ensure that the replacement site is available and capable of occupation before the existing site is lost.

Supporting Text

8.68 Proposals involving the loss of an authorised permanent Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showpeople site must provide robust evidence that Policy HO10 is satisfied. Any required replacement provision must offer equivalent or improved accommodation and access to services and facilities and be available for occupation before the existing site is lost. This will be secured through the use of planning conditions, planning obligations or other appropriate legal mechanisms. The Council may require independent verification of the evidence submitted at the applicant's expense.

Specialist Housing for Older People and Vulnerable Groups

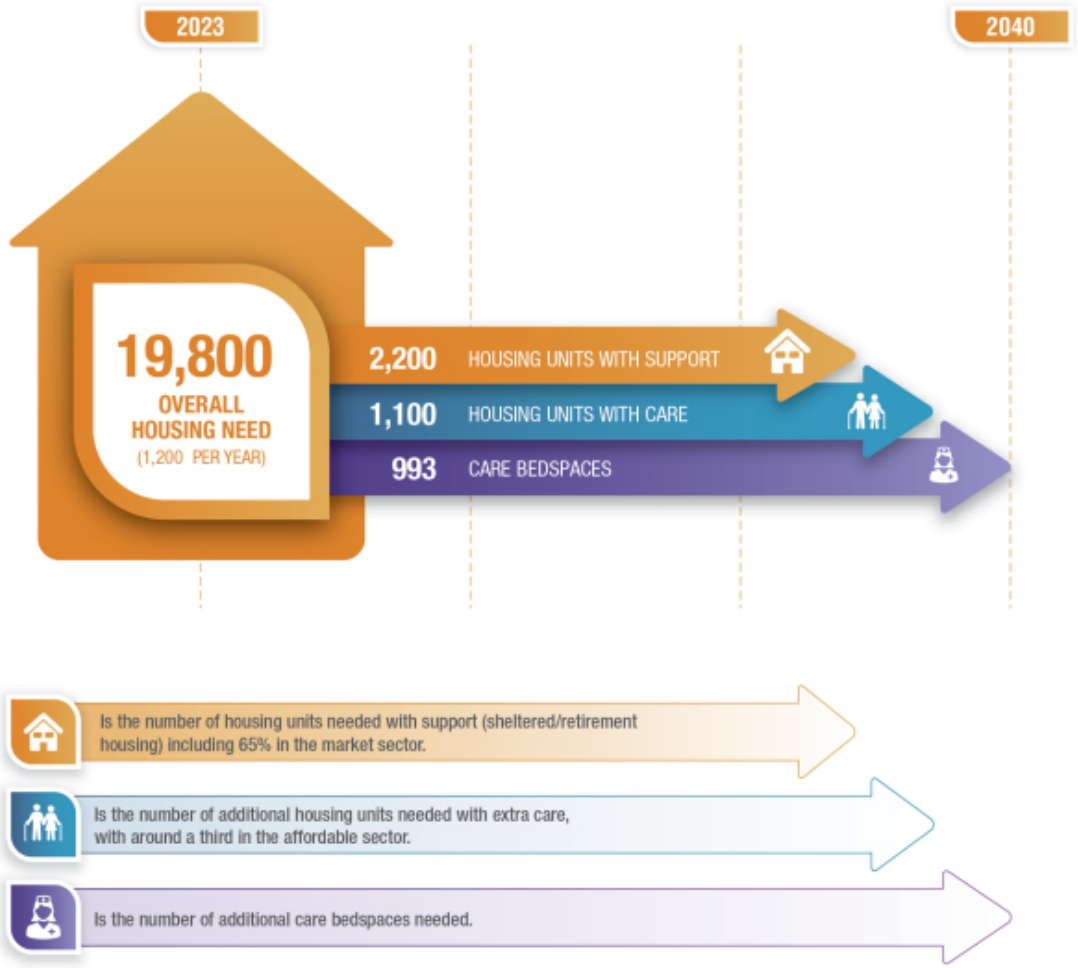
8.69 Wealden's ageing population[209] will increase demand for specialist and accessible accommodation including supported, sheltered and extra care housing, retirement living and retirement villages and homes that support people with dementia or mobility impairments. Such

209 See the Wealden Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) (January 2026) at Section 11.

provision can enable residents to live independently for longer and improve health and well-being outcomes.

8.70 The Council's Housing Strategy[210] and the East Sussex County Council Plan [211] identify the provision of suitable accommodation for older and vulnerable people as an important priority.

Figure 21 Older Persons Accommodation Needs



8.71 To ensure that residents have access to services, facilities, healthcare and public transport, specialist housing development should be located in sustainable locations. Policy HO11 therefore supports the delivery of specialist accommodation within development boundaries and on strategic allocations where proposals are accessible, well designed and meet identified needs.

210 Wealden District Council's Housing Strategy 2025-28

211 East Sussex County Council Plan 2025/26

Policy HO11 Specialist Housing for Older and Vulnerable People

Policy HO11: Specialist Housing for Older People and Vulnerable Groups

New Specialist Housing for Older People and Vulnerable Groups

1. Proposals for specialist housing for older people and vulnerable groups, including supported living, extra care housing, retirement housing and residential care accommodation, will be supported where:

a) the proposal addresses an identified need having regard to the Council's most up-to-date evidence of housing, care and support needs;
b) the site is within a development boundary, forms part of a site allocation or is otherwise sustainably located, with convenient access appropriate to occupiers needs to local services, facilities, healthcare and public transport;
c) the development provides a high-quality, accessible and adaptable living environment that meets the intended occupiers' needs and supports independent living, health, wellbeing and social inclusion, in accordance with Policy HO12; and
d) the proposal accords with all other relevant policies of the development plan.

2. The Council will support the delivery of a range of specialist accommodation types to meet identified needs, including accommodation for older people, people with disabilities, people with learning disabilities or autism, people with mental health needs and other groups requiring specialist housing and support.

3. Proposals that provide affordable specialist accommodation, including affordable rented and shared ownership housing, will be particularly supported where they address an identified local need.

Design Requirements

4. Specialist housing must provide accessible and inclusive internal and external spaces, proportionate private or communal amenities and facilities and appropriate parking, servicing, cycle parking, refuse storage and electric vehicle charging in accordance with East Sussex County Council's adopted parking standards (and any successor standards) and Local Plan design policies.

Loss of Existing Specialist Accommodation

5. Proposals involving the loss of existing specialist housing or accommodation for older people and vulnerable groups will only be permitted where:

a) there is no longer an identified need for the accommodation; or
b) suitable replacement accommodation of an equivalent or improved standard will be provided in an accessible location and there will be no net loss of specialist provision within the local area; or
c) the accommodation is no longer fit for purpose and cannot reasonably be adapted, refurbished or redeveloped for specialist accommodation use.

6. Applications proposing the loss of specialist accommodation must be supported by robust and up-to-date evidence. Where necessary, the Council may require independent verification at the applicant's expense.

Supporting Text

8.72 The loss of specialist accommodation will only be supported where Policy HO11 is satisfied. Replacement provision should offer as a minimum, at least equivalent capacity and quality in the same or a suitable, accessible nearby settlement. Where continued specialist use is considered to be impracticable or unviable, proportionate evidence must demonstrate why refurbishment, adaptation or redevelopment is not feasible. This may require independent verification at the applicant's expense.

Residential Accessibility Standards

8.73 The LHNA (January 2026) identifies substantial growth in the number of older people and people with mobility impairments, together with a need for wheelchair user homes in both market and affordable tenures over the plan period. New housing should therefore be capable of responding to changing accessibility needs over occupants' lifetimes.

8.74 Whilst Building Regulations require all new homes are required to meet baseline accessibility requirements, local planning authorities may require higher standards where a need has been identified and where these requirements are demonstrated to be viable.

8.75 The LHNA recommends that all new homes should meet Building Regulation M4(2) Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings standard. It also identifies the need for a proportion of new market homes to meet Building Regulations M4(3)(a) Wheelchair Adaptable Dwelling standards and new affordable homes to meet Building Regulations M4(3)(b) Wheelchair Accessible Dwelling standards. The Council's Viability Assessment concludes that these standards are deliverable. This is reflected in the policy wording for Policy HO12.

Policy HO12 Residential Accessibility Standards

Policy HO12: Residential Accessibility Standards

1. All new dwellings will be required to meet the Building Regulations M4(2) Accessible and Adaptable Dwelling standard, unless they are provided to Building Regulations M4(3)(a) Wheelchair Adaptable Dwellings standards or M4(3)(b) Wheelchair Accessible Dwellings standards, or subsequent government standards.

2. On developments providing 30 or more (net) dwellings, a minimum of 3% of market dwellings shall be provided to Building Regulations M4(3)(a) Wheelchair Adaptable Dwelling standards, or any successor standard.

3. Where affordable housing is provided on developments of 30 or more (net) dwellings, a minimum of 10% of affordable dwellings shall be provided to Building Regulation M4(3)(b) Wheelchair Accessible Dwelling standards, unless an alternative proportion is justified through up-to-date evidence of need.

4. Exceptions to the requirements of this policy will only be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated through robust evidence that compliance would be impracticable, unviable, or would result in unacceptable harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset and where no reasonable alternative solution exists.

Supporting Text

8.76 The PPG recognises that site-specific circumstances may affect the ability of development proposals to meet the accessibility standards set out in Building Regulations M4(2), M4(3)(a) (Wheelchair Adaptable Dwellings) and M4(3)(b) (Wheelchair Accessible Dwellings). Where site-specific constraints make full compliance with Policy HO12 impracticable, such circumstances may include site topography, flood risk requirements or existing building constraints, the application must provide a robust justification explaining the constraint and the extent to which accessibility can be achieved. Compliance will normally be secured by planning condition.

8.77 Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how the requirements of Policy HO12 will be achieved, including through plans and supporting information where necessary. Where compliance with any requirement is not proposed, applications should clearly identify the reasons and provide supporting evidence.

8.78 Where the application of the percentages set out in Policy HO12 results in a fraction of a dwelling, the requirement will be rounded up to the nearest whole dwelling to ensure the delivery of accessible and adaptable homes.

Internal Residential Space Standards for New Dwellings

8.79 Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS)[212] set minimum gross internal floor areas and dimensions and storage requirements for new homes. Requiring compliance will help ensure that homes remain functional and capable of meeting household needs over time.

8.80 The Council's LHNA identifies a need for a broad range of housing types and sizes, including smaller homes for younger households, families and older people wishing to downsize.

8.81 The Council's Viability Assessment concludes that the requirement would not have a significant impact on the viability or deliverability of residential development. Policy HO13 therefore requires new residential development to accord with the NDSS, subject to limited exceptions for existing buildings or heritage assets where robust evidence shows that full compliance is impracticable.

Policy HO13 Internal Residential Space Standards for New Dwellings

> **Policy HO13: Internal Residential Space Standards or New Dwellings**
>
> 1. All new residential development, including dwellings created through subdivision, conversion or change of use of existing buildings, shall comply with Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS), or any successor national standard.

Supporting Text

8.82 The Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) set minimum gross internal floor areas and built-in storage requirements for new homes. The standards apply according to the number of bedrooms, number of occupants and the number of storeys within a dwelling.

212 Technical Housing Standards – Nationally described space standards

Table 8 Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (m2)

Number of Bedrooms(b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwelling	2 storey dwelling	3 storey dwelling	Built-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37) *			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

**Where a 1b1p has a shower room instead of a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39m2 to 37m2, as shown bracketed.*

8.83 The Council recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where full compliance with the Nationally Described Space Standards cannot be achieved. Such circumstances are likely to be limited and may include the conversion of listed buildings, designated heritage assets or other existing buildings where compliance would result in unacceptable harm to their significance or would not be practically achievable. In such cases, applicants will be required to demonstrate through robust evidence why compliance cannot reasonably be achieved and how the proposal will nevertheless provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation.

8.84 Compliance with Policy HO13 will normally be secured through the planning application process and, where necessary, by planning condition. Applicants should demonstrate how the proposed development complies with the NDSS through the submission of appropriately detailed floor plans and accommodation schedules.

Rural Workers Accommodation

8.85 National planning policy seeks to avoid isolated homes in the countryside unless specific circumstances apply. A rural worker's dwelling may be justified where an essential operational need requires a full-time worker to live at or near the enterprise. However, advancements in technology, changing working practices and the availability of accommodation within nearby settlements mean that a requirement to live on-site will not arise in all cases. Personal

preference, convenience, recruitment, security or general business efficiency are not sufficient. Policy HO14 therefore requires evidence of functional need, suitable alternatives and the enterprise's financial sustainability.

Policy HO14 Rural Workers Accommodation

Policy HO14 Rural Workers Accommodation

1. Proposals for permanent rural workers' dwellings outside development boundaries will be supported where:

a) an essential functional need for a full-time worker to live at or near the enterprise;
b) no suitable alternative nearby accommodation exists or can reasonably be provided through the use or conversion of existing buildings;
c) the enterprise has been established for at least three years, is financially viable for at least one and is likely to remain financially viable, or where newer, can demonstrate sound financial prospects;
d) accommodation not previously disposed of from the holding; and
e) the dwelling is appropriately sited being closely related to existing buildings where practicable, proportionate to operational need and avoids unacceptable environmental or amenity harm.

Temporary Rural Workers Dwellings

1. Temporary rural workers' accommodation will be supported where there is a clearly demonstrated essential need, and the enterprise has not yet established financial justification for a permanent dwelling.

Occupancy Conditions

2. Permanent and temporary rural workers' dwellings will be subject to occupancy restrictions limiting occupation to persons solely or mainly employed, or last employed, in agriculture, forestry or another qualifying rural enterprise, together with any resident dependants.

3. An occupancy restriction will only be permitted where robust evidence demonstrates that:

a) the dwelling is no longer needed within the holding or local area;
b) the enterprise is no longer financially viable; and
c) the dwelling has been continuously marketed for at least 18 months at a price reflecting the occupancy restriction.

4. The Council may require independent assessment of viability, demand or marketing evidence at the applicant's expense.

Supporting Text

8.86 The Council will consider whether the identified need can be met by an existing dwelling on the holding or a building capable of conversion. The planning and ownership history will be considered where suitable accommodation has been sold separately, converted or otherwise disposed of.

8.87 Any dwelling must be proportionate to the operational needs of the enterprise and the accommodation requirements of the worker and their immediate family. Floorspace and residential curtilage should not exceed what is reasonably necessary, having regard to Policy HO13. Proposals exceeding those standards must provide a clear business justification.

Occupancy condition

8.88 Permission for a rural worker's dwelling will normally be subject to a planning condition and/or planning obligation restricting occupation for persons employed, or last employed, in agriculture, forestry or another qualifying rural enterprise, together with any resident dependants.

8.89 Proposals seeking the removal of an occupancy restriction will be expected to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of Policy HO14. The marketing should reflect the occupancy restriction affecting the property and demonstrate that there is no realistic demand from qualifying rural workers or enterprises. The Council may require independent verification of the evidence submitted.

Conversion of Rural Buildings to Residential Use

8.90 Wealden's rural area contains a number of agricultural and other rural buildings that may become surplus to operational requirements over time. The sensitive re-use of existing buildings can contribute to the rural economy, support the conservation of the built environment and reduce the need for new development in the countryside.

8.91 The Council’s preference is for redundant rural buildings to be reused for economy, tourism, recreational or other rural enterprise purposes where these uses are appropriate and capable of supporting the long-term sustainability of rural communities. Policy EC4 (Rural Economy) sets out the Council's approach to proposals for rural economic development and the re-use of rural buildings for employment-generating uses.

8.92 The residential conversion of a rural building may be appropriate where economic, tourism or recreation reuse is not suitable, achievable or viable, and the proposal complies with Policy HO15 and all other relevant policies of the Local Plan.

8.93 National planning policy seeks to support sustainable development in rural areas whilst avoiding patterns of development that would result in an unsustainable reliance on the private car. Accordingly, residential conversions should be located where future occupiers have reasonable access to services, facilities and public transport. Buildings in isolated locations, or those requiring substantial new access infrastructure or other significant alterations to facilitate residential use, are less likely to represent sustainable development.

Policy HO15 Conversion of Rural Buildings to a Residential Use

Policy HO15: Conversion of Rural Buildings to Residential Use

1. The conversion of existing rural buildings to residential use outside the development boundaries will be supported where:

a) the building is of permanent and substantial construction, capable of conversion without significant rebuilding, extension or alteration and its residential conversion represents the optimal viable use, including where it is a heritage asset;

b) where relevant, the proposal complies with Policy EC8 (The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism Use) and it has been demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of the building continuing in, or being reused for an employment, tourism, recreational or other appropriate rural economic use;

c) the proposal would not prejudice the continued operation or future management of any rural enterprise or agricultural unit;

d) the building makes a positive contribution to the character of the countryside, landscape, farmstead or historic environment and, the conversion, alterations and residential use would conserve its character and appearance, setting and heritage significance without unacceptable harm to landscape, biodiversity or visual amenity;

e) satisfactory living conditions would be provided for future occupiers, having regard to noise, odour, farm operations and other nearby activities;

f) the residential curtilage, ancillary buildings, garaging, hardstanding, domestic paraphernalia and means of enclosure are limited to what is reasonably required, conserves rural character and any historic farmstead hierarchy and may be controlled through, planning conditions or the removal of permitted development rights, where necessary; and

g) the proposal accords with all other relevant policies of the Local Plan.

Supporting Text

8.94 Applicants must demonstrate that the building is structurally capable of conversion without substantial reconstruction or rebuilding. Any necessary extensions or alterations required to facilitate the conversion should be limited in scale and be proportionate to the existing building. The Council may require independent review of structural or technical evidence at the applicant's expense.

8.95 Applicants must demonstrate that the building has been actively marketed on realistic terms for a continuous period of at least 18 months. Evidence should be supported by written confirmation from a suitably qualified commercial agent demonstrating that there is no reasonable market demand.

8.96 The Council will consider, on a site-specific basis, whether planning conditions or planning obligations are necessary to protect the character of the building, its setting and the wider landscape. This may include the removal of permitted development rights for extensions, alterations, outbuildings, means of enclosure or other forms of development where these could adversely affect the character of the building, its rural setting or the surrounding landscape.

Park Homes and Residential Caravan Sites

8.97 Park homes and permanent residential caravan sites contribute to the diversity of the district's housing stock and can provide an alternative form of accommodation for a range of households, including older people and those seeking lower-cost housing options. Existing sites form an established part of Wealden's housing offer and can support the provision of smaller homes within a managed community environment.

8.98 Whilst park homes and residential caravan sites can make a positive contribution to meeting housing needs, proposals must be located in sustainable locations where residents have appropriate access to services, facilities and public transport. The expansion of existing sites, and the provision of new sites where appropriate, can contribute towards housing choice and help diversify the district's housing stock. Policy HO16 therefore supports proposals that provide well-designed accommodation and accord with the spatial strategy and other relevant policies of this Plan.

Policy HO16 Park Homes and Residential Caravan Sites

Policy HO16: Park Homes and Residential Caravan Sites

1. Proposals for new park homes or permanent residential caravan sites within development boundaries, and small-scale extensions to existing park home or permanent residential caravan sites located outside development boundaries, will be supported where they contribute towards meeting identified housing needs and:

a) respond positively to local character and landscape through scale, design and layout;

b) the site is not located within Flood Zones 2 or 3, areas of poor ground stability, or other locations where flood risk or land conditions would result in an unacceptable risk to occupants;

c) provide suitable on-site facilities and recreational provision, parking circulation, servicing, and refuse and recycling storage, and safe pedestrian and vehicular access without an unacceptable effect on highway safety or capacity; and

d) are reasonably accessible to services, facilities and public transport by sustainable modes and avoid unacceptable effects on neighbouring amenity, including privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight, noise, odour and disturbance.

Supporting Text

8.99 Policy HO16 sets out the criteria for which proposals for new park homes and permanent residential caravan sites, and extensions to existing sites, will be assessed. Such accommodation contributes towards meeting housing needs, including those of older people seeking smaller, lower-maintenance homes.

8.100 New sites and extensions to existing ones outside development boundaries should demonstrate that they have good access to a nearby sustainable settlement, day-to-day services, facilities and public transport, with safe opportunities for walking and cycling, to minimise reliance on private vehicles. New sites should provide appropriate on-site facilities and amenity provision

proportionate to the scale and nature of the development. This may include communal facilities, open space and recreational areas where justified by the size of the proposal.

Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside

8.101 National planning policy seeks to direct new housing to sustainable locations and to avoid isolated new homes in the countryside unless specific exceptions apply. However, the replacement of an existing lawful dwelling can represent an appropriate form of development where it maintains the existing housing stock without increasing the overall number of dwellings in the countryside.

8.102 In some cases, replacement may also secure enhancements to the appearance of the site and its contribution to the surrounding landscape. Policy HO17 supports the replacement of a lawful dwelling outside development boundaries where this would not increase the number of dwellings and would improve the home's quality, accessibility, design or environmental performance. Replacement dwellings should be proportionate to their setting and avoid unacceptable impacts on landscape character, designated landscapes, heritage assets, biodiversity and neighbouring amenity.

Policy HO17 Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside

Policy HO17: Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside

1. The replacement of an existing dwelling outside a development boundary will be supported where:
   a) the existing dwelling is lawful, remains in residential use and has not been abandoned;
   b) the scale, height, form, massing, floorspace and external appearance of the replacement dwelling would be proportionate to the existing dwelling and would not be materially more intrusive, unless exceptional circumstances demonstrate that a larger dwelling would avoid additional landscape, visual or amenity harm;
   c) it is located on or in close proximity to the existing footprint, and within the residential curtilage, unless an alternative siting would deliver demonstrable landscape, heritage, access, biodiversity or residential amenity benefits;
   d) it conserves and, where possible, enhances the character and appearance of the countryside, having regard to landscape character, heritage assets, settlement pattern and local distinctiveness;
   e) safe and suitable access, parking, servicing and private amenity space can be provided; and
   f) it would cause unacceptable harm to neighbouring living conditions, including privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight, noise or disturbance.
2. Where necessary, planning conditions will be used to:
   a) remove permitted development rights where extensions or alterations could undermine this policy; and/or
   b) require demolition and removal of the existing dwelling where the replacement is permitted in an alternative location.

Supporting Text

8.103 Policy HO17 permits one-for-one replacement of existing lawful dwellings that remain capable of lawful residential occupation. It does not apply where the residential use has been abandoned, which will be assessed on a case-by-case basis having regard to relevant planning circumstances, including the condition of the building, the period of non-occupation and the extent to which the lawful residential use is capable of being resumed.

8.104 Within the High Weald National Landscape, or its setting, proposals must also comply with Policy NE7 (High Weald National Landscape). The scale, siting, design and visual impact of the replacement dwelling should conserve and enhance the landscape's natural beauty and special qualities.

8.105 Comparable scale will be assessed by comparing the footprint, floorspace, height, bulk, massing and landscape impact of the existing and proposed dwellings, having regards to the site's planning history.

8.106 Where necessary to secure compliance with Policy HO17, planning conditions may remove permitted development rights for extensions, outbuildings and other alterations that could harm the countryside, landscape quality or the dwelling's setting.

Extensions and Alterations to Existing Dwellings, Outbuildings and Annexes

8.107 Extensions, alterations, outbuildings and annexes can help households adapt their homes for changing needs, including accessibility, dependent relatives, multi-generational living and home working. Where appropriately designed and located, these forms of development can contribute positively to the adaptation and continued use of the district's housing stock.

8.108 Where planning permission is required, proposals will be assessed against Policy HO18 and other relevant policies. Development should be proportionate to the host dwelling and its setting and avoid unacceptable impacts on local character, residential amenity or the wider environment.

Policy HO18 Extensions and Alterations to Existing Dwellings, Outbuildings and Annexes

Policy HO18: Extensions and Alterations to Existing Dwellings, Outbuildings and Annexes

1. Proposals for extensions and alterations to existing dwellings, and for outbuildings and annexes within their curtilages, will be supported where they:

a) respond positively to the scale, form, proportions, materials, height, massing and architectural character of the host dwelling and the surrounding area;

b) retain sufficient private amenity space, parking and servicing arrangement for occupiers;

c) in the case of extensions and alterations, remain physically and visually subordinate to the host dwelling, having regard to its original form and the cumulative impact of previous extensions and alterations;

d) in the case of outbuildings, are appropriately sited and designed in relation to the character, appearance and setting of the host dwelling and the surrounding area; and

e) in the case of annexes, remain functionally related to the host dwelling and are designed and located such that they cannot readily function as an independent dwelling. Detached annexes should be located in close proximity to the host dwelling. Applicants should demonstrate why existing buildings within the curtilage cannot reasonably be converted before proposing a new detached annexe.

2. Where necessary, planning conditions and/or planning obligations will be used to:

a) ensure that an annexe remains ancillary to the host dwelling and is not occupied or disposed of separately; and.

b) remove permitted development rights where further extensions, alterations or ancillary buildings could harm local character, landscape quality or the neighbouring amenity.

Supporting Text

8.109 Annexes should be physically attached to the host dwelling, where practicable. A detached annexe may be permitted where it is close to and retains a clear functional relationship with the host dwelling.

8.110 In considering proposals for detached annexes, the Council will have regard to their siting, design, scale and relationship to the host dwelling, and whether they could reasonably function as a separate self-contained dwelling.

8.111 Where necessary, planning conditions and/or planning obligations will secure an annexe's ancillary relationship to the host dwelling and present its occupation or disposal as a separate planning unit.

Extensions to Residential Gardens

8.112 Extending residential garden curtilages into the countryside can introduce domestic features, buildings, boundary treatments, lighting, parking and other paraphernalia associated with residential use that harm rural character, landscape quality and openness of the surrounding area. Particular care is required within or affecting the setting of South Downs National Park and the High Weald National Landscape.

8.113 Policy HO19 requires garden extensions to be modest in scale, form a logical extension to the existing curtilage, reflect local character and form, and integrate with existing landscape features. Boundaries should be clearly defined where appropriate and must avoid intrusive domestic encroachment into the wider countryside.

Policy HO19 Extensions to Residential Gardens

Policy HO19: Extensions to Residential Gardens

1. Extension of residential garden curtilages in the countryside will be supported where they:

a) are modest in scale and proportionate to the existing curtilage;

b) form a logical and visually coherent extension to the existing garden that responds to the pattern of development and established landscape features, including hedgerows, watercourses, woodland and field boundaries;

c) conserve rural character and avoid unacceptable domestic encroachment and the erosion of countryside character through domestic uses, structures, parking, lighting or other domestic paraphernalia; and

d) avoid unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity, privacy or outlook.

2. Within the High Weald National Landscape, or where affecting the setting of the SDNP, proposals conserve and enhance natural beauty, landscape character and special qualities of these nationally protected landscapes.

3. Where necessary, planning conditions and/or planning obligations will be used to remove permitted development rights where outbuildings, hardstanding, means of enclosure, exterior lighting or other forms of development could harm the character and appearance of the countryside.

Supporting Text

8.114 Where necessary and reasonable, to protect the character of the countryside, landscape quality, heritage significance or local amenity, planning conditions may remove permitted development rights for extensions, outbuildings, means of enclosure, exterior lighting and the provision of hard surfaces.

Wealden
District Council

09
Infrastructure



Wealden
Local Plan

Introduction

9.1 The Council recognises that the growth aspirations set out in this Local Plan are dependent on the timely, proportionate and coordinated infrastructure provision. This includes transport, utilities, waste and recycling facilities, digital infrastructure, green infrastructure, education, healthcare, community facilities and other public services. Infrastructure must be delivered in the right location, at the right scale and at the right time to support sustainable development and existing and future communities, hence this being a strategic objective of this Local Plan.

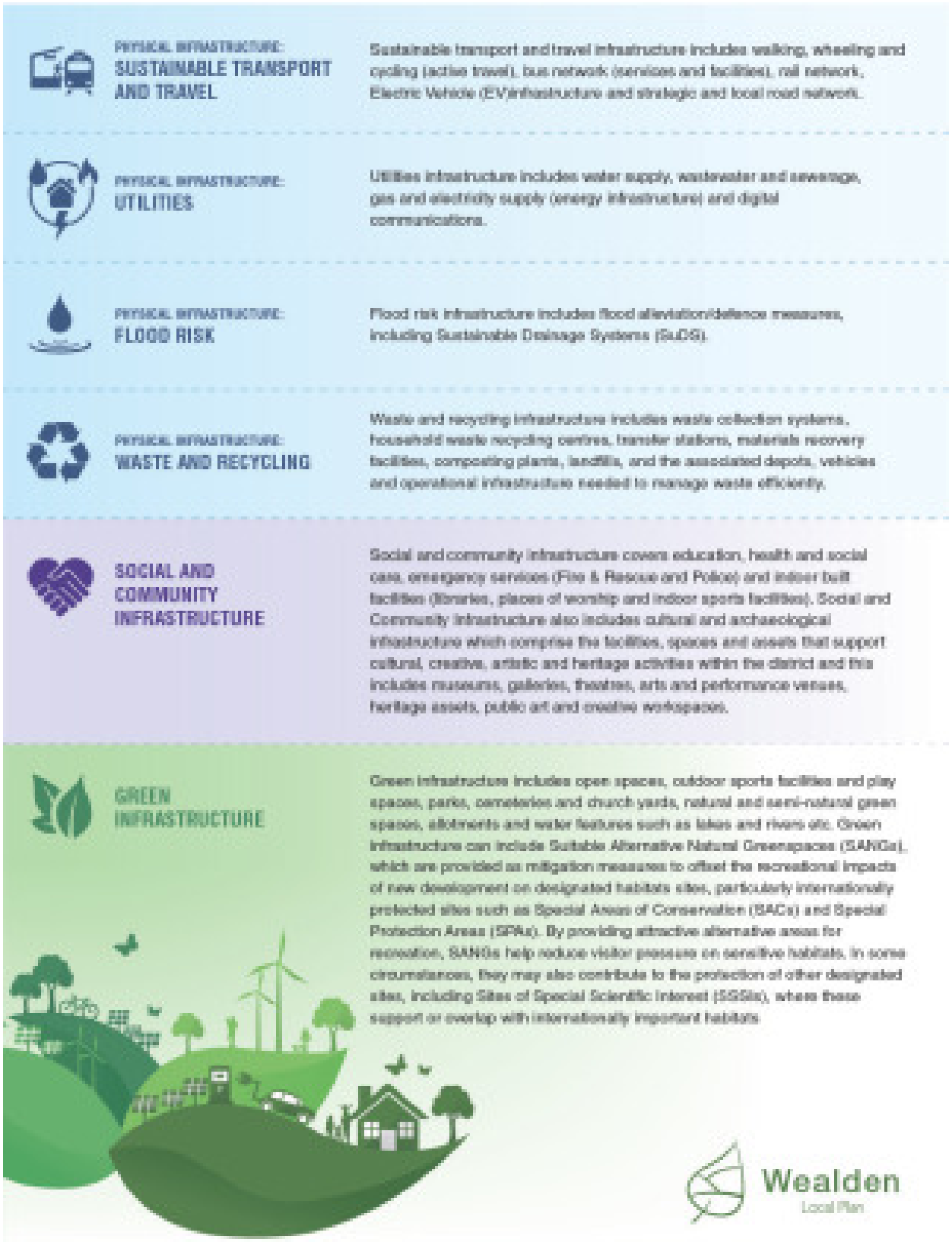
9.2 The Council has published an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)[213] which has been presented as an interactive StoryMap and an Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (IDS)[214] which identifies existing infrastructure capacity, deficiencies, future requirements, delivery timescales, funding needs and potential funding sources. These documents have been informed by engagement with infrastructure providers, statutory bodies, service operators, Parish and Town Councils and other stakeholders.

9.3 As a live document, the IDS will be kept under review as new evidence emerges and will help guide infrastructure priorities, developer requirements and funding decisions. Developer contributions will only be sought where they are necessary to mitigate the impacts of development, whether individually or cumulatively. The Council will continue to work with infrastructure providers and funding bodies to secure wider infrastructure improvements where these cannot be funded through development alone.

213 Wealden District Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) September 2026

214 Wealden District Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (IDS) September 2026

Figure 22 Three Main Types of Infrastructure



Policy INF1 Infrastructure Provision, Delivery, and Funding

Policy INF1: Infrastructure Provision, Delivery, and Funding

1. New development must demonstrate that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists or that any necessary new or improved infrastructure will be provided to support development and mitigate its impacts. Infrastructure must be delivered at the appropriate time, including before occupation or at another agreed trigger point where necessary, and secured through planning conditions, Section 106 planning obligations or other appropriate legal agreements.

2. The timing of infrastructure provision must be agreed with the Council, in consultation with infrastructure providers, to ensure that necessary infrastructure is delivered and operational prior to occupation, or at another agreed trigger point. Where development is phased, infrastructure delivery must be aligned with the agreed phasing of development.

3. Where a monitor and manage approach is adopted, infrastructure delivery will be coordinated through partnership working with the Council, developers and relevant infrastructure providers through agreed monitoring, triggers and interventions, which shall be underpinned by the use of planning conditions and section 106 obligations as necessary.

4. The provision of infrastructure facilities such as those relating to healthcare and education should be provided in locations that relate well to both existing and new development, in consultation with the relevant infrastructure providers. They should be located in areas well served by existing or new/enhanced public transport services and walking, wheeling and cycling routes. Infrastructure should be designed in a way to ensure accessibility for all users.

Viability

5. Where justified, legal agreements will include viability review mechanisms to secure policy compliant infrastructure or contributions if scheme viability improves. Applicants must provide an open-book viability assessment where they seek to demonstrate viability constraints, with independent review at the applicant's expense.

Supporting Text

9.4 Applicants should use the latest IDP, IDS and relevant evidence base documents to identify infrastructure requirements and expected mitigation. Infrastructure matters should be discussed at pre-application stage where relevant.

9.5 Where a monitor and manage approach is adopted for transport infrastructure, infrastructure delivery will be coordinated through partnership working with the Council, developers and relevant infrastructure providers. Consistent with Department for Transport[215], there should be no presumption that strategic transport infrastructure required to support growth will be funded through future investment programmes, and realistic delivery and funding mechanisms should be identified at an early stage.

215 DfT Circular 01/2022

9.6 The delivery of relevant infrastructure will be secured either through direct provision by the developer or financial contributions, such as CIL and / or Section 106 planning obligations. Contributions towards infrastructure maintenance will also be secured where justified and compliant with the statutory tests for planning obligations.

9.7 Viability reviews allow infrastructure requirements to be reassessed at agreed stages, particularly on large or phased schemes where viability may change. Review mechanisms and any clawback provisions will be secured through the Section 106 agreement where justified.

Active and Sustainable Travel

9.8 High Levels of car ownership, rural connectivity challenges and gaps in sustainable transport infrastructure mean that new development must help reduce the need to travel by private car and support safe, accessible and inclusive alternatives. Better connected walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport networks will support healthier, more inclusive and lower-carbon communities. These measures will play an important role in helping to meet the Council's carbon reduction objectives.

9.9 Policy INF2 applies a vision-led approach to transport planning by requiring proportionate evidence, mitigation and investment in active and sustainable travel. The Council will have regard to Active Travel England guidance, ESCC guidance and other relevant evidence when assessing opportunities to improve connectivity and reduce reliance on private vehicles.

Policy INF2 Sustainable Transport and Active Travel

Policy INF2: Sustainable Transport and Active Travel

1. New development will be supported where it:
   a) Is situated in a sustainable location, or can be made sustainable through the provision of appropriate infrastructure and services;
   b) Provides safe and convenient access to schools, jobs, shops, services and public transport;
   c) Protects, and as required, improves existing transport networks, public rights of way and active travel routes;
   d) Contributes to safe, inclusive and integrated walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport networks;
   e) Is supported by proportionate transport evidence, which may include a Transport Assessment, Transport Statement, Non-Motorised User Audit and Sustainable Travel Plan where required, particularly where impacts on the Strategic Road Network may arise;
   f) Provides mitigation necessary to address development impacts;
   g) Supports alternative transport initiatives where appropriate, including car clubs, car sharing schemes and cycle hire schemes; and
   h) Provides appropriate cycle parking, car parking and electric vehicle charging infrastructure in accordance with ESCC guidance.

2. Development proposals must demonstrate that transport design, active travel connectivity, public transport accessibility and parking provision have been integrated into the design process from the outset.

3. In terms of design, development will be supported where:

   a) The nature and level of traffic can be accommodated without adversely impacting upon the safety, amenity or character of the surrounding area;
   b) Roads and junctions within the development, including those to be altered or added as a result of the development, are designed, and delivered in accordance with the appropriate highway guidance with particular emphasis on the safety of all active travel users and motorised vehicle users;
   c) It provides suitable and safe access, turning and servicing arrangements for refuse vehicles, emergency service vehicles and deliveries; and
   d) The development provides a design and layout that will deliver and encourage slower driving speeds prioritising walking, wheeling and cycling as appropriate to the scheme.

Supporting Text

9.10 The Council will continue to work closely with ESCC and National Highways, as the respective Highway Authorities, in considering the impacts of development on the transport network. This partnership working will ensure that new development does not result in a severe residual impact on the operation, safety or accessibility of the local, major or strategic road network and that it provides meaningful opportunities for active connectivity.

9.11 Active and sustainable travel can improve health, reduce inequalities, support social interaction and reduce reliance on private vehicles. Development should therefore provide safe, direct and attractive routes to key destinations, designed for people of all ages and abilities.

9.12 The Council will also liaise with partners to ensure that the information required to support development proposals is identified at an early stage in the planning process. We will also work proactively with developers to identify the right opportunities for proposals to contribute to sustainable development and sustainable travel. New development will be expected to provide mitigation measures to ensure that it does not result in a severe impact on the transport system.

9.13 Developers should demonstrate that active travel infrastructure has been designed having regards to Active Travel England's (ATE) design assistance tools and planning application assessment toolkit (including Local Transport Note Cycling Infrastructure Design 1/20)[216]. Development proposals should also demonstrate how they have incorporated the Active Design principles set out by Sport England[217], ensuring that the built environment promotes physical activity, supports mental wellbeing, and enables healthier, more active communities. These principles should be embedded from the earliest stages of site planning and layout design to ensure that new development contributes positively to long-term health outcomes and inclusive mobility.

216 Cycle Infrastructure Design (LTN 1/20), July 2020

217 Active Design Guidance, Sports England

Vision-Led Transport Planning (Vision and Validate Approach)

9.14 The Council supports a vision-led transport planning approach, consistent with national policy, the DfT Circular 01/2022[218] and East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4[219]. This approach identifies desired transport outcomes first and uses monitoring, triggers and targeted interventions to manage impacts over time.

9.15 A vision-led approach to transport planning enables a more flexible 'monitor and manage' framework whereby transport outcomes are regularly reviewed and additional interventions can be introduced where necessary. The Council will continue to work closely with ESCC (or successor bodies), National Highways and other transport partners to implement this approach, ensuring that development is directed towards the most accessible locations, reduces the need to travel by private car, and supports the delivery of high-quality active travel and public transport infrastructure. In some locations, targeted transport improvements may also help unlock further sustainable development opportunities.

East Sussex Countywide Transport Model (ESCTM)

9.16 Strategic transport impacts have been assessed through the East Sussex Countywide Transport Model and the Wealden Local Plan Shared Transport Evidence Base. These identify impacts and proportionate mitigation measures to support the Local Plan strategy which aligns with the objectives of East Sussex LTP4 and the Transport Strategy for the South East (2025)[220].

Transport assessment, Transport statement or Travel Plan

9.17 Development proposals must be supported by proportionate transport evidence where they are likely to generate significant transport movements or impacts. This may include a Transport Assessment, Transport Statement, Travel Plan and/or Non-Motorised User Audit, prepared in accordance with national guidance, ESCC guidance and the Council's validation requirements. The implementation of a travel plan will be secured as part of a planning permission and agreed and monitored through a Section 106 planning obligation.

9.18 Transport evidence must assess cumulative impacts with relevant Local Plan allocations and committed development. Applicants are strongly encouraged to agree the scope of transport work with the Council, ESCC and, where relevant, National Highways before submitting an application.

Parking Provision

9.19 The Council supports the appropriate provision of parking in new development and will ensure that such parking is provided and maintained to meet the needs of local communities both now and in the future. This includes parking for vehicles, bikes and powered two-wheel vehicles, for example.

9.20 National policy requires local parking standards to consider accessibility, development type and mix, public transport availability, local car ownership and the need for electric and

218 Department for Transport (DfT) Circular 01/2022

219 East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4

220 Transport for the South East, Transport Strategy 2025

ultra-low emission vehicle infrastructure. Maximum parking standards should only be used where clearly justified by local circumstances.

9.21 To determine the right type and level of parking provision the Council will apply the ESCC parking guidance[221] (or any successor document), including relevant residential parking calculators, to determine appropriate parking provision. Parking should reflect the size, type and location of development, support sustainable travel including e-bikes and e-scooters and avoid adverse effects on highway safety, accessibility or emergency access.

9.22 There is a need to respond to the challenges of climate change, as well as to optimise the density of development in locations that are already well served by public transport provision (see Policy HO2: Density). This may mean that some residential schemes around public transport hubs may require less parking provision with similar considerations applying to accessible employment uses. The ESCC vehicle and cycle parking guidance recognises that a degree of flexibility may be appropriate depending on the local characteristics, including the proposed land use, accessibility by sustainable travel modes and forecast trip rates. This approach aligns with the wider vision-led transport planning principles known as 'Decide and Provide'. However, given that Wealden is largely rural, reducing reliance on private vehicles remains a significant challenge.

9.23 Therefore, supporting the transition to low-carbon travel, particularly through the roll out of sustainable or low carbon vehicles will be essential and the provision of adequate, safe and future-proofed parking infrastructure will continue to play an important role. Policy INF3 (Parking Provision) seeks to ensure that any new development is supported by safe, secure, accessible, and adequate parking provision, whilst being fully integrated within the active and alternative travel networks.

Policy INF3 Parking Provision

Policy INF3: Parking Provision

1. Development must provide parking, servicing, cycle parking and electric vehicle charging infrastructure that is safe, accessible and appropriate to the scale, type, mix and location of the proposal. Provision should have regard to local accessibility, public transport availability, car ownership levels, highway safety, emergency access, flood risk, sustainable drainage and the latest ESCC parking guidance.

2. Reduced or flexible parking provision may be supported where justified by location, accessibility and realistic opportunities for modal shift, provided this would not result in unacceptable highway safety, accessibility or amenity impacts.

Supporting text

9.24 Policy INF3 (Parking Provision) applies to new development proposals, including alterations or additions to existing buildings and changes of use where existing parking provision may be affected.

221 East Sussex County Council – Guidance on Parking at New Developments, March 2024

9.25 Parking levels should reflect accessibility, local context and realistic opportunities for modal shift. Parking and servicing areas should be safe, accessible, flood-resilient (in line with Policies CC7 (Flood Risk) and CC8 (Sustainable Drainage) and designed to accommodate electric vehicle charging requirements (Schedule 1 Part S of the Building Regulations) and future low-emission vehicle demand. Proposed parking should account for this transition at the outset and include the necessary passive infrastructure, such as underground ducting and servicing, to facilitate the future installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure where appropriate.

Utilities

9.26 Adequate utilities infrastructure is essential to deliver the Local Plan strategy. This includes water supply, wastewater treatment and sewerage, surface water drainage, electricity, gas, digital and telecommunications infrastructure.

9.27 As a largely rural district, parts of Wealden have limited access to some utilities and services, including mains sewerage, mains gas, high-speed broadband and reliable mobile coverage. Policy INF4 therefore requires development to demonstrate that utility capacity is available or can be provided without prejudicing future provision. These issues should be considered at an early stage in the design of the development, and the Council encourages developers to liaise with utility providers on capacity and design prior to the submission of a planning application.

Policy INF4 Utilities

Policy INF4: Utilities

1. Development must demonstrate that adequate utilities infrastructure is available, or can be provided, to meet the needs of the proposal without prejudicing existing or future utility provision. This includes water supply, wastewater treatment, sewerage, surface water drainage, electricity, gas and other relevant utilities.

2. Utilities infrastructure must be planned into the layout and phasing of development from the outset, including access for maintenance, repair, upgrade and connection. For major or phased development, applicants should engage utility providers early and, where appropriate, provide a site-wide utilities strategy or masterplan.

3. Development that supports renewable energy infrastructure, low-carbon utility networks and water resource infrastructure required to support growth and climate resilience will be supported in principle.

4. Where practical and feasible, development proposals should seek to provide new utility connections underground and minimise the visual impact of utility infrastructure, particularly where residential amenity or landscape character would otherwise be adversely affected.

5. Where development requires additional utility capacity or network upgrades, planning permission will only be granted where the necessary improvements are secured in a timely manner to support the development.

Supporting Text

9.28 For major development, applicants should engage utility providers at pre-application stage to confirm existing and future capacity over the build-out period. Where appropriate, a comprehensive site-wide utilities masterplan should set out delivery, phasing, access and maintenance arrangements.

9.29 There are a number of planning policies within this Local Plan that should be considered alongside Policy INF4. The provision of water infrastructure is considered specifically under Policy NE13: Water Environment and Water Infrastructure and surface water drainage is considered specifically under Policy CC8: Sustainable Drainage. These policies should be read alongside Policy INF4. Digital infrastructure, including broadband, mobile communications and fibre networks is addressed in detail through Policy INF6 (Digital and Communications Infrastructure).

Safeguarding Infrastructure

9.30 Safeguarding land relates to protecting areas that may be required to deliver infrastructure provision in the future, either within or beyond the plan period. The purpose is to prevent development or other conflicting uses that could prejudice the future delivery of infrastructure.

9.31 There are currently a number of infrastructure projects being considered that would have long term benefits for the district and its residents. Policy INF5 identifies areas where land will be safeguarded to enable the future delivery of strategic infrastructure projects. The safeguarded areas are identified on the Council's policies maps.

Policy INF5 Safeguarding of Infrastructure

Policy INF5: Safeguarding of Infrastructure

1. As defined on the Policies Map, development will not be permitted where it would prejudice the reinstatement of the following railway lines:
   a) Lewes to Uckfield;
   b) Eridge to Tunbridge Wells; and
   c) Willingdon Chord
2. As defined on the Policies Map, development will not be permitted where it would compromise the delivery of a new reservoir to the north of the existing Arlington Reservoir.
3. Development will also not be permitted where it would prejudice the delivery of any offline improvements to the A27 between Lewes and Polegate.

Supporting text

Lewes to Uckfield Railway Line

9.32 The Lewes to Uckfield Line is a former railway line that links Lewes and Uckfield. Its reinstatement would improve rail capacity, network resilience and sustainable travel connections between Mid-Wealden, Lewes, Brighton, London and the Sussex Coast by reducing reliance on private vehicle movements. Safeguarding is justified by continuing support in ESCC Local

Transport Plan 4 and the Transport for the South East, Transport Strategy and Strategic Investment Plan[222].

Eridge to Tunbridge Wells

9.33 The Eridge to Tunbridge Wells rail link would enable services from Uckfield to be extended through to Tunbridge Wells, providing greater accessibility and resilience across the network, especially for rail journeys between London and the Sussex Coast (in conjunction with the Lewes-Uckfield line reinstatement). This would also form part of long-term mitigation measures to reduce traffic across the district. This rail link is also safeguarded by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in its adopted Local Plan[223].

Willingdon Chord

9.34 The Willingdon Chord, which would provide a short rail link between the Polegate and Pevensey lines north of Eastbourne under the Golden Jubilee Way bridge, is a potential strategic rail enhancement that could improve east-west connectivity along the Sussex coast by enabling direct services between Lewes/Brighton and Hastings without reversal at Eastbourne. While it offers journey time and operational benefits, significant infrastructure, cost and business case challenges mean it remains a longer-term aspiration rather than a committed scheme.

Arlington Reservoir Extension

9.35 South East Water's current Water Resource Management Plan 2024 (WRMP24)[224] identifies the need for an extension to Arlington Reservoir, including the construction of a new reservoir adjacent to the existing one. The extension of the Arlington Reservoir will help address the forecast shortfall in water supply identified within the WRMP24 and improve long-term water resilience across the region. For this reason, the Council will safeguard the land to enable this project to be brought forward by the infrastructure provider.

Offline A27 project

9.36 The A27 between Lewes and Polegate is a strategic corridor which provides connectivity to/from South Wealden and Eastbourne to Brighton and Gatwick/London via the A23/M23 corridor to the west and Bexhill/Hastings via the A259 to the east. There are issues with known congestion, journey time reliability and safety issues. Although national delivery timescales have changed, the Council considers safeguarding necessary because long-term strategic connectivity needs remain identified in national, regional and local transport strategies (including the Government's Road Investment Strategy), and development within the corridor could prejudice future delivery options.

Digital and Communication Infrastructure

9.37 Digital communications are now an integral part of everyday life. High-quality digital infrastructure supports economic growth, homeworking, access to services, social inclusion and reduced travel. In Wealden, rural areas continue to experience variable broadband and mobile connectivity, with limited consumer choice in some locations.

222 Transport for the South East – A Strategic Investment Plan for the South East (2026)

223 Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan, December 2025

224 South East Water - Water Resources Management Plan 2024 (WRMP24)

9.38 In the last few years, there have been improvements in digital and communications infrastructure across the district. However, we do need to see further improvements to support the decarbonisation agenda as well as support economic prosperity and our communities.

9.39 Policy INF6 supports improved full fibre, broadband and mobile connectivity while ensuring that new telecommunications infrastructure minimises impacts on landscape, heritage, ecology, residential amenity and the built environment

Policy INF6 Digital and Communication Infrastructure

Policy INF6: Digital and Communications Infrastructure

1. The Council supports the expansion and improvement of digital and communications infrastructure across the district, subject to other policies in this Local Plan.

2. New housing, employment and retail development must incorporate gigabit-capable digital infrastructure, including Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP) where feasible. Where FTTP cannot be provided, the applicant must demonstrate that alternative gigabit-capable solutions have been considered and that infrastructure is designed to facilitate future FTTP connections where practicable.

3. Development proposals should, where appropriate, contribute towards the following objectives:

a) Support improvements to digital connectivity in rural areas and locations experiencing poor broadband or mobile network performance;
b) Reduce inequalities in digital access and help address digital exclusion and digital poverty;
c) Facilitate opportunities for homeworking, flexible working and digital businesses;
d) Support the provision of shared workspaces, community hubs, or other facilities offering high-quality digital connections where a local need is identified; and
e) Ensure that new infrastructure is designed to be resilient, adaptable and capable of accommodating future technological advances.

4. Development proposals must demonstrate that their design and layout facilitate effective broadband and mobile connectivity and that adequate telecommunications coverage is available both internally and externally.

<u>New Telecommunications Infrastructure</u>

5. Telecommunications infrastructure proposals must demonstrate that the proposed location is necessary, having regard to opportunities for mast sharing and the use of existing buildings and structures.

6. All relevant proposals (including prior approvals) will need to demonstrate that:

a) The proposal is the least environmentally harmful option;
b) Where appropriate, pre-application consultation has been undertaken with affected communities, local groups and organisations;
c) The cumulative exposure will not exceed the guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP);

d) The location and design of the proposed apparatus and associated structures will minimise any adverse visual impacts on visual amenity or the character and appearance of the surrounding area / host building; and

e) The location and design will have no significant adverse impact on the historic environment, on sensitive sites including areas of ecological interest, areas of landscape importance or sensitive landscape areas.

Supporting text

9.40 Policy INF6 (Digital and Communications Infrastructure) applies to all new residential development and all public and business premises. It does not apply to householder development, such as extensions to existing dwellings.

9.41 Due to the rural nature of the district, digital connectivity is mainly, but not exclusively, delivered through full fibre connections and can also be provided through technologies such as cable and fixed wireless access.

9.42 The Council will work with infrastructure providers, service operators, ESCC and neighbouring authorities to regularly monitor digital infrastructure provision and identify opportunities to improve network coverage, capacity and consumer choice across the district.

9.43 At the submission stage, applicants should provide a Digital Infrastructure Statement, which outlines how digital communication technology will be delivered through the development.

9.44 Where required, a Digital Infrastructure Statement should explain provider engagement, delivery method, consumer choice, timing of provision and the layout of connectivity infrastructure.

9.45 In exceptional circumstances, where these policy requirements are not achievable[225], alternative solutions such as fixed wireless may be considered acceptable. These circumstances must be evidenced within the Digital Infrastructure Statement in order to justify a departure from the policy.

9.46 Applicants will be required to actively engage at the earliest opportunity with the Council to discuss deployment plans to minimise costs, time and uncertainty associated with the planning process for the deployment of fixed and mobile infrastructure.

9.47 For outline applications and as part of pre-application discussions, applicants should provide a statement demonstrating that the connectivity and delivery requirements of Policy INF6 (Digital and Communications Infrastructure) can be achieved, or explaining why compliance is not possible.

Local services and Community Facilities

9.48 Local and community facilities support health, wellbeing, social interaction, education, culture, worship, recreational, leisure and community cohesion.

225 For example, in very isolated locations which are not close to an existing fibre network, or in cases of new properties coming forward in existing structures such as sensitive heritage assets.

9.49 National policy sets out that we should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities and local services to enhance sustainability and guard against unnecessary loss.

9.50 Wealden contains a wide range of community facilities, including village halls, community centres, local shops, places of worship, education and healthcare facilities, libraries, public houses and cultural venues. These assets are especially important in rural communities where access to alternatives may be limited.

Policy INF7 Local Services and Community Facilities

Policy INF7: Local Services and Community Facilities

New and additional provision

1. Proposals for new, improved or replacement local services and community facilities will be supported where they:

a) Are accessible to the community they serve, including by walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport;
b) Are located within development boundaries, unless it can be demonstrated that the proposed location is the only suitable option and is well related to the community it will serve;
c) Are an appropriate scale, design and intensity of use;
d) Are flexible, inclusive and adaptable to changing community needs;
e) Provide appropriate access, toilet facilities, cycle parking, car parking and electric vehicle charging (passive and active) provision;
f) Minimise amenity, light pollution, crime and nuisance impacts through Secured by Design principles; and
g) Are, where new or enhanced local service or community provision is provided, secured on-site or through planning obligations where required to meet the needs of development.

Retention of Local Services and Community Facilities

2. Proposals resulting in the loss or partial loss of local services and /or community facilities will not be supported unless robust evidence demonstrates either that:

a) there is no current or foreseeable community need or demand for the facility or service in its existing use, it cannot reasonably be put to an alternative community facility or local service use;
b) the facility is no longer viable or suitable for its existing or an alternative community use; and
c) the site has been actively marketed for at least 18 months and there is no current or foreseeable need or demand for the facility in its existing use, or for an alternative community facility or local service use; or
d) equivalent replacement provision in terms of size, scale, function and capacity will be delivered in an accessible location and available before the loss of the existing facility.

3. Proposals that would result in the loss of a local service or community facility, or a feature integral to the operation and viability of a local service or community facility, including, but not limited to car parks, gardens and function rooms, will be refused, unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated and the proposal to proceed accords with all other policy provisions in this Local Plan.

Supporting text

9.51 Local services and community facilities provide important health and wellbeing benefits, reducing social isolation and supporting community cohesion. They are particularly important to vulnerable members of the community, including lower-income households, older people and young people who may not have access to services further afield.

9.52 The Council will work with developers, communities and relevant organisations to ensure that appropriate local services and community facilities, including new provision, enhancements to, and replacement of existing facilities, or shared provision of facilities are provided in the most appropriate locations to facilitate the needs of development as well as those of existing communities.

9.53 Ordinarily, the premises should be actively marketed for sale or letting for at least 18 months before an application is submitted. The Council may require submitted evidence to be independently reviewed at the applicant's expense.

9.54 The Council will support development where there is loss of a community facility or local service as part of a wider development scheme, which would, in turn, provide new or improved services or community facilities within the local area. The delivery of these new services and community facilities must ensure that the existing community is not adversely affected by the new development. Replacement provision should be delivered and operational prior to the occupation of the development. This may be secured through planning conditions or a planning obligation.

Open space, sports and recreation provision

9.55 Open space, sports and recreation facilities support health, wellbeing, biodiversity, climate resilience, social interaction and access to nature. New residential development will increase demand for these facilities and must contribute to provision that meets the needs of future residents.

9.56 The Council's Open Space Report (2022)[226], its Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (2022)[227] and Playing Pitch Action Plan (2023)[228] and green infrastructure evidence identifies existing provision, deficiencies and future requirements. Appendix 1 of this Local Plan sets out relevant standards and calculation methods.

9.57 Policy INF8 applies to all forms of open space, sports and recreation provision, including parks, natural and semi natural greenspace, amenity greenspace, play space, allotments, cemeteries, churchyards, playing pitches, indoor sports facilities and associated infrastructure.

226 Wealden District Council Open Space Report, April 2022

227 Wealden District Council – Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy Assessment Report (April 2022)

228 Wealden District Council – Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy and Action Plan, (March 2023)

Policy INF8 Open Space, Sports and Recreation Provision

Policy INF8: Open Space, Sports and Recreation Provision

1. The Council will seek to increase the availability and accessibility of high quality and high-value open space, sports, and recreation provision by protecting and enhancing existing provision including ancillary facilities, improving the management of provision, as well as through the delivery of new open space, sports and recreation provision.

2. Development proposals for open space, sport and recreation provision should have regard to the principles set out in Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework, Safer Parks for Women and Girls, Inclusive Spaces and Places for Girls and Young People, and any subsequent guidance, to ensure spaces are safe, inclusive, accessible and welcoming to all users.

Protecting existing provision

3. Existing open space, sports and recreation provision, including lapsed provision[229], should not be built on unless:

a) A robust assessment has been undertaken which demonstrates that the provision is surplus to current and foreseeable future requirements; or
b) Equivalent or better replacement provision in terms of quantity and quality will be provided in a suitable and accessible location; or
c) The development is for alternative sports and recreation provision at the site, whose benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss.

4. Proposals relating to sports provision or their associated facilities will only be supported where:

a) The proposal is for ancillary facilities that will support the principal use of the site and does not affect the quantity and quality of existing playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use; and
b) The proposal affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not affect the use.

5. Proposals that would result in the loss of playing pitches will only be supported where the site has no special significance to the interests of sport.

New or enhanced provision

6. Residential development[230] of 10 or more dwellings (net) will be required to provide or contribute to publicly accessible open space and recreation provision in accordance with Appendix 1 and the latest evidence base.

7. Provision should be made on-site unless exceptional circumstances exist where off-site provision would better facilitate the identified needs or site constraints justify an alternative approach.

229 Lapsed provision refers to open space, sports or recreation facilities that are currently unused but retain the potential to be brought back into active use for open space, sport or recreation purposes.

230 This includes both market and affordable housing, older person housing (where occupants are active) and permanent mobile homes.

8. Where off-site provision is justified, developer contributions for the enhancement and maintenance of existing open space and recreation provision serving the development or otherwise identified within the Council's evidence base as requiring investment, will be secured through a Section 106 planning obligation.

Sports provision (including indoor sports facilities, playing pitches and ancillary facilities)

9. Proposals for sports provision will be supported where they meet the needs of the local community and/or unmet need within the district and where they meet the requirements of other relevant policies in the development plan.

10. Residential development[231] of 10 or more dwellings will be required to contribute to the provision or enhancement of sports provision (in addition to open space and recreation provision) where justified by the latest playing pitch, indoor sports and sports facility evidence. Provision may be on-site or through contributions to new, enhanced or maintained facilities, depending on development scale, location, existing capacity and identified need. Where shortfalls are identified but do not require the provision of new facilities or provision on site, the Council will seek developer contributions for the enhancement and maintenance of existing sports provision secured through a Section 106 planning obligation.

11. Where new schools are provided in major new residential developments, they should be designed to facilitate community access, with opportunities for meeting the community's outdoor sports needs explored at the outset to maximise the potential for facility provision to be made within the developments.

Design and maintenance of provision

12. New open space, sports and recreation provision must be safe, inclusive, accessible, well-connected, appropriately lit, multifunctional and designed to support health, nature recovery, climate resilience and long-term maintenance. Management and maintenance arrangements will be secured through planning conditions or Section 106 obligations where required.

Development contributions

13. On-site provision will be required to be completed prior to the first occupation of the development and should be designed to accommodate the needs of the development from the outset, whilst supporting anticipated growth over the lifetime of the development.

14. On-site provision, off-site provision, enhancement works and maintenance contributions will be secured through Section 106 planning obligations where justified and consistent with the statutory tests.

Supporting text

9.58 The basic principle is that all development should provide for the open space, sports and recreation needs that they generate. All new developments should therefore contribute to adequate open space, sports, and recreation provision, alongside other requirements such as playing pitches. Development will be required to provide facilities that meet needs, are

231 This includes both market and affordable housing, older person housing (where occupants are active) and permanent mobile homes.

accessible, equitable and provide safe, attractive and welcoming spaces where users feel secure.

9.59 Where appropriate, development proposals should seek to achieve the aims set out in the relevant guidance. Applicants should have regard to the 'Safer Parks for Women and Girls,' 'Inclusive Spaces and Places for Girls and Young People' and the Make Space for Girls 'Resource Library' (or any subsequent guidance) prior to the submission of planning applications.

9.60 Open space and playing pitch studies[232] provide information to help applicants determine the requirements for proposed development. Details relating to thresholds and standards taken from the Council's open space, sports and recreation evidence base are provided in Appendix 1.

9.61 Appendix 1 sets out the standards for on-site provision for open space including amenity green space, natural green space and parks. It also sets out calculations for the provision of equipped children's play provision and allotments / community gardens.

Consultation

9.62 Where relevant, applicants should consult Parish or Town Councils and local communities on open space, sports and recreation proposals. Consultation should be inclusive and proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal.

Off Site Contributions

9.63 Off-site contributions may be appropriate where on-site provision would be unsuitable, fragmented, constrained or less effective than improving nearby facilities. Contributions will be calculated using the latest evidence base and Appendix 1 where applicable.

9.64 Comprehensive information on how to calculate financial contributions is set out in Part 13 – Approach to Contributions within the Open Space Report[233].

Development contributions

9.65 Both on and off-site contributions will be secured through a Section 106 planning obligation and at a level that is proportionally commensurate with the proposed development or cumulative growth from multiple developments.

9.66 Where a development is for 100% affordable housing and qualifies for an exemption under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended)[234], financial contributions, where required, for offsite provision and / or maintenance contributions will be secured via Section 106 planning obligation.

232 Wealden District Council Open Space Report, April 2022 and the Wealden District Council – Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy Assessment Report (April 2022)

233 Wealden District Council Open Space Report, April 2022

234 Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2010) (as amended)

Indoor Sports Facility Provision and sport related contributions

9.67 The Indoor Sports Facilities Assessment[235] has identified a need both to optimise the use of existing community halls and centres and, where justified by new development, to provide new opportunities for purpose-built community facilities.

9.68 Indoor and outdoor sports requirements will be informed by the latest Council evidence and relevant Sport England guidance, calculators and design standards. Strategic developments may be required to provide new facilities, while smaller schemes may contribute to upgrading existing provision where this would meet identified needs.

Maintenance Contributions

9.69 Where on-site provision is required, applicants must demonstrate how it will be managed and maintained over the long term. This may include an establishment period, transfer to an appropriate body, a management plan and commuted sums secured through a Section 106 agreement.

King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIIECP) National Trail Southeast Section

9.70 The King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIIECP) is a new National Trail that will provide a continuous walking route around the English coastline. Sections run through Wealden, linking coastal destinations, including Pevensey Bay and the Seven Sisters (part of the SDNP), supporting recreation, tourism, health and wellbeing.

9.71 Development affecting the route must maintain its continuity, attractiveness, safety and accessibility. Where appropriate, proposals should improve links to the wider rights of way network, settlements, visitor destinations and coastal access, while safeguarding environmental and access functions.

Policy INF9 King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIIECP)

Policy INF9: King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIIECP)

1. Development proposals should protect and, where appropriate, enhance the King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIIECP), as defined within the Policies Map, and take opportunities to facilitate realignment closer to the coastline where this would improve public access and remain consistent with environmental objectives;

2. Development proposals shall retain public access to the coast and, where appropriate, improve access through measures such as the provision of new path connections; and

3. Where development affects the KCIIIECP, applications must identify the route on submitted plans and demonstrate how the trail will be safeguarded and positively accommodated within the development. Development should, where possible, enhance the route and public access to the shoreline in accordance with the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Development that would result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the route, its continuity, accessibility, functionality or enjoyment will not be permitted.

235 Wealden District Council Indoor Sports Facility Needs Assessment (March 2022)

Supporting text

9.72 The KCIIIECP is a national asset that links iconic places and heritage sites along the coast, enabling people to experience, appreciate and value the benefits of the natural and historic environment. Evidence shows that the trail delivers substantial health and wellbeing benefits, boosting local economies and coastal communities.

9.73 The route has been established under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009[236]. In some locations, the approved alignment of the trail may change over time in response to coastal processes, erosion, habitat creation projects, flood management schemes, or opportunities to improve public access. Where appropriate, development proposals should support opportunities to improve the route and maintain its long-term resilience.

9.74 Development adjacent to, crossing, or otherwise affecting the KCIIIECP should be designed to maintain the continuity, attractiveness, safety and accessibility of the route. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how the trail has been considered during the design process and how any impacts on users of the route have been avoided or appropriately mitigated.

9.75 Opportunities should be taken, where appropriate and proportionate to the scale of development, to enhance the user experience of the KCIIIECP. Such enhancements may include improved connections to the wider rights of way network, new links to settlements and visitor destinations, improved accessibility, signage, interpretation, landscaping and measures that strengthen public access to the coast.

236 Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

Wealden
District Council

10
Design



Wealden
Local Plan

Introduction

10.1 Good design is fundamental to achieving sustainable development and the successful delivery of the Local Plan. It is not solely concerned with the appearance of buildings and places but also how they function, support health and wellbeing, create opportunities for social interaction, respond to climate change and contribute to economic prosperity[237]. The NPPF places great importance on securing high-quality, inclusive and beautiful places through both plan-making and development management.

10.2 The National Design Guide[238] provides a national framework for achieving well-designed places through ten characteristics grouped under the themes of character, climate and community. These principles help ensure that development responds positively to its context whilst creating attractive, sustainable and resilient places. The ten characteristics are illustrated below.

Figure 23 A Well Designed Place



237 CABE (N.D.G)The Value of Good Design.How Buildings and Spaces Create Economic and Social Value.Available at: www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/the-value-of-good-design.pdf

238 Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (January 2021) National Design Guide Available at: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962113/National_design_guide.pdf

10.3 Wealden has a rich and varied built and natural environment that has been shaped by its history, landscapes and locally distinctive materials. The character of its towns, villages and countryside contributes significantly to the district's identity and sense of place. The Wealden Design Guide[239] and Characterisation Study[240] provide further guidance on local character and design expectations.

Achieving well-designed and high-quality places

10.4 Development should respond positively to local character and distinctiveness while allowing for contemporary design approaches that meet modern needs. Good design should not seek to replicate historic development styles but should create attractive, functional, inclusive and adaptable places.

10.5 Policy DE1 establishes the overarching design principles for development within the district. Together with the Wealden Design Guide, Characterisation Study and other relevant Local Plan policies, it will be used to assess whether proposals achieve high-quality design, respond positively to local character, support inclusive and healthy places, and contribute to the natural environment and economic vitality of Wealden.

Policy DE1 Achieving Well Designed and High-quality Places

Policy DE1: Achieving Well Designed and High-quality Places

1. All development must achieve a high standard of design, proportionate to its scale, nature and location. Development must contribute positively to local character, sustainability, health and wellbeing, and create attractive, functional and inclusive places. Innovative and contemporary design will be supported where it demonstrates design excellence and responds positively to its context.

2. Development proposals must demonstrate how they have had regards to national, local and neighbourhood design guidance. This includes the Wealden Design Guide, Wealden Characterisation Study and relevant Neighbourhood Plan design guidance or design codes.

Character and Sense of Place

3. Development proposals will be supported where they:

a) respond positively to the character, setting and distinctiveness of the site and surrounding area, including landscape, townscape, heritage assets, settlement pattern, important views and natural features;

b) create a strong sense of place through high-quality design, materials, landscaping and architectural detailing;

c) retain, incorporate and where possible enhance important landscape, natural and historic features; and

d) provide a positive contribution to local character or create a new and successful character appropriate to the location.

239 Wealden Design Guide (September 2026)

240 Wealden Characterisation Study (September 2026)

Layout and Design Quality

4. Development proposals will be supported where they:

a) demonstrate a high-quality layout and make efficient use of land whilst respecting site constraints;
b) ensure that the siting, scale, massing, orientation and appearance are appropriate to the site and its surroundings;
c) take a comprehensive and coordinated approach to development; and
d) provide an attractive, legible and accessible environment that is easy to understand, access and navigate.

Health, Amenity and Accessibility

5. Development proposals will be supported where they:

a) provide safe, inclusive and accessible environments which promote health and wellbeing;
b) prioritise walking, wheeling, cycling and access to public transport, services and facilities;
c) provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers; and
d) incorporate appropriate facilities for refuse, recycling and servicing.

Adaptability and Longevity

6. Development proposals will be supported where they:

a) are adaptable to changing needs and technologies;
b) are designed to support long-term management and maintenance; and
c) are informed by proportionate community engagement on design issues, where proportionate to the scale, nature or sensitivity of the proposal.

Supporting Text

10.6 A high standard of design is required for all development proposals, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, changes of use and new development. Consistent with the NPPF, development which is not well designed should be refused, particularly where it fails to reflect local design policies and guidance.

10.7 Where required, Design and Access Statements should demonstrate how development responds positively to its site and surroundings, how a high-quality design has been achieved, and how relevant national, local and neighbourhood planning policy and guidance has informed the proposal. The level of information provided should be proportionate to the scale and complexity of the development.

10.8 Proposals for innovative and contemporary architecture will be supported where they demonstrate a positive response to their context through layout, form, scale, materials and detailing, and where they complement the character of the surrounding area.

10.9 Applicants should have regard to relevant national, local and neighbourhood design guidance, proportionate to the scale, nature and location of the proposal. This may include the Council's Design Guide, **(**and any subsequent Wealden Design Guide

SPD**),** Characterisation Study, Building for a Healthy Life[241], Active Design Guidance[242] or any successor documents, guidance produced by the High Weald National Landscape Partnership[243] and any relevant Neighbourhood Plan design policies[244].

10.10 To support the implementation of Policy DE1 and provide greater clarity and certainty for applicants, the Council will prepare a Wealden Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD will expand upon the design principles set out in this Local Plan and provide detailed guidance on issues such as character, context, layout, movement, landscape, public realm, sustainability and the delivery of high-quality places. Once adopted, the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

10.11 Major strategic developments should seek to incorporate the principles of a 20-minute neighbourhood, where appropriate to their scale, location and function.

Pre application Advice and Engagement

10.12 Early engagement through the Council's pre-application advice service is encouraged, particularly for major, complex or sensitive proposals, to establish design expectations and identify key issues before submission.

10.13 Applicants should undertake early, meaningful and proportionate community engagement where appropriate, particularly where masterplans or design codes are being prepared. Where a Statement of Community Involvement is required, applications should demonstrate how local views have informed the evolution of the proposal.

Masterplans and Design Codes

10.14 Masterplans are required for residential developments of 100 or more dwellings and for significant non-residential developments. They provide a comprehensive framework for delivering high-quality, sustainable and locally distinctive development, ensuring that proposals are well integrated with existing settlements and contribute positively to economic, social and environmental objectives. Masterplans also give greater certainty to applicants, communities and decision-makers regarding the form and delivery of development.

10.15 Design Codes are encouraged for developments of 100 or more dwellings and will be required for strategic developments of 500 or more dwellings. They provide a clear framework for achieving high-quality and consistent design across larger sites, including guidance on matters such as layout, character, building form, materials, landscaping and public realm. Design Codes can also help provide certainty for developers, communities and decision-makers throughout the development process.

10.16 Masterplans and Design Codes should be prepared at the earliest opportunity and informed by effective engagement with the local community, relevant stakeholders and the

241 The Urban Design Group et al (2026) Building for a Healthy Life. A Design Toolkit for neighbourhoods, streets, homes and public spaces. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a0daf969171ee9f72826eab/Building_for_a_healthy_life.pdf

242 Sport England website. Available at: https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design

243 High Weald National Landscape Guidance webpage. Available at: https://highweald.org/guidance/

244 Wealden District Council Neighbourhood Planning webpage. Available at: https://www.wealden.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/

Council. Applicants should also have regard to the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, or any successor documents, when preparing Design Codes.

Policy DE2 Masterplans and Design Codes

Policy DE2: Masterplans and Design Codes

Masterplans

1. Masterplans will be required for:
   a) residential developments of 100 or more dwellings;
   b) non-residential development on sites of 5 hectares or more; and
   c) other development where the Council considers that a comprehensive, masterplan-led approach is necessary due to the site's constraints, opportunities or relationship with adjoining land.

2. Masterplans should be proportionate to the scale and complexity of the proposal and demonstrate:
   a) an understanding of the site, its context and key opportunities and constraints;
   b) a vision and design objectives for the development;
   c) the proposed approach to land uses, movement, built form, public spaces, landscaping, sustainability and green infrastructure;
   d) development phasing, where relevant; and
   e) how the proposal responds to technical and design evidence.

3. Where adjoining sites are functionally related or likely to come forward within a similar timeframe, they should be planned comprehensively through a single masterplan.

Design Codes and Delivery

4. Design Codes will be required for:
   a) strategic developments of 500 or more dwellings; and
   b) self-build or custom-build developments.

5. Design Codes are encouraged for developments of 100 or more dwellings and other development where a coding approach would assist in securing design quality.

6. Masterplans and Design Codes should be prepared at the earliest opportunity and inform pre-application discussions.

7. Planning applications should demonstrate how community engagement has informed the design and evolution of the proposal.

8. Design Codes should be prepared having regard to the National Design Guide, National Model Design Code and any subsequent national guidance.

9. Where approved, adherence to Masterplans and Design Codes will be secured through planning conditions, legal agreements or other appropriate mechanisms.

SupportingText

Masterplans

10.17 Masterplans provide a framework for the development of large or more complex sites, setting out the vision, design principles, site constraints and opportunities, access, landscape, green infrastructure, archaeology, heritage assets, drainage, access, phasing and delivery arrangements. They should be informed by site and context appraisal and prepared collaboratively with the Council, local communities and relevant stakeholders where appropriate. Where schemes are delivered in phases or by different developers, the Council may require masterplans to be reviewed and updated to ensure the overall vision and design objectives continue to be achieved. The Wealden Design Guide[245] provides further guidance on understanding site and context appraisals.

10.18 Masterplans are expected to be prepared collaboratively and should be informed by engagement with the Council, local communities and other stakeholders where appropriate. Applicants are encouraged to use the Council's pre-application service to agree the scope and content of a masterplan at an early stage.

10.19 Masterplans should accompany planning applications where required by Policy DE2 and demonstrate a comprehensive approach to development of the site. This will be particularly important for sites in multiple ownership, where schemes will be delivered in phases, or developments likely to be built by different developers. Where appropriate, the Council may require masterplans to be reviewed and updated as later phases come forward to ensure the overall vision and objectives continue to be achieved.

10.20 Where adjoining sites that together comprise 100 dwellings or more, they should be planned comprehensively through a single masterplan. This can help maximise opportunities for habitat connectivity, green infrastructure, sustainable drainage and movement networks.

Design Codes

10.21 A design code is 'a set of simple, concise, illustrated design requirements that are visual and numerical wherever possible to provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area'[246].

10.22 Strategic sites are those identified within this Local Plan for significant residential or employment development that are expected to make an important contribution towards meeting the district's development needs. Design Codes will be required for strategic residential developments of 500 or more dwellings and are encouraged on developments of 100 or more dwellings and other development where a coding approach would assist in securing design quality.

10.23 The need for a Design Code, including its scope, content and level of detail, should be discussed with the Council at the pre-application stage. Design Codes should be prepared as early as possible and should help inform the evolution of the proposal, rather than be added after the main design principles have been fixed.

245 Wealden Design Guide (September 2026)

246 MHCLG (June 2021) National Model Design Code Part 1: The Coding Process. Available at: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1009793/NMDC_Part_1_The_Coding_Process.pdf

Spaces for people, nature and the public realm

10.24 Public spaces and the wider public realm make an important contribution to the quality, attractiveness and functionality of places. They should be designed as attractive, inclusive and multifunctional environments that support movement, recreation, social interaction, health and wellbeing, encourage physical activity and are accessible to all users throughout the year.

10.25 Public spaces and public realm should also contribute to biodiversity, climate change mitigation and climate resilience. Trees, planting, sustainable drainage features and other green infrastructure should be incorporated, where appropriate to improve air quality, provide shade, reduce overheating, manage surface water and strengthen habitat networks. Development should maximise opportunities to incorporate these features into streets, public spaces and other areas of the public realm.

10.26 Public realm should be considered from the outset of the design process creating environments that are safe, inclusive and easy to navigate and help reduce opportunities for crime and the fear of crime by planning for long-term management. Policy DE3 focuses on the quality, function and design of public spaces and the public realm, while requirements for open space, play space, green infrastructure and biodiversity provision are addressed elsewhere in this Local Plan. Public realm should be considered as an integral part of development from the outset.

Policy DE3 Spaces for People, Nature and the Public Realm

Policy DE3: Spaces for People, Nature and the Public Realm

1. Public spaces and the public realm, including streets, squares and parks, should be integrated into the design of the development from the outset to create attractive, inclusive and accessible places that support health, wellbeing and nature recovery.

2. Development proposals that incorporate new or enhanced public realm should demonstrate how 'Healthy Streets' indicators, or any successor guidance have informed the design and layout of the development.

3. Development proposals will be supported where they:

a) incorporate existing natural features and high-quality landscape design, including trees and other planting that enhance local character, biodiversity, climate resilience and sustainable water management;

b) provide a high-quality public realm, including appropriate landscaping, lighting, street furniture, signage, public art and boundary treatments, whilst avoiding unnecessary clutter;

c) deliver safe, attractive and accessible public spaces that encourage recreation, physical activity, social interaction and inclusion;

d) Create clear distinctions between public and private spaces, active and overlooked frontages and layouts that support natural surveillance and reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour, having regard to Secured by Design principles; and

e) provide appropriate lighting and clear sightlines whilst minimising light pollution in accordance with Policy NE10: Light Pollution and Dark Skies.

Supporting Text

10.27 Public spaces and the public realm are important elements of successful development and should be designed to benefit as many people as possible. Depending on the scale and nature of the proposal, applicants should demonstrate how community engagement has informed the design and function of public spaces so that they are inclusive, accessible, safe and easy to navigate. The Healthy Streets[247] approach provides a useful framework for creating environments that encourage walking, wheeling, cycling and opportunities to spend time outdoors. Features such as shade and shelter, seating, green infrastructure and pedestrian priority can contribute positively to the quality and usability of public spaces.

10.28 The public realm should respond positively to local character through a coordinated approach to the design of streets, landscaping, lighting, signage, street furniture, boundary treatments and public art.

10.29 Public spaces should be inclusive, accessible and easy to navigate for all users, including older people, disabled people and those with particular mobility or accessibility needs. Development should seek to create environments that are comfortable to use and capable of supporting a wide range of activities.

10.30 Safety should be considered from the outset to incorporate measures that promote natural surveillance, active frontages, appropriate lighting and clear sightlines to help create spaces that feel safe and secure, with regard to Secured by Design[248] principles where appropriate.

10.31 Where required, Design and Access Statements should demonstrate how the requirements of Policy DE3 have informed the design and layout of the proposal. Where a Design and Access Statement is not required, applicants should ensure that the relevant plans and supporting information clearly explain how the policy has been addressed.

Shopfronts and Advertisements.

10.32 Shopfronts and associated signage are important features of Wealden's towns and villages and contribute to local character and distinctiveness. This applies not only to retail premises, but also to banks, estate agents, public houses, restaurants and other commercial premises. Well-designed shopfronts can enhance the quality and appearance of centres, while poorly designed alterations can erode local character, particularly within Conservation Areas and on historic buildings.

10.33 Advertisements should be designed and located to respect the character of the building and its surroundings. Poorly designed, excessively prominent or cluttered signage can detract from the quality of the built environment, particularly within historic areas and rural locations.

10.34 Policy DE4 sets out the Council's approach to the design of shopfronts and advertisements. The policy seeks to conserve and enhance local character and distinctiveness, while supporting thriving town and village centres. Further guidance is provided through the Council's Design Guide and other relevant design guidance.

247 Lucy Saunders (2026) Healthy Streets. Making streets healthy places for everyone. Available at: https://www.healthystreets.com/

248 Secured by Design website. Available at: https://www.securedbydesign.com/guidance/design-guides

Policy DE4 Shop Fronts and Advertisements

Policy DE4: Shopfronts and Advertisements

Shopfronts

1. Proposals for new, replacement or temporary shopfronts, including fascias, will be supported where they:

a) respect the architectural style, character and proportions of the building and surrounding area;
b) use materials, colours, signage and detailing appropriate to the host building and its setting;
c) relate appropriately to upper floors in respect of scale, proportion and alignment; and
d) preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the building and street scene.

Heritage Assets

2. Within Conservation Areas, on Listed Buildings and on Non-Designated Heritage Assets, proposals should:

a) retain and restore traditional shopfronts and historic detailing wherever possible;
b) respect historic character, traditional architectural proportions and historic shopfront arrangements;
c) use traditional materials and techniques appropriate to the heritage significance of the asset;
d) reflect the original subdivision of frontages where units are combined; and
e) retain and refurbish surviving historic canopies, blinds and associated features where reasonably practicable.

3. There will be a presumption against:

a) the loss of traditional or historic shopfronts;
b) inappropriate external security shutters. Where security measures are required, applicants should demonstrate why less harmful solutions cannot reasonably be achieved;
c) internally illuminated signage and logos where they would harm visual amenity, heritage significance or dark sky objectives.

Advertisements

4. Advertisements, fascia signs, hoardings and associated illumination will be supported where they:

a) are sensitively designed;
b) preserve the visual amenity of the building and surrounding area;
c) do not adversely affect highway or pedestrian safety; and
d) avoid street clutter or the perception of clutter on the street scene.

Cumulative Impact

5. The cumulative impact of advertisements and associated illumination on townscape, landscape, visual amenity and heritage significance will be taken into account when determining applications.

Supporting Text

10.35 New, replacement and temporary shopfronts should respect the architectural style, character and appearance of the building and its surroundings. Within Conservation Areas, on Listed Buildings and on non-designated heritage assets, priority should be given to the retention and repair of historic shopfronts and features of architectural or historic interest. Where replacement is justified, proposals should demonstrate how the design conserves and, where appropriate, enhance the character, appearance and significance of the heritage asset and its setting

10.36 Canopies and blinds will generally only be supported where they are appropriate to the character of the building and its surroundings. Within Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings, they should normally reflect any historic precedent and be of a traditional retractable design. External security measures should avoid harming the appearance of the building or wider street scene.

10.37 Advertisements should be designed and located to respect the character of the building and surrounding area. Within Conservation Areas and where heritage assets are affected, illumination should be kept to the minimum necessary and sensitively designed. Internally illuminated advertisements will generally only be appropriate where they do not harm the character or appearance of the area.

10.38 Where multiple signs or illuminated advertisements are proposed, the Council will consider their cumulative impact on the building, street scene, landscape character and heritage assets. Applicants should demonstrate how the proposal avoids visual clutter and complies with relevant policies, including Policy NE10: Light Pollution and Dark Skies.

Wealden
District Council

11
Economy



Wealden
Local Plan

Introduction

11.1 The economy of Wealden continues to evolve in response to changes in technology, working practices and consumer behaviour. Growth in online retailing, increased homeworking, changing tourism patterns, and flexibility in national planning legislation have all influenced the way businesses operate. At the same time, evidence shows continuing demand for employment premises, particularly industrial and business space, with supply not keeping pace with demand. In a predominantly rural district such as Wealden, this places increasing importance on providing modern employment floorspace in the right locations and supporting businesses to grow and adapt.

11.2 The policies in this chapter seek to support sustainable economic prosperity, provide a range of employment opportunities, retain and modernise existing employment sites, and support the growth and diversification of the rural economy. They are informed by the Employment and Economic Study (2022)[249] and Update (2026)[250]. They also seek to ensure that employment growth is supported by the necessary infrastructure and sustainable transport connections.

11.3 Efficient and reliable freight movement plays an important role in supporting Wealden's economy, including industrial and business areas, rural enterprises, agricultural activities, tourism and the construction sector. The movement of goods is essential to business productivity, investment and the operation of local supply chains. The Council will work with East Sussex County Council and other partners to support the delivery of the East Sussex Freight Strategy[251] and ensure that development facilitates efficient freight and servicing movements whilst minimising impacts on local communities, the environment and the transport network.

11.4 Tourism is an important part of Wealden's economy and contributes significantly to local employment and visitor spending. The Wealden Economic Development Strategy (2023)[252] seeks to strengthen the district's role as a visitor destination and increase tourism spending over time. The Wealden Visitor Accommodation Study (2023)[253] identifies the importance of retaining visitor accommodation and supporting the continued development of tourism facilities and attractions in appropriate locations. Consequently, the policies in this chapter support the retention, enhancement and diversification of the district's tourism offer.

Economic Policies

Sustainable Economic Prosperity and Investment

11.5 Supporting sustainable economic prosperity is a key objective of the Wealden District Council Strategy (2023-2027)[254]. Businesses, employment opportunities and investment make an important contribution to the district's long-term economic, social and environmental wellbeing.

249 Employment and Economic Study – Eastbourne and Wealden, April 2022

250 Employment and Economic Study – Eastbourne and Wealden Update, January 2026

251 East Sussex Freight Strategy 2025-2050

252 Wealden Economic Development Strategy 2023 -2033

253 Wealden Visitor Accommodation Study, September 2023

254 Wealden District Council Strategy 2023 -2027

11.6 The Local Plan will support economic prosperity through the delivery of new employment opportunities, investment in business premises and infrastructure, and the retention of important employment sites. This will help residents access local jobs, reduce the need for out-commuting and strengthen the resilience of the district's economy.

11.7 The Council's Economic Development Strategy (2023) sets out the following vision for Wealden's economy:

> *An economy that is successful and provides skilled job opportunities and progression and is also balanced in terms of achieving climate change objectives, sustainably revitalising and maintaining town centres, and protecting the unique built and natural heritage that makes Wealden an attractive place to live and visit.*

11.8 This document sets out the context, main priorities and actions for the Wealden economy in a ten-year strategy. The strategy is structured around five priority aims as set out in the figure below.

Figure 24 Economic Development Strategy 2023 - 2033 - Priority Aims



11.9 The Economic Development Strategy is supported by a number of priorities, including low carbon growth, skills and training, business support, the visitor and cultural economy, digital connectivity, employment land provision, innovation and investment. Policy EC1 seeks to support these priorities through the planning system and provide a positive framework for economic prosperity across the district.

Policy EC1 Sustainable Economic Prosperity and Investment

Policy EC1: Sustainable Economic Prosperity and Investment

1. The Council will support economic development and tourism proposals that contribute to sustainable economic prosperity, including:

a) ensuring that major economic development proposals, including strategic employment allocations identified at Policy SS6, demonstrate how they support local employment, skills and education, including in responding to changing technology;

b) supporting new employment development, including start-up businesses, homeworking and the redevelopment, conversion, upgrading, intensification or reconfiguration of existing employment premises, where it improves provision, supports job creation or retention, and helps meet modern business needs through opportunities arising from innovation, technological change and evolving business practices;

c) supporting the growth and diversification of the rural economy, including agricultural, forestry and food production uses, where development is appropriate to its location, scale and design;

d) supporting tourism facilities and visitor accommodation that enhance the district's attractiveness as a place to visit and stay;

e) ensuring that employment development is well-designed, flexible and capable of accommodating a range of unit sizes and business needs;

f) supporting economic development that contributes towards environmental and climate change objectives, including Net Zero ambitions, sustainable construction and sustainable travel opportunities;

g) supporting the creation of safe, attractive, accessible and high-quality environments, including improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling connectivity; and

h) supporting the provision of infrastructure required for business growth, including electric vehicle charging infrastructure, gigabit-capable broadband and mobile communications infrastructure and ensuring that the freight and servicing requirements of development are appropriately considered.

Supporting Text

11.10 Where additional infrastructure is required to support development, the Council will use planning obligations and/or planning conditions, where appropriate, to secure its delivery. Planning obligations may also be used to secure measures that support local employment, skills and education.

11.11 Economic and tourism development will also be expected to comply with other relevant policies relating to design, the natural environment, infrastructure, transport and climate change.

Strategic Employment Sites

11.12 The NPPF (December 2024) states that planning policies should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt, placing significant weight on the need to support economic growth and productivity.

11.13 Strategic Employment Sites play an important role in meeting the district's employment needs, supporting business growth and providing opportunities for investment. The retention, improvement, redevelopment, intensification and, where appropriate, expansion of these sites will be important to the delivery of the Council's Economic Development Strategy (2023).

11.14 Evidence prepared for East Sussex and the district identifies strong demand for employment premises, particularly industrial and business space, and highlights an ongoing shortage of modern, high-quality accommodation. Demand remains particularly strong along the A22 corridor and within the district's main employment locations.

11.15 The Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (April 2022) identifies 19 Strategic Employment Sites suitable for safeguarding for employment purposes. These sites are located across the district but are concentrated within or around the district's main towns, including Uckfield, Polegate, Crowborough, Hailsham and Heathfield.

11.16 Strategic Employment Sites represent the district's principal employment locations and make an important contribution towards meeting identified employment land and floorspace needs. The Council will therefore apply a presumption in favour of their retention, redevelopment, intensification and modernisation for employment purposes.

Policy EC2 Existing Strategic Employment Sites

Policy EC2: Existing Strategic Employment Sites

1. The following Strategic Employment Sites, as identified on the Policies Map, will be safeguarded for employment uses within Use Classes E(g)[255], B2 and B8.

Strategic Employment Sites
Ashdown Business Park, Michael Way, Maresfield
Bellbrook Industrial Estate, Bell Lane, Uckfield
Chaucer Business Park, Dittons Road, Polegate
Diplocks Way Industrial Estate, Diplocks Way, Hailsham
Durgates Industrial Estate, Durgates, Wadhurst
Farningham Road Industrial Estate, Farningham Road, Crowborough

255 This would include offices, the research and development of products or processes, or any industrial process appropriate for a residential area; formerly known as B1 Class (business).

Strategic Employment Sites
Ghyll Road Industrial Estate, Heathfield
Hackhurst Lane Industrial Estate, Lower Dicker
Lexden Lodge Industrial Estate, Crowborough Hill, Jarvis Brook, Crowborough
Milbrook Industrial Estate, Sybron Way, Crowborough
Mountney Bridge Business Park, Eastbourne Road, Westham
Park Lane Industrial Estate, Park Road, Crowborough
Ridgewood Industrial Park, New Road, Ridgewood, Uckfield
Squires Farm Industrial Estate, Easons Green, Framfield
Station Road Industrial Estate, Station Road, Forest Row
Station Road Industrial Estate, Station Road, Hailsham
Station Road Industrial Estate, Browning Road, Heathfield
Swallow Business Park, Diamond Drive, Lower Dicker
Wadhurst Business Park, Faircrouch Lane, Wadhurst

Employment Development

2. Proposals for the redevelopment, intensification, modernisation or limited expansion of employment uses within, or immediately adjoining Strategic Employment Sites will be supported where they:

a) support business growth, investment, job creation or retention;
b) improve the quality, flexibility, functionality and operation of employment premises to meet modern business needs and standards; and
c) do not result in unacceptable harm to the character of the area, highway network or wider environment.

Ancillary Uses

3. Ancillary uses will be supported where they:

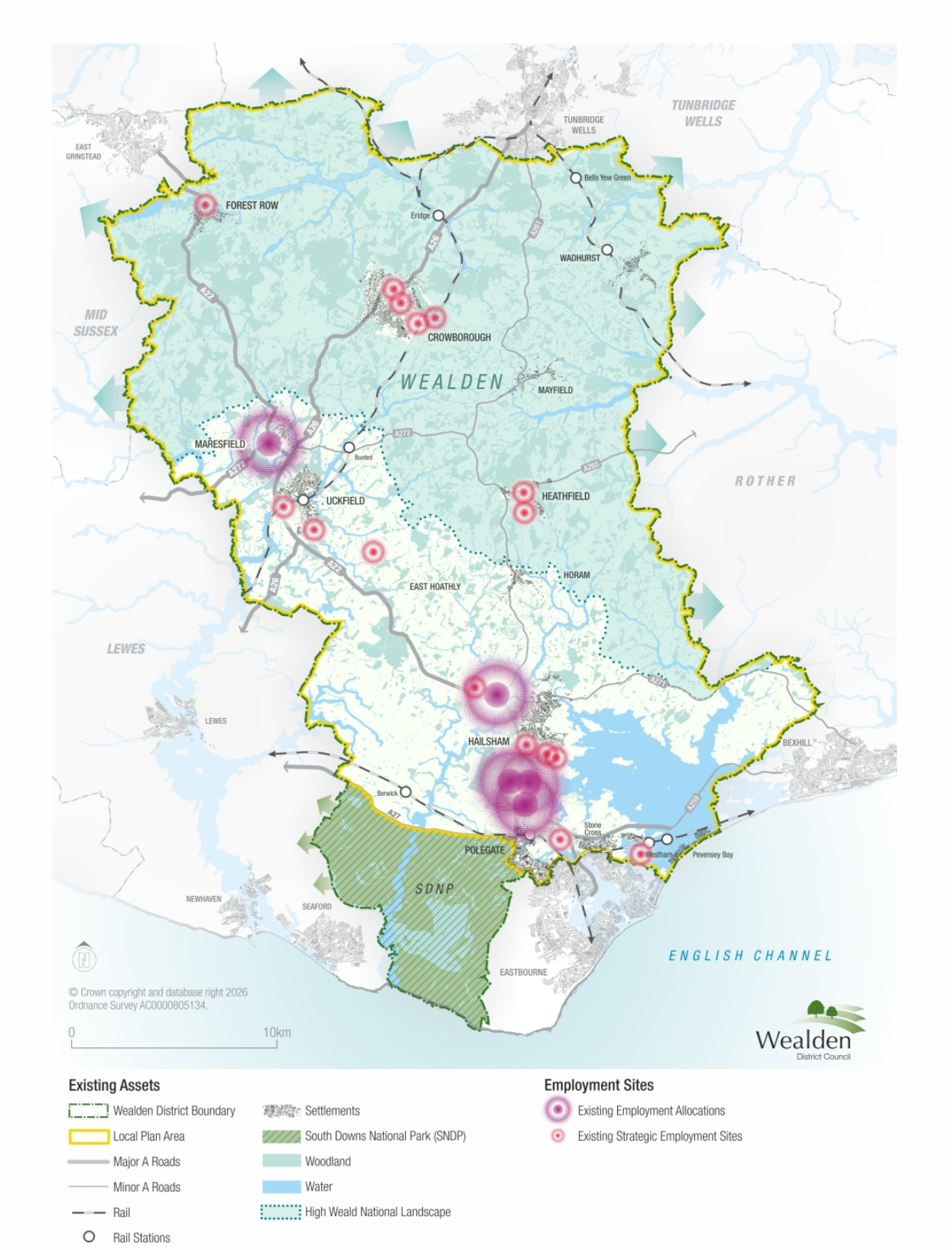
a) are clearly subsidiary to the principal employment use; and
b) do not undermine the operation, integrity or function of the Strategic Employment Site.

Loss of Employment Uses

4. Proposals resulting in the loss of employment land, premises or floorspace within a Strategic Employment Site will only be supported where robust evidence demonstrates that:

a) there is no reasonable prospect of the site, premises or floorspace continuing in employment use;
b) the site, premises or floorspace has been actively and effectively marketed for employment purposes for a continuous period of at least 18 months at an appropriate market value;
c) the proposal would not undermine the operation, integrity or viability of the wider Strategic Employment Site;
d) the proposal would not prejudice the Council's ability to meet identified employment land and floorspace needs; and
e) where required by the Council, supporting evidence may be independently reviewed at the applicant's expense.

Figure 25 Wealden District Strategic Employment Sites



Supporting Text

11.17 Strategic Employment Sites are the district's principal employment locations and are safeguarded to support business growth, investment and the delivery of identified employment needs. Policy EC2 applies only to those Strategic Employment Sites identified on the Policies Map and protects their role in Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8. These include offices, research and development activities and industrial processes appropriate within Use Class E(g), together with general industrial and storage and distribution uses. Other employment generating uses, including many 'sui generis' uses, are not regarded as employment uses for the purposes of this policy.

11.18 Limited ancillary uses, such as trade counters or small cafes serving workers on site, may be appropriate where they remain clearly subordinate to the principal employment use and do not undermine the operation, function or character of the Strategic Employment Site.

11.19 Strategic Employment Sites are afforded a higher level of protection than other employment sites within the district. Proposals involving the loss of employment land, premises or floorspace will be expected to demonstrate that there is no reasonable prospect of the site continuing in employment use, supported by evidence including active marketing and, where necessary, independent review. The Council will also consider whether the proposal would prejudice the operation, function or viability of the wider Strategic Employment Site, or the ability to meet identified employment land and floorspace requirements.

Retention and/or Loss of Existing Non-Strategic Employment Sites, Premises or Floorspace

11.20 Non-strategic employment sites make an important contribution to the district's economy by providing a range of employment opportunities, premises types and affordability levels across both urban and rural areas. The Employment and Economic Study (2022) and Update (2026) identify a continuing need to retain and support existing employment sites, reflecting strong demand for employment premises and a shortage of modern grow-on and scale-up space.

11.21 Retaining employment sites and supporting their continued use will help deliver economic objectives of this Local Plan by supporting local jobs, reducing the need to travel and maintaining opportunities for a diverse range of businesses across the district.

11.22 Economic conditions and business requirements will continue to change over the Plan period. Demand for different types of employment space may fluctuate and some premises may no longer remain suitable for modern business needs. Policy EC3 therefore provides a flexible approach that seeks to retain employment uses wherever possible, whilst allowing alternative employment generating uses where continued employment use can no longer be justified.

11.23 The Council's preferred approach is to retain sites, premises and floorspace in employment use. Where this cannot be achieved, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that there is no reasonable prospect of the site continuing in employment use before alternative employment-generating uses are considered. Only where robust evidence demonstrates that these options are not viable or suitable will alternative non-employment uses be considered under Policy EC8.

Policy EC3 Retention and / or Loss of Non-Strategic Employment Sites, Premises or Floorspace

Policy EC3: Retention and Loss of Non-Strategic Employment Sites, Premises or Floorspace

Retention and Improvement

1. Existing employment sites, premises and floorspace in Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8 will be protected against loss to non-employment uses unless the relevant policy tests for alternative uses or loss of employment uses are met in accordance with Policy EC8 - The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism Uses.

2. Proposals for the redevelopment, intensification, modernisation or limited expansion of employment uses on non-strategic employment sites will be supported where they:

a) support business growth, investment, job creation or retention;
b) improve the quality, flexibility or operation of employment premises;
c) help meet modern business needs and standards; and
d) avoid unacceptable harm to the character of the area, highway network or wider environment.

Alternative Employment Generating Uses

3. Proposals for the change of use from employment uses (Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8) to alternative employment generating uses will be supported where:

a) there are no strong economic reasons to retain the site, premises or floorspace in its existing use;
b) the proposal would maintain or enhance employment opportunities;
c) the operation or function of any wider employment site would not be prejudiced; and
d) sufficient parking, servicing and access arrangements are provided.

Supporting Text

11.24 For the purposes of this policy, employment uses comprise Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8. These include offices, research and development activities and industrial processes appropriate within Use Class E(g), together with general industrial and storage and distribution uses. Other employment generating uses and many 'sui generis' uses are not regarded as employment uses for the purposes of this policy.

11.25 The Council's preferred approach is to retain existing employment sites, premises and floorspace in employment use. Proposals involving the loss of employment uses to non-employment uses will be considered in accordance with Policy EC8: The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism Uses.

11.26 Policy EC3 supports the retention, redevelopment, intensification and modernisation of non-strategic employment sites. Where applicants seek to change employment uses to alternative employment-generating uses, they will be expected to demonstrate that the proposal

would continue to support employment opportunities and would not prejudice the operation or function of any wider employment site.

11.27 In some circumstances, the continuation of an employment use may no longer be appropriate due to factors such as impacts on neighbouring occupiers, highway safety concerns or site-specific constraints. In such cases, applicants will be expected to provide robust evidence to justify the proposed change of use, having regard to the potential for alternative employment uses to continue operating from the site.

The Rural Economy

11.28 The rural economy is an important component of Wealden's economy, supporting businesses, employment opportunities and investment across the district. The Employment and Economic Study (April 2022) and Update (2026) identify the continued importance of rural sectors, including agriculture, forestry and other land-based industries.

11.29 Rural economic growth can be supported through a variety of measures, including diversification, the reuse of existing rural buildings, farm-based enterprises and development associated with agriculture and forestry. In some circumstances, certain forms of development may benefit from permitted development rights or alternative consent regimes.

11.30 Policy EC4 therefore supports appropriate rural economic growth, diversification and reuse of buildings where proposals are suitable in scale, design and location and protect landscape character, the natural environment, highway safety and local amenity.

Policy EC4 Rural Economy

Policy EC4: Rural Economy

Economic Development Outside Development Boundaries

1. Proposals that support the rural economy outside development boundaries will be supported where:

a) they promote the sustainable growth, expansion or diversification of rural businesses and enterprises;
b) the proposal is of an appropriate scale, siting, design and appearance having regard to its countryside location and does not result in unacceptable harm to landscape character, the natural environment or heritage assets;
c) the proposal would not generate traffic of a type or amount inappropriate for the rural road network and safe and suitable access can be achieved;
d) the location is accessible, or opportunities to improve sustainable access have been explored and secured, where appropriate; and
e) the proposal would not adversely affect the operation of existing neighbouring uses.

Buildings

2. Where development requires buildings, proposals will be supported where:

a) existing buildings are reused or adapted where reasonably available and suitable; or

b) new buildings are demonstrated to be necessary to support the rural enterprise.

New Buildings

3. Proposals for new buildings will be supported where:

a) a justified business case demonstrates the need for the development;

b) the scale of development is appropriate to the needs of the enterprise;

c) the siting, design and appearance of the building reflect its functional purpose and local distinctiveness; and

d) the proposal does not result in unacceptable harm to landscape character, the natural environment or heritage assets.

Agricultural and Land-Based Uses

4. Development that assists farms and other land-based businesses to modernise, diversify or adapt to changes in funding regimes, food production requirements or climate change will be supported in principle, subject to compliance with other policies in the development plan.

Supporting Text

11.31 Policy EC4 supports the growth, expansion and diversification of the rural economy outside development boundaries, including agriculture, forestry, rural enterprises, farm diversification schemes and other economic development that supports the rural economy. Proposals should also comply with other relevant policies in this Local Plan, including those relating to design, landscape, the historic environment, biodiversity, transport and climate change.

11.32 The reuse and adaptation of existing rural buildings will be supported where the buildings are suitable for the proposed use and the development remains appropriate to its rural setting. Where necessary, structural surveys or other technical evidence may be required, and independently reviewed, at the applicant's expense, where justified.

11.33 New rural buildings should meet the operational requirements of the enterprise whilst respecting local character and landscape quality and be appropriately located and designed, avoid unnecessary urbanisation or visual intrusion of the countryside. Particular regard will be given to proposals within the High Weald National Landscape, its setting and the setting of the South Downs National Park.

11.34 Proposals that help farms and other land-based businesses modernise, diversify and adapt to changing economic circumstances, funding arrangements, food production requirements and climate change, will be supported where they contribute to the long-term viability of the enterprise and are justified by proportionate business plans or supporting evidence, where required.

11.35 Where justified, planning conditions or legal agreements may be used to secure the appropriate use of rural buildings and to ensure that development continues to support the rural enterprise for which permission was granted.

11.36 Tourism development outside development boundaries will be assessed against Policy EC4 (Rural Economy) where it forms part of rural economic development and against Policy EC6 (Tourism Facilities and Attractions) where it involves tourism facilities and attractions.

Equestrian Development

11.37 Equestrian activities form an important part of Wealden's rural economy and provide opportunities for recreation, sport and employment. The district's countryside and extensive bridleway network make it a popular location for both commercial and leisure equestrian uses. The NPPF recognises the importance of access to open space and opportunities for physical activity in supporting health and wellbeing.

11.38 Equestrian development can include stables, tack rooms, riding arenas, hardstanding, fencing, lighting, accesses and parking areas. While such development can support rural businesses and leisure activities, it can also affect landscape character, rural amenity and highway safety if poorly located or designed. The subdivision of fields and proliferation of buildings and structures can have a particularly harmful impact on the countryside.

11.39 Policy EC5 provides a positive framework for equestrian development whilst ensuring that proposals are appropriate to their rural location and do not result in unacceptable impacts on landscape character, highway safety, amenity or the wider environment. The policy should be read alongside other relevant policies in this Local Plan, particularly those relating to the countryside, landscape, design, biodiversity and transport.

Policy EC5 Equestrian Development

Policy EC5: Equestrian Development

1. Proposals for equestrian facilities, including any ancillary buildings and structures, will be supported where:

a) the proposal is not located in a visually prominent location where it would cause unacceptable harm to the character of the countryside or landscape setting;
b) it has been demonstrated that existing buildings cannot reasonably be reused or adapted before new buildings are proposed;
c) new buildings or structures are of an appropriate scale to their landscape setting and, where feasible, closely related to existing buildings;
d) the proposal provides suitable foul and surface water drainage, waste management, including animal waste, safe highway and bridleway access and parking, and makes adequate provision for horse welfare, including grazing and exercise land;
e) any outdoor lighting or floodlighting is designed to avoid unacceptable impacts on visual amenity, residential amenity, wildlife or highway safety;
f) the proposal would not generate traffic of a type or amount inappropriate for the rural road network or require highway alterations that would harm rural character; and
g) the proposal avoids the unnecessary subdivision or domestication of agricultural land that would harm landscape character

Supporting Text

11.40 Policy EC5 provides a framework for considering equestrian development in the countryside. In assessing proposals, the Council will seek to ensure that facilities are appropriately located and designed, whilst avoiding unacceptable impacts on landscape character, highway safety, residential amenity and the wider rural environment.

11.41 Adequate provision should be made for the welfare of horses, including sufficient grazing and exercising land. Sufficient grazing land can help avoid the over-intensive use of land and reduce the need for excessive subdivision and fencing that may harm rural character. Whilst there is no universally applicable standard, guidance from the British Horse Society suggests between 0.4 and 0.6 hectares (1 to 1.5 acres) of grazing land per horse, depending on factors such as breed, size, grazing conditions and management practices.

11.42 Outdoor lighting and floodlighting will rarely be acceptable in the open countryside where it would adversely affect landscape character, dark skies, residential amenity, wildlife or highway safety. Particular regard will be given to proposals within or adjoining the High Weald National Landscape, the South Downs National Park or other areas recognised for their dark skies. Where lighting is required for commercial equestrian operations, it should be kept to the minimum necessary for the safe operation of the facility and designed to minimise its visual impact. Proposals should also have regard to Policy NE10: Light Pollution and Dark Skies.

11.43 Where justified, planning conditions may be used to remove permitted development rights for fencing, hardstanding, external storage or other ancillary works associated with equestrian development. This may be necessary to prevent the excessive subdivision of land or the proliferation of structures that could detract from landscape character, particularly within designated landscapes and other sensitive countryside locations.

Tourism Policies

Tourism Facilities and Attractions

11.44 Tourism is an important part of Wealden's economy, supporting businesses, employment and visitor spending. The Wealden Visitor Accommodation Study (2024) identifies continuing demand for visitor accommodation and concludes that visitor numbers and associated accommodation needs are likely to grow over the plan period.

11.45 The Wealden Economic Development Strategy (2023) identifies the visitor and cultural economy as a strategic priority, with the aim being to:

> *Support the recovery of Wealden tourism sector and seek to increase spend above pre-pandemic levels by encouraging visitors to stay longer all year round.*
>
> *It also encourages the development and promotion of Wealden as a high-quality destination, whilst seeking to protect and enhance its special qualities*.

11.46 Tourism development can contribute to the rural and urban economy through visitor attractions, accommodation, leisure facilities and supporting infrastructure. The Economic

Development Strategy also supports low-carbon and environmentally sustainable forms of visitor accommodation including provision within rural areas where appropriate.

11.47 Policy EC6 supports the retention, enhancement and diversification of tourism facilities and visitor attractions. Proposals should be appropriate to their location and, where possible, be accessible by sustainable transport modes. Tourism development in rural areas should also be considered against Policy EC4 (Rural Economy).

11.48 Existing tourism facilities and attractions make an important contribution to the district's visitor economy. The Council will therefore seek to retain these uses unless it can be demonstrated that they are no longer viable and have no reasonable prospect of continuing.

Policy EC6 Tourism Facilities and Attractions

Policy EC6: Tourism Facilities and Attractions

1. Proposals for new, improved, expanded or diversified tourism facilities and attractions will be supported where they:

   a) contribute positively to the visitor economy;
   b) are appropriate in scale, design and appearance to their location and surroundings;
   c) provide high-quality tourism facilities or attractions; and
   d) retain, enhance or diversify the district's tourism offer.

2. Proposals for tourism facilities and attractions outside development boundaries will be supported where:

   a) they relate to the expansion, improvement or diversification of an existing tourism facility or attraction; or
   b) a countryside location is justified by the nature of the proposal.

3. Proposals for tourism facilities and attractions outside development boundaries must also comply with Policy EC4: Rural Economy.

4. Development resulting in the loss of tourism facilities and attractions to alternative uses will be considered in accordance with Policy EC8: The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism uses.

Supporting Text

11.49 Policy EC6 supports the retention, enhancement and diversification of tourism facilities and attractions across the district. The Council recognises the important contribution that tourism makes to the local economy and will take a positive approach to proposals that strengthen the visitor offer and support sustainable economic growth.

11.50 Proposals for tourism facilities and attractions outside development boundaries should be supported by evidence demonstrating why a countryside location is justified by the nature of the proposal. Such proposals will also be expected to comply with Policy EC4 (Rural Economy), which provides the overarching framework for economic development in rural areas.

11.51 The Council encourages applicants to engage in pre-application discussions at an early stage. Where necessary, applicants may be required to submit supporting information,

including a business case, to demonstrate the operational need, viability and long-term sustainability of the proposal. The Council may require submitted evidence to be independently reviewed at the applicant's expense.

Visitor Accommodation

11.52 Visitor accommodation forms an important part of Wealden's tourism offer and makes a significant contribution to the local economy. The Visitor Accommodation Study (2024) identifies continuing demand for visitor accommodation across a range of sectors and concludes that additional provision is likely to be required over the plan period.

11.53 The district benefits from a diverse range of visitor accommodation, including hotels, guest houses, holiday parks, self-catering accommodation, camping and touring caravan sites. Retaining a variety of accommodation types is important in supporting tourism, visitor spending and associated businesses across the district.

Figure 26 Visitor Accommodation within Wealden District (excluding the South Downs National Park)



11.54 Existing visitor accommodation can be vulnerable to loss from higher value alternative uses, including residential development. The loss of visitor accommodation can reduce the overall choice, quality and availability of accommodation within the district and undermine the long-term growth of the visitor economy. The Council will therefore seek to retain existing visitor accommodation unless it can be demonstrated that its continued use is no longer viable or suitable.

11.55 Visitor accommodation can support both urban and rural economies and may form part of wider rural diversification schemes. New visitor accommodation should be appropriate to its location, respect landscape character, safeguard residential amenity and avoid unacceptable impacts on the natural and historic environment.

11.56 Policy EC7 provides the framework for assessing proposals for new, improved and expanded visitor accommodation, whilst also seeking to protect existing accommodation that contributes to the district's tourism offer.

Policy EC7 Visitor Accommodation

Policy EC7: Visitor Accommodation

1. The Council supports the provision, improvement, expansion and diversification of visitor accommodation that contributes to the visitor economy and supports local employment.

2. Subject to other relevant policies in this Local Plan, proposals for visitor accommodation will be supported where they:

   a) increase the range, quality or choice of visitor accommodation available within the district;
   b) contribute positively to the local economy and visitor offer.

3. New serviced visitor accommodation should be located within development boundaries unless a countryside location is justified by the nature of the proposal.

4. New non-serviced visitor accommodation will be supported where it accords with other relevant policies in this Local Plan.

5. Development resulting in the loss of visitor accommodation to alternative uses will be considered in accordance with Policy EC8: The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism Uses.

Supporting Text

11.57 Visitor accommodation, including hotels and other forms of serviced accommodation, may be regarded as a main town centre use. Proposals should therefore have regard to the requirements of Policy TC2: Sequential and Local Impact Test where relevant.

11.58 The Visitor Accommodation Study (2024) identifies a continuing need for a range of serviced and non-serviced accommodation as part of a diverse tourism offer, recognising that different types of accommodation serve different sectors of the visitor market. For Policy EC7, serviced visitor accommodation includes uses such as hotels, guest houses and bed and

breakfast accommodation, whilst non-serviced visitor accommodation includes self-catering accommodation, holiday lodges, camping and caravan sites.

11.59 New visitor accommodation should be appropriate to its location and should contribute positively to the visitor economy. Proposals will also need to comply with other relevant policies in this Local Plan, including those relating to the natural environment, landscape, design, transport, climate change and the historic environment.

11.60 Non-serviced visitor accommodation, including caravan and camping sites, holiday lodges, glamping accommodation and other forms of self-catering accommodation, can support the visitor economy and rural diversification. Where proposals are located outside development boundaries, they should also be considered against Policy EC4 (Rural Economy).

11.61 Development proposals for visitor accommodation located within the influence of internationally protected habitats may require mitigation in accordance with Policy NE5: Ashdown Forest SPA and other relevant environmental policies.

11.62 Planning permission for visitor accommodation may be subject to planning conditions restricting occupation to holiday or visitor accommodation where necessary to ensure that the development continues to serve its approved tourism purpose.

11.63 Proposals involving the loss of visitor accommodation will be assessed against Policy EC8: Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism Uses. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the accommodation is no longer viable and that there is no reasonable prospect of its continued operation or an alternative visitor accommodation use being secured.

The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism Use

11.64 Employment sites and premises, tourist attractions and facilities, and visitor accommodation all make an important contribution to the district's economy, supporting businesses, jobs and sustainable communities across both urban and rural areas.

11.65 Many economic and tourism uses are subject to pressure for alternative uses, particularly where higher land values can be achieved through redevelopment. The loss of these uses can reduce employment opportunities, visitor spending and the overall vitality of local communities.

11.66 The Council's approach through Policy EC8 therefore seeks to retain these uses unless robust evidence demonstrates that there is no reasonable prospect of the current or an appropriate alternative economic or tourism use continuing. The policy applies to proposals involving the loss of employment uses, tourism facilities and attractions, and visitor accommodation, unless specifically addressed through another policy in this Local Plan, such as Policy EC2 (Existing Strategic Employment Sites).

Policy EC8 The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism Use

Policy EC8: The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism Use

1. Proposals that would result in the loss of employment uses, tourism facilities and attractions, or visitor accommodation will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that:

a) There is no reasonable prospect of the existing use continuing;

b) The site, premises or floorspace has been actively and effectively marketed for its existing use, and any alternative use identified within this Local Plan where relevant, for a continuous period of at least 18 months;

c) The site, premises or floorspace has remained vacant, unlet or unsold despite genuine and sustained attempts to let or sell at a reasonable market value; and

d) The existing use, and any alternative use identified within this Local Plan where relevant, is no longer financially viable.

2. Proposals that would result in the loss of facilities or features essential to the operation or viability of an existing employment use, tourism facility, attraction or visitor accommodation use will only be supported where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.

3. Where considered necessary by the Council, submitted evidence may be independently reviewed at the applicant's expense.

Supporting Text

11.67 Policy EC8 applies where proposals would result in the loss of employment uses, tourism facilities and attractions, or visitor accommodation. The Council's preferred approach is to retain these uses wherever possible, recognising their contribution to the local economy, employment opportunities and sustainable communities.

11.68 Applications involving the loss of an economic or tourism use should be supported by robust evidence demonstrating that there is no reasonable prospect of the existing use continuing. This should normally include viability and marketing information sufficient to demonstrate that the site, premises or floorspace is no longer capable of supporting the existing use and that there is no reasonable prospect of the use continuing, or any alternative use identified within the relevant policy framework.

11.69 Marketing evidence should demonstrate genuine and sustained attempts to sell or let the site, premises or floorspace at a reasonable market value, including the marketing strategy, marketing period, enquiries received, offers made and the reasons why any offers were not accepted.

11.70 Unless otherwise specified elsewhere in this Local Plan, or a relevant Neighbourhood Plan, sites and premises should normally be marketed for a continuous period of at least 18 months before an application seeking the loss of the existing use is submitted. Marketing should be undertaken through appropriate commercial agents and advertised using channels that are capable of reaching the relevant market.

11.71 Where necessary, the Council may require viability or marketing information to be independently reviewed at the applicant's expense.

Wealden
District Council

12
Town Centres



Wealden
Local Plan

Introduction

12.1 This chapter sets out the strategy for how our district, service and local centres can develop, as well as where new town centre uses should be directed, in line with national planning policy requirements to support the role of town centres through a positive approach to growth, management and adaptation[256]. The Employment and Economic Study for Eastbourne and Wealden (January 2026)[257] confirms that the largest employment sector in Wealden is wholesale and retail trade in 2025 with over 9,500 employees (15%), albeit that this is similar in percentage terms to other parts of the southeast. Employment within retail trade in Wealden District is forecasted to continue with modest growth throughout the Plan period.

12.2 The Council's priority is to ensure that Wealden contains 'vibrant places' and for our town centres to adapt to contemporary needs, whilst providing a place for residents and visitors to enjoy. It is considered that the quality of places within Wealden, along with the right town centre offer (night-time economy and diverse shopping), will attract footfall and increase expenditure within the district's towns and villages, which is also another key priority. This would include preserving the heritage of our town and villages for visitors, whilst ensuring that there are viable town centre units catering for the retail and leisure needs of the modern consumer. Over the lifetime of the Local Plan, there may also be opportunities to consider enhancements to community facilities in those centres, as well as planning for climate change (i.e. the provision of EV charging points in town centre car parks).

12.3 However, the role of town centres continues to face significant change with national trends such as the rise of internet shopping, as well as the aftereffects of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the relaxation of planning regulations for town centre uses has allowed for certain town centre uses to interchange without planning permission, including the introduction of residential uses, resulting in the further decline of physical retail stores in our high streets.

12.4 Locally, Wealden's town and local centres have fared reasonably well over the period from 2016-2025 including through the Covid-19 pandemic, with the district having retained and increased its market share of comparison goods over the period, even in light of sizable regional competitors, with minimal internal competition from out-of-centre destinations within Wealden. Nonetheless, Wealden's centres do not provide significant comparison goods destinations in their own right, and it is acknowledged that alternative uses will be required to support our centres to ensure they remain vibrant and viable in the future. Our strategy therefore is to be more flexible in our town and local centres, whilst still endeavouring to retain the core retail areas in our market towns and to improve the character of our centres.

District, Service and Local Centre Hierarchy and 'Town Centre' First Principles

12.5 Town Centres play an import role in local communities, and the Council is committed to continue supporting development where it enhances their vitality and viability. Although town centres in Wealden can appear dispersed, they form a generally healthy network. Overall, the Wealden Town Centre Study (2022)[258] and subsequent 2026 update[259] concluded that centres

256 Paragraph 90 of the NPPF (December 2024)

257 Employment and Economic Study, Eastbourne and Wealden Update, January 2026

258 Wealden Town Centre Study (July 2022)

259 Wealden Town Centre Study (January 2026)

are functioning effectively, with vacancy rates consistently below national averages and with a strong convenience-led retail offer, anchored by supermarkets in the larger towns.

12.6 Uckfield emerges as the principal and most popular centre, with the largest and most diverse offer and strongest overall performance, while Hailsham also plays a significant role, but exhibits comparatively higher vacancy levels (albeit still below national levels). The smaller service centres, particularly Forest Row and Wadhurst, distinguish themselves through strong independent retail character and community identity, but do serve more localised catchments.

12.7 However, many of Wealden's centres face shared challenges including a limited comparison retail offer and continued leakage to larger destinations just outside the district, alongside a shift towards service uses. Accessibility issues, particularly in smaller centres, are reinforced by car dependency in the district. Although the environmental quality of our centres is generally good, some centres require improvements to the public realm and pedestrian experience. The night-time economy is also relatively weak in many of our centres. Overall, the centres are resilient, but evolving, with future vitality dependent on diversification, qualitative improvements, and strengthening their local service and community roles.

12.8 In line with the NPPF (December 2024)[260] and as informed by the two Wealden Town Centre Studies, Policy TC1 (District, Service and Local Centre Hierarchy and 'Town Centre' First Principles) defines a network and hierarchy for our seven main centres in the district, as well as our local centres, and sets out the Council's Town Centre First principles.

Table 9 Defining the hierarchy of District, Service and Local Centres in Wealden

Centre	Number Of Units
District Centres	**90 plus units** Good level of retail provision with a wide range of shops (supermarkets and some comparison retailing including that provided by national retailers). Public transport hub and offer a good level of car parking. Provide jobs, services and offer a range of community facilities for the population of the town as well as surrounding settlements.
Services Centres	**30-60 units** Good level of retail provision to cater for everyday needs but have significantly less provision than District centres, including a more limited comparison goods offer. Less likely to attract national retailers, however, they do attract local businesses providing for special interests.
Local Centres	**10 or more units**

12.9 The Council's Economic Development Strategy (2023)[261] confirms that the quality of a place is a fundamental strength of Wealden that alongside the right town centre offer, will attract footfall and spending. The 'greening' of centres, the provision of public realm features and support for the provision and connection of improved walking and cycling links and measures integrated with public transport are key to improving our centres. Applicants for new town centre development should consider Policy DE1: Achieving well-designed and high-quality places and

260 Paragraph 90 of the NPPF (December 2024).

261 Wealden Economic Development Strategy 2023-2033

Policy DE3: Spaces for people, nature and public realm of this Local Plan to ensure that opportunities to address the issues identified above are realised within new development of this nature.

Policy TC1 District, Service and Local Centre Hierarchy and 'Town Centre' First Principles

Policy TC1: District, Service and Local Centre Hierarchy and 'Town Centre' First Principles

1. Development proposals for main town centre uses will be expected to take a 'town centre first' approach and be located within district, service and local centres, as defined on the Policies Map. Main town centre uses[262] should be located within these boundaries unless the proposal complies with the sequential test under Policy TC2 (Sequential and Local Impact Test).

The defined centres hierarchy for the district is as follows:

a) District Centres: Uckfield, Hailsham, Crowborough; and Heathfield;
b) Service Centres: Polegate, Forest Row; and Wadhurst;
c) Local Centres: Pevensey Bay, Mayfield, Horam, Herstmonceux, Rotherfield; and Jarvis Brook (Crowborough).

2. Within the district, service and local centres, as defined on the Policies Map, proposals for 'main town centre uses' will be supported where they:

a) Seek to maintain or enhance the role, character, overall mix and diverse offer of uses ensuring a range of main town centre uses to support local communities, without the over concentration of any one use;
b) Develop and enhance the evening and night-time economy without resulting in adverse impacts on residential amenity and daytime footfall and can demonstrate that such uses will add to the vitality and viability of the centre;
c) Are of an appropriate scale to the centre and reflect its function and position within the defined town centre hierarchy;
d) Support the creation of a safe, attractive, accessible and high-quality environment, taking into account the identity of centres, their heritage as well as their connections with other towns, attractions and accommodation. This will include taking opportunities to improve sustainable travel connectivity within the centres and adjoining areas where possible; and
e) Retain an active frontage at ground floor level.

3. Support will also be given within district, service and local centre boundaries, as defined on the Policies Map, for:

a) The amalgamation or subdivision of existing units that contain 'main town centre uses', providing it only results in a minimal loss of floorspace, but leads to an overall improvement to the format of the unit, an increase in jobs or meets the needs of a modern retail/leisure business;

262 See the NPPF (December 2024), Annex 2: Glossary

b) Temporary 'meanwhile' uses to occupy vacant units where they support the vitality and viability of designated centres and do not compromise the future redevelopment of the unit/site;

c) Proposals for upper floor uses that contribute to the centres vitality and viability, including residential uses, subject to conformity with other policies in the Local Plan. The redevelopment of upper floor uses should not result in the loss of ancillary storage space or other beneficial uses to the extent that it would make a ground floor unit unviable; and

d) Delivery lockers, where it can be demonstrated that their installation would enhance the vitality and viability of the designated centre and would not restrict accessibility for pedestrians or harm the public realm.

4. The change of use of existing ground floor premises, that is defined as a 'main town centre use' to residential will not be supported within a defined centre unless it can be demonstrated that the following apply:

a) The vitality and viability of the centre is not harmed;

b) An attractive and active frontage to the public realm is maintained; and

c) That there would only be very limited if any harm caused to the character of the street scene.

Supporting Text

12.10 Policy TC1 confirms that proposals for 'main town centre uses' should be of an appropriate scale to the centre and reflect its function and position within the District, Service and Local Centre Hierarchy. For example, the Council would not normally consider proposals for major retail development to be appropriate in local centres. It is expected that most new retail floorspace will be met within the district centres.

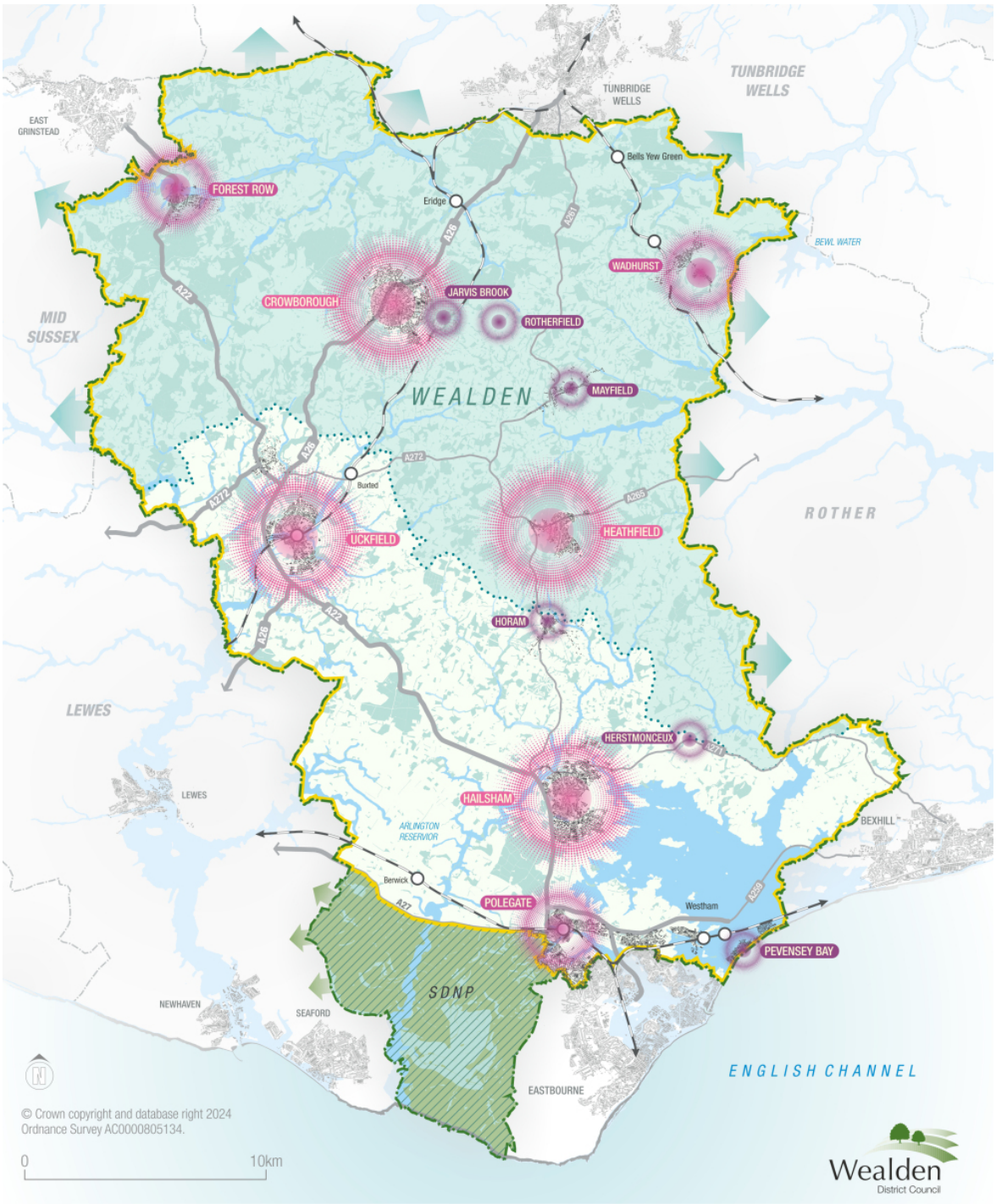
12.11 All proposals for 'main town centre uses' should seek to enhance the role, character and overall mix and diverse offer of uses in individual town and local centres, without the over concentration of any particular use. For example, although sui generis uses are supported in town centres to enhance the evening and night-time economy, the applicant would need to demonstrate that the location of that use would not result in either an over concentration of the use, an adverse impact on daytime footfall or an adverse impact on residential amenity.

12.12 The Wealden Town Centre Studies encourage flexible working practices and new formats for 'main town centre uses' through supporting the amalgamation or subdivision of existing town centre units, providing it only results in a minimal net loss of floorspace, and delivers a better standard of retail/leisure floorspace.

12.13 The policy also supports 'meanwhile' uses to temporarily occupy vacant units through occupiers seeking to test new business concepts, pop-up stores and event spaces to ensure the vitality, vibrancy and viability of existing centres. Where required, the Council may choose to apply planning conditions to such uses (if they require planning permission) to safeguard neighbouring occupiers (i.e. opening times), as well as a time limit for the use. Support will also be given to other complimentary uses in town centres, including the construction of click and collect 'hubs', or delivery lockers that provide reasons to visit designated centres and provide opportunities for dwell time and linked trips to the centre.

12.14 In relation to residential development, the Council would not normally support the change of use of existing ground floor premises in a ‘main town centre use’ to residential development within defined centres. It is considered that residential uses on the ground floor level are unlikely to support ‘active frontages’ within our centres or the vitality and viability of those centres.

Figure 27 Wealden District Town Centre Hierarchy



Sequential and Local Impact Test

Sequential Test

12.15 A key issue for our defined centres is the provision of both edge of town and 'out-of-town' retailing in the district. National planning policy supports a 'town centre' first approach, in that all new town centre uses should seek to locate themselves within designated district, service and local centres, before considering other locations outside of those centres. Our local plan supports this principle to ensure that 'out-of-town' retail is only delivered where there is no viable alternative within existing centres, and where it is shown demonstrably that there is no detrimental impact on existing nearby centres.

12.16 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses[263], which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. This approach prioritises town centre locations first, followed by edge of centre[264], with out-of-centre sites[265] considered only where suitable and available sequentially preferable sites are not identified within a reasonable timeframe. The Wealden Town Centre Study (January 2026) indicates a limited quantitative need for either retail or leisure floorspace until 2040, as defined in Policy SS4 (Retail Provision and Town Centres), coupled with vacancies within Wealden's town centres. The Council's preferred approach is to direct such development towards the defined centres first and apply the sequential approach for main town centre uses proposed outside of these boundaries.

Local Impact Test

12.17 The NPPF confirms that retail and leisure developments greater than 2,500 sqm (gross) floorspace, proposed either in edge of centre or out-of-centre locations will be subject to the assessment of the impact criteria. It also notes that local planning authorities are able to set local impact thresholds which are lower than 2,500 sqm (gross),after consideration of the criteria in the PPG[266].

12.18 The Wealden Town Centre Study (January 2026) confirms that the average size of town centre units across the district is 168 sqm gross. The level of 'leakage' to destinations outside the district is 46.3% for convenience good spends and 69.4% of all comparison goods spend. In terms of vacancy rates, this has remained relatively similar between the respective Studies. Notwithstanding that, Wealden's centres have been relatively resilient to losses during the Covid-19 period, and the evidence base continues to confirm that the potential draw of regional centres on the edge of the district cumulatively impact the vitality and viability of Wealden's centres. In considering the evidence it was recommended that retail developments falling below the current national threshold have the potential to impact the health of all district, service, and local centres within Wealden and that a locally set impact threshold is justified.

263 This is defined in the NPPF (December 2024) at Annex 2: Glossary and includes retail development; leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses; offices; and arts, culture and tourism development.

264 This is defined in the NPPF (December 2024) at Annex 2. For retail purposes, a location that is well connected to, and up to 300 metres from of a town centre boundary. For all other 'main town centre uses', a location 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange.

265 This is defined in the NPPF (December 2024) at Annex 2 as a location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

266 PPG – Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 2b-015-20190722

12.19 Given the average size of retail units in Wealden, even relatively small out-of-centre proposals can harm our town centres. The Wealden Town Centre Study (January 2026) recommends a local impact threshold of 350 sqm (gross). This would capture larger convenience retail proposals whilst avoiding undue burden on small stores, extensions, and most comparison goods retailers. This approach ensures the impacts of out-of-centre retail proposals are properly assessed and protects town centres from reduced footfall and expenditure. No local impact threshold is recommended for leisure uses.

Policy TC2 Sequential and Local Impact Test

Policy TC2: Sequential and Local Impact Test

1. To support the vitality and viability of district, service and local centres as defined on the Policies Map, a sequential approach must be applied to proposals for main town centre uses proposed on the edge of or outside of centres, in accordance with the NPPF.

2. Proposals that satisfy the sequential test at the edge of an existing centre or in out-of-centre locations will be expected to provide specific measures that will, where appropriate, establish new or improve the quality and function of, sustainable connections to the centre. This would specifically include improvements to walking/cycling routes and public transport links. The nature and extent of the measures should be directly related to the scale of the proposal.

3. Proposals should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as the format and scale of the development, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are explored first before out-of-town locations are considered.

4. Proposals for 'main town centre uses' outside of defined centres will be required to be accompanied by an impact assessment where they exceed the following thresholds:

   a) Over 350 square metres (gross) for retail proposals; or
   b) Over 2,500 square metres (gross) for leisure proposals.

5. In both cases, the impact assessment must sufficiently demonstrate that it will not have a significant adverse impact on the district's defined centres, either on their own or cumulatively in consideration of other commitments in the area.

6. Where necessary, planning conditions and/or legal agreements will be applied to any new planning permission outside of defined centres, including defining the nature and extent of the proposed use to ensure no future adverse impacts on existing defined centres.

Supporting Text

12.20 In applying the sequential test, the Council will consider whether a site falls within the definition of 'edge of town' centre as set out in the NPPF having regard to local circumstances and national policy and guidance. The NPPF confirms that the sequential approach should not be applied to proposals for small scale rural offices or other small scale rural development, albeit it does not provide a definition for small-scale in this context. Accordingly, small scale rural offices, retail development and other 'main town centre use' proposals within rural areas will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The Council will adopt a proportionate approach of

the requirements for the sequential test. However, in line with the Wealden Town Centre Study (January 2026), such proposals would typically fall below the local impact threshold of 350 sqm and more closely align with the median unit size in Wealden's centres of 90 sqm.

12.21 In relation to the Local Impact Test, although all planning applications for retail development of over 350 sqm (gross) outside of defined centres will be required to submit an impact assessment, national guidance indicates that the impact test should be undertaken in a proportionate and locally appropriate way. The level of detail for the submission of an impact assessment would typically be agreed with Council officers during the pre-application process, but this will need to ensure, at a minimum, an assessment of:

- the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and
- the impact of the proposal on vitality and viability of the defined centre(s), including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and the wider retail catchment (as applicable to the scale and nature of the scheme).

12.22 Lastly, the introduction of Use Class E in September 2020 enables retail uses to occupy non-retail premises (in Use Class E) in out of centre locations, thereby circumventing the 'town centre first' principle. Where this could impact on the health of district, service or local centres, the Council may attach a planning condition in out-of-centre locations to restrict the use applied for.

Primary Shopping Areas

12.23 The NPPF confirms that planning policies should define the extent of defined centres and primary shopping areas and clearly set out the range of uses permitted in such locations, as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre[267]. Primary Shopping Areas are defined in the NPPF as 'defined areas where retail development is concentrated'.

12.24 The Wealden Town Centre Study (January 2026) focused on our seven main district and service centres within the District, Service and Local Centre Hierarchy (namely Uckfield, Hailsham, Crowborough, Heathfield, Polegate, Forest Row and Wadhurst). For each centre, the evidence recommends a wider defined centre boundary[268] and a primary shopping area boundary. In general, areas that are isolated, or operate as a distinct separate parade of shops, or where they do not function as part of the collective retail, leisure, commercial and service offering of 'main town centre uses' have not been included within the relevant defined centre boundaries.

12.25 Wealden's defined centres are comprised of close groupings of shops, cafes and other businesses selling a relatively wide range of products and services. For convenience goods and day-to-day services, customers can fulfil the majority of their day-to-day needs in our centres (and some comparison purchases) in one trip. The presence of non-retail uses in primary shopping areas can dilute the core purpose of our centres and may disincentivise shoppers to come into those centres, thereby reducing their vitality and viability.

267 Paragraph 90b) of the NPPF (December 2024).

268 The NPPF at Annex 2: Glossary defines a town centre boundary as an 'area defined on the local authority's policies map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area'.

12.26 Although Wealden recognises the role that residential development has to play in centres, particularly in terms of delivering footfall to these centres, this needs to be balanced with protecting our defined centres, including the possibility that such uses will erode some of the characteristics of our centres that supports their vitality and vibrancy, through the removal of active frontages. Residential uses at ground floor level in primary shopping areas can also give rise to practical issues, such as the creation of incompatible living conditions for potential occupiers and the conversion of traditional shop frontages (particularly in conservation areas) to residential frontages that can cause detrimental impacts to the character of the area. For these reasons, the Council's preferred approach is to only support residential uses outside of primary shopping areas (unless the residential use is on the upper floor(s)).

12.27 The introduction of Use Class E[269] in September 2020 combined several town centre uses (shops, cafes, restaurants, offices, fitness and gyms, creches, estate agents etc.) into one use class. Further changes to permitted development rights introduced in August 2021[270] allows for uses falling within Use Class E to be dwellinghouses without planning permission (but subject to a prior approval process). However, several of our defined centres (Forest Row, Wadhurst, Mayfield etc.) are washed over by the High Weald National Landscape designation and therefore do not benefit from such permitted development rights. Therefore, where planning permission is required, Policy TC3 (Primary Shopping Areas) will apply.

Policy TC3 Primary Shopping Areas

Policy TC3: Primary Shopping Areas

1. Within Primary Shopping Areas, as defined on the Policies Map, proposals for retails uses (Use Class E(a)) will be supported to ensure that these central areas retain their role as shopping destinations meeting the shopping needs of the community and generating the required footfall during the day for our centres to continue to be vibrant and viable.

2. To support thriving centres within Wealden, development proposals within Primary Shopping Areas, as defined on the Policies Map, involving the loss of Class E Uses will only be supported where the following criteria is met:

a) A 'main town centre use' as defined by the NPPF, is proposed;
b) It can be demonstrated that the proposal will sustain and enhance the viability and vitality of the Primary Shopping Area and the centre more generally;
c) An active frontage is maintained at the ground floor level; and
d) It does not result in a concentration of uses that harm the vitality and viability of the Primary Shopping Area, or the centre more generally.

Supporting Text

12.28 The overarching purpose of designating Primary Shopping Areas is to ensure that these core areas within our centres retain their role as shopping destinations to meet the needs

269 Town and Country Planning(Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020.

270 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

of the community (and visitors) in order to generate footfall during the day and to ensure that these centres remain vibrant and viable. Uses that would detract from the overall shopping function of these Primary Shopping Areas will be resisted where planning permission is required, including those sui generis uses that relate to the night-time economy (i.e. public houses, bars, takeaways and live music venues) that may reduce daytime footfall, or uses that have closed or inactive frontages (i.e. some professional service uses or offices).

12.29 The Council recognises the introduction of various permitted development right changes within the planning system and the implications thereof. However, the loss of an active ground floor frontage to residential use will not be supported within primary shopping areas where planning permission is required. This is particularly the case where such proposals would create gaps between active frontages, be incompatible with existing uses (i.e. the residential amenity of future occupiers would be unsatisfactory) or where conversions of traditional shopfronts to residential uses harms the existing built form and/or character of the area.

Garden Centres

12.30 Owing to the rural nature of Wealden and the location of some of its countryside on the outskirts of large towns, there has historically been a significant number of horticultural nurseries and garden centres scattered throughout the district, many of which are located outside of existing development boundaries on major road routes or outside of market towns. While traditionally focused on plants and garden-related products, over time, some have expanded into selling wider household goods including comparison goods (clothes, household goods, indoor furniture) and convenience goods (food products).

12.31 To ensure that defined centres are protected, the Council considers that a criteria-based policy is required for the expansion/extension of existing garden centres that are located in less sustainable locations (i.e. outside of development boundaries). This will help prevent such proposals from adversely affecting the vitality and viability of nearby retail centres particularly where they compete with goods sold on our local high streets.

12.32 Policy TC4 (Garden Centres) sets out the criteria which will be considered when determining planning applications for the expansion/ extension of existing garden centres outside of development boundaries.

Policy TC4 Gardens Centres

Policy TC4: Garden Centres

1. Proposals for the expansion/extension of existing garden centres outside of development boundaries, as defined on the Policies Map, will be permitted when the following criteria is met:

a) the sale of plants, horticultural products, garden buildings, garden furniture and ornaments within the garden centre remains the principal use;

b) the additional traffic generated does not have an adverse impact on local roads by reason of their inadequate capacity or rural nature;

c) it can accommodate the car parking requirements satisfactorily within the immediate surrounds of the building, or where this is not suitable due to highway safety concerns, an alternative solution is agreed; and

d) the site has good accessibility to an existing sustainable settlement and is not situated in an isolated location.

2. Planning conditions will be applied where necessary to ensure that where an extension to an existing garden centre is permitted, the retail floorspace of the garden centre principally relates to the sale of garden/horticultural products.

3. Extensions to existing garden centres located outside of defined district, service and local centres that are proposed to have retail floorspace above 350 square metres gross will be subject to the Local Impact Test under Policy TC2: Sequential and Local Impact Test of this Local Plan.

4. All other ancillary uses that are defined as 'main town centre uses' within national planning policy (i.e. cafes/restaurants) may also be considered under the sequential test.

Supporting Text

12.33 Where an extension to an existing garden centre is permitted, the Council will consider whether a planning condition to ensure the retail floorspace of the garden centre principally relates to the sale of garden/horticultural products is required. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis, in line with the NPPF and will only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development being permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Both the scale of the extension and the sustainability of the location are key matters in determining whether the Council will seek to impose a planning condition of this nature, and this will be discussed with applicants at an early stage.

12.34 It should be noted that all proposals for new garden centres and/or the expansion/extension of garden centres that have 'main town centre uses' in all locations (i.e. inside and outside development boundaries) will continue to be subject to the sequential test and local impact assessment if outside of a defined district, service and local centre boundary (Policy TC2 – Sequential and Local Impact Test).

Wealden
District Council

13
Site Allocations



Wealden
Local Plan

Introduction

13.1 Policies SS2 (Provision of Homes), SS3 (Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs) and SS5 (Provision of Employment Floorspace) identify housing, traveller accommodation and employment development required to meet the needs of the district to 2042. This chapter identifies the sites allocated to deliver that development and sets out any site-specific requirements.

13.2 Site allocations must accord with the development plan when read as a whole, including relevant neighbourhood plans[271]. The allocation of a site does not remove the requirement to obtain planning permission, and development proposals will be assessed against all relevant policies and material considerations.

13.3 The site allocations have been informed by the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) (September 2026)[272], the Sustainability Appraisal process and other supporting evidence. These assessments have informed the identification of suitable and deliverable sites, together with any site-specific requirements necessary to mitigate constraints and secure sustainable development.

13.4 Policies SA1 (Housing and Mixed-Use Site Allocations) and SA2 (Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations) identify the sites allocated within the Plan. Employment allocations to meet identified needs can also be found in this chapter. Site references correspond with the Policies Map and related inset maps.

Housing and Mixed-Use Allocations

13.5 Policy SA1 identifies sites allocated for housing and mixed-use development. The dwelling capacities shown are indicative and have been informed by the SHELAA and supporting evidence.

13.6 Stand-alone site-specific allocation policies are included where additional requirements are necessary owing to the scale, nature or location of development, these can be found in this chapter. These policies supplement the wider policies of the Plan and identify any infrastructure, environmental, design, access or delivery requirements relevant to the site.

13.7 Site-specific requirements may be included to address:

- environmental, landscape or heritage constraints;
- access and connectivity requirements;
- infrastructure delivery and phasing;
- comprehensive development across adjoining sites;
- biodiversity, green infrastructure and open space provision; and
- place-making and design considerations.

271 At time of writing, this includes the Herstmonceux Neighbourhood Plan, Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan, Hellingly Neighbourhood Plan, Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan, Ninfield Neighbourhood Plan, Horam Neighbourhood Plan and East Hoathly with Halland Neighbourhood Plan.

272 Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) - Wealden District Council

Policy SA1 Housing and Mixed Use Site Allocations

Policy SA1: Housing and Mixed-Use Site Allocations

1. The sites identified in Table 10 and shown on the Policies Map are allocated for housing and mixed development.

2. Development proposals on allocated sites must accord with the site-specific requirements set out in this chapter, where applicable, and the development plan when read as a whole.

Table 10 Housing and Mixed-Use Site Allocations

Allocation Ref	Site address	SHELAA Ref.	Parish	Adjoining Settlement	Dwellings (net) and other development allocated
BYG1 (FR)	Land between Court Lodge and Bells Yew Green Industrial Estate, B2169, Bells Yew Green	748/1750	Frant	Bells Yew Green	20
BE1 (BE)	Land north of Recreation Ground, Station Road, Berwick Station	617/1780	Berwick	Berwick Station	45
BE2 (BE)	Land West of Station Road, Berwick Station	619/1780	Berwick	Berwick Station	27
BE3 (BE)	Land to north east of Berwick Station, Station Road, Berwick Station	822/1780	Berwick	Berwick Station	10
BE4 (BE)	Land at Brookfield Nursey, Station Road, Berwick Station	616/1780	Berwick	Berwick Station	5
BB1 (FF)	Land adjoining Old Mill House, Framfield Road, Blackboys	1237/1790	Framfield	Blackboys	10
BB2 (FF)	Blackboys Inn and Adjoining Land, Lewes Road, Blackboys	251/1790	Framfield	Blackboys	9
BR1 (HEAW)	Former Broad Oak Primary School, Scotsford Road, Broad Oak, Heathfield	1266/1630	Heathfield and Waldron	Broad Oak	12
BU1 (BU)	Land at Holly Farm, Station Road, Buxted	744/1840	Buxted	Buxted	35
BU2 (BU)	Land east of Great Totease Farm, Church Road, Buxted	146/1840	Buxted	Buxted	20

Allocation Ref	Site address	SHELAA Ref.	Parish	Adjoining Settlement	Dwellings (net) and other development allocated
BU3 (BU)	Lower Totease Farm, Framfield Road, Buxted	027/1840	Buxted	Buxted	10
BU4 (BU)	Land at Limes Lane, Buxted	1247/1840	Buxted	Buxted	25
CIH1 (HEAW)	Land to the east of Burnetts Farm, Firgrove Road, Cross-in-Hand	017/1920	Heathfield and Waldron	Cross-in-Hand	10
CIH2 (HEAW)	Land to rear of Breton House, B2102, Cross in Hand	431/1920	Heathfield and Waldron	Cross-in-Hand	15
CIH3 (HEAW)	5 Farthing Cottage, Back Lane, Cross in Hand	1238/1210	Heathfield and Waldron	Cross-in-Hand	5
CIH4 (HEAW)	Land at Sunnyside, A267, Cross in Hand	941/1920	Heathfield and Waldron	Cross-in-Hand	9
CR1 (CR)	Land adjacent to the London Road and Pilmer Road Junction, Crowborough	055/1110 317/1110 634/1110	Crowborough	Crowborough	40
CR2 (CR)	Land at Millbrook Road, Crowborough	507/1110	Crowborough	Crowborough	15
CR3 (CR)	Crowborough Police Station, Crowborough Hill, Crowborough	955/1110	Crowborough	Crowborough	5
CR4 (CR)	Kingswood, Luxford Lane, Crowborough	038/1110	Crowborough	Crowborough	6
CR5 (WIT)	Land to the rear of Cooks Corner Farm and to the north of London Road, Crowborough	576/1110	Withyham	Crowborough	15

Allocation Ref	Site address	SHELAA Ref.	Parish	Adjoining Settlement	Dwellings (net) and other development allocated
CR6 (CR)	Land at Beechenwood Farm, Crowborough	1026/1110	Crowborough	Crowborough	120 (Strategic Site)
CR7 (CR)	Spring Cottage, Eridge Road, Crowborough	298/1110	Crowborough	Crowborough	10
CR8 (CR)	Land at junction of Eridge Road and A26, Steel Cross, Crowborough	158/1110	Crowborough	Crowborough	20
CR9 (CR)	Land at Byeways, Palesgate Lane, Crowborough	698/1110	Crowborough	Crowborough	30
CR10 (CR)	Land at Steel Cross Farm, Green Lane, Crowborough	250/1110	Crowborough	Crowborough	95
EH1 (EH)	Harrison's, South of London Road, East Hoathly	985/1950	East Hoathly with Halland	East Hoathly	150 (Strategic Site)
EH2 (EH)	Broomy Lodge Field, London Road, East Hoathly	466/1950	East Hoathly with Halland	East Hoathly	30
EH3 (EH)	Land Hesmonds Stud, East Hoathly	773/1950	East Hoathly with Halland	East Hoathly	176 (Strategic Site)
EH4 (EH)	Land east of South Street, East Hoathly	782/1950	East Hoathly with Halland	East Hoathly	30
FAD1 (BU)	Land at The Walled Garden, Five Ash Down	058/1990	Buxted	Five Ash Down	15
GR1 (WIT)	Land south of Back Lane and to the west of railway line, Groombridge	213/2040	Withyham	Groombridge	21

Allocation Ref	Site address	SHELAA Ref.	Parish	Adjoining Settlement	Dwellings (net) and other development allocated
HA1 (HA)	Grovelands Primary School, Gleneagles Drive, Hailsham	384/1310	Hailsham	Hailsham	40
HA2 (HA)	Land at Hailsham Delivery Office, 11 North Street, Hailsham	621/1310	Hailsham	Hailsham	8
HA3 (HA)	Land at the Market, Market Street, Hailsham	678/1310	Hailsham	Hailsham	40
HA4 (HA)	Hamlins Mill, Mill Road, Hailsham	294/1310	Hailsham	Hailsham	6
HA5 (HA)	Land south of Howard Close, Hailsham	454/1310	Hailsham	Hailsham	40
HA6 (HA)	Wellfield, 154 - 156 Station Road, Hailsham	091/1310	Hailsham	Hailsham	9
HA7 (HEL)	Swingate Gardens, Mill Lane, Hellingly	1282/3000	Hellingly	Hailsham	70
HA8 (HEL)	Land adjoining 13 Station Road, Hellingly	107/3000	Hellingly	Hailsham	10
HA9 (HEL)	Land at Park Farm, New Road, Hellingly	1241/3000	Hellingly	Hailsham	100 (Strategic Site)
HA10 (HA)	Amberstone Council Depot, Amberstone, Hailsham	461/1310	Hailsham	Hailsham	15
HA11 (HA)	Land at Harebeating Nursery, Harebeating Lane, Hailsham	524/1310	Hailsham	Hailsham	10
HA12 (HA)	Land adjacent Pattenden Farm, Battle Road, Hailsham	521/1310 313/1310	Hailsham	Hailsham	100 (Strategic Site)
HA13 (HA)	Land east of Battle Road, Harebeating Lane, Hailsham	197/1310	Hailsham	Hailsham	300 (Strategic Site)

Allocation Ref	Site address	SHELAA Ref.	Parish	Adjoining Settlement	Dwellings (net) and other development allocated
HA14 (HA)	Harebeating Farm, Harebeating Lane, Hailsham	883/1310	Hailsham	Hailsham	20
HA15 (HA)	Land at Oaklands, west of Coldthorn Lane, Ersham Road, Hailsham	1129/1310	Hailsham	Hailsham	40
HA16 (HA)	Bolneys Farm, South Road, Hailsham	305/1310	Hailsham	Hailsham	60
HA17 (HA)	Land at the Paddocks, South Road, Hailsham	1048/1310	Hailsham	Hailsham	8
HAR1 (HAR)	Land at Castle Farm, Withyham Road	708/2080	Hartfield	Hartfield	5
HAR2 (HAR)	Land at Old Crown Farm, Edenbridge Road, Hartfield	709/2080	Hartfield	Hartfield	6
HEA1 (HEAW)	Land at and surrounding Rothershaw, High Street, Heathfield	525/1210 595/1210	Heathfield and Waldron	Heathfield	22
HEA2 (HEAW)	Land at Heathfield Police Station, High Street, Heathfield	633/1210	Heathfield and Waldron	Heathfield	6
HEA3 (HEAW)	Land to the south west of Ghyll Road, Tilsmore, Heathfield	149/1210	Heathfield and Waldron	Heathfield	35
HEA4 (HEAW)	Land on north side of Burwash Road, Heathfield	258/3200	Heathfield and Waldron	Heathfield	15
HEA5 (HEAW)	Land south of Burwash Road and east of Tower Street, Heathfield	260/1210	Heathfield and Waldron	Heathfield	22

Allocation Ref	Site address	SHELAA Ref.	Parish	Adjoining Settlement	Dwellings (net) and other development allocated
HEA6 (HEAW)	Land at 15 Tower Street, Heathfield	299/1210	Heathfield and Waldron	Heathfield	10
HEA7 (HEAW)	Parklands, Burwash Road, Heathfield	275/1210	Heathfield and Waldron	Heathfield	8
HEA8 (HEAW)	The Old Half Moon, Burwash Road, Heathfield	798/1210	Heathfield and Waldron	Heathfield	7
HMX1 (HMX)	Land at Collins Honda, Hailsham Road, Herstmonceux	608/2090	Herstmonceux	Herstmonceux	12
HMX2 (HMX)	Land to north of James Avenue, Herstmonceux	081/2090	Herstmonceux	Herstmonceux	10
HOR1 (HOR)	Land adjoining Discovery Way and Village Hall, Horam	1062/3030	Horam	Horam	8
HOR2 (HOR)	Clearview Farm, Chiddingly Road, Horam	960/3030	Horam	Horam	35
HOR3 (HOR)	Land at Great Easterfields, Chiddingly Road, Horam	920/3030	Horam	Horam	8
HOR4 (HOR)	Coxlow Farm, Horam Road, Horam	875/3030	Horam	Horam	750 (net) dwellings, Primary School, Employment and

Allocation Ref	Site address	SHELAA Ref.	Parish	Adjoining Settlement	Dwellings (net) and other development allocated
					Community Uses (Strategic Site)
IS1 (IS)	Holly Gap Farm, Station Road, Isfield	413/3040	Isfield	Isfield	10
IS2 (IS)	Land to rear of Sandpit Cottage, Station Road, Isfield	1143/3040	Isfield	Isfield	10
LAU1 (LAU)	Briars, Church Lane, Laughton	1225/3060	Laughton	Laughton	5
LOH1 (HEL)	Land at Broad Farm, south of New Street, Lower Horsebridge	1079/3100	Hellingly	Lower Horsebridge	400 (Strategic Site)
LOH2 (HEL)	Woods Corner, North Street, Lower Horsebridge	1145/3100	Hellingly	Lower Horsebridge	15
LOH3 (HEL)	Field at North Street, Lower Horsebridge	009/3100	Hellingly	Lower Horsebridge	14
LOH4 (HEL)	Land at Horselunges Manor, Hellingly	1233/3000	Hellingly	Lower Horsebridge	60
LC1 (NIN)	Land south of Ninfield Road, Ninfield, Lunsford Cross	1293/1630	Ninfield	Lunsford Cross	300 (net) dwellings, Primary School (Strategic Site)
MA1 (MA)	Stumblewood, The Drive, Maresfield Park	1279/3120	Maresfield	Maresfield	10
MA2 (MA)	Land east of Top Drive, Maresfield Park, Maresfield	1000/3120	Maresfield	Maresfield	10

Allocation Ref	Site address	SHELAA Ref.	Parish	Adjoining Settlement	Dwellings (net) and other development allocated
MA3 (MA)	Land south of Maresfield, A22, Maresfield	212/3120 440/3120	Maresfield	Maresfield	185 (Strategic Site)
NIN1 (NIN)	Land adjacent to Ninfield Reservoir, High Street, Ninfield	098/3170	Ninfield	Ninfield	20
POL1 (POL)	Land at Royal Mail Delivery Office, 74 High Street, Polegate	622/1510	Polegate	Polegate	8
POL2 (POL)	Polegate Station Car Park, High Street, Polegate	967/1510 1068/1510	Polegate	Polegate	25
POL3 (POL)	Hindsland Fields (west), Eastbourne Road, Polegate	261/1510	Polegate	Polegate	60
POL4 (POL)	Hindsland Fields (east), Eastbourne Road, Polegate	120/1510	Polegate	Polegate	30
POL5 (POL)	Former Waterhouse Coaches Site, Dittons Road, Polegate	518/1510	Polegate	Polegate	8
RC1 (UCK)	Land at White House Farm, London Road, Uckfield	1007/1410	Uckfield	Ringles Cross	200 (Strategic Site)
RC2 (BU)	Land east of Coopers Green Road, Ringles Cross	001/3225	Buxted	Ringles Cross	20
RC3 (BU)	Land opposite Roundwood, Coopers Green Road, Ringles Cross	975/3225	Buxted	Ringles Cross	15

Allocation Ref	Site address	SHELAA Ref.	Parish	Adjoining Settlement	Dwellings (net) and other development allocated
RO1 (RO)	Highfields Farm, Rotherfield	1257/1110	Rotherfield	Rotherfield	8
STC1 (WES)	Sharnfold Farm, Hailsham Road, Stone Cross	745/2070 786/2070 1132/2070	Westham	Stone Cross	230 (Strategic Site)
STC2 (WES)	Land at and adjacent to The Downs View and Emberson, Hailsham Road, Stone Cross	1153/3280	Westham	Stone Cross	60
STC3 (WES)	Land to the west of the B2104, Hankham	944/3280	Westham	Stone Cross	15
STC4 (WES)	Land to the west of Stone Cross Garden Centre, Dittons Road, Stone Cross	677/3280	Westham	Stone Cross	20
STC5 (WES)	Dittons Nursery, Dittons Road, Stone Cross	529/3280	Westham	Stone Cross	20
STC6 (WES)	Land south of Hankham Road, Stone Cross	1025/3280	Westham	Stone Cross	30
STC7 (WES)	Land at Hazlebank, Rattle Road, Stone Cross	575/3280	Westham	Stone Cross	8
STW1 (FR)	Land at Ramslye Farm (Spratsbrook Farm), Tunbridge Wells	729/1610	Frant	Tunbridge Wells	300 (Strategic Site)
STW2 (FR)	Strawberry Hill Farm, Eridge Road, Tunbridge Wells	443/1610	Frant	Tunbridge Wells	35

Allocation Ref	Site address	SHELAA Ref.	Parish	Adjoining Settlement	Dwellings (net) and other development allocated
STW3 (FR)	Land to the west of Frant Road, Tunbridge Wells	1077/1610	Frant	Tunbridge Wells	70
STW4 (FR)	Pinewood Farm, Frant Road, Tunbridge Wells	979/1610	Frant	Tunbridge Wells	120 (Strategic Site)
STW5 (FR)	Land between Frant Road and Bayham Road, Tunbridge Wells	755/1610 1201/1610	Frant	Tunbridge Wells	150 (Strategic Site)
STW6 (FR)	Land at Bayham Road, Tunbridge Wells	651/1610	Frant	Tunbridge Wells	60
STW7 (FR)	Land at Benhall Mill Road, Tunbridge Wells	063/1610	Frant	Tunbridge Wells	30
STW8 (FR)	Land to the east of Benhall Mill Road, Tunbridge Wells	126/1610	Frant	Tunbridge Wells	120 (Strategic Site)
UCK1 (UCK)	Uckfield Police Station, New Town, High Street, Uckfield	956/1410	Uckfield	Uckfield	10
UCK2 (FF)	Land at Bird In Eye (North), Bird In Eye Hill, Uckfield	127/1410	Framfield	Uckfield	215 dwellings and SANGs (Strategic Site)
UCK3 (FF)	Land at Hempstead Lane, Uckfield	725/1410	Framfield	Uckfield	300 dwellings and SANGs

Allocation Ref	Site address	SHELAA Ref.	Parish	Adjoining Settlement	Dwellings (net) and other development allocated
					(Strategic Site)
UCK4 (UCK)	Land rear of Oakley Court, Selby Road, Uckfield	517/1410	Uckfield	Uckfield	6
UCK5 (FF)	Land north of Eastbourne Road, Uckfield	1222/2020	Framfield	Uckfield	45
UCK6 (FF)	Land off Old Eastbourne Road, Uckfield	194/1410	Framfield	Uckfield	30
UCK7 (UCK)	Sunview, 46 New Road, Ridgewood, Uckfield	198/1410	Uckfield	Uckfield	30
UCK8 (UCK)	Cress Farm, 20 Lewes Road, Ridgewood, Uckfield	539/1410	Uckfield	Uckfield	8
UCK9 (UCK)	Land South West Of Ridgedown, Lewes Road, Uckfield	1144/1410	Uckfield	Uckfield	55
UCK10 (UCK)	Land at Thorncrest, Lewes Road, Uckfield	006/1410	Uckfield	Uckfield	30
UCK11 (LH)	Land at Owlsbury Farm, Lewes Road, Uckfield	1061/1410	Little Horsted	Uckfield	1,300 dwellings, Primary School, SANGs (Strategic Site)
WAD1 (WAD)	Land at Windmill House, Windmill Lane, Wadhurst	694/3330	Wadhurst	Wadhurst	20

Allocation Ref	Site address	SHELAA Ref.	Parish	Adjoining Settlement	Dwellings (net) and other development allocated
WES1 (WES)	Land adjacent to 125 Rattle Road, Westham	473/3360	Westham	Westham	7
WES2 (WES)	Land at Peelings Lane, Westham	1099/3360 732/3360	Westham	Westham	140 (Strategic Site)
WIL1 (WJ)	Land at Mornings Mill Farm	1234/3370	Willingdon and Jevington	Willingdon	40

POLICY BYG1 (FR): Land between Court Lodge and Bells Yew Green Industrial Estate, Bells Yew Green as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 1.31

Indicative Capacity: 20 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Concentrate development in the south of the site, with appropriate buffers to ancient woodland taking into account Policy NE4, to reflect the existing settlement pattern, limit encroachment towards Court Lodge historic farmstead and protect its setting;
2. Retain and enhance trees and woodland along the northern edge of the site to screen views from Court Lodge historic farmstead;
3. Reflect the intimate scale, built form and streetscape of the recent terraced development west of Bayham Road;
4. Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation and historic field boundaries within and surrounding the site, including the Rushlye Wood ancient woodland, the Bayham Road hedgerow and mature deciduous trees in the centre of the site;
5. Provide a semi-natural habitat buffer, taking into account Policy NE4, to Rushlye Wood ancient woodland adjoining the south-east boundary of the site;
6. Use additional native planting species to maintain the rural character of the wider area;
7. Provide safe vehicular, cycle and pedestrian connections to the site from the B2169 (Bayham Road), or the development at Dukes Drive, meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with both East Sussex County Council and Kent County Council as relevant highway authorities;
8. Enhance access connectivity between the site, Rushlye Wood and the wider network of PRoW; and
9. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY CR6 (CR): Land at Beechenwood Farm, Pleasant View Road, Crowborough as identified on the Policies Map

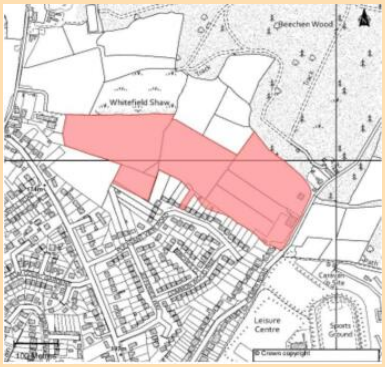
Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 8.26

Indicative Capacity: 120 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the policies in the development plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe and convenient vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access to and from the site, including connections to Crowborough town centre, local services, schools, employment areas and public transport facilities;
2. Demonstrate, having regard to national planning policy and advice of the Highway Authority, that any residual cumulative impacts on the highway network would not be severe;
3. Locate built development within the southern part of the site and limit its extension down the slope and provide and maintain a minimum 25 metre undeveloped buffer to the ancient woodland at Beechenwood, unless ecological surveys demonstrate that a reduced buffer would not adversely affect the woodland and is agreed by the Local Planning Authority;
4. Retain, protect and enhance the shaw, boundary hedgerows, mature trees and internal field boundary hedgerows within the western half of the site and integrate these features into the design of the development;
5. Minimise encroachment towards the boundary of Cooks Corner Farm historic farmstead and retain and enhance trees and woodland to screen views of development from the farmstead near the south-west edge of the site;
6. Protect existing Public Rights of Way and recreational routes within and adjoining the site, unless an alternative arrangement of equivalent or improved quality is agreed, and enhance connections to green infrastructure and the wider countryside and woodland wherever possible;
7. Include green spaces and tree planting throughout the development to break up the built form, strengthen green infrastructure, and integrate the scheme into the landscape;
8. Limit development to two storeys to respect the scale and character of the High Weald National Landscape, unless additional accommodation within the roof space can be provided without increasing perceived building height or harm key views
9. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system; and
10. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY CR8 (CR): Land at junction of Eridge Road and A26, Steel Cross, Crowborough as identified on the Policies Map

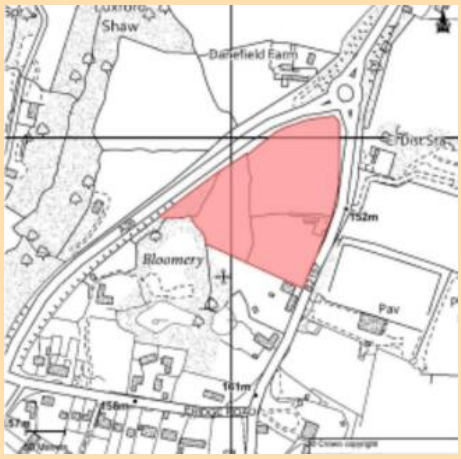
Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 2.54

Indicative Capacity: 20 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape

Relevant Planning History: WD/2021/2877/RM - granted planning permission for 2 (net) dwellings; WD/2022/2638/F – planning permission refused for 2 (net) dwellings behind the approved frontage development



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Retain, protect and enhance mature vegetation, priority habitat deciduous woodland, shaws, hedgerows and historic field boundaries within and surrounding the site, strengthening enclosure pattern and maintaining landscape structure;
2. Strengthen green infrastructure and woodland and hedgerow connectivity through new native tree planting, hedgerow corridors and green spaces to break up the built form and integrate the scheme into the landscape;
3. Reflect the existing settlement pattern and character through a scale and built form consistent with recent development within the south-eastern corner of the site;
4. Provide safe vehicular, cycle and pedestrian connectivity from Eridge Road, meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in consultation with the local highway authority. Any access works should retain the character of Eridge Road and protect roadside hedgerows, as far as practicable;
5. Limit development to two storeys to respect the scale and character of the High Weald National Landscape, unless additional accommodation within the roof space can be provided without increasing perceived building height or harm key views;
6. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider; and
7. Provide a site-specific flood risk assessment and incorporate to manage surface water in accordance with other policies in this Plan.

POLICY CR9 (CR): Land at Byeways, Palesgate Lane, Crowborough as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 2.22

Indicative Capacity: 30 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Retain, protect and enhance mature vegetation and veteran trees, tree clumps, woodland and hedgerows within and surrounding the site, particularly those along Palesgate Lane and the outer boundaries to minimise views into the site;
2. Provide a suitable buffer area against the heathland that abuts the eastern boundary of the site;
3. Provide green space and tree planting throughout the development to break up built form, strengthen green infrastructure, and integrate the scheme into the landscape;
4. Provide safe vehicular, cycle and pedestrian connections from the approved access serving for land with extant planning permission at Steel Cross, meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with the local highway authority;
5. Provide a site-specific flood risk assessment and manage surface water in accordance with other policies in this Plan;
6. Limit development to two storeys to respect the scale and character of the High Weald National Landscape, unless additional accommodation within the roof space can be provided without increasing perceived building height or harm key views; and
7. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY CR10 (CR): Land at Steel Cross Farm, Green Lane, Crowborough as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 4.47

Indicative Capacity: 95 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the development plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Focus development in the north of the site to minimise encroachment of the settlement edge beyond the soft boundary feature formed by Limekiln Wood;
2. Provide safe vehicular, cycle and pedestrian connectivity from the approved Steel Cross access, meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in consultation with the local highway authority;
3. Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation, including woodlands, trees, and hedgerows within the site, in particular woodland along Palesgate Lane should be retained and protected to minimise visibility into the site;
4. Retain the infield trees and ponds in the north of the site and provide an appropriate buffer zone incorporating new semi-natural habitat relating to the ponds, where suitable;
5. Retain and enhance public access from the northern part of the site to its site boundaries, to maintain and improve connectivity to Limekiln Wood, without compromising biodiversity;
6. Provide green spaces and tree planting throughout the development to break up the built form, strengthen green infrastructure, and integrate the scheme into the landscape;
7. Limit development to two storeys to respect the scale and character of the High Weald National Landscape, unless additional accommodation within the roof space can be provided without increasing perceived building height or harm key views; and
8. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY: EH1 (EH) Harrison's, South of London Road. East Hoathly as identified on the Policies Map

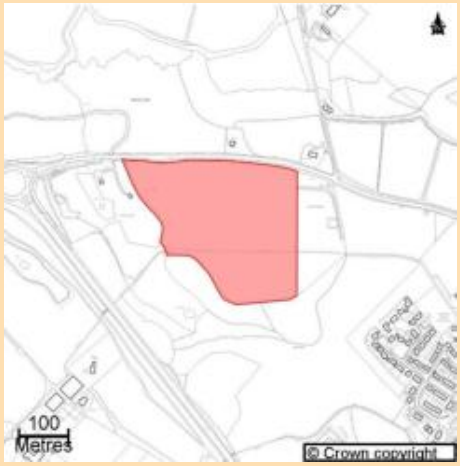
Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 6.67

Indicative Capacity: 150 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Ancient Woodland, Priority Habitat Woodland

Relevant Planning History: A planning application for up to 275 (net) dwellings across SHELAA sites 154/1950, 985/1950 and 773/1950 (southern sites) under reference WD/2025/0376/MAJ – Not yet determined



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the development plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide suitable noise mitigation measures to address the site's proximity to the A22 along its western boundary;
2. Retain, protect and enhance mature boundary vegetation and woodland to support and enhance the green infrastructure network to the west of East Hoathly and to minimise visibility into the site from London Road and the community allotments;
3. Incorporate a landscape buffer along the western boundary to soften the urban edge to the existing settlement;
4. Provide a safe vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access from London Road. The access must meet relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards, in liaison with the local highway authority and take account of the access arrangements for the site to the north of London Road that is currently under construction for 205 (net) dwellings;
5. Extend and improve existing footpaths along London Road to enhance pedestrian connectivity to the services and facilities located in East Hoathly;
6. Provide additional bus stops and contribute to service improvements on London Road to ensure the site is served by public transport, including footways and crossing points to reach those facilities;
7. Integrate the existing PRoW that crosses the site's southern boundary into the design of the development and demonstrate how opportunities to improve pedestrian connectivity across the nearby PRoW network have been considered; and
8. Phase occupation of the development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider; and
9. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system.

POLICY EH3 (EH): Land at Hesmonds Stud, East Hoathly as identified on the Policies Map

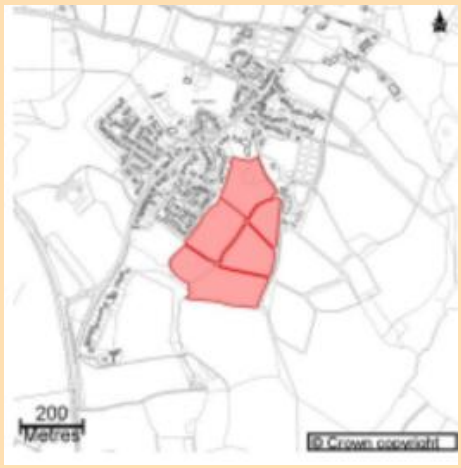
Allocated for: Residential and a two-form entry primary school

Site Area (ha): 16.1

Indicative Capacity: 176 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: None

Relevant Planning History: WD/2025/0376/MAJ – Current Planning Application Proposal for 275 (net) dwellings and two-form entry primary school – Not Yet Determined



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the development plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide for a two-form entry primary school within the site, with suitable vehicular access. The school must meet the requirements of the Local Education Authority and be secured through a legal agreement;
2. Provide a suitable vehicular and pedestrian access to the site via adjoining site with planning permission for residential development of 17 (net) dwellings at South Street, in accordance with highway design standards with the Local Highway Authority;
3. Demonstrate whether the South Street/A22 junction has sufficient capacity or whether the development would result in a material highways impact requiring mitigation. Any necessary highway/junction improvements will be secured through a legal agreement;
4. Enhance active travel connections by upgrading the two Public Rights of Way crossing the site to support walking and cycling links to village amenities, whilst safeguarding their routes, setting and enhancing views;
5. Retain and enhance mature hedgerows, woodland, and trees within and along the site boundaries, including trees on the western boundary protected by a Tree Protection Order (TPO), to reinforce existing field patterns, maintain enclosure, reduce visual impact, strengthen ecological connectivity and reinforce landscape character;
6. Protect and incorporate the small pond and associated woodland within the northern parcel of the site as part of the green infrastructure network;
7. Minimise visual influence of development in views from the South Downs National Park and surrounding countryside through sensitive siting, scale, and use of appropriate materials; and
8. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system.

POLICY GR1 (WIT): Land south of Back Lane and to the west of railway line, Groombridge as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 3.24

Indicative Capacity: 21 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape

Relevant Planning History: WD/2021/2568/MAJ – refused for 21 (net) dwellings and dismissed at appeal



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Focus development on the north of the site, to relate to existing development along Station Road and Lealands Close;
2. Ensure the height and massing of development responds appropriately to topography and scale of existing development;
3. Retain, protect and enhance mature vegetation, including existing trees and hedgerows within and around the site and provide additional native planting to strengthen landscape screening and ecological connectivity;
4. Retain the infield trees in the eastern part of the site and improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows within and around the site through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible;
5. Provide safe and suitable vehicular access onto Station Road, meeting visibility, capacity and safety standards, whilst minimising impacts on existing hedgerows and the historic lane in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highways authority;
6. Protect and enhance public access and retain the wooded and enclosed character of views from surrounding public rights of way, including the High Weald Landscape Trail; and;
7. Retain and enhance the public footpath and promoted recreational route along the southern boundary, including suitable connections, surveillance in accordance with Secured by Design principles and opportunities to improve wider pedestrian and cycle connectivity.

POLICY HA7 (HEL): Swingate Gardens, Mill Lane, Hailsham as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 2.02

Indicative Capacity: 70 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: None

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe, pedestrian, vehicular and cycle connections preferably from the approved development to south of the site, meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highway authority;
2. Retain, protect, enhance and reinforce existing boundary vegetation to maintain habitat diversity and strengthen the green infrastructure network. Planting should comprise native species characteristic of the Low Weald to reduce landscape impact and provide ecological benefit;
3. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY: HA9 (HEL) Land at Park Farm, New Road, Hellingly as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 12.7

Indicative Capacity: 100 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Local Wildlife Site and Ancient Woodland located within or adjacent to the site

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Contribute to the objectives of the Jarvis's Wood, Nobody's Wood, Park Wood Complex Local Wildlife Sites in the south of the site through on-site measures and mitigation;
2. Provide safe and suitable pedestrian connections through the site and to New Road and The Drive via adjoining development sites to access public transport;
3. Provide safe and suitable vehicular access from the permitted development at Land at Park Farm, New Road to the south, subject to transport testing and modelling of the effects on surrounding junctions, meeting visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highway authority;
4. Retain, protect, and enhance boundary vegetation, including mature trees, ancient woodland and the infield hedgerow, and reinforce it with locally prominent native species to strengthen the green infrastructure network and deliver ecological benefits.
5. Development should maintain a minimum 25 metre undeveloped buffer to the ancient woodland, in line with Policy NE4 unless ecological surveys demonstrate that a reduced buffer would not adversely affect the woodland and is agreed by the Local Planning Authority; and
6. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system.

POLICY HA12 (HA): Land adjacent Pattenden Farm, Battle Road, Hailsham as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 7.14

Indicative Capacity: 100 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: None

Relevant Planning History: WD/2019/2685/MAJ – Resolution to grant planning permission for 95 dwellings, application then withdrawn.



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe vehicular and cycle connections from Battle Road, meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highway authority;
2. Enhance connectivity with the wider Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network by providing pedestrian links to:

    a) PRoW 33a along the northern boundary;

    b) Battle Road, including its bus stops, and a shared cycleway via a safe and suitable crossing on the north west side of Battle Road; and

    c) Adjacent site allocations, wider services and facilities via the western and southern boundaries.
3. Demonstrate a coordinated approach and collaboration with and/or consideration of layout and design on site allocations HA13 (HA) and HA11 (HA) to deliver high-quality, integrated placemaking;
4. Provide a site-specific flood risk assessment and manage surface water in the across the site, supported by a joint masterplan with sites allocations HA13 (HA) and HA11 (HA) that delivers a cohesive SuDS strategy and blue and green infrastructure plan;
5. Retain, protect, enhance and reinforce existing boundary vegetation to maintain habitat diversity and strengthen the green infrastructure network east of Hailsham. Planting should comprise native species characteristic of the Low Weald and Pevensey Levels to reduce landscape impact and provide ecological benefit;
6. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system;
7. Protect the significance and setting of the Grade II listed Yew Tree Cottage and Harebeating Windmill, informed by a heritage impact assessment. Limit built form near the north-eastern part of the site and provide opportunities for accessible views of the assets from within the site and adjoining Public Rights of Way;

8. Site residential development, curtilages and associated infrastructure including equipped play areas, to avoid unacceptable odour effects from Hailsham North Wastewater Treatment Works, informed by an appropriate assessment; and
9. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY HA13 (HA): Land east of Battle Road, Harebeating Lane, Hailsham as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 14.27

Indicative Capacity: 300 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: None

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe vehicular and cycle connections, exploring opportunities for shared access arrangements with adjacent site allocations HA12 (HA) and HA11 (HA), meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highway authority;
2. Enhance connectivity with the wider Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network by:

    a) Providing a link to PRoW 33a along the northern boundary;

    b) Retaining and enhancing PRoW 26a through the site between Harebeating Lane and the town centre; and

    c) Enhance PRoW 25a at the southeastern boundary to provide a safe and convenient pedestrian access to nearby facilities.
3. Demonstrate a coordinated approach and collaboration with and/or consideration of layout and design on site allocations HA12 (HA) and HA11 (HA) to deliver high-quality, integrated placemaking;
4. Provide a site-specific flood risk assessment and manage surface water in the across the site, supported by a joint masterplan with site allocations HA12 (HA) and HA11 (HA) that delivers a cohesive SuDS strategy and blue and green infrastructure plan;
5. Retain, protect, enhance and reinforce existing boundary vegetation to maintain habitat diversity and strengthen the green infrastructure network east of Hailsham. Reinforce the northeastern and southeastern boundaries with native species characteristic of the Low Weald and Pevensey Levels to reduce landscape impact and provide ecological benefit;
6. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system;
7. Protect the significance and setting of the Grade II listed Harebeating Farmhouse, Harebeating Windmill and Longleys Farmhouse, informed by a heritage impact assessment. Limit built form near the north-western part of the site and provide opportunities for accessible views of the assets from within the site and adjoining Public Rights of Way;

8. Site residential development, curtilages and associated infrastructure including equipped play areas, to avoid unacceptable odour effects from Hailsham North Wastewater Treatment Works, informed by an appropriate assessment; and
9. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider

POLICY HA14 (HA): Harebeating Farm, Marshfoot Lane, Hailsham as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 0.51

Indicative Capacity: 10 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: None

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe vehicular and cycle connections from Battle Road, exploring opportunities for shared access arrangements with site allocations HA1 and HA3, meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highway authority;
2. Demonstrate a coordinated approach and collaboration with and/or consideration of layout and design on site allocations HA13 (HA) and HA12 (HA) to deliver high-quality, integrated placemaking;
3. Provide a site-specific flood risk assessment and manage surface water across the site, supported by a joint masterplan with sites allocations HA13 (HA) and HA12 (HA) that delivers a cohesive SuDS strategy and blue and green infrastructure plan;
4. Retain, protect, enhance and reinforce existing southern, western and northern boundary vegetation to maintain habitat diversity and strengthen the green infrastructure network. Planting should comprise native species characteristic of the Low Weald and Pevensey Levels to reduce landscape impact and provide ecological benefit;
5. Protect the significance and setting of the Grade II listed Harebeating Windmill, informed by a heritage impact assessment; and
6. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY HA16 (HA): Bolneys Farm, South Road, Hailsham as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 3.57

Indicative Capacity: 60 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Ancient Woodland, Biodiversity Opportunity Area, and Priority Habitat located within or adjacent to the site

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Retain, protect, and enhance existing vegetation, except where removal is necessary to provide vehicular or pedestrian access;
2. Provide landscape mitigation and suitable buffer, in line with Policy NE4 along boundaries adjoining Bolney's Wood (ancient woodland) to strengthen the green infrastructure and deliver ecological benefits;
3. Mitigate noise and odour from adjoining commercial, industrial and storage or distribution uses, and traffic noise from the A22 and A295, to secure acceptable amenity for future occupiers;
4. Deliver appropriate opportunities identified in the Wilmington Woodlands and Watershed Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) covering part of the site;
5. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider; and
6. Provide and/or contribute towards active travel and sustainable transport improvements, including crossing points, footway, bus stops, connect the site with walking, cycling, public rights of way network and improve accessibility for all users.

POLICY HEA3: Land to the southwest of Ghyll Road, Tilsmore, Heathfield as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 4.49

Indicative Capacity: 35 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape

Relevant Planning History: WD/2020/0170/MAJ – Planning application for 94 (net) dwellings and open space was withdrawn.



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Concentrate development in the east of the site along Ghyll Road, relating it to the existing settlement edge and limiting development beyond the ridge crest onto the valley side, to minimise changes to the landform and retain its contribution to the pattern of faults and folds;
2. Set development back from the in-field trees and young woodland in the west;
3. Position development within the site to retain the glimpsed long views from Jubilee Park across the site to the wider High Weald National Landscape;
4. Retain, protect enhance and reinforce mature vegetation within and along the site boundaries, particularly the trees and young woodland in the west and the mature boundary hedgerows to the south and east along Ghyll Road and the PRoW, to conserve landscape character, habitat, perceptual qualities and the historic routeway;
5. Strengthen woodland and hedgerow connectivity, particularly in the west, through locally characteristic planting and hedgerow corridors using native species where possible;
6. Retain and enhance the boundaries of the eastern field to conserve the site's historic field pattern;
7. Retain and enhance the public right of way along the site boundary, connect the development with Wayside Walk, Pook Reed Lane and Jubilee Park, and preserve the footpath's semi-rural character by setting development back from it; and
8. Provide suitable vehicular access from Ghyll Road and safe pedestrian/cycle connections to Heathfield's local amenities, including a widened footway along the site frontage and any necessary off-site highway works and mitigation identified in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highway authority.

POLICY HEA5 (HEAW) Land south of Burwash Road and east of Tower Street, Heathfield as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 0.72

Indicative Capacity: 22 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Reflect the existing settlement pattern, character, scale, built form and streetscape of the recent development along Blackberry Mews, with development focused in the central and western parts of the site;
2. Coordinate development with site allocations HEA6 (HEAW), HEA7 (HEAW) and HEA8 (HEAW) to support high-quality, integrated placemaking;
3. Retain, protect, enhance and reinforce mature vegetation within and around the site, including the hedgerows and occasional trees along the northern boundary and the A265 Burwash Road, to maintain field pattern and provide screening from Parklands to the south;
4. Strengthen woodlands and hedgerow connectivity through native tree planting and hedgerow corridors that reflect local character, including links between the in-field trees and surrounding habitats, and deliver opportunities identified for the Heathfield Habitat Link Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA), where possible; and
5. Provide suitable vehicular access from Burwash Road and safe pedestrian/cycle connections to Heathfield's local amenities and any necessary off-site highway works and mitigation identified in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highway authority.

POLICY HOR4 (HOR): Coxlow Farm, Horam Road, Horam as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential, Employment and Community Uses, and a two-form entry primary school

Site Area (ha): 86.36

Indicative Capacity: 750 (net) dwellings, 4,000sqm (net) Employment (E(g), B2 and B8), 1,500sqm (net) community floorspace, a two-form entry primary school and open space

Policy Map Designations: Ancient Woodland, Priority Habitats, Flood Risk

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the development plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Be designed to respond appropriately to the character, appearance and constraints of the site, including its edge-of-village location adjacent to the countryside and the National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) Overhead Cable Route, through a high-quality masterplanned layout which applies the NGET Design Guide and Principles, reduces the impact of associated assets through good design, and uses materials, building heights, densities and development grain that reflect the local vernacular and respond sensitively to the southern and eastern edges of the site.
2. Locate uses in the most appropriate parts of the site, with education and community uses to the north eastern part of the site, integrated with the built form of the village, and employment development further south and west, where it can relate effectively to the road network and access;
3. Secure and deliver the required mix of development, uses and on-site infrastructure, including, but not limited to, education (a two-form entry primary school), community uses, sports, open space and employment provision, in accordance with an agreed Phasing and Delivery Plan. Development may be delivered in phases, provided that each phase contributes appropriately to the delivery of the required mix of uses and infrastructure and has regard to the viability of the whole development, rather than the viability of any single phase alone;
4. Provide safe and suitable vehicular access(es) from the west of the site, including any necessary junction reconfiguration and highway improvement works, in consultation with the Local Highway Authority and supported by appropriate evidence. This must include measures to meet relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards, improve accessibility for all users, including those with mobility impairments, and provide or contribute towards necessary active travel infrastructure;
5. Provide safe, direct and convenient pedestrian and active travel connections within the site and to the north-western and eastern boundaries, maximising opportunities for links to the Cuckoo Trail, Horam village centre, bus stops, schools, employment areas, community facilities and the wider walking, cycling and public rights of way network. Where connections require third-party land, rights or agreements, development should facilitate such links and make appropriate financial contributions towards their delivery, where justified and necessary;

6. Prepare and deliver a comprehensive Sustainable Transport, Monitoring and Management Strategy which demonstrates how walking, cycling, public transport and shared transport use will be maximised, reliance on the private car minimised, and the effectiveness of transport and infrastructure mitigation monitored throughout the phased delivery of the site, with additional measures identified and delivered where required;
7. Protect and enhance ancient woodland, existing woodland and boundary vegetation within and adjacent to the site through a landscape-led layout, suitable buffers and appropriate setbacks from designated ancient woodland, including Coxlow Farm Shaw, Coggers Shaw, Marle Green Shaw, Coylet Farm Shaw's 1, 2 and 3 and Toll Wood. A minimum 25 metre buffer will be required unless site-specific ecological evidence demonstrates that a lesser buffer would be appropriate and would not result in adverse effects on the ancient woodland. The layout and landscaping must avoid isolated pockets of ancient woodland wherever possible, retain the strong visual enclosure of the site, reduce the presence of built development in views, including from the High Weald National Landscape, and use locally prominent native species to strengthen green infrastructure, deliver ecological benefits, maintain rural character and integrate built form within the landscape;
8. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system;
9. Take account of the existing sewerage infrastructure crossing the site and ensure the layout and design ensure its protection and allow for its continued operation. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, in consultation with the service provider, or in accordance with any alternative interim arrangements agreed by the Local Planning Authority and ensure an appropriate layout that safeguards the easement required for Southern Water's infrastructure crossing the site; and
10. Demonstrate that development will not result in the sterilisation of minerals resources within the Horam Brickworks Mineral Safeguarding Area or prejudice associated safeguarded mineral operations in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Waste and Minerals Local Plan for East Sussex[273]. Development must be planned and designed to maintain the effective operation, viability and future potential of safeguarding mineral extraction, processing and associated activities, as agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Minerals Planning Authority.

273 East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton and Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan – (Adopted February 2017) – SP-MSA/F Horam Brickworks, Horam

POLICY LC1 (NIN): Land South of Ninfield Road, Ninfield Road, Lunsford Cross as identified on the Policies Map

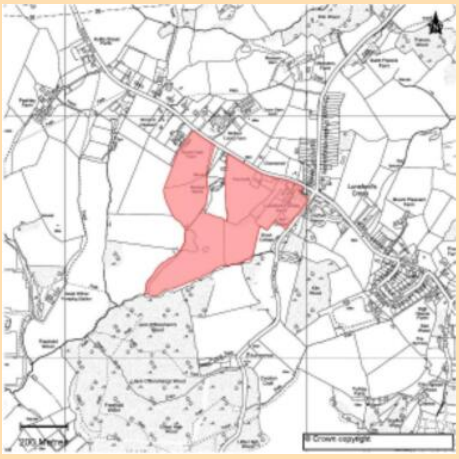
Allocated for: Residential and primary school

Site Area (ha): 20.0

Indicative Capacity: 300 (net) dwellings and primary school

Policy Map Designations: Priority Habitat, Ancient Woodland

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the policies in the development plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe, vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access to the site from the Ninfield Road. The location and design of the access must be agreed with the Local Highway Authority;
2. Prioritise pedestrian and cycle access through the site, including connections to Sidley/Bexhill, where feasible, particularly towards Bexhill, in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highway authority;
3. Focus development in the north, north-east, east of the site, adjacent to the A269, so that it relates to the existing pattern of development in this location;
4. Set development back from the ancient woodland adjoining the southwestern boundary of the site and within the eastern parcel of land. A minimum 25 metre buffer will be required unless site-specific ecological evidence demonstrates that a lesser buffer would be appropriate and would not result in adverse effects on the ancient woodland;
5. Retain and enhance hedgerows particularly along the A269 to screen development and strengthen habitat connectivity. Replace unavoidable losses with species characteristic of the locality, using native species where possible and secure its appropriate maintenance;
6. Provide local characteristic planting using native species to screen development to maintain the area's rural character and integrate built form into the landscape. Incorporate green open space and trees throughout the development to break its perceived mass and strengthen green infrastructure;
7. Development is located within 500 metres of an operational wastewater treatment works, and therefore an odour assessment shall be undertaken and any necessary mitigation incorporated into the design and layout of the development;
8. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system; and
9. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

Development proposals must also demonstrate that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists, or will be provided, to support the development, including where infrastructure requirements extend into adjoining local planning authority areas. Where an identified infrastructure capacity shortfall exists, and the development would generate additional demand that would materially worsen that shortfall, developers will be required to provide, contribute towards, or otherwise secure measures sufficient to mitigate the additional demand arising from the development. Any mitigation or contribution must be directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind and will be agreed in consultation with relevant infrastructure providers, local planning authorities and statutory bodies.

POLICY: LOH1 (HEL) Land at Broad Farm, south of New Street, Lower Horsebridge as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 16.3813

Indicative Capacity: 400 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: None

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe and suitable vehicular, cycle, and pedestrian access from the B2104, meeting visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highway authority;
2. Prepare and deliver a comprehensive Sustainable Transport, Monitoring and Management Strategy which demonstrates how walking, cycling, public transport and shared transport use will be maximised, reliance on the private car minimised, and the effectiveness of transport and infrastructure mitigation monitored throughout the phased delivery of the site, with additional measures identified and delivered where required;
3. Enhance roadside woodland and hedgerows to screen views from the A267 and B2104, using locally prominent native species to strengthen green infrastructure and deliver ecological benefits;
4. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system;
5. Retain, protect and enhance vegetation within and around the site, particularly mature woodland, trees and hedgerows, to strengthen green infrastructure, visually contain development in views from Lower Horsebridge and Hailsham, and deliver landscape and ecological benefits. New planting should use locally prominent native species;
6. Retain attractive views to and from Hellingly Church and the Conservation Area;
7. Retain key views and landscape features forming the setting of Lobdens, Busbridge House and Croft Cottage; and
8. Retain and enhance the public right of way crossing the northern and eastern parts of the site to improve connections with the wider PROW network.

POLICY: LOH3 (HEL) Field at North Street, Lower Horsebridge as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 0.48

Indicative Capacity: 14 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Hellingly Conservation Area

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe vehicular, cycle, and pedestrian access from B2104, including a crossing point connecting to bus services, the Cuckoo Trail, the primary school and Lower Horsebridge, meeting visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highway authority;
2. Retain, protect, enhance and reinforce mature trees and other boundary vegetation including screening to the primary school north of the site;
3. Protect the tranquillity of Hellingly Cemetery adjoining the site's western boundary; and
4. Assess and, where necessary, mitigate effects on historic buildings within Hellingly's historic core.

POLICY: LOH4 (HEL) Land at Horselunges Manor, Hellingly as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 6.13 hectares

Indicative Capacity: 60 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the Hellingly Conservation Area

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Confine residential development to the southern part of the site to safeguard the Conservation Area and heritage assets to the north and east;
2. Retain, protect, and enhance boundary vegetation, including mature trees and the infield hedgerow, and reinforce it with locally prominent native species to strengthen green infrastructure and deliver ecological benefits;
3. Protect the tranquillity of Hellingly Cemetery adjoining the site's western boundary; and
4. Provide safe and suitable vehicular, cycle, and pedestrian access from B2104, including an alternative lay-by, if required, to offset its loss, meeting visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highway authority.

POLICY MA3 (MA): Land south of Maresfield, A22, Maresfield as identified on the Policies Map

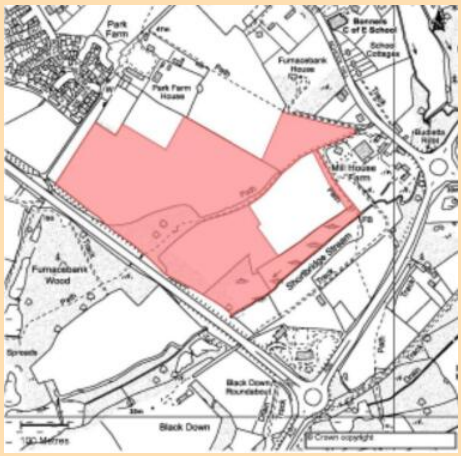
Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 10.23

Indicative Capacity: 185 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Biodiversity Opportunity Area, Priority Habitat, Flood Zones 2 and 3 located within or adjacent to the site

Relevant Planning History: WD/2021/1068/MAO – Refused for 49 dwellings. WD/2022/0480/MAO – Approved up to 25 dwellings



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide a new vehicular access onto the A22, safe pedestrian/cycle connections to Maresfield's local amenities, and any necessary off-site highway works and mitigation, agreed with East Sussex County Council as highway authority;
2. Provide a comprehensive public transport strategy, prepared in consultation with the local highway authority and relevant operators, that secures any necessary infrastructure, service enhancements, new or relocated bus stops and pedestrian connections to provide convenient access to public transport;
3. Retain and enhance Public Rights of Ways within the site and provide safe and convenient connections to them;
4. Retain, protect and enhance existing vegetation within and around the site, particularly mature woodland, trees and hedgerows, to strengthen green infrastructure, conserve landscape character, and deliver ecological benefits. Provide additional landscape mitigation using locally prominent native species along sensitive boundaries, particularly to the south and east;
5. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system;
6. Assess the significance of the Maresfield Conservation Area and nearby heritage assets, including Park Farmhouse, Barn, Oasthouse, Barn to the North of Mill House Farmhouse, Mill House, and Mill Cottage, all Grade II Listed, and the effects of development on them. Conserve, and where appropriate enhance these assets and their setting, and respect the character and appearance of the area. Focus development in the south-eastern part of the site along the Uckfield Bypass and south of Shortbridge Stream, retaining established trees, hedgerows and bushes along the north-western and northeastern boundaries;

7. Provide appropriate noise attenuation to the southeast of the site, or otherwise demonstrate acceptable amenity standards for future occupiers, to mitigate noise from the A22; and
8. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY POL3 (POL): Hindsland Fields (west), Eastbourne Road, Polegate as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 1.84

Indicative Capacity: 60 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: None

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe and suitable access meeting visibility, capacity and safety standards in consultation with East Sussex County Council as highway authority. Access from Eastbourne Road may be acceptable, where its design minimises the loss of frontage trees and hedgerows;
2. Provide safe and convenient pedestrian access, including footpath and crossing points where required, connecting adjoining sites and nearby facilities;
3. Retain and enhance mature trees and hedgerows along Eastbourne Road, using locally prominent native species to strengthen biodiversity, green infrastructure and landscape character;
4. Respond appropriately to the site's topography and elevated Eastbourne Road frontage through layout, scale and height of development;
5. Provide appropriate noise attenuation to the west of the site, or otherwise demonstrate acceptable amenity standards for future occupiers, to mitigate noise generated by Eastbourne Road; and
6. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY RC1 (UCK): Land at White House Farm, London Road, Uckfield as identified on the Policies Map

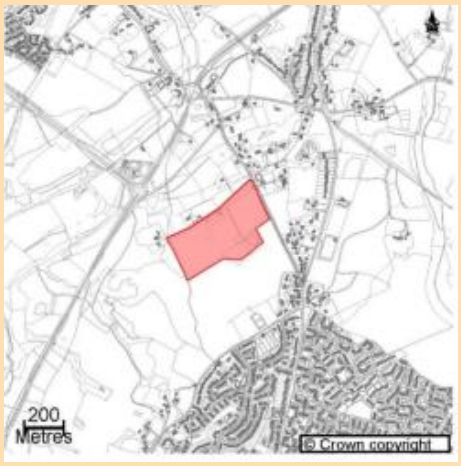
Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 11.19

Indicative Capacity: 200 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Ancient Woodland, Biodiversity Opportunity Area and Priority Habitat located within and adjacent the site

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe and suitable vehicular, cycle, and pedestrian access from London Road, meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highway authority;
2. Provide a comprehensive Public Transport Strategy, prepared in consultation with the local highway authority and relevant operators, that secures any necessary infrastructure, service enhancements, new or relocated bus stops and pedestrian connections to provide convenient access to public transport;
3. Retain, protect, and enhance existing vegetation within the site, including priority habitat deciduous woodland to the west, mature boundary trees and the London Road boundary hedgerow, using locally prominent native species to strengthen green infrastructure and deliver ecological benefits;
4. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system
5. Provide enhanced landscape screening to the northern, western, and eastern boundaries, with additional mitigation along the southern boundary, adjoining Paygate Wood ancient woodland (Paygate Wood) and TPO trees. This will include a minimum 25 metre undeveloped buffer to the ancient woodland, unless ecological surveys demonstrate that a reduced buffer would not adversely affect the woodland and is agreed by the Local Planning Authority; and
6. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY STC1 (WES): Sharnfold Farm, Hailsham Road, Stone Cross as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 32.96

Indicative Capacity: 230 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Priority Habitat, Biodiversity Opportunity Area

Relevant Planning History: WD/2025/1738/MAO – Planning permission for up to 120 (net) dwellings



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe and suitable access, supported by evidence of traffic generation and any necessary mitigation, meeting visibility, capacity and safety standards to the satisfaction of National Highways and East Sussex County Council as relevant highway authorities;
2. Prepare and implement a comprehensive Sustainable Transport, Monitoring and Management Strategy, coordinated with adjacent site allocations STC3 (WES) and STC2 (WES), that maximises walking, cycling and public and shared transport use, minimises private car use, monitors mitigation throughout phased delivery and secures additional measures where required, in consultation with National Highways and East Sussex County Council as relevant highway authorities.
3. Coordinate with site allocation STC3 (WES) and STC2 (WES) to deliver high-quality, integrated placemaking;
4. Locate development sensitively to protect the historic character and rural setting of Grade II listed Sharnfold Farm Barn and Sharnfold Farm Cartshed;
5. Respond to the site's countryside setting through high-quality materials reflecting local vernacular, lower building heights and densities where appropriate, and a looser development grain near the countryside. Development in the north of the site must be reduced in scale, height and quantum to reflect the open character of the Pevensey Levels and views to the South Downs National Park;
6. Retain, protect and enhance mature boundary trees and hedgerows that contribute to green infrastructure and visually enclose the site;
7. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system;
8. Provide safe and suitable pedestrian links to Westham Footpath 17a at the northwest corner of the site and points along the eastern/northeastern boundaries, improving connectivity across the wider PRoW network between adjacent site allocations STC3 (WES) and STC2 (WES) and to facilities and bus stops;
9. Provide appropriate noise attenuation for development in the south of the site to mitigate A27 noise and secure acceptable living conditions for future occupiers;
10. Safeguard the high-pressure gas pipeline and gas distribution infrastructure crossing the site, complying with relevant safety requirements and clearances and maintain access for maintenance;

11. Design and lay out development to protect future residential amenities from noise, light and or other potential adverse effects associated with adjoining infrastructure, including the wind turbines northwest of the site, while safeguarding its ongoing operation; and
12. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY STC2 (WES): Land at and adjacent to The Downs View and Emberson, Hailsham Road, Stone Cross as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 2.44

Indicative Capacity: 60 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: None

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe and suitable vehicular access, meeting visibility, capacity and safety standards, and explore shared access arrangements with adjacent site allocations STC1 (WES) and STC3 (WES), in liaison with East Sussex County Council as Highways Authority. Where access is from the B2104, demonstrate that noise and vibration will not harm the amenity of retained properties. This may require removing a frontage property;
2. Coordinate with site allocation STC1 (WES) and STC3 (WES) to deliver high-quality, integrated placemaking;
3. Safeguard and enhance the access from the southeast of the site and around site allocation STC3 (WES) to provide safe and convenient active travel connections. The access must not serve motorised vehicles and must be stopped up when the development implemented;
4. Safeguard the high-pressure gas pipeline and gas distribution infrastructure crossing the site, complying with relevant safety requirements and clearances and maintain access for maintenance;
5. Retain and enhance mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees to reinforce field boundaries, enclose the site, and integrate development into the landscape. Provide additional planting where necessary to reduce effects on landscape character, strengthen green infrastructure and deliver ecological benefits by using locally prominent native species;
6. Provide appropriate noise attenuation for development in the south of the site to mitigate A27 noise and secure acceptable living conditions for future occupiers; and
7. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY STC3 (WES): Land to the west of the B2104, Hankham as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 1.44

Indicative Capacity: 15 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: None

Relevant Planning History: WD/2020/2501/MA0 - Dismissed at appeal for 22 dwellings



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe and suitable vehicular access, meeting visibility, capacity and safety standards, and explore shared access arrangements with site allocations STC2 (WES) and STC1 (WES), in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highways Authority;
2. Coordinate with site allocation STC2 (WES) and STC1 (WES) to deliver high-quality, integrated placemaking;
3. Safeguard and enhance the access from the southeast of the site and around site allocation STC2 (WES) to provide safe and convenient active travel connections. The access must not serve motorised vehicles and must be stopped up when the development is implemented;
4. Safeguard the high-pressure gas pipeline and gas distribution infrastructure crossing the site, complying with relevant safety requirements and clearances and maintain access for maintenance;
5. Retain, protect and enhance mature vegetation along the A27 to enclose and screen the development, reduce effects on landscape character and provide ecological benefits; and
6. Provide appropriate noise attenuation for development to the south of the site to mitigate A27 noise and achieve amenity standards for future occupiers.

POLICY STW1 (FR): Land at Ramslye Farm (Spratsbrook Farm), Tunbridge Wells as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 39.68

Indicative Capacity: 300 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape, Priority Habitat

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the policies in the development plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe, vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access to the site, preferably through a shared vehicular access with site STW2 (FR), unless otherwise agreed with the Highway Authority. The location and design of the access must be agreed with the Local Highway Authority;
2. Demonstrate a coordinated approach with site allocation STW2 (FR) to deliver high-quality development and placemaking;
3. Prioritise pedestrian and cycle access through the site, including connections with site allocation STW2 (FR) to the south-east and, where feasible, links to pedestrian/cycle routes towards Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, in liaison with Kent County Council Highways Authority;
4. Focus development in the north-east and east of the site, adjacent to the A26, so that it relates to the existing pattern of ridgetop development and avoids the perception of development spilling into the valley landscape to the south/south-west;
5. Ensure new development reinforces and responds to local character through its scale, layout, design and materials. Development should draw on the 'High Weald Housing Design Guide', 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development' and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan;
6. Set development back from the incised and wooded gill stream corridors in the south and west of the site;
7. Set development back from the ancient woodland adjoining the southern and southwestern boundaries of the site (Sprats Brook, Ruffet Wood and Ramslye Wood). A minimum 25 metre buffer will be required unless site-specific ecological evidence demonstrates that a lesser buffer would be appropriate and would not result in adverse effects on the ancient woodland;
8. Retain and enhance woodland along the A26 to minimise views of development. Replace any unavoidable losses with species that are characteristic of the locality and use native species where possible. An appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting;
9. Enhance eroded hedgerows, replace those affected by development and strengthening the connectivity of the local habitat network. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible;
10. Retain the historic assart field pattern in the north-west of the site where possible;

11. Assess and respond to views of development from the Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area, particularly the elevated ridgeline of Broadwater Down and views across the site from the A26 Eridge Road into the conservation area;
12. Assess and respond to views of development from residential properties along the settlement edge, including Ramslye Road and retain relatively open views towards wooded skylines of the wider High Weald National Landscape, including towards Broadwater Warren to the south of the site;
13. Set development back from the public right of way that crosses the site, maintain its rural character and enhance public access by providing opportunities to experience areas of woodland, the High Rocks Scheduled Monument and the wider rural landscape;
14. Avoid development within the setting of the Scheduled Monument and set development back from the Scheduled Monument and the adjacent ancient woodland;
15. Use additional planting to screen new development and maintain the rural character of the wider area. Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible;
16. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system; and
17. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

Development proposals must also demonstrate that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists, or will be provided, to support the development, including where infrastructure requirements extend into adjoining local planning authority areas. Where an identified infrastructure capacity shortfall exists, and the development would generate additional demand that would materially worsen that shortfall, developers will be required to provide, contribute towards, or otherwise secure measures sufficient to mitigate the additional demand arising from the development. Any mitigation or contribution must be directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind and will be agreed in consultation with relevant infrastructure providers, local planning authorities and statutory bodies.

POLICY STW2 (FR): Strawberry Hill Farm, Eridge Road, Tunbridge Wells as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 2.97

Indicative Capacity: 35 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape and contains Priority Habitat

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe vehicular, cycle and pedestrian connections preferably through a shared vehicular access to the highway network with site allocation STW1 (FR), meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with both East Sussex County Council and Kent County Council as relevant highway authorities;
2. Demonstrate a coordinated approach, and collaboration with and/or consideration of the site allocation STW1 (FR) to deliver high-quality, integrated placemaking including pedestrian and cycle routes through the site connecting site allocation STW1 (FR) and, where feasible, towards Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, in liaison with Kent County Council as highway authority;
3. Concentrate development in the north of the site to reflect the existing settlement pattern and avoid extending onto lower-lying land to the south;
4. Set development back from Strawberry Hill Farm in the south of the site to avoid encroachment on the historic farmstead;
5. Respond to local character through appropriate scale, layout, design, and materials having regard to the High Weald Housing Design Guide, Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development and High Weald AONB Management Plan;
6. Retain and enhance hedgerows, replace any lost to development, strengthen habitat connectivity and use native planting, where possible;
7. Retain, protect, enhance and reinforce mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, particularly along its boundaries, preserve the field pattern, enclose views from the A26 and screen development from the Strawberry Hill historic farmstead;
8. Position and scale development to retain glimpsed views south towards the wooded skyline of Broadwater Forest and Whitehill Wood ancient woodlands;
9. Integrate open space and tree planting throughout the development to break up built form, strengthen green infrastructure and help assimilate development into the landscape;
10. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system;

11. Enhance public access and provide opportunities to link to the open access land at Hargate Forest; and
12. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

Development proposals must also demonstrate that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists, or will be provided, to support the development, including where infrastructure requirements extend into adjoining local planning authority areas. Where an identified infrastructure capacity shortfall exists, and the development would generate additional demand that would materially worsen that shortfall, developers will be required to provide, contribute towards, or otherwise secure measures sufficient to mitigate the additional demand arising from the development. Any mitigation or contribution must be directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind and will be agreed in consultation with relevant infrastructure providers, local planning authorities and statutory bodies.

POLICY STW3 (FR) Land lying to the west side of Frant Road, Tunbridge Wells as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 3.73

Indicative Capacity: 70 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe vehicular, cycle and pedestrian connections to the site either from the Frant Road (A267) or St Mark's Road, meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with both East Sussex County Council and Kent County Council as relevant highway authorities;
2. Demonstrate a coordinated approach, and collaboration with and/or consideration of site allocation STW4 (FR) to deliver high-quality, integrated placemaking including pedestrian and cycle routes through the site connecting site allocation STW4 (FR) and, where feasible, routes towards Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, in liaison with Kent County Council as highway authority;
3. Provide a site-specific flood risk assessment and manage surface water in the central area of the site that enhances blue and green infrastructure, in accordance with other policies in this Plan;
4. Retain and enhance field boundaries where possible to avoid the loss of the historic field pattern;
5. Retain and protect existing mature vegetation and reinforce the southern and western boundaries with native species and incorporate green buffers, tree belts, and open space to maintain filtered views and the rural character of the settlement edge;
6. Respond to the site's elevated northern and lower-lying southern areas to protect long views and maintain the rural foreground of the High Weald National Landscape; and
7. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

Development proposals must also demonstrate that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists, or will be provided, to support the development, including where infrastructure requirements extend into adjoining local planning authority areas. Where an identified infrastructure capacity shortfall exists, and the development would generate additional demand that would materially worsen that shortfall, developers will be required to provide, contribute towards, or otherwise secure measures sufficient to mitigate the additional demand arising from the development. Any mitigation or contribution must be directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind and will be agreed in consultation with relevant infrastructure providers, local planning authorities and statutory bodies.

POLICY STW4 (FR): Pinewood Farm, Frant Road, Tunbridge Wells as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 10.79

Indicative Capacity: 120 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape, contains Biodiversity Opportunity Area and Priority Habitat

Relevant Planning History: WD/2025/2873/MAJ –178 (net) dwellings and community facility – Not yet determined



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe vehicular, cycle and pedestrian connections to the site preferably through a shared highway with site allocation STW3 (FR), meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with both East Sussex County Council and Kent County Council as relevant highway authorities;
2. Demonstrate a coordinated approach, and collaboration with and/or consideration of site allocation STW3 (FR) to deliver high-quality, integrated placemaking including pedestrian and cycle routes through the site and, where feasible, routes towards Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, in liaison with Kent County Council as highway authority;
3. Retain and enhance field boundaries where possible to conserve the historic field pattern;
4. Retain mature vegetation along A267 Frant Road to preserve enclosure and character, and help mitigate noise;
5. Concentrate built development in the north of the site to relate better to Tunbridge Wells settlement pattern and minimise encroachment towards Pinewood Farm;
6. Provide a semi-natural wetland and woodland buffer between development and ponds to the south-west;
7. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system;
8. Provide a suitable buffer to the section of Hargate Forest Priority Habitat abutting the site to the northwest; and
9. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

Development proposals must also demonstrate that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists, or will be provided, to support the development, including where infrastructure requirements extend into adjoining local planning authority areas. Where an identified infrastructure capacity shortfall exists, and the development would generate additional demand that would materially worsen that shortfall, developers

will be required to provide, contribute towards, or otherwise secure measures sufficient to mitigate the additional demand arising from the development. Any mitigation or contribution must be directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind and will be agreed in consultation with relevant infrastructure providers, local planning authorities and statutory bodies.

POLICY STW5 (FR): Land between Frant Road and Bayham Road, Tunbridge Wells as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 10.38

Indicative Capacity: 150 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Deliver residential development on the northern part of the site and relocate Tunbridge Wells Rugby Club to the southern part, known as Chase Farm, with replacement sports provision of an equivalent or better standard;
2. Reflect the existing settlement pattern and character including scale, built form and streetscape of the recent development along Dukes Drive;
3. Retain, protect and enhance the treeline along the western/south-western boundary of the northern part of the site (along the A267), which is subject to a group TPO;
4. Provide and incorporate into the scheme design a suitable buffer to the Ancient Woodland in line with Policy NE4 and Priority Habitat woodland adjoining Chase Farm, setting back development from Whitehill Wood on the southern and western boundaries and from the Priority Habitat woodland on the eastern boundary;
5. Retain, protect, enhance and reinforce existing mature vegetation within and surrounding both parts of the site and strengthen landscape screening to the south and west using native species;
6. Incorporate green buffers, tree belts, and areas of open space to maintain the filtered, rural character of views from the settlement edge;
7. Retain, protect and enhance the priority habitat deciduous woodland in the south-east corner of the northern parcel, together with internal trees and hedgerows and its mature, wooded boundary along the edge of the northern parcel. Retain and enhance field boundaries where possible to conserve the historic field pattern;
8. Retain glimpsed long views south across the wider High Weald National Landscape by avoiding development on the more elevated western and lower-lying southern parts of the site, which provide outward views from the rural foreground;
9. Provide a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrating how surface water at the Chase Farm and southern part of the Rugby Club site will be mitigated through SuDS that enhance blue and green infrastructure and provide biodiversity, amenity and water-quality benefits;
10. Provide permeable walking and cycling connections to new or existing bus stops within 400m of the site, enabling safe and effective sustainable travel to Tunbridge Wells town centres;

11. Provide safe vehicular, cycle and pedestrian connections via the B2169 Bayham Road, the Dukes Drive development or the A267 Frant Road, meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with both East Sussex County Council and Kent County Council as relevant highway authorities;
12. Coordinate vehicular, cycle and pedestrian connections, green infrastructure, mature vegetation retention and landscape mitigation with adjoining residential developments;
13. Mitigate noise and odour from adjacent employment uses, informed by site-specific assessments;
14. Integrate retained boundary vegetation into the site's landscape and green infrastructure framework;
15. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system; and
16. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

Development proposals must also demonstrate that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists, or will be provided, to support the development, including where infrastructure requirements extend into adjoining local planning authority areas. Where an identified infrastructure capacity shortfall exists, and the development would generate additional demand that would materially worsen that shortfall, developers will be required to provide, contribute towards, or otherwise secure measures sufficient to mitigate the additional demand arising from the development. Any mitigation or contribution must be directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind and will be agreed in consultation with relevant infrastructure providers, local planning authorities and statutory bodies.

POLICY STW6 (FR): Land at Bayham Road, Tunbridge Wells as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 3.72

Indicative Capacity: 60 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe vehicular, cycle and pedestrian connections to the site either via site allocation STW5 (FR) or through an alternative arrangement from the B2169 (Bayham Road), meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with both East Sussex County Council and Kent County Council as relevant highway authorities;
2. Demonstrate a coordinated approach, and collaboration with and/or consideration of site allocation STW5 (FR) to deliver high-quality, integrated placemaking including vehicular, cycle and pedestrian connections, green infrastructure, retention of mature vegetation and landscape mitigation;
3. Mitigate noise and odour from adjacent employment uses, informed by site-specific assessments;
4. Retain and protect existing mature boundary vegetation and incorporate green buffers, tree belts and open space to maintain filtered views and rural character of the settlement edge; and
5. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY STW7 (FR): Land at Benhall Mill Road, Tunbridge Wells as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 4.13

Indicative Capacity: 30 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Local Wildlife Site

Relevant Planning History: WD/2007/3590/MAO – Refusal for 72 net dwellings



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Establish and maintain a robust boundary between the developable area to the south and the ecologically sensitive area to the north, incorporating appropriate buffer zones, habitat protection and long-term ecological management;
2. Protect and enhance the site's role within the Local Nature Recovery Network and as an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity, contributing to relevant LNRS targets through on-site measures or appropriate financial contributions;
3. Protects neighbouring amenity by retaining and enhancing mature boundary vegetation and reduce visual impact;
4. Provide a safe vehicular, cycle and pedestrian connections , meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with both East Sussex County Council and Kent County Council as relevant highway authorities;
5. Retain and connect to the existing public footpath along the northeastern boundary, with surrounding development designed to provide appropriate surveillance in accordance with Secured by Design principles and enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity within and around the site, including potential improvements to the local footpath network; and
6. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

Development proposals must also demonstrate that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists, or will be provided, to support the development, including where infrastructure requirements extend into adjoining local planning authority areas. Where an identified infrastructure capacity shortfall exists, and the development would generate additional demand that would materially worsen that shortfall, developer will be required to provide, contribute towards, or otherwise secure measures sufficient to mitigate the additional demand arising from the development. Any mitigation or contribution must be directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind and will be agreed in consultation with relevant infrastructure providers, local planning authorities and statutory bodies.

POLICY: STW8 (FR): Land to the east of Benhall Mill Road, Tunbridge Wells as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 6.11

Indicative Capacity: 120 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape, Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland

Relevant Planning History: WD/2017/0143/MAJ – Withdrawn for 159 dwellings



In addition to meeting the policies in the development plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Assess the potential level of contamination on the site and provide a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property, and the natural and historic environment in line with Policy NE14;
2. Provide safe vehicular, cycle, pedestrian access to the site from Benhall Mill Road. Proposals must meet relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with both East Sussex County Council and Kent County Council as highway authorities;
3. Development should explore and deliver opportunities to enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity within and around the site, including potential improvements to the local footpath network, in liaison with East Sussex County Council and Kent County Council;
4. Ensure the design and layout of the development retains, protects and enhances the mature vegetation along the site boundaries to provide natural screening, noise attenuation from the railway line and soften visual impact of development;
5. Ensure any scheme takes account of the development adjacent to the southern boundary in terms of building height and orientation, density, layout, and landscape treatments to maintain appropriate levels of privacy, outlook and residential amenity for existing and future occupiers;
6. Where possible, retain the onsite priority habitat deciduous woodland and look to implement a long-term woodland management plan as part of any development;
7. Introduce a strong and reinforced landscape framework to the site to complement the form and layout of any scheme and maintain ecological connectivity with the Local Wildlife Site (Hawkenbury Meadow) immediately to the north;
8. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system;
9. Include a site-specific flood risk assessment showing how surface water flood risk along the western boundary and in the north of the site will be mitigated. This will include the incorporation of

sustainable drainage that enhances blue and green infrastructure and delivers multifunctional benefits, including biodiversity, amenity, and water quality improvements; and

10. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

Development proposals must also demonstrate that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists, or will be provided, to support the development, including where infrastructure requirements extend into adjoining local planning authority areas. Where an identified infrastructure capacity shortfall exists, and the development would generate additional demand that would materially worsen that shortfall, developers will be required to provide, contribute towards, or otherwise secure measures sufficient to mitigate the additional demand arising from the development. Any mitigation or contribution must be directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind and will be agreed in consultation with relevant infrastructure providers, local planning authorities and statutory bodies.

POLICY: UCK2 (FF) Land at Bird in Eye (North), Bird in Eye Hill, Uckfield as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)

Site Area (ha): 17.41

Indicative Capacity: 215 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Flood Zones 2 and 3, Ancient Woodland, Biodiversity Opportunity Area, Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland, Within 7km Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area Zone

Relevant Planning History: WD/2026/1348/MAO – Outline application for up to 215 dwellings and associated development - Not Yet Determined



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the development plan, development proposals for site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Focus built development on the lower slopes and low-lying fields in the west of the site, where landform and existing vegetation provide enclosure and where development would be less visible and have less effect on landscape character;
2. Mitigate the visual and noise impact from the adjacent railway and ensure that development provides a safe and suitable living environment near the railway line;
3. Introduce a strong, reinforced landscape framework that informs the form and layout of the scheme, particularly in the south of the site where the elevated open slopes are visually prominent and contribute to the rural setting and outlook from the edge of Uckfield;
4. Provide landscaping buffers along the northern boundary to integrate the development into the landscape and help attenuate noise from the industrial estate to the north;
5. Provide safe and suitable vehicular access onto the B2102 that meets relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with the local highway authority;
6. Prepare and deliver a comprehensive Sustainable Transport Strategy, coordinated with adjacent site allocation UCK3 (FF), that demonstrates how walking, cycling and public transport use will be maximised and reliance on the private car minimised. The strategy must identify and secure appropriate on-site infrastructure and any necessary off-site infrastructure, including connections and measures to improve access to employment, education, community facilities, local centres and public transport services. It must also provide a coordinated approach to movement across the wider development area, including a safe and suitable route linking the south and north of the site across the railway line;
7. Provide a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), or contribute to the delivery of a SANG, of sufficient size, quality and accessibility to mitigate recreational impacts arising from the development on the Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation, in accordance with the Habitats Regulations and Policy NE5;

8. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider; and
9. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system.

POLICY: UCK3 (FF) Land at Hempstead Lane, Uckfield as identified on the Policies Map

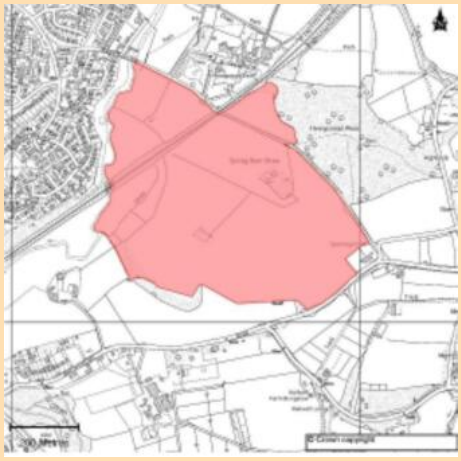
Allocated for: Residential and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS)

Site Area (ha): 36.02

Indicative Capacity: 300 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: None

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the policies in the development plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Focus development on the lower slopes and low-lying fields in the western part of the site, where it would be contained by landform and vegetation and would have reduced impact on landscape character and visual amenity;
2. Mitigate visual and noise impact from the adjacent railway, and ensure that development provides a safe and suitable living environment near to the railway line;
3. Provide a comprehensive landscape framework that informs the layout, scale and form of development, particularly on the elevated open slopes in the southern part of the site, which are visually prominent and contribute to the rural setting of Uckfield;
4. Avoid built development within the floodplain of the River Uck and Framfield Stream, retain the open and small-scale floodplain character of the River Uck, and protect the riparian woodland that forms a strong boundary along the existing settlement edge;
5. Set back development from the ancient woodland at Spring Barn Shaw and provide an appropriate undeveloped buffer to protect root systems and avoid adverse impacts on the Ancient Woodland;
6. Retain, protect and enhance the River Uck riparian corridor, mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and strengthen the ecological connectivity between the river riparian corridor, woodland blocks and habitats within and adjoining the site;
7. Retain and safeguard the public right of way along the north-western boundary of the site, provide an appropriate development set back and minimise the visual impact of development from the path;
8. Provide landscaping buffers along the northern boundary to help integrate development into the surrounding landscape and reduce noise impacts from the industrial estate to the north;
9. Provide safe and suitable vehicular access onto the B2102, meeting relevant visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with the local highway authority;
10. Prepare and deliver a comprehensive Sustainable Transport Strategy, coordinated with adjacent site allocation FF5, that demonstrates how walking, cycling and public transport use will be maximised and reliance on the private car minimised. The strategy must identify and secure appropriate on-site infrastructure and any necessary off-site infrastructure, including connections and measures to improve access to employment, education, community facilities, local centres

and public transport services. It must also provide a coordinated approach to movement across the wider development area;

11. Provide a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), or contribute to the delivery of a SANG, of sufficient size, quality and accessibility to mitigate recreational impacts arising from the development on the Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation, in accordance with the Habitats Regulations and Policy NE5;
12. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system; and
13. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY: UCK 5 (FF) Land North of Eastbourne Road, Framfield as identified on the Policies Map

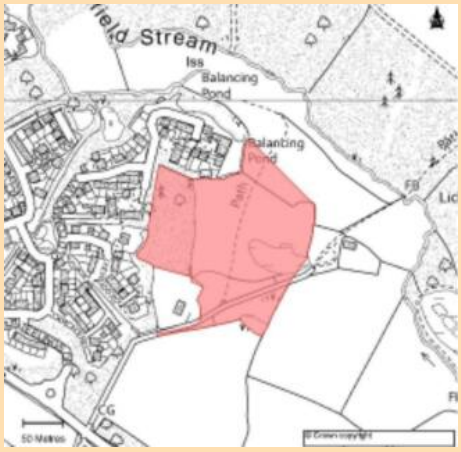
Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 3

Indicative Capacity: 45 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: None

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the policies in the development plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Focus development on the western part of the site and avoid the elevated southern area to minimise visual impact;
2. Retain, protect and enhance boundary vegetation, including the woodland which backdrop to Fernley Park, to support visual containment and the wider green infrastructure network;
3. Reinforce the existing field pattern through new planting to maintain the site's enclosed character and minimise visual impact;
4. Respond sensitively to the site's floodplain context by avoiding development in the north-east where flood risk is higher and integrating green/blue infrastructure where appropriate
5. Retain the historic assart field pattern and retain and enhance existing hedgerows;
6. Protect the rural character and user experience of the public right of way to the south-east of the site;
7. Integrate sensitively with the existing settlement edge of Uckfield to the west whilst maintaining the wooded backdrop to Uckfield; and
8. Ensure the built form and layout respect the transition from the settlement edge and open countryside and provide a clear, defensible boundary.

POLICY UCK9 (UCK): Land South West of Ridgedown, Lewes Road, Uckfield as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 1.87

Indicative Capacity: 55 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: None

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Secure safe and suitable vehicular access, meeting visibility, capacity and safety standards in consultation with East Sussex County Council as highway authority. Shared access with the adjacent site (known as Ridgewood) with planning permission should be explored and general vehicular access must not use the dedicated bus/sustainable transport track; and
2. Retain, protect, and enhance existing vegetation within the site, wherever possible, except where removal is necessary for site access. Planting should use locally prominent native species to strengthen green infrastructure and deliver ecological benefits.

POLICY UCK11: Land at Owlsbury Farm, Lewes Road, Uckfield as identified on the Policies Map

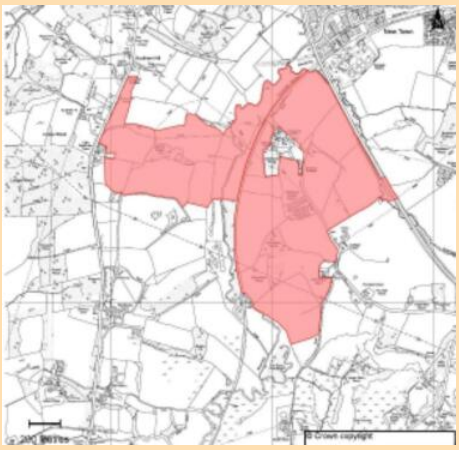
Allocated for: Residential, a two-form entry primary school, Community Uses, Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) and other associated community uses

Site Area (ha): 167.22

Indicative Capacity: 1,300 dwellings, a two-form entry primary school, SANG, community and commercial uses

Policy Map Designations: Biodiversity Opportunity Area (River Uck and its headwaters), Ancient Woodland, Priority Habitats, Flood Risk

Relevant Planning History: WD/2025/0922/MEA – Current Planning Application Proposal for 1,550 (net) dwellings, 50-unit residential care/late living units (Use Class C2), a two-form entry primary school, Community Uses and SANGS – Not Yet Determined



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the development plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Be designed to respond to the site's edge-of-settlement location adjoining the countryside through high-quality design, materials, building heights, densities and layout that respect local character and provide an appropriate transition to the rural landscape, particularly to the south and west of the site;
2. Include a strategy for responding to the National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (NGET) Overhead Cable Route present within the site, which demonstrates how the NGET Design Guide and Principles have been applied at the masterplanning stage and how the impact of the assets has been reduced through good design;
3. Provide safe and suitable vehicular access to the A22 and safe, attractive pedestrian and cycle connections to Uckfield town centre, the railway station and surrounding destinations through the provision of a pedestrian and cycle bridge across the A22. The bridge shall be designed to be fully accessible for all users and provided in accordance with an agreed phasing strategy. All access arrangements shall meet visibility, capacity and safety standards in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highway authority;
4. Safeguard and incorporate the Uckfield to Lewes railway corridor within the masterplan in accordance with Policy INF5, enabling potential future reinstatement and mitigating associated noise, visual and safety impacts on future occupiers;
5. Prepare and implement a comprehensive Sustainable Transport, Monitoring and Management Strategy that maximises walking, cycling, public and shared transport, minimises private car use, monitors mitigation throughout phased delivery and secures additional measures where required;
6. Provides buffers to Ancient Woodland in accordance with Policy NE4, including Bean's Wood, Owlsbury Wood, Owlsbury Farm Shaw, Honeyspot Shaw, Stroodland Wood, Hoathfield Wood and Walk Shaw adjoining the site's southern boundary;

7. Retain, protect and enhance woodland within and adjoining the site to maintain visual enclosure and limit views, particularly from elevated areas to the east;
8. Protect the significance and setting of Horsted Place Registered Park and Garden, Buckham Hill Scheduled Monument and Owlsbury Farmhouse, and implement any site-specific mitigation measures identified through heritage assessment;
9. Retain, protect and enhance hedgerows and mature specimen trees, replacing losses where necessary, and use locally prominent native planting to screen development, maintain rural character, strengthen habits and green infrastructure networks, deliver ecological benefits and integrate built form into the landscape;
10. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system;
11. Provide an on-site Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace in the western limb of the site, of sufficient size, quality and accessibility to mitigate the development's recreational effects on the Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation, in accordance with the Habitats Regulations and Policy NE5;
12. Provide a site-specific flood risk assessment that mitigates surface water flood risk in the centre and south of the site, avoids inappropriate development within the River Uck and Ridgewood Stream valleys and floodplains, and incorporates Sustainable Drainage to blue and green infrastructure, biodiversity, amenity, and water quality;
13. Deliver a mixed-use development that complements the role and function of Uckfield town centre, incorporating a two-form entry primary school, along with community, commercial and service uses of an appropriate scale to serve the day-to-day needs of residents whilst maintaining Uckfield town centre as the principal focus for retail, leisure and other main town centre uses; and
14. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider and ensure an adequate layout that provides necessary easement to Southern Water's infrastructure which crosses the site.

POLICY WAD1 Land at Windmill House, Windmill Lane, Wadhurst as identified on the Policies Map

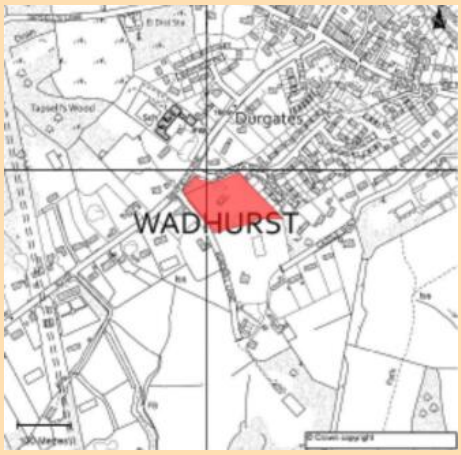
Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 1.14

Indicative Capacity: 20 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: Site entirely within the High Weald National Landscape and Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland located within the site

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Retain, protect and enhance the site's mature vegetation, priority habitat deciduous woodland, tree avenue, in-field trees, tree clumps and historic field boundaries, and strengthen woodland connectivity through native planting that reflects the locality;
2. Use locally characteristic planting to screen development and maintain the area's rural character;
3. Retain the central pond and provide an appropriate buffer incorporating new semi-natural habitat, and set back development from, the infield trees/tree clumps including those around the central pond;
4. Provide safe and suitable vehicular access from Baldock Road, avoiding access from Windmill Lane or Mayfield Lane to protect the tree avenue, preserve the lane's character and address visibility and junction spacing constraints.
5. Provide off-site highway works and mitigation necessary to deliver an access from Baldock Road, agreed with East Sussex County Council as highway authority;
6. Connect internal pedestrian and cycle routes to existing footways on Mayfield Lane and the public footpath along Baldock Road and Station Road, to access Wadhurst's local amenities and widen the footway along Mayfield Lane, where feasible; and.
7. Enhance access to the surrounding landscape through the existing public right of way network.

POLICY WES2: Land at Peelings Lane, Westham as identified on the Policies Map

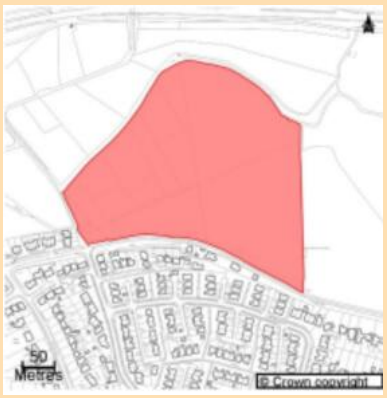
Allocated for: Residential

Site Area (ha): 6.5

Indicative Capacity: 140 (net) dwellings

Policy Map Designations: None on site itself, but it sits in close proximity to Pevensey Levels Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar Site to the north and east.

Relevant Planning History: WD/2025/2269/MAO for up to 140 (net) dwellings – Not Yet Determined



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide safe, vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access from Peelings Lane, west of the site near to St Johns Drive, meeting visibility, capacity and safety standards. Additional walking and cycling accesses may be provided where acceptable to East Sussex County Council as highway authority. Incorporate highway measures to minimise development-related vehicular traffic on Peelings Lane, reflecting its rural character and limited capacity;
2. Include a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrating that all development will be located in Flood Zone 1, taking account of future flood risk and climate change allowances. Manage surface water flooding through the central area using Sustainable Drainage Systems that enhance blue and green infrastructure and deliver attenuation, water quality, biodiversity and amenity benefits, reflecting the site's location within the Pevensey Levels SAC catchment;
3. Create a sensitive transition between Westham and the surrounding countryside through the layout, scale, landscape buffers and green infrastructure, retaining existing landscape features;
4. Retain and protect TPO trees along the southern boundary and incorporate them into the site's green infrastructure;
5. Deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, measured using the relevant statutory biodiversity metric and UK Habitat Classification system;
6. Retain, protect, and enhance mature vegetation along the boundary toward the A27 to screen the site. Safeguard and strengthen existing tree belts and hedgerows through the site and, where possible, retain other boundaries to maintain ecological connectivity and field patterns;
7. Provide appropriate noise attenuation for development in the north of the site to mitigate A27 noise and secure acceptable living conditions for future occupiers; and
8. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider and ensure an adequate layout that provides necessary easement to Southern Water's infrastructure which crosses the site.

POLICY: MA EMP1 (MA) Ashdown Business Park Extension, Maresfield as identified on the Policies Map

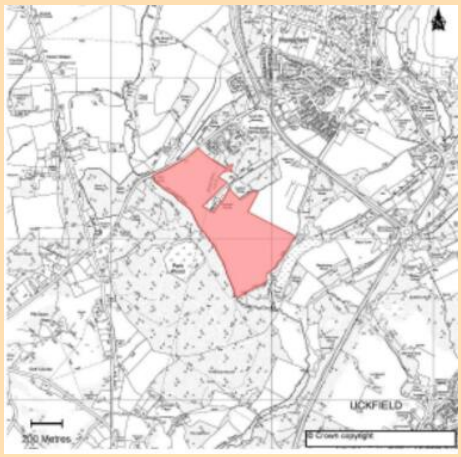
Allocated for: Employment Uses

Site Area (ha): 30.98

Indicative Capacity: 45,000 sqm (net) floorspace

Policy Map Designations: Ancient Woodland, Priority Habitats, Flood Risk, Biodiversity Opportunity Area

Relevant Planning History: WD/2022/3319/MAO – Provision of up to 60,000 sqm of Gross employment floorspace in Use Class E(g), B2 and B8 – Application refused



In addition to meeting the policies in the development plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide vehicular access from the A272 or through the existing Ashdown Business Park, with safe pedestrian/cycle connections and any necessary off-site highway works and mitigation, in consultation with East Sussex County Council as highway authority;
2. Prepare and implement a comprehensive Sustainable Transport Strategy that maximises walking, cycling and public transport use and minimises reliance private car use and secures any necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure, including connections and measures to improve access to public transport services;
3. Retain, protect and enhance existing woodland, trees, hedgerows and other vegetation, including that along with boundary with the A272, provide appropriate buffers to Park Wood and Calves Wood ancient woodland in accordance with Policy NE4, and deliver green infrastructure, landscape and ecological enhancements, including opportunities identified in the Biodiversity Opportunity Area benefits;
4. Provide a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrating how surface water and fluvial flood risk will be managed, including sustainable drainage measures to deliver blue and green infrastructure, biodiversity, amenity, and water quality benefits;
5. Assess potential site contamination, including Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), and implement any necessary remediation in accordance with Policy NE14; and
6. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY HA EMP2 (HEL): Knights Farm West, Hailsham as identified on the Policies Map

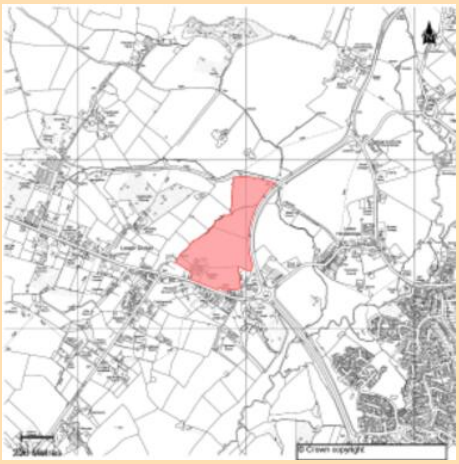
Allocated for: Employment Uses

Site Area (ha): 17.34

Indicative Capacity: 40,000 sqm (net) floorspace

Policy Map Designations: None

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide vehicular access from the A22, with safe pedestrian/cycle connections and any necessary off-site highway works and mitigation, in liaison with East Sussex County Council as highway authority;
2. Prepare and implement a comprehensive Sustainable Transport Strategy that maximises walking, cycling and public transport use and minimises private car use and secures any necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure, including connections and measures to improve access to public transport services;
3. Retain, protect and enhance existing woodland, trees, hedgerows and other vegetation, particularly along the A22, and deliver green infrastructure, landscape and ecological enhancements;
4. Provide a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrating how surface water and fluvial flood risk will be managed, including sustainable drainage measures that deliver blue and green infrastructure, biodiversity, amenity, and water quality benefits;
5. Assess, and where necessary, remediate contamination arising from the site's previous use in accordance with Policy NE14; and
6. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY HA EMP3 (HA): Woodside Park, Land East of A22, Hailsham as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Employment Uses

Site Area (ha): 8.31

Indicative Capacity: 10,000 sqm (net) floorspace

Policy Map Designations: None

Relevant Planning History: WD/2021/2556/MAO – Provision of up to 16,750 sqm of Gross employment floorspace in Use Class E(g) and B2 – Application withdrawn



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide vehicular access from the A22, with safe pedestrian/cycle connections and any necessary off-site highway works and mitigation, in liaison with East Sussex County Council and National Highways as relevant highway authorities;
2. Retain, protect and enhance existing woodland, trees, hedgerows and other vegetation, particularly the A22 and Coldthorn Lane boundaries, and deliver green infrastructure, landscape and ecological enhancements;
3. Assess, and where necessary, remediate contamination arising from the site's existing use in accordance with Policy NE14; and
4. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY HA EMP4 (LM): Natewood Farm, Polegate, Hailsham as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Employment Uses

Site Area (ha): 2.06

Indicative Capacity: 9,300 sqm (net) floorspace

Policy Map Designations: None

Relevant Planning History: None



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide vehicular access from the A22, or via the adjoining employment site, with safe pedestrian/cycle connections and any necessary off-site highway works and mitigation, in liaison with East Sussex County Council and National Highways as relevant highway authorities;
2. Retain, protect and enhance existing woodland, trees, hedgerows and other vegetation, particularly along the A22, and deliver green infrastructure, landscape and ecological enhancements; and
3. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

POLICY HA EMP5 (POL): Land at North Polegate, A22 as identified on the Policies Map

Allocated for: Employment Uses

Site Area (ha): 46.8

Indicative Capacity: 66,370 sqm (net) floorspace

Policy Map Designations: Flood Risk, Priority Habitats, Biodiversity Opportunity Area designations present on-site

Relevant Planning History: WD/2023/0260/MEA – Provision of up to 66,370 sqm of Gross employment floorspace in Use Class E(g), B2 and B8 - Not Yet Determined



In addition to meeting the relevant policies in the plan, development proposals for this site must demonstrate that it will:

1. Provide vehicular access from the A22, safe pedestrian/cycle connections and any necessary off-site highway works and mitigation, in liaison with East Sussex County Council and National Highways as relevant highway authorities;
2. Prepare and implement a comprehensive Sustainable Transport Strategy that maximises walking, cycling and public transport use, minimises private car use and secures any necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure, including connections and measures to improve access to public transport services;
3. Retain, protect and enhance existing woodland, trees, hedgerows and other vegetation, including along boundaries with the A22 and the Cuckoo Trail, and deliver green infrastructure, landscape and ecological enhancements that realise opportunities identified in the Biodiversity Opportunity Area;
4. Provide a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrating how surface water and fluvial flood risk will be managed through sustainable drainage measures that deliver blue and green infrastructure, biodiversity, amenity, and water quality benefits;
5. Conserve and enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park through a landscape-led design approach that protects key views, retains and enhances landscape features, and avoids adverse effects its special qualities, scenic beauty and setting; and
6. Phase occupation of development to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure unless alternative interim arrangements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the service provider.

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations

13.8 Policy SA2 allocates sites to meet the accommodation needs identified in Policy SS3 (Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs).

13.9 The capacity of each allocation has been informed by the evidence base, including the GTAA, SHELAA, Sustainability Appraisal and other technical assessments. The number of pitches or plots identified for each site represents the anticipated capacity, taking account of the information available at the time of allocation.

13.10 Development proposals will be assessed against the policies of this Plan, including Policy HO9 (Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Criteria).

Policy SA2 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations

Policy SA2: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations

1. The sites identified in Table 11, as indicated on the Policies Map, are allocated to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

2. Development proposals must:

   a) provide the number of pitches or plots identified in Table 11, unless a different number is justified through a site-specific assessment;

   b) accord with Policy HO9 (Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Criteria) and all other relevant policies in the Development Plan; and

   c) provide any necessary mitigation and infrastructure required to support the development.

Table 11 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations

Allocation Ref	Site address	SHELAA Ref.	Parish	Adjoining Settlement	Proposed Pitches/Plots
CO GT1 (HAR)	The Chalet, Hartfield/Cowden	Existing site	Hartfield	Cowden	2 (1 existing to permanent, 1 additional)
BYG GT2 (FR)	The Stables, Hawkenbury Road, Bells Yew Green	Existing Site 1261/1610	Frant	Bells Yew Green	2
MC GT3 (RO)	Green Hedges Nursery, Mark Cross	Existing Site 1281/1630	Rotherfield	Mark Cross	4
BU GT4 (BU)	Kiowa, Water Treatment Works, Buxted	Existing site	Buxted	Buxted	2 (2 existing to permanent)
HD GT5 (HD)	Five Badgers and Little Robins, Stonehurst Lane, Mayfield	Existing Site 1262/1980	Hadlow Down	Hadlow Down	4
AG GT6 (MFA)	Little Oaks, Argos Hill	Existing site	Mayfield and Five Ashes	Argos Hill	3
MAY GT7 (MFA)	The Plot, Horleigh Green Road, Mayfield	Existing Site	Mayfield and Five Ashes	Mayfield	1
CIH GT8 (MFA)	Little Rose, Meres Lane, Cross in Hand, Heathfield	Existing Site 959/1210	Mayfield and Five Ashes	Cross-In-Hand	2 (1 temporary to permanent, 1 additional)

Allocation Ref	Site address	SHELAA Ref.	Parish	Adjoining Settlement	Proposed Pitches/Plots
HEA GT9 (HEAW)	Monkhurst Field, Sandy Cross Lane, Heathfield*	230/1210	Heathfield and Waldron	Heathfield	5
HAL GT10 (FF)	Fir Tree View, Easons Green	Existing site	Framfield	Halland	2
WH GT11 (CHI)	Randalls, Whitesmith	Existing Site	Chiddingly	Whitesmith	2
LD GT12 (HEL)	Land adjoining Laurel Cottage, The Dicker, Lower Dicker*	940/3090	Hellingly	Lower Dicker	8
LD GT13 (HEL)	Gracelands, Hackhurst Lane, Lower Dicker	Existing Site - TSP	Hellingly	Lower Dicker	3 (TSP Plots)
HA GT14 (HA)	Development Land at Station Road, Hailsham (part)*	467/1310	Hailsham	Hailsham	6
MG GT15 (LM)	Milton Field, Milton Gate, Wilmington	Existing site	Long Man	Milton Gate	2
	* means new GTTSP Site. All others are existing.				

Wealden
District Council

14
Monitoring & Review



Wealden
Local Plan

Introduction

14.1 Monitoring is a key component of the plan-making process and is essential to assessing whether the Local Plan is delivering its Spatial Planning Objectives and contributing towards the Sustainability Appraisal objectives. The monitoring framework set out in this chapter identifies a range of indicators that will be used to measure the effectiveness of Local Plan policies and monitor changes across the district over the plan period.

14.2 The monitoring framework includes both policy-specific indicators, which assess the effectiveness of individual policies, and contextual indicators, which help to understand wider social, economic and environmental trends that may influence plan outcomes. The framework also identifies the relevant Spatial Planning Objectives and Sustainability Appraisal objectives to which each indicator relates. Where appropriate, indicators are accompanied by targets against which performance can be assessed over time.

14.3 Following adoption of the Local Plan, monitoring information will be reported through the Council's Authority Monitoring Report (AMR), which is published at least annually. The AMR will assess progress against the indicators and targets contained within the monitoring framework and identify any policies that are not performing as intended or are no longer effective in responding to changing circumstances.

14.4 Where monitoring indicates that a policy is not achieving its intended outcomes, or where there have been significant changes in national policy, legislation, evidence or local circumstances, the Council will consider whether a review of the relevant policy, or the Local Plan as a whole, is necessary.

14.5 The monitoring framework will be kept under review throughout the plan period to ensure that it remains effective, proportionate and capable of identifying the need for any policy interventions or updates.

Table 12 Local Plan Monitoring Framework Spatial Strategy

Local Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy SS1: Spatial Strategy for Wealden	SPO – 4a	SO14	Net number of dwellings completed outside of the development boundaries	Net number of dwellings completed outside of development boundaries and not supported by other policies within the Local Plan (i.e. Rural Exceptions Sites)	Minimal	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy SS1: Spatial Strategy for Wealden	SPO – 5a, 5b, 5c and 5d	SO18	Net increase / decrease in employment floorspace	Net increase / decrease in employment floorspace in Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8	No net loss per annum	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy SS2: Provision of Homes	SPO – 4a. and 4b.	SO14	Net Dwellings Completed per monitoring year	Net number of dwellings competed for each monitoring year	To meet the identified need of 16,833 (net) dwellings by 31 March 2042 (or 1,052 dwellings per annum (dpa))	Developers, local authority, local highway authority, public agencies, utility companies and service providers	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Local Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy SS3: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople - Accommodation Needs	SPO – 4a. and 4b.	SO14, SO17	Total number of Gypsy and Traveller Pitches	Net number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches granted planning permission within the monitoring period	Provide an additional 45 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers by 2040	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy SS3: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople - Accommodation Needs	SPO – 4a. and 4b.	SO14, SO17	Total number of Plots for Travelling Showpeople	Net number of plots for Travelling Showpeople granted planning permission within the monitoring period	Provide an additional 3 plots for Travelling Showpeople by 2040	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy SS4: Retail Provision and Town Centres	SPO – 5b, 5d, 7b and 7c	SO18 and SO19	Retail Use Floorspace Completions	Net increase / decrease in retail floorspace in Use Class E(a) in the monitoring period	To meet identified need of a minimum of 15,200 sqm of retail floorspace by 2042	Developers, businesses and local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy SS5: Provision of Employment Floorspace	SPO – 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e 6a and 6b	SO18	Net Increase / Decrease in Employment Floorspace Completions	Net increase / decrease in employment floorspace in Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8 in the monitoring period	To support the provision of at least 197,780 sqm of employment floorspace by 2042	Developers, businesses and local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Local Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy SS6: Strategic Employment Sites	SPO – 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 6a and 6b	SO18	Delivery of Large Employment Commitments Total Floorspace	Net total employment floorspace delivered across all Large Employment Commitments	Deliver net total of 27,110 sqm of employment floorspace across the Large Employment Commitments	Developers and local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
SS7: Ensuring Comprehensive Development	SPO – 4a and 4b.	SO14, SO17	The Delivery of comprehensive development	The total number of major housing sites (above 10 (net) dwellings) with extant planning permission that have lapsed during the monitoring period	Minimal	Developers and local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
SS8: Responding to Climate Change	SPO – 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 3a, 3b and 4a	SO1 and SO2	Per capita greenhouse gas emissions and total greenhouse gas emissions	Per capita greenhouse gas emissions and total greenhouse gas emissions in the district for the latest monitoring period available, including a breakdown for	Reduce over the plan period	Developers, businesses, utility providers, public agencies and local authority	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

Local Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
				industry, commercial, public sector, domestic and transport			
SS8: Responding to Climate Change	SPO – 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 3a, 3b and 4a	SO1 and SO2	Publicly available electric vehicle charging devices	Publicly available electric vehicle charging devices at all speeds within Wealden District	Increase over the plan period	Developers, businesses, utility providers and local authority	Department for Transport
SS9: Health, well-being and quality of life	SPO – 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d and 2e	SO15 and SO17	Life Expectancy	Life Expectancy at Birth for Males and Females in Wealden	Increase	N/A	ONS and NHS
SS9: Health, well-being and quality of life	SPO – 2a, 2b, 2c, 2e, 3a, 3b and 3c	SO13 and SO15	Residents within 30 minutes of GPs	The percentage of residents within 30 minutes of GPs by transport mode (walking, cycling and car)	Increase	Developers, local authority	Department for Transport
SS9: Health, well-being and quality of life	SPO – 2a, 2b, 2c and 2e	SO15	Disability	The percentage of Wealden residents who consider themselves to have a disability	Decrease	N/A	ONS (Census)

Local Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
SS9: Health, well-being and quality of life	SPO – 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d and 2e	SO15	Physically active children and young people	Percentage of physically active children and young people	Increase	N/A	Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
SS9: Health, well-being and quality of life	SPO	SO15 and SO17	Health Impact Assessments	Planning permissions granted contrary to advice from ESCC on a Health Impact Assessment (HIA)	None	Developers, local authority and East Sussex County Council	Wealden District Council Monitoring
SS10: Green Infrastructure	SPO – 8a, 8b and 8d	SO8 and SO9	Delivery of green and blue infrastructure	Hectares of green and blue infrastructure delivered through strategic site allocations during the monitoring period	In accordance with Policy SS10 of the Local Plan	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
SS10: Green Infrastructure	SPO – 8a, 8b, 8d and 9d	SO8	Distance to nearest Park, Public Garden, or Playing Field	Average distance to nearest Park, Public Garden, or Playing Field in Metres for Wealden District	Decrease	Developers, local authority	ONS

Local Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Appraisal Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
SS10: Green Infrastructure	SPO – 8a, 8b, 8d and 9d	SO8	Number of Parks, Public Gardens, or Playing Fields within 1km radius	Average number of Parks, Public Gardens, or Playing Fields within 1km radius for Wealden District	Increase	Developers, local authority	ONS

Table 13 Local Plan Monitoring Framework Climate Change

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
CC1: Net Zero Development Standards	SPO – 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d	SO1 and SO2	Energy performance certificates for new dwellings	The percentage of all new dwelling energy performance certificates above Rating C for the monitoring period	Increase	Developers, local authority	DHLUC
CC2: Reducing Energy Consumption in Existing Buildings	SPO – 1a, 1b and 1c	SO1, SO2	Total Final Energy Consumption	Total Final Energy Consumption for Wealden District kilotonne of oil equivalent (ktoe), All Fuels (Domestic)	Reduce	Developers, local authority	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
CC3: Sustainable Design and Construction	SPO – 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d	SO1, SO2	Energy performance certificates for existing and new dwellings	The percentage of all dwelling energy performance certificates above Rating C (existing and new dwellings) for the monitoring period	Increase	Developers, local authority	DHLUC
CC3: Sustainable Design and Construction	SPO – 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d	SO1, SO2	Energy performance certificates	The percentage of all non-domestic energy performance certificates above Rating C for the monitoring period	Increase	Developers, local authority	DLUHC

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
CC4: Carbon sequestration	SPO – 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d and 1e	SO1	Net Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) greenhouse gas net emissions kilotonne (kt)	LULUCF greenhouse gas emissions total (kt), in Wealden during the monitoring period	Decrease emissions	Developers, local authority	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
CC5: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	SPO – 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d	SO1, SO2	Commercial scale renewable energy schemes	Level of installed megawatts (mws) of commercial scale renewable energy schemes in Wealden District during the monitoring period	Increase	Developers, utility providers, local authority	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
CC6: Water Efficiency	SPO – 1c, 1e and 8d	SO4	Consumption of Water	Southeast Water Per Capita Consumption of Water in litres	Decrease	Developers, local authority, statutory water supply company	South East Water
CC7: Managing Flood Risk	SPO – 1a, 1c, 1e and 8d	SO4	Planning Permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency on water quality grounds	Planning Permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency on water quality grounds in Wealden District during the monitoring period	Zero	Developers, local authority	Envionment Agency

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
CC7: Managing Flood Risk	SPO – 1a and 8d	SO2 and SO3	Planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding grounds	Planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding grounds in Wealden District during the monitoring period	Zero	Developers, local authority	Environment Agency
CC8: Sustainable Drainage	SPO – 1e and 1d	SO2 and SO3	Planning permissions granted contrary to Lead Flood Authority Advice on sustainable drainage	Planning permissions granted contrary to Lead Flood Authority Advice on sustainable drainage in Wealden District during the monitoring period	Zero	Developers, local authority, Local Lead Flood Authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Table 14 Local Plan Monitoring Framework Natural Environment

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
NE1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery	SPO – 8a, 8b, 8c and 8d	SO4, SO8 and SO9	The recorded condition/status of designated ecological sites in the district	The recorded condition/status of designated ecological sites in the district that includes the Ashdown Forest SPA/SAC and the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site	Improve the condition/ status of international designated ecological sites in the district	Developers, local authority and public agencies (i.e. Natural England)	Natural England
NE1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery	SPO – 8a, 8b, 8c and 8d	SO4, SO5, SO8 and SO9	Changes in (a) priority habitat and species (by type) and (b) change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value	Changes in (a) priority habitat and species (by type) and (b) change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional, sub regional or local significance	No loss	Developers, local authority, and public agencies (i.e. Natural England, Environment Agency etc.)	Wealden District Council Monitoring (via the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre)
NE2: Biodiversity Net Gain	SPO – 8a, 8b, 8c and 8d	SO8 and SO9	Delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain	The percentage of sites that deliver at least 15% biodiversity net gain through the planning application process	Maximise, but a minimum of 15% in accordance with Policy	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
					NE2 of the Local Plan		
NE3: Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows	SPO – 8a and 8b	SO2, SO8 and SO9	Woodland as a percentage of area	Woodland as a percentage of area in the Wealden local authority area	Minimise loss	Developers, local authority	Forest Research, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
NE3: Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows	SPO – 8a and 8b	SO2, SO8 and SO9	Area (Ha) under Woodland Trust Management	Area (Ha) under Woodland Trust Management	Increase over the plan period	Developers, local authority and Woodland Trust	Wealden District Council Monitoring (via the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre)
NE4: Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees	SPO – 8a and 8b	SO2, SO8 and SO9	Ancient woodland or veteran trees	The percentage of Ancient Woodland Habitat within Wealden District and the area of habitat hectare (Ha)	Minimise Loss	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring (via the Sussex Biodiversity

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
							Record Centre
NE5: Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC	SPO – 8a and 8b	SO8 and SO9	Estimated visitor numbers on SANGs	Estimated visitor numbers on SANGs with Wealden	Increase over the plan period	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
NE5: Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC	SPO –8a and 8b	SO9	New dwellings completed within the 400 metre to 7km buffer of the Ashdown Forest SPA	The number of dwellings (net) completed within the 400 metre to 7km buffer of the Ashdown Forest SPA, in Wealden District during the monitoring period	No target	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
NE5: Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC	SPO – 8a and 8b	SO9	SANGs capacity	The amount of SANGs land delivered for the Ashdown Forest SPA during the monitoring period.	Sufficient SANGs capacity for anticipated development	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
NE6: Landscape Character	SPO – 9b and 9c	SO10	Refusals of planning permission on landscape character grounds	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy, but allowed at planning appeal	Zero	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
NE7: The High Weald National Landscape	SPO – 9b	SO10	Number of new dwellings completed within the High Weald National Landscape	The number of new dwellings completed (net) within the High Weald National Landscape in Wealden	No target	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
NE7: The High Weald National Landscape	SPO – 9b	SO10	Approvals of planning permission contrary to advice from Natural England or the High Weald National Landscape Unit	The number of planning applications approved contrary to advice from Natural England or the High Weald National Landscape Unit	Minimise	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
NE8: Setting of the South Downs National Park	SPO – 9b	SO10	Refusals of planning permission on setting of the SDNP	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy, but allowed at planning appeal	Zero	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
NE9: Agricultural Land	SPO – 1a, 1e 9a and 9c	SO5	Total amount of land used for agriculture (Ha)	The total amount of land used for agriculture within Wealden District for the monitoring period	Minimise loss	Developers, local authority	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DHLUC)

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
NE9: Agricultural Land	SPO – 1a, 1e 9a and 9c	SO5	Approvals of planning permission contrary to advice from Natural England on the loss of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land	Approvals of planning permission contrary to advice from Natural England on the loss of BMV agricultural land	Minimise loss	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
NE10: Light pollution and dark skies	SPO – 9a, 9b and 9c	SO7 and S10	Light pollution and dark skies	The average (mean) rank of the district for light pollution.	Maintain current level of lighting in Wealden District	Developers, local authority	Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)
NE11: Noise pollution	SPO – 2c and 9d	SO7	Noise Complaints	The rate of complaints about noise	Reduce over the plan period	Developers, local authority	Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
NE12: Air quality	SPO – 9d	SO7	Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)	Number of AQMAs declared within Wealden District	Minimise	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
NE13: Water Environment and Water Infrastructure	SPO – 8a, 8b and 8d	SO4	Recorded water quality in rivers, estuaries, and groundwater	Recorded water quality in rivers, estuaries and groundwater from River Basin Management Plans that includes the Cuckmere, the Adur and Ouse and the Pevensey Marshes	Improve over the plan period	Developers, local authority, utility providers and environment agency	Environment Agency
NE13: Water Environment and Water Infrastructure	SPO – 8a, 8b and 8d	SO4	River and groundwater units with biological and/or chemical quality rated as good	Percentage of river and groundwater units in the plan area with biological and/or chemical quality rated as good	Increase over the plan period	Developers, local authority, utility providers and environment agency	Environment Agency
NE14: Contaminated Land and Land Stability	SPO – 1e and 8a	SO5	Approvals of planning permission contrary to the advice from the Environmental Health Team or Environment Agency	Approvals of planning permission contrary to advice from the Environmental Health Team or Environment Agency on land stability grounds within the monitoring period	Zero	Developers, local authority and environment agency	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Table 15 Local Plan Monitoring Framework Historic Environment

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy HE1: The Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment	SPO – 9a, 9c and 9d	SO10, SO11	Approvals of planning permission contrary to advice from Historic England	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice from Historic England within the monitoring period	Zero	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HE2: Conservation Areas	SPO – 9a and 9c	SO10, SO11	Refusals of planning permission within Conservation Areas	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy, but allowed at planning appeal	Zero	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HE2: Conservation Areas	SPO – 9a and 9c	SO10, SO11	Number of managed Conservation Areas	Number of Conservation Areas with character appraisals and management proposals	Increase	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HE3: Enabling Development	SPO – 9a and 9c	SO10, SO11	Refusals of planning permission/listed building consent for enabling development	Number of planning applications/listed building consent applications refused as contrary to this policy, but allowed at planning appeal	None (enabling development)	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy HE4: Historic Parks and Gardens	SPO – 9a and 9c	SO10, SO11	Historic Parks and Gardens	Number of historic parks and gardens at risk within the monitoring period	Lower the number of historic parks and gardens at risk	Land owner(s), local authority, Historic England	Historic England
Policy HE5: Archaeology	SPO – 9a and 9c	SO10, SO11	Approvals of Planning Permission contrary to Archaeological advice	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice received by East Sussex County Council on archaeology	Zero where Policy HE6 of the Local Plan applies	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HE6 Climate Change and the Historic Environment	SPO – 9a and 9c	SO10, SO11	Refusals of planning permission/listed building consent for enabling development	Number of planning applications/listed building consent applications refused as contrary to this policy, but allowed at planning appeal	None (enabling development)	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HE7: The Change of Use or Loss of Heritage Assets	SPO – 9a and 9c	SO10, SO11	Refusals of planning permission/listed building consent for enabling development	Number of planning applications/listed building consent applications refused as contrary to this policy, but allowed at planning appeal	None (enabling development)	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Table 16 Local Plan Monitoring Framework Housing

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy HO1: Housing Type and Mix	SPO – 4a and 4b.	SO14, SO17	Housing Mix	Number of dwellings granted planning permission by size (i.e. no. of bedrooms) during the monitoring period.	In accordance with Policy HO1 of the Local Plan.	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HO2: Density	SPO – 4a and 4b.	SO14 and SO16	Housing Density	Gross number of net dwellings completed per hectare of developed land during the monitoring period.	None	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HO3: Brownfield Land	SPO – 1c, 1e, 4a and 4b.	SO5 and SO14	Brownfield Land Housing Completions	Net number of the additional homes completed on Brownfield Land during the monitoring period.	Maximise	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HO4: Small and Medium Sized Housing Sites	SPO – 4a and 4b.	SO14	Completions on Small and Medium Sized Housing Sites	Net number of additional homes completed on sites no larger than one hectare during the monitoring period	More than 10% of housing completions on sites no larger than one hectare	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy HO5: Self and Custom -Build Housebuilding	SPO – 4a and 4b.	SO14	Self and Custom-Build Housing granted planning permissions	Number of Self and Custom-Build Housing plots granted planning permission during the self-build and custom build monitoring period	In accordance with Policy HO5 of the Local Plan	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HO6: Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) and Subdivision of Existing Dwellings	SPO – 4a and 4b.	SO14, SO17	HMOs and Subdivision of Existing Dwelling Completions	Net number of new HMOs and the number of dwellings (net) created through the subdivision of existing dwellings during the monitoring period	None	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HO7: Rural Exception Sites to meet Local Housing Need	SPO – 4a. and 4b.	SO14, SO17	Rural Exception Site Completions	Net number of additional affordable homes completed on rural exception sites within the monitoring period	Maximise	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HO8: Affordable Housing	SPO – 4a and 4b.	SO14, SO17	Affordable Housing Completions	Net number of additional affordable homes completed within the monitoring period (by tenure) Affordable Rented	Maximise	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
				Social Rented Affordable Home Ownership			
Policy HO8: Affordable Housing	SPO – 4a and 4b.	SO14, SO17	Affordable housing completions as a percentage of all housing completions	Gross affordable housing completions as a percentage of eligible housing developments	In line with Policy HO8 and the 35% (plan target)	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy H09: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople – Site Criteria	SPO – 4a and 4b.	SO14, SO17	Refusals of planning permission for Gypsy and Traveller Development	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy, but allowed at planning appeal	Minimise	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy H10: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople – Safeguarding Sites	SPO – 4a and 4b.	SO14, SO17	Safeguarded Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites	Number of safeguarded Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites loss during the monitoring period	No net loss of Safeguarded sites	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy H11: Specialist Housing for Older people	SPO – 2c, 4a and 4b.	SO14, SO17	Older Person Housing Accommodation	Net additional housing units completed by type and tenure (Housing with Care, Housing with	Increase	Developer, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
and Vulnerable Groups				Support, Nursing Care) for older and vulnerable people within the monitoring period			
Policy HO12: Residential Accessibility Standards	SPO – 4a and 4b.	SO14, SO16	Residential Accessibility Standards	Number of units that meet the Residential Accessibility Standards for new completions (as set out in part M4(2), M4(3) (a) or M4(3) (b) of Building Regulations 2015).	Maximise	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HO13: Internal Residential Space Standards for New Dwellings	SPO – 4a and 4b.	SO14, SO16	Refusals of planning permission based on Internal Residential Space Standards	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy but allowed at planning appeal.	Zero	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HO14: Rural Workers Accommodation	SPO – 4a, 4b and 6b.	SO14, SO18	Rural Workers Accommodation	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy but allowed at planning appeal.	Zero	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy HO15: Conversion of Rural Buildings to Residential Use	SPO – 4a. and 4b.	SO14	Conversions of Rural Buildings to a Residential Use	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy but allowed at planning appeal.	Zero	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HO16: Park Homes and Residential Caravan Sites	SPO – 4a and 4b	SO14	Park Homes and Residential Caravan Sites	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy but allowed at planning appeal.	Zero	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HO17: Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside	SPO – 4a and 9d	SO14 and SO16	Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy but allowed at planning appeal.	Zero	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy HO18: Extensions and Alterations to Existing Dwellings, Outbuildings and Annexes	SPO – 4a, 4b and 9d	SO14 and SO16	Extensions and Alterations to Existing Dwellings, Outbuildings and Annexes	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy but allowed at planning appeal.	Zero	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
HO19: Extensions to	SPO – 9b and 9d	SO10 and SO16	Extensions to Residential Gardens	Number of planning applications refused as	Zero	Local authority	Wealden District

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Residential Gardens				contrary to this policy but allowed at planning appeal.			Council Monitoring

Table 17 Local Plan Monitoring Framework Infrastructure

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy INF1: Infrastructure provision, delivery, and funding	SPO – 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 3a, 3b and 3c	SO13, SO15, SO16 and SO20	Community Infrastructure Levy monetary contributions	Annual Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monetary contributions received in the monitoring period	Maximise	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy INF1: Infrastructure provision, delivery, and funding	SPO – 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 3a, 3b and 3c	SO13, SO15, SO16 and SO20	Section 106 monetary contributions	Annual Section 106 monetary contributions in the monitoring period	Maximise	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy INF2: Sustainable transport and active travel	SPO – 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c and 7a	SO13 and SO19	Total bus journeys taken in East Sussex each year	The number of bus journeys taken in East Sussex for each monitoring year	Maximise	Developers, local authority, ESCC, infrastructure providers	East Sussex County Council Monitoring
Policy INF2: Sustainable transport and active travel	SPO – 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c and 7a	SO13 and SO19	Active travel to work	The percentage residents in the local authority area who walk (at least ten minutes), or cycle 3 times per week	Maximise	Developers, local authority,	East Sussex County Council Monitoring

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy INF2: Sustainable transport and active travel	SPO – 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c and 7a	SO13, SO16, SO18 and SO19	Travel to work by mode	Mode of travel used to commute to work (%)	Reduce travel to work by private motor vehicle over the plan period	Developers, local authority, County Council	ONS (Census)
Policy INF3: Parking provision	SPO – 2a, 3a and 3c	SO13	Parking Standards	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy but allowed at planning appeal	Zero	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy INF4: Utilities	SPO – 2a, 2b and 4a	SO4, SO12, SO13 and SO16	Utilities	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy but allowed at planning appeal	Zero	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy INF5: Safeguarding of Infrastructure	SPO – 2b	SO4 and SO13	Safeguarded infrastructure	Planning permissions granted that prejudice infrastructure identified in Policy INF5	Zero	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy INF6: Digital and	SPO – 2a and 2b	SO12	Average Broadband Speed	Average Broadband Speed across Wealden District	Increase	Developers, local authority,	East Sussex County

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Communication Infrastructure						broadband providers, County Council	Council Records/ Ofcom
Policy INF6: Digital and Communication Infrastructure	SPO – 2a and 2b	SO12	Fibre to the property availability	Fibre to the property availability in percentage terms in Wealden District	Increase	Developers, local authority, broadband providers, County Council	East Sussex County Council Record/Ofcom
Policy INF7: Local services and Community Facilities	SPO – 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d and 2e	SO13, SO15, SO16 and SO17	Number of Community facilities	Number community facilities registered as Assets of Community Value (ACV)	No net loss of existing community facilities registered as ACV	Local authority, Parish/Town Councils	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy INF8: Open Space, sports and recreation provision	SPO – 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d and 2e	SO13, SO15 and SO16	New open space, sports and recreation facilities	Net amount (in hectares) of open space, sports and recreation provision within the district for each monitoring year	Increase	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy INF8: Open Space, sports and recreation provision	SPO – 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e and 8b	SO8, SO16	Development of Local Green Spaces	The number of losses and/or inappropriate development of Local Green Spaces during the monitoring period	Zero	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy INF9: King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIIECP)	SPO – 2b	SO4 and SO13	Safeguarded Coast Path	Planning permissions granted that prejudice infrastructure identified in Policy INF9	Zero	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Table 18 Local Plan Monitoring Framework Design

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy DE1: Achieving well-designed and high-quality places	SPO – 4a, 7c and 9d	SO10, SO11 and SO16	Good Design and High-Quality Places	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy but allowed at planning appeal	Minimal	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy DE2: Masterplans and Design Codes	SPO – 4a, 7c and 9d	SO10, SO11 and SO16,	Masterplan and Design Codes	Number of masterplan and design codes submitted and approved by the local planning authority within the monitoring period	None (Enabling Policy)	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy DE3: Spaces for people, nature and the public realm	SPO – 4a, 7c and 9d	SO10, SO11, SO16 and SO19	Good Design and Public Realm	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy but allowed at planning appeal	Minimise	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy DE4: Shopfronts and Advertisements	SPO - 7c and 9d	SO10, SO11, SO16 and SO19	Shop front or advertisement permissions	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy but allowed at planning appeal	Minimise	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Table 19 Local Plan Monitoring Framework Economy

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy EC1: Sustainable Economic Prosperity and Investment	SPO – 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 6a, 6b, 6c and 7b	SO17, SO18 and SO19	Average (median) earnings, residents based	Average (median) earnings, residence-based (full-time) in the monitoring period	Increase	Local authority and businesses	ONS
Policy EC1: Sustainable Economic Prosperity and Investment	SPO – 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 6a, 6b, 6c and 7b	SO17, SO18 and SO19	Economic Activity Rates	Percentage of Economically Active and in Employment within the monitoring period	Increase	Local authority and business	East Sussex County Council Annual Population Survey
Policy EC2: Existing Strategic Employment Sites	SPO – 5a, 5c, 5d 6a, 6b, 6c and 7b	SO17, SO18 and SO19	Employment floorspace completions on existing strategic employment sites	Net amount of employment floorspace (sqm) completions on existing strategic employment sites during the monitoring period	No net loss over the Local Plan period	Developers, local authority and businesses	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy EC3: Retention and	SPO – 5a, 5c, 5d, 6a,	SO17, SO18 and SO19	Change of use from employment uses (E(g), B2 and B8) to	Net amount of employment floorspace gained, or loss during the monitoring year	No net loss over the Local Plan Period	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Loss of Non-Strategic Employment Sites, Premises or Floorspace	6b, 6c and 7b		non-employment uses				
Policy EC4: Rural Economy	SPO – 5a, 5b, 5d, 6a and 6b	SO17 and SO18	New Rural Employment Floorspace	Net amount of employment floorspace gained, or loss during the monitoring year outside development boundaries and existing strategic employment sites.	No net loss over the Local Plan Period	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy EC5: Equestrian Development	SPO – 6a and 9d	SO10, SO16 and SO18	Equestrian Development	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy but allowed at planning appeal	Minimise	Local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy EC6: Tourism Facilities and Attractions	SPO – 6c and 7b	SO18 and SO19	New Tourism Facilities and Attractions	Net number of new tourism facilities and attractions for each monitoring year	Maximise	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
EC7: Visitor Accommodation	SPO – 6c and 7b	SO18 and SO19	New Bedspaces	Net number of new bedspaces for visitor accommodation during monitoring year	Maximise over the plan period	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring
EC8: The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism Use	SPO – 2b, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 6b, 6c and 7b	SO16, SO17, SO18 and SO19	Economic, or tourism facility floorspace	Net loss/gain in economic or tourism floorspace within the monitoring period	Minimise net loss economic or tourism floorspace over the Local Plan period (this is covered by other indicators)	Developers, local authority	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Table 20 Local Plan Monitoring Framework Town Centres

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy TC1: District, Service and Local Centre Hierarchy and 'Town Centre' First Principles	SPO – 7a, 7b and 7c	SO18 and SO19	Town Centre Vacancy Rates	Percentage of 'town centre' unit vacancies within Wealden District, Service and Local Centres	Reduce over the plan period	Developers, local authority, and businesses	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy TC1: District, Service and Local Centre Hierarchy and 'Town Centre' First Principles	SPO – 7a, 7b and 7c	SO18 and SO19	Retail floorspace in town centres	Amount of retail floorspace (sqm) gained or lost in Wealden District, Service and Local Centres during the monitoring period	Minimise loss	Developers, local authority, and businesses	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy TC2: Sequential and Local Impact Test	SPO – 7a, 7b and 7c	SO10, SO18 and SO19	Retail floorspace completed outside of designated centres	Amount of retail floorspace (sqm) completed within the monitoring period outside of designated centres	Minimise	Developers, local authority and businesses	Wealden District Council Monitoring
Policy TC3: Primary Shopping Areas	SPO – 7a, 7b and 7c	SO18 and SO19	Retail floorspace gained or loss within Primary Shopping Areas	Amount of retail floorspace (sqm) gained or loss within the monitoring period within Primary Shopping Areas	Maximise	Developers, local authority and businesses	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy TC4: Garden Centres	SPO – 7a, 7b and 7c	SO18 and SO19	Garden Centres	Number of planning applications refused as contrary to this policy but allowed at planning appeal	Minimise	Developers, local authority and businesses	Wealden District Council Monitoring

Table 21 Local Plan Monitoring Framework Site Allocations

Plan Policy	Spatial Planning Objectives	Sustainability Objective	Indicator Name	Indicator	Target	Implementation	Source
Policy SA1:Housing and Mixed Use Site Allocations	SPO – 4a, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 6a	SO14 and SO18	Dwellings and Employment Floorspace completed on allocated sites	Number of dwellings (net) and employment floorspace completed on allocated sites during the monitoring period	In accordance with Policy SA1	Developers and local authority	Wealden District Council
Policy SA2: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations	SPO – 4a and 4b.	SO14, SO17	Pitches and Plots completed on allocated site	Number of pitches and plots completed on allocated sites during the monitoring period	In accordance with Policy SA2	Developers and local authority	Wealden District Council

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15
Glossary



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A

Accreditation Schemes - Defined as rules and processes relating to the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies to which the same requirements apply.

Active Beach Management - Refers to the proactive approach taken by coastal managers and practitioners to maintain and enhance beach environments. This includes:

- Regularly assessing beach conditions and sediment composition to understand the dynamics of the beach.
- Implementing measures to protect beaches from erosion and flooding, ensuring safety and functionality.
- Utilising tools and technique to optimise the use of beach resources for environmental, social, and economic benefits.
- Collaborating with local communities to develop sustainable beach management plans that consider their needs and preferences.

This approach aims to balance the benefits of beach use with the protection of coastal eco-systems.

Active Frontages – Business or retail uses with windows and doors onto the street which create interest and activity.

Administrative Area – is a geographic region that is designated and defined for the purposes of administration. In the context of this Local Plan, this administrative area is Wealden District (excluding the South Downs National Park).

Affordable Home Ownership Tenure - see definition under affordable housing.

Affordable Housing – Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions.

a) **Social rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent; (b) the landlord is a registered provider; and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

b) **Other affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

c) **Discounted market sales housing**: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market.

It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Affordable Ownership Accommodation - see above under definition of affordable housing.

Affordable Rent - see above under definition of affordable housing.

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) - Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.

Almshouse – is a charitable form of self-sufficient, low-cost community housing that is held in trust for local people in housing need. They are managed and run by almshouse charities made up of local volunteers

Ancient or Veteran Tree – A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. A veteran tree may not be very old, but it has significant decay features, such as branch death and hollowing. These features contribute to its exceptional biodiversity, cultural and heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient but are old relative to other trees of the same species. The age at which a tree becomes ancient or veteran will vary by species because each species ages at a different rate. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.

Ancient Woodland – An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

Arboriculture – The cultivation, management and study of trees and shrubs especially for ornamental purposes.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - An area with statutory national landscape designation, the primary purpose of which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. AONBs are designated by Natural England. See also **National Landscapes**.

Article 4 direction - A direction made under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 which withdraws permitted development rights granted by that Order.

B

Biodiversity - The number, abundance, variety and variability of different species (including organisms, animals and plants) living within a particular habitat and/or area. A Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) can be prepared for these areas aimed at conserving and enhancing its biological diversity.

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) – Is an internationally recognised program addressing threatened species and habitats and is designed to protect and restore biological systems.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) – Is a approach to development. It makes sure that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were before the development. In England, BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land - Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

Bridleway - A public right of way for walking, horse riding, bicycles, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs.

Brownfield Land – See Previously developed land.

Brownfield Land Registers - Registers of previously developed land that local planning authorities consider to be appropriate for residential development, having regard to criteria in the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Registers) Regulations 2017. Local planning authorities will be able to trigger a grant of permission in principle for residential development on suitable sites in their registers where they follow the required procedures.

Build to Rent – Purpose built housing that is typically 100% rented out. It can form part of a wider multi-tenure development comprising either flats or houses, but should be on the same site and/or contiguous with the main development. Schemes will usually offer long tenancy agreements of three years or more, and will typically be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control.

Buffer Zone – An area of land that is applied as a protective measure separating certain types of development from adjoining sensitive land uses to avert the effect of negative environmental or human influences.

Building Regulations - are minimum standards for design, construction and alterations to virtually every building. The Building Regulations 2010 cover the construction and extension of buildings and these regulations are supported by Approved Documents set out detailed practical guidance on compliance with the regulations.

C

Carbon Storage– Process by which atmospheric carbon is captured and stored.

Climate Change Adaptation – Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Climate Change Mitigation – Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate Emergency – a situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it.

Coastal Change Management Area (CCMA) – An area identified in plans as likely to be affected by physical change to the shoreline through erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation or coastal accretion.

Co-Housing – are intentional communities run by their residents. Each household as a self-contained home as well as shared community space and facilities.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area.

Community Land Trust (CLT) - A Community Land Trust is a non profit, community-based organisation committed to the stewardship and affordability of land, housing and other buildings used for community benefit in perpetuity.

Community-Led Development - A development taken forward by, or with, a not-for-profit organisation, that is primarily for the purpose of meeting the needs of its members or the wider local community, rather than being a primarily commercial enterprise. The organisation should be created, managed and democratically controlled by its members, and membership of the organisation should be open to all beneficiaries and prospective beneficiaries of that organisation.

Comparison Goods– Retail items not bought on a frequent basis, for example televisions and white goods (fridges, dishwashers etc.), where comparisons between products are made.

Conservation Areas – Local planning authorities are obliged to designate Conservation Areas, where any part of their own area that is of special architectural or historic interest, and where the character and appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Convenience Goods - Every day essential items, such as food.

Curtilage – The area normally within the boundaries of a property surrounding the main building and used in connection with it.

D

Dark Night Skies – Dark skies with little or no artificial pollution and where the quality of night air is outstanding.

Decarbonisation - A process of removing or reducing carbon emissions resulting from human activity, with the goal of eliminating them altogether.

Design code - A set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code should build upon a design vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area.

Design guide - A document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice, often produced by a local authority.

Designated heritage asset - A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

Density – Density refers to a measurement of the number of dwellings per hectare.

Development - The carrying out of building, engineering and mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land.

Development Boundaries – Development boundaries identify the area within which development proposals would be acceptable in principle, subject to complying with other policies contained in the Development Plan. They seek to prevent development from gradually extending into the surrounding open countryside.

Development Plan - Is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that

remain in force. Neighbourhood plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan, unless the local planning authority decides that the neighbourhood plan should not be made.

Discounted Market Sales Housing - see above under definition of affordable housing.

District Centres– See Town Centre Hierarchy.

E

Ecological Networks – refers to the creation of larger and better connected areas of natural habitat which is recognised as a key strategy for maintaining and conserving biodiversity and enabling wildlife to adapt to climate change.

Economic Development – An economy that is successful and provides skilled job opportunities and progression and is also balanced in terms of achieving climate change objectives, sustainably revitalising and maintaining town centres, and protecting the unique built and natural heritage that makes Wealden an attractive place to live and visit.

Ecosystem Services - are defined as services provided by the natural environment that benefit people. Ecosystem Services are the direct and indirect contributions ecosystems (known as natural capital) provide for human wellbeing and quality of life. Ecosystem services provided by our natural environment can include the food we eat, the water we drink, plant materials used for fuel, building materials and medicines. It can also include services such as climate regulation, natural flood defences, carbon storage, the pollination of crops by insects and even the inspiration we take from the natural environment and wildlife.

Ecosystems Approach - Makes explicit the link between the status of natural resource systems and ecosystem services that support human well-being. It seeks to maintain the integrity and functioning of ecosystems to avoid rapid undesirable ecological change. It also recognises that the impacts of human activities are a matter of social choice and are as integral to ecosystem interactions as ecosystems are to human activities.

Edge of centre - For retail purposes, a location that is well connected to, and up to 300 metres from, the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances

Embodied Emissions – Embodied emissions are associated with all the non-operational aspects of a building, such as those from the extraction, manufacture and assembly of a building's materials and components, its repair, maintenance and refurbishment, and end of life activities.

Employment Land - Land that is used or proposed to be used for offices, industry and/or storage and distribution use.

Energy Efficiency – Reducing the amount of energy use required to provide goods and services (such as heating water, lighting etc).

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points– Charging points for electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles.

Evidence base – The information and data gathered by local planning authorities to justify the "soundness" of the policy approach set out in the Local Plan, including physical, economic and social characteristics of an area.

F

First Homes - see above the definition of affordable housing.

Full Business Case – the purpose of a Full Business Case is to:

- Demonstrate that the project is viable, affordable, and delivers value for money.
- Define the commercial arrangements to ensure successful delivery of the works.
- Provide the evidence required for final approval and funding release before construction or implementation begins.
- It builds on earlier stages:
    - Strategic Outline Case (SOC) – Why is the project needed?
    - Outline Business Case (OBC) – What options are available and which is preferred?
    - Full Business Case (FBC) – How will the preferred option be delivered?

Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) – Since patterns of economic activity vary from place to place, there is no standard approach to defining a functional economic market area, however, it is possible to define them taking account of factors including:

- extent of any Local Enterprise Partnership within the area;
- travel to work areas;
- housing market area;
- flow of goods, services and information within the local economy;
- service market for consumers;
- administrative area;
- catchment areas of facilities providing cultural and social well-being; and
- transport network.

G

General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) – The General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 2015 includes various provisions that allow for certain developments to occur without the need for planning permission.

Green Infrastructure (GI) – A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.

Green corridor/network – The Green Infrastructure (GI) network comprises broadly defined green and blue corridors containing a mosaic of land uses, natural and semi-natural wildlife habitats and access links. The corridors act as linkages and stepping stones for dispersal of wildlife, provide sustainable transport linkages through provision of footpaths and cycle routes connecting local communities to natural greenspace, and enable strategic linkages with GI networks in adjoining areas.

Greenfield Land – Land that has not previously been developed. This includes land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

Gypsies and Travellers – Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)– to assesses the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, as well as non-Gypsy and Traveller residential caravan dwellers established through national guidance contained in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS).

H

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) – an assessment under the Habitats Regulations to test if a plan or project proposal could significantly harm the designated features of a European site. A European site is protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended (known as the Habitats Regulations).

Habitats Site – any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) – An HIA is a process that identifies the health and wellbeing impacts (benefits and harms) of any plan or development project. A properly conducted HIA recommends measures to maximise positive impacts; minimise negative impacts; and reduce health inequalities.

Heritage asset - A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

High Weald– A medieval landscape of wooded, rolling hills studded with sandstone outcrops; small, irregular shaped fields; scatter farmsteads; and ancient routeways. The 1,461km2 area covers parts of Kent, Sussex and Surrey at the heart of South East England.

Historic environment - All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Historic Parks and Gardens – Historic England 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England', established in 1983, currently identifies over 1,600 sites assessed to be of particular significance. Inclusion of an historic park or garden on the register in itself brings no additional statutory controls, local authorities are required by central government to

make provision for the protection of the historic environment in their policies and their allocation of resources.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) - A building, or part of building is an HMO if it meets one of the following criteria:

- Any building in which two or more households share basic amenities (or the lack of an amenity) such as a bathroom, toilet or cooking facilities; or
- Any flat in which two or more households share basic amenities; or
- Any converted building which comprises of one or more units of accommodation that are not self-contained; or
- Any converted building which comprises of self-contained flats and the standard of conversion does not meet the 1991 Building Regulation Standards and more than one third of the flats are occupied on short tenancies.

Housing Market Areas (HMA) – is a geographical area defined by household demand and preferences for all types of housing, reflecting the key functional linkages between places where people live and work.

Housing Register – The Council owns and manages around 3,000 homes and we facilitate access to around 3,500 registered provider (housing association) homes in the district. However, because the demand for homes is greater than the supply, we operate a Housing Register.

The Housing Register is a database of qualifying households, who are seeking affordable rented housing.

I

Infrastructure – facilities or services needed to support development, including transport, flood defences, schools, hospitals, and other health and social care facilities (for further details, see section 216(2) of the Planning Act 2008, and regulation 59 of the CIL Regulations (2010), as amended by the 2012 and 2013 Regulations).

Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) – A formal document setting out what infrastructure is required to support and enable the development proposed in the Wealden Local Plan. This 'living document' is a collaboration between Wealden District and infrastructure providers and identifies the infrastructure to support development in the Local Plan.

Intermediate Housing - see above the definition of affordable housing.

Irreplaceable Habitats - Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen.

L

Lawful Use – Development that is lawful in planning terms. No action can be taken by the Council against the development, proposed use of buildings, land or operations to be carried out and that no planning permission is required.

Legal Agreement– See Planning Obligations.

Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) - A Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) prepares and maintains a strategy for local flood risk management in their area, coordinating views and activity with other local bodies and communities through public consultation and scrutiny, and delivery planning in line with the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. East Sussex County Council has a strategic overview role for local flooding and works closely with other organisations to manage local flood risk in East Sussex.

Listed Buildings – are buildings which have been identified as being of special architectural or historic interest and are designated as either Grade I, Grade II* or Grade II by Historic England. This relates to the quality and relative interest of the building.

Local Centres– See Town Centre Hierarchy.

Local Connection – Applicants for the housing register need to be 'eligible' (UK national, or not subject to immigration control), and a qualifying person - local connection is one factor but there are other factors such as affordability, and behaviour. The following links set this out in more details – Applying for Social Housing to Rent and the Council's Housing Allocations Policy.

Local housing need – The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance.

Local Nature Partnership - A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), established for the purpose of protecting and improving the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) – sets out priorities for nature recovery and propose actions in the locations where it would make a particular contribution to achieving those priorities. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has appointed 48 responsible authorities to lead on preparing a local nature recovery strategy for their area. East Sussex County Council is the responsible authority for East Sussex.

Local Nature Reserves (LNR) – They are usually areas of natural green space but the following types of land can also be LNRs as long as they have wildlife or geological interest. They are a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 by principal local authorities.

Local Plan (LP) – A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community, under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning (England) Regulations 2012). In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

Local Planning Authority – The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority include the district council, London borough council, county council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority, the Mayor of London and a development corporation, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) – are wildlife-rich sites selected for their local nature conservation value. They vary in shape and size and can contain important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species.

Low and Zero Carbon Technologies – A term given to technologies that emit low levels of CO2 emissions, or no net CO2 emissions. The incorporation of these technologies is more

effective within buildings with a highly energy efficient fabric after heat demand and loss have been reduced to a minimum. Some examples include wind turbines, solar panels and carbon capture equipment.

M

Main Town Centre Uses - Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

Major development - For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m^2 or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Meanwhile Uses – Describes the short-term use of temporarily empty buildings/sites before they are brought back into use permanently.

Mixed-Use Development – Provision of a mix of complementary uses such as residential, commercial, community and leisure uses on a single site or within a particular area.

N

National Landscapes – areas legally designated as areas of outstanding natural beauty under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

National Nature Reserves (NNR) – were established to protect some of our most important habitats, species and geology, and to provide 'outdoor laboratories' for research.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – is a government document which sets out the planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied in relation to the production of Local Plans and Development Management decisions. The latest National Planning Policy Framework was published in February 2025.

Nationally Described Space Standards - The standard that deals with internal space within new dwellings and is suitable for application across all tenures. It sets out requirements for the gross internal floor area of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height.

Natural Resources –They are resources that are found in the environment and are developed without the intervention of humans.

Nature Recovery Network (NRN) - A national network of wildlife-rich places to increase and restore nature, and the role of the delivery partnership and management group

Neighbourhood Development Plans or Neighbourhood Plan – A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Net Zero – Reductions in emissions to as close to zero as possible, with the small amount of remaining emissions absorbed through natural carbon sinks like forests, and new technologies like carbon capture.

O

Occupancy Condition – A restriction on who can occupy a building, typically but not exclusively used, for restricting agricultural workers dwellings.

Open Beach Management – Refers to the practices and guidelines used to manage beaches effectively, particularly in coastal areas. This includes:

- Managing beaches to protect against coastal erosion and flooding.
- Implementing regular care and maintenance to ensure beach safety and functionality.
- Creating accessible and inclusive beach environments for all visitors, considering their needs and preferences.
- Utilising case studies and best practices from various regions to optimize beach management.

These elements are crucial for sustainable beach management and enhancing the overall visitor experience.

Open space - All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Out of Centre - A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

Out of Town - A location out of centre that is outside the existing urban area.

P

Permitted Development (or Permitted Development Rights) – Permission to carry out certain limited forms of development without the need to make an application to a local planning authority, as granted under the terms of The General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 2015 as amended.

Pitch – For the purposes of this planning policy, "pitch" means a pitch on a "gypsy and traveller" site and "plot" means a plot on a "travelling showpeople" site (often called a "yard").This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for "gypsies and travellers" and mixed-use plots for "travelling showpeople", which may need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment.

Planning Application – A planning application can take three forms:

a) **Outline permission:** Submitted to establish the basic principles of a proposed development, but still requiring approval reserved matters of detail.

b) **Full planning application:** incudes all the details of the proposed development – site/building plans and types of building materials used.

c) **Reserved matters:** the matters of detail which have to be approved following the grant of an outline planning permission.

Planning Condition – A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Planning Obligation – A legal agreement entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) - A web-based resource, which provides more detailed guidance on the contents of the NPPF.

Plot – See the definition of 'pitch' above.

Pre-Application Advice – is provided by planning officers employed by the council helping applicants to understand how the Council are likely to determine any subsequent planning application, and any changes that are likely to be needed, if any, to give the scheme the best chance of being granted planning permission. It is important to note that the guidance given is informal advice and does not bind the council in any future decision it makes.

Previously Developed Land – Land which has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed). It also includes land comprising large areas of fixed surface infrastructure such as large areas of hardstanding which has been lawfully developed.

Primary Shopping Area – A defined area where retail development is concentrated

Prior Approval - means that a developer has to seek approval from the local planning authority that specified elements of the development are acceptable before work can proceed. The matters for prior approval vary depending on the type of development and these are set out in full in the relevant Parts in Schedule 2 to the General Permitted Development Order.

Policies Map – a map illustrating geographically the policies in the plan and be reproduced from, or based on, an Ordnance Survey map.

Q

Quality of Life – Measures the standard of health, comfort and happiness experienced by an individual or group.

R

Ramsar Site – These sites are wetlands of international importance designated and protected under the 1971 Ramsar Convention. It is an intergovernmental treaty providing a framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Pevensey Levels is a Ramsar site.

Registered Provider– A registered provider of affordable housing under Registered Social Housing Provider part 2 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.

Renewable and low carbon energy - Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Rural Diversification –The expansion, enlargement or variation of the range of products or fields of operation of a rural business (branching out from traditional farming activities, for example, new income generating enterprises like renewable energy, tourism and food processing).

Rural Exception Sites - Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

S

Seasonal Occupancy Condition - limit the use of land for a particular purpose to certain seasons of the year both to prevent the permanent residential use of premises or to provide appropriate protection for the local environment.

Section 106 Planning Obligations/Agreements – are legal obligations entered into to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal. Planning obligations run with the land, are legally binding and enforceable.

Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing - Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing. A legal definition, for the purpose of applying the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), is contained in section 1(A1) and (A2) of that Act.

Self-Build and Custom Build Register – Contains information on the level of demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the district.

Sequential Approach/Sequential Test (Flooding) – ensures that a sequential, risk-based approach is followed to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding, taking all sources of flood risk and climate change into account. Where it is not possible to locate development in low-risk areas, the Sequential Test should go on to compare reasonably available sites:

- Within medium risk areas; and
- Then, only where there are no reasonably available sites in low and medium risk areas, within high-risk areas.

Sequential Test (Main Town Centre Uses) - The sequential test guides main town centre uses towards town centre locations first, then, if no town centre locations are available, to edge of centre locations, and, if neither town centre locations nor edge of centre locations are available, to out of centre locations (with preference for accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre). It supports the viability and vitality of town centres by placing existing town centres foremost in both plan-making and decision-taking.

Service Centres- See Town Centre Hierarchy.

Setting of a heritage asset - The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a

setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Settlement Hierarchy – A settlement hierarchy is an important tool that categorises settlements and groups them together based on their sustainability. It helps decide on the most sustainable locations for future growth. Further details can be found in the Council's Sustainable Settlement Study.

Shared Ownership – see above under definition of affordable housing.

Significance (for heritage policy) - The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – A site designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as an area of special interest by reason of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features (plants, animals and natural features relating to the Earth's structure).

Small to Medium Sized Housing Site – A site which is no larger than one hectare.

South Downs National Park (SDNP) - The South Downs National Park officially came into being on 31 March 2010.The South Downs National Park Authority is responsible for planning in the Alfriston, Cuckmere Valley and the East Dean and Friston Parishes, amongst other parts of Wealden District.

Spatial Strategy – aim to deliver the local plan's vision and objectives by guiding development to the right locations and by delivering sustainable growth that takes account of people, places and our environment. It sets out how and where growth should be distributed across a local area.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – Areas defined by regulation 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been given special protection as important conservation sites. Ashdown Forest and the Pevensey Levels are SACs.

Special Protection Area (SPA) – Areas classified under regulation 15 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds. Ashdown Forest is a SPA.

Specialist Housing - Housing to meet need arising from diverse needs including purpose-built or supported housing for the elderly or disabled people or those requiring care.

Stepping Stones - Pockets of habitat that, while not necessarily connected, facilitate the movement of species across otherwise inhospitable landscapes.

Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) – A strategy providing on site mitigation measures on the Ashdown Forest intended to help reduce the impact of new residential development on the SPA by changing the behaviour of visitors to the Forest.

Strategic Allocations - The allocation of specific significant sites for either housing or employment development in the Local Plan.

Strategic Environmental Assessment - A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRA) – A document showing land at risk from flooding across the district, prepared as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. Strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment and should manage flood risk from all sources. They should consider cumulative impacts in, or affecting, local areas susceptible to flooding, and take account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management authorities, such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards.

Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) - It is a comprehensive study which considers the availability, suitability and achievability of land in the district for potential development. The SHELAA enables the Council to identify a sufficient supply of deliverable sites or broad locations within the time periods:1 - 5 years; 6 - 10 years; and 11 - 15 years, as required by paragraph 72 of the NPPF but it does not allocate sites.

Strategic policies - Policies and site allocations which address strategic priorities in line with the requirements of Section 19 (1B-E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Sustainable Development – The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development, and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sui Generis – is a Latin term that, in this context, means 'in a class of its own'. Certain uses are specifically defined and excluded from classification by legislation and therefore become 'sui generis.'

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) – Greenspaces provided to mitigate the effects of recreation (associated with new housing) on the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA).

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

Supported Housing – is a housing service where housing, support and/or care services are provided to help people to live as independently as possible. Supported housing provides homes for a wide range of people including older people, people with a learning disability and autistic people, people with mental health related needs, vulnerable young people and people who have experienced homelessness.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) – is a systematic process that must be carried out during the preparation of local plans and spatial development strategies. Its role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) – A sustainable drainage system controls surface water run off close to where it falls, combining a mixture of built and nature-based techniques to mimic natural drainage as closely as possible, and accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change. The type of system that would be appropriate will vary from small scale interventions such as permeable paving and soakaways that can be used in very small developments to larger integrated schemes in major developments.

Sustainable Settlements Study – Those settlements with the most services and facilities and good level of public transport provision and accessibility are the most sustainable settlements in the district. However, it can also be the case that a settlement with few services and facilities and therefore considered less sustainable on a purely 'scored' basis, can be categorised higher in the hierarchy if, for example, it is in close proximity to a higher order settlement and has sustainable access to the services and facilities within that settlement.

Sustainable Transport Modes – Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra-low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

T

Temporary Planning Permission – Under section 72 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the local planning authority may grant planning permission for a specified temporary period only. Circumstances where a temporary permission may be appropriate include where a trial run is needed to assess the effect of the development on the area or where it is expected that the planning circumstances will change in a particular way at the end of that period. A temporary planning permission may also be appropriate to enable the temporary use of vacant land or buildings prior to any longer-term proposals coming forward (a 'meanwhile use').

Town Centre - Area defined on the local authority's policies map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in the development plan, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.

Town Centre Hierarchy – hierarchy of Wealden's defined centres and their protection. The hierarchy is based on their current position and function and seeks to both protect the position of each centre whilst also improving their viability and vitality.

- District centres: Uckfield, Hailsham, Crowborough and Heathfield all of which have a good level of retail provision (100 plus units) with a wide range of shops (supermarkets and some comparison retailing including that provided by national retailers). The centres also provide hubs for public transport and offer a good level of car parking. District centres provide jobs, services and offer a range of community facilities for the population of the town as well as surrounding settlements.
- Service centres: Polegate, Forest Row, Wadhurst all have a good level of retail provision (40-60 units) to cater for everyday needs but have significantly less provision than District centres, including a more limited comparison goods offer. These centres are less likely

to attract national retailers, however, they do attract local businesses providing for special interests.

- Local centres: Pevensey Bay, Mayfield, Horam, Herstmonceux, Rotherfield and Jarvis Brook (Crowborough) are smaller centres providing a range of retail and service facilities catering for local needs. These centres have 10 or more units.

Town or Parish Council - These operate at a level below district and borough councils and in some cases, unitary authorities. Because of their great diversity, parishes do not generally have statutory functions, although they are often responsible for smaller local services such as allotments, parks and community centres.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO) - is an order made by a local planning authority in England to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of amenity.

Travel Plan - A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that details how agreed sustainable transport objectives are to be delivered, and which is monitored and regularly reviewed.

Travelling Showpeople – Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.

U

Urban Cooling – Process where urban areas adapt to extreme heat to protect people and the economy. Urban areas can lower temperatures by implementing measures such as tree cover, vegetation, cool roofs and surfaces to counteract the urban heat island effect.

V

Vision-led approach – an approach to transport planning based on setting outcomes for a development based on achieving well-designed, sustainable and popular places, and providing the transport solutions to deliver those outcomes as opposed to predicting future demand to provide capacity (often referred to as 'predict and provide').

Visitor Accommodation – A short-term living accommodation where guests/visitors pay to stay.

W

Wildlife Corridors – Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.

Windfall Allowance – Making an allowance for windfall sites within the development plan as an area of anticipated housing supply.

Windfall sites - Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.

Other

20-minute neighbourhoods

– the concept of '20-minute neighbourhoods' or 'complete, compact and connected neighbourhoods' has been put forward as an approach to help local plans deliver sustainable

development. The 20-minute neighbourhood is about creating attractive, interesting, safe, inclusive, walkable environments in which people of all ages and levels of fitness are happy to travel actively for short distances from home to the destinations that they visit and the services they need to use day to day.

Wealden
District Council

16
Appendices



Wealden
Local Plan

Appendices

Appendix 1: Open Space Standards

16.1 The provision standards used to determine deficiencies and surpluses for open space are set in terms of quality, accessibility and quantity. The standards below have been derived from the evidence provided within the Open Space Report (April 2022)[274].

Quantity

16.2 The setting and application of quantity standards is necessary to determine shortfalls in provision and to ensure new developments contribute to open space provision needs.

16.3 Shortfalls in quality and accessibility standards are identified across the District for different types of open space. Therefore, new developments will be required to contribute to the overall provision of open space in accordance with Policy INF 8 – Open Space, sports and recreation provision.

16.4 The table below sets out the quantity standards for the area of open space required for every 1,000 people.

Table 22 Quantity Standards for open and recreation space provision

Typology	Quantity Standards (hectares per 1000 additional population)
Park & Gardens	0.53 ha
Natural & Semi Natural Greenspace	1.91 ha
Amenity Greenspace	0.56 ha
Total Multi-functional greenspace	**3.0 ha**
Provision for Children and Young people	0.25 ha
Allotments & Community Gardens	0.25 ha

16.5 Multifunctional Greenspace (MFGS) comprises of the typologies of parks and gardens, amenity greenspace and natural/semi-natural greenspace combined. The Multifunctional Greenspace quantity standard should be used as the starting point to calculate future open space provision requirements. The type of multi-functional greenspace to be delivered will be discussed with applicants at the pre-application stage in accordance with Policy INF 8 – Open Space, Sports and Recreation Provision. Ultimately, the type of new open space provision will be dependent on the priorities set out in the Council's Open Space, Sports and Recreation evidence base alongside any further relevant and up-to date information.

274 Wealden District Council Open Space Report: https://www.wealden.gov.uk/UploadedFiles/Wealden-Open-Space-Report-26.05.22.pdf

16.6 Occupancy levels to be used to determine the additional population from a development proposal is provided in the table below.

Table 23 Occupancy Levels per dwelling size

Dwelling Type	Occupancy Rate
1 Bedroom	1.3
2 Bedrooms	1.8
3 Bedrooms	2.5
4 Bedrooms	2.8
5+ Bedrooms	3.1

16.7 Where the size of occupancy is unknown, the additional population can look to be calculated from the number of dwellings expected being multiplied by an average household occupancy rate of 2.4.

16.8 New developments of 10 dwellings or more will need to provide a combined 3.50 hectares per 1,000 population of open space. An equivalent to 35.0 square metres per person. In the first instance, all types of provision should look to be provided as part of new housing developments and accessibility considered accordingly.

Requirement for on-site provision

16.9 Whether provision should be made on-site or via an off-site contribution is dependent on the size of the development. In the case of larger-scale residential developments, it is expected that provision will be provided on-site. Larger residential developments will have a critical mass of population and should provide all types of open space on-site in order to serve the additional population as a result of the development.

16.10 Best practice guidance from organisations like Fields In Trust (FIT), recommends that provision below certain sizes should not be provided as on-site provision and instead provided as off-site contributions. This is to avoid the creation of numerous small sites often of less recreational value (and quality over time). The following minimum area sizes are suggested to help inform when new provision should be provided on-site:

Table 24 Minimum site areas

Open Space Type	Minimum area (hectares)	Warrant on-site provision New population	Warrant on-site provision Average number of dwellings
Multi-Functional Greenspace Amenity/Natural	0.05ha	16	6
Multi-Functional Greenspace Small parks	0.3ha	100	41
Multi-Functional Greenspace Medium parks	1.5ha	500	208
Multi-Functional Greenspace Large parks	3.0	1,000	416
Equipped play provision	0.01ha	40	16
Allotments / community gardens	0.05	200	83

16.11 For MFGS, where generated demand is sufficient, one centrally located large park (c.3 hectares or above) may be preferable in place of several smaller parks. Up to developments of this size (i.e. 416 dwellings as per the table above), MFGS should generally consist of amenity and natural greenspace. This is to avoid potentially providing lots of small parks and garden sites. However, for some developments there may still be instances where on-site provision of a small (0.30 ha) or medium (1.50 ha) size park and garden is warranted. This will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

16.12 Play provision requirements for any development which does not trigger the on-site contribution will generally be sought as off-site contributions. However, if the development is not within reach of an existing play site than on-site provision may be warranted regardless of the small size of the development.

16.13 Consideration for the provision and requirement of allotments or community gardens will need to be on a case-by-case basis.

Accessibility

16.14 Accessibility catchments are a tool to identify communities currently not served by existing facilities. To determine accessibility the concept of ‘effective catchments’ are used, defined as the distance that would be travelled by most users. The accessibility catchments do not consider if a distance is on an incline or decline. They are intended to act as an initial form of analysis to help identify potential gaps.

16.15 The Open Space Report recommends the catchments set out in the table below.

Table 25 Accessibility Catchment Guidelines

Open Space Type	Mode of Travel	Distance Guideline
Park & Gardens	Walk	15 minutes (1,500m)
Park & Gardens	Drive	15 minutes for sites over 5 hectares
Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace	Walk	20 minutes (2,000m)
Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace	Drive	20 minutes for sites over 20 hectares
Amenity Greenspace	Walk	10 minutes (1,000m)
Provision for Children & young people Local Area for Play (LAP)	Walk	1 minute (100m)
Provision for Children & young people Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)	Walk	5 minutes (400m)
Provision for Children & young people Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)	Walk	12 ½ minutes (1,000m)
Provision for children and young people Other provision (e.g., Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), Skate park)	Walk	9 minutes (720m) 15 minutes (1,500m)
Provision for children and young people Skate parks	Drive	12 minutes
Allotment / Community Gardens	Walk	15 minutes (1,500m)


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