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

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PART B

6.0 Gypsy & Traveller Provision

6.1 Policy on traveller sites is set out within the Governments ‘Planning policy for traveller sites’ document, published in August 2015\textsuperscript{5}, together with the relevant policies and guidance from the NPPF and NPPG.

6.2 The Government’s overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. To help achieve this, Government’s aims in respect of traveller sites are:

- that local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning;
- to ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites;
- to encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale;
- that plan-making and decision-taking should protect Green Belt from inappropriate development;
- to promote more private traveller site provision while recognising that there will always be those travellers who cannot provide their own sites;
- that plan-making and decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective;
- for local planning authorities to ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies;
- to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply;
- to reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan-making and planning decisions;
- to enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure; and
- for local planning authorities to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment.

6.3 The Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 identified the need of an additional 23 pitches between 2006 and 2016. The current need stands at 53 pitches. The Government require the Council to consider the need for Gypsy and Traveller sites over a 15 year period and therefore the Council have worked

with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities to identify the need over a longer period and using more up to date information.

6.4 Chapter 10 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation document details the considerations in seeking to develop a strategy and policies regarding Gypsy and Traveller site provision. The Section also contains details of the issues the Council faces in terms of this provision and presents the Option considered. The Options are separated into the provision of pitches required and the location of these pitches.

6.1 Provision of Sites Options

6.1.1 The Options for addressing the provision of pitches are as follows:

- **Option 1** – seek to exceed the permanent pitch requirements for Gypsy and Travellers
- **Option 2** – seek to meet the permanent pitch requirements for Gypsy and Travellers
- **Option 3** – seek to locate a transit site within Wealden District
- **Option 4** – seek to locate an emergency stopping place within Wealden District

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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General Assessment

6.1.2 As can be seen from the assessment the majority of the SA Objectives do not have a direct relationship with any of the Options. This does not mean that effects may not occur, simply that they will not occur as a direct result of the Options.
6.1.3 For those where there are likely effects, these have been assessed as either positive or uncertain at this time and are explained further in under each SA Objective heading.

Environmental SA Objectives (SA1; SA2 and SA9)

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District and SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

6.1.4 None of the Options specify locations or indeed broad areas within which pitches, whether permanent, transit or emergency would be provided and so the effects on SA1 and SA2 are uncertain. The effects will be dependent on location and type of site provision that is needed and this will only become clear from the production of a robust evidence base identifying such elements, which is not yet complete. However, in seeking to exceed the permanent pitch requirement (Option 1) this may introduce a large number of people within close proximity to biodiversity assets as well as protected and locally important landscapes which could have negative visual effects or negative effects as a result of pollution.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

6.1.5 In regards to SA9, the effects are again uncertain as it will depend on the location and type of pitch provision. If existing sites are extended to accommodate the provision requirements then the effects may be positive as the land is already in use and has already been developed. However, particularly in regards to Option 1 there may not be sufficient capacity on existing sites and so new sites, which are likely to be Greenfield, will need to be developed and hence this would exact a negative effect on SA9.

Social SA Objectives (SA13; SA15 and SA16)

SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

6.1.6 For SA13, the effects of Options 1-3 are likely to be positive in that allocating land for permanent pitches or transit sites provides the opportunity for the developer of that site to then provide accommodation for Gypsy and Travellers use. The sites are also likely to be sustainably located in terms of enabling access for services and facilities. This offers much the same benefit to SA13 as allocating sites for market and/or affordable housing.

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health

6.1.7 In regards to SA15, the effects of all the Options are assessed as uncertain due to the fact that it will depend on the location and type of site provided. Positive effects may occur however with sites being located close to health facilities which could be accessed by the occupiers of the Gypsy and...
Traveller sites. Providing pitches in general may also contribute to an enhanced sense of wellbeing for the occupiers.

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

6.1.8 For SA16, the effects of Options 1 and 2 may be positive in that they may help towards the integration of Gypsy and Travellers into local communities through the provision of permanent pitches and hence help build vibrant and inclusive communities, although again this will depend on other factors such as location of sites, capacity of local infrastructure and so on. Due to their ‘temporary’ nature, Options 3 and 4 are unlikely to have any effect on SA16 as those staying on the sites are unlikely to be there for any considerable length of time.

6.2 Location and Delivery of Sites Options

6.2.1 The Options for addressing the location and delivery of Gypsy and Traveller sites are:

- **Option 1** – To retain the criteria contained within the Core Strategy
- **Option 2** – To change the criteria within the Core Strategy
- **Option 3** – To use the criteria within the Core Strategy to assess the suitability of sites
- **Option 4** – To vary the criteria within the Core Strategy for transit or emergency stopping places, to allow flexibility regarding the need to be within close proximity to settlements/public transport
- **Option 5** – To consider a requirement for sites to be provided for in future strategic development sites over a certain size
- **Option 6** – To consider the impacts of allowing sites with temporary planning permission to be made permanent, allowing existing sites which currently don't have consent or extending existing sites
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Location/Delivery Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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### 6.2.2 As can be seen from the assessment the majority of the SA Objectives do not have a direct relationship with any of the Options. This does not mean that effects may not occur, simply that they will not occur as a direct result of the Options.

### 6.2.3 For those where there are likely effects, these have been assessed as either positive or uncertain at this time and are explained further in under each SA Objective heading.

#### Environmental SA Objectives (SA1; SA2; SA7; SA9 and SA10)

**SA1** To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

And

**SA2** Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

### 6.2.4 Options 1 and 3 would likely give positive effects on SA1 and SA2. Option 1 advocates for taking forward the specific criteria listed in the Core Strategy which includes ensuring that internationally and nationally designated landscapes and nature conservation areas are not adversely affected. Therefore taking this forward will only bring positive effects on SA1 and SA2. Option 3 is closely linked to Option 1 in that it seeks to use the criteria listed in the Core Strategy for assessing the suitability of sites for allocation and so by default will offer positive effects on SA1 and SA2. Furthermore, the Core Strategy was examined and found sound by an independent inspector and so the criteria are also deemed a sound basis for site suitability assessment.

### 6.2.5 Options 2; 4 and 5 are assessed as having uncertain effects at this time. Option 2 promotes changing the criteria within the Core Strategy however does not specify these changes. The criteria could be tightened up or relaxed and it would depend on the changes as to the extent and types of
effect, negative and/or positive, on SA1 and SA2. Option 4 advocates varying the criteria within the Core Strategy in relation to transit and emergency sites and again it would depend on the variations as to the type and nature of effect on SA1 and SA2. Option 5 is again assessed as having uncertain effects on SA1 and SA2 as it will depend on where the strategic sites are located and their layout.

SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment.

6.2.6 For SA7, Options 1 and 3 are assessed as having likely positive effects as they seek to use the criteria from the Core Strategy which includes avoiding locations where there is a risk of flooding. However, it does not include reference to measures to reduce flood risk although this is likely to come forward as part of other Local Plan policies and strategies.

6.2.7 Options 2; 4 and 5 are assessed as having uncertain effects on SA7. Again Option 2 would seek to change the criteria but does not stipulate what changes these would be and so any effects, either positive or negative, would be dependent on this. However, it is highly likely that some reference to avoiding flood risk areas would still be included. Option 4 would also depend on the variations made to the criteria as to the magnitude and type of effects but again it is highly likely that reference to avoiding flood risk areas would be made. The same assessment can be made in relation to Option 5.

6.2.8 All of the Options are assessed as having uncertain effects against SA9 due to the fact it will depend on site location and land availability as to whether the best use of previously developed land is made. None of the Options, together with the Core Strategy criteria, stipulate for Greenfield development in regards to Gypsy and Traveller sites and brownfield land would be appropriate as long as it is free from contamination. The Core Strategy criteria do state that sites should be well related to existing settlements and services which could indicate use of previously developed land, but in reality it is likely that Greenfield sites will be the most appropriate and available.

6.2.9 Again all of the Options are assessed as having uncertain effects on SA10 as it will depend on the location of sites. Being well related to existing settlements and thus affording good access to services may encourage more sustainable modes of transport such as walking, but this is uncertain.
Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

**SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces**

6.2.10 For SA12, Options 1 and 3 are likely to have positive effects as the criteria in the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that all new sites for Gypsy and Travellers are located where possible in good proximity to public services and facilities thereby aiming to improve accessibility for the Gypsy and Traveller community. There could be pressure however on local services if mitigation measures are not implemented. For the remaining Options it would depend on the changes/variations made and the location of strategic sites.

**SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home**

6.2.11 In regards to SA13, Options 1; 3 and 5 are all assessed as having positive effects. This is primarily due to the fact that the Options seek to take forward and use the criteria from the Core Strategy policy on Gypsy and Traveller sites (WCS11) as well as seeking to require provision on strategic sites. Aspects of the criteria will provide significant proportional benefits in terms of providing good quality homes through allocating sites in much the same way as allocating for market and affordable housing.

6.2.12 Option 2; 4 and 6 are assessed as having uncertain effects on SA13 as they do not stipulate proposed changes and it would depend on what changes or variations were put forward as to what the likely effects, positive or negative, would be. On the whole they are likely to provide some positive effects though by allocating sites.

**SA14 Improve the level of skills, education and training amongst the population and develop a skilled workforce to support long term economic competiveness**

6.2.13 Although the Options are assessed as having no direct relationship with SA14, it could be argued that by locating sites within close proximity to facilities such as schools will help to encourage and provide opportunities for learning and training and hence the development of a skilled workforce.

**SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health**

6.2.14 Options 1; 3; 4 and 5 may offer positive effects on SA15 if sites are located, as per the Core Strategy criteria, with good access to facilities and services, principally health services. This would also be true of provision on strategic sites which by their nature would be located in close proximity and with good access to all types of services and facilities. Due to the uncertain nature of the rest of the Options, the effects on SA15 cannot be fully determined at this initial stage.
6.2.15 The Options follow the same assessment for SA16 as for SA15 in terms of effects. Options 1; 3; 4 and 5 are likely to result in positive effects on SA16 as social integration is a feature of the criteria within the Core Strategy policy and this is likely to continue regardless of site type. Due regard is had within the criteria to have potential to relate to existing communities thereby providing the potential for social contact.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

6.2.16 None of the Options are concerned with employment land provision or job creation and so have no direct relationship with these Objectives.

6.2.17 The Preferred Option for Testing combines elements from the Provision of Sites Options and the Location and Delivery Options assessed previously and is provided at Chapter 10 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper

**Preferred Option for Testing 7**

6.2.18 In summary the Preferred Option for Gypsy and Traveller provision is:

‘To seek to meet at least the pitch provision requirement and consider any opportunities to exceed. To retain the criteria contained within the Core Strategy. To use the criteria within the Core Strategy to assess sites, but also consider opportunities to require provision on strategic development sites. Consider the impacts of allowing sites with temporary planning permission to be made permanent, allowing existing sites which currently don't have consent or extending existing sites’

**Predicting the effects of the Preferred Option for Testing 7 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

6.2.19 The SA assessments of the Provision of Sites Options and the Location and Delivery Options are applicable to the Preferred Option for Testing and so will not be repeated here. In this regard, the SA assessment carried out for these Options are relevant and should be read in conjunction with this section.

6.2.20 This section will provide a summary, drawing together the relevant commentary from the previous SA assessments, of the likely effects the Preferred Option will have on the SA Framework and Objectives.

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Environmental SA Objectives

6.2.21 In terms of these objectives the Preferred Option has a mixture of positive and uncertain effects. Whilst sites that are important for biodiversity and landscape designations (SA1 and SA2) would not be considered for potential site allocations, there may be proposals for sites within close proximity and it would be up to the promoters of those sites to prove there would be no adverse impact upon the designated sites. Furthermore, the Preferred Option takes forward the criteria from policy WCS11 of the Core Strategy which has landscape impacts (SA3) as a consideration when assessing the suitability of sites for allocation.

6.2.22 Following the criteria, there would be no Gypsy or Traveller sites located within flood risk areas and so the likely effects on SA7 will be positive. However, it should be noted that provision may be needed within these sites for some mitigation measures such as SuDS to ensure that the development does not increase flood risk to another area for example.

6.2.23 As there is no reference to the use of Greenfield sites for provision within the Preferred Option, brownfield sites would be appropriate as long as they are free from contamination and so there are likely to be positive effects on SA9. However, there is a shortage of brownfield land within the District as a whole and if opportunities to exceed the pitch provision requirements are sought, it is likely that Greenfield sites will be needed and so there could be negative effects in relation to SA9 further down the line.

6.2.24 The Preferred Option uses the criteria within the Core Strategy policy and as such requires that sites should be well located in relation to key services and facilities, therefore it should help to ensure that sustainable modes of transport are utilised (SA10). Proximity to the road network however, as a requirement for suitable access, may slightly weaken the positive impacts.

6.2.25 Whilst the remaining environmental SA Objectives are assessed as having neutral effects as a result of the Preferred Option, there may be some ancillary impacts. For example new sites will be accessible for large vehicle movements; by nature of the requirements for the Travelling community therefore in facilitating new sites in areas well related to existing communities there is potential for an increase in traffic movements and potential for increased air pollution (SA8). There is also no provision within the Preferred Option to promote renewable energy opportunities; however a possible measure could be to ensure that the sites were located in positions where they could maximise use of renewable decentralised energy systems such as wind or solar energy (SA11).

Social SA Objectives

6.2.26 Clearly it is the social SA Objectives that will benefit the most from the Preferred Option. Through taking the Core Strategy criteria forward the Preferred Option seeks to ensure that all new sites for Gypsy and Travellers
are located where possible in good proximity to public services and facilities thereby aiming to improve accessibility for them (SA12). This would be particularly true on any strategic sites as these would be in close proximity to existing services as well as potentially providing new services and facilities that the travelling community could access.

6.2.27 SA13 particularly benefits from the Preferred Option as it offers the provision of decent, quality homes for the travelling community on higher quality sites. Whilst having a neutral effect on SA14, it can be argued that ensuring that sites have reasonable access to services such as schools and employment will help to encourage and provide opportunities for learning and training.

6.2.28 As a result of carrying the Core Strategy criteria through, the Preferred Option is likely to have positive effects on the health and wellbeing (SA15) of the travelling community by having to consider to access of any new sites to facilities and this would include access to health facilities, although it could be strengthened by having specific reference to this in the final policy.

6.2.29 In terms of creating vibrant and inclusive communities and reducing social exclusion (SA16) the Preferred Option, by way of using the Core Strategy criteria, has the potential for positive effects through increasing social interaction between the resident communities of the District and the travelling community.

6.2.30 The Preferred Option may lead to a reduction in illegal encampments as well which would help foster better relations between the settled and travelling communities. However there is always the potential for negative effects if development is carried out inappropriately.

**Economic SA Objectives**

6.2.31 There is no direct link between these Objectives and the Preferred Option, for example any sites allocated are unlikely to help stimulate the regeneration of the town centres and the sites are not concerned with creating new job opportunities.
7.0 The Vision

7.1 The vision for the Wealden Local Plan has been created from the strategic preferred options for testing. As such, the assessments of all of the Options and Preferred Options for Testing within this SA Report are relevant to the achievement of the Vision.

7.2 The Local Plan as a whole and the policies it contains will help ensure that the Vision is achieved. It is not necessary to assess the Vision against the SA Objectives as it will be inherently positive due to the fact that the Preferred Options for Testing are its basis.
8.0 Brownfield Land

8.1 Between 2010 and 2014 47% of housing completions have taken place on brownfield land within Wealden. However, brownfield land is becoming scarce within the District and opportunities for site coming forward are limited, hence this high proportion will likely be unsustainable in future years.

8.2 Chapter 13 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue (Issue 9) facing the District in terms of brownfield development and the potential Policy Options (Option 13) to address this.

8.3 The Options are:

- **Option 1** - Allow the redevelopment of all brownfield land across the District, subject to criteria protecting residential amenities and reflecting environmental constraints.

- **Option 2** - Allow the redevelopment of brownfield land across the District, subject to criteria protecting residential amenities and reflecting environmental constraints and ensuring brownfield land is within or adjoining and is accessible by means of public footpath to either a Sustainable Settlement, a Local Settlement or a Neighbourhood Settlement.

- **Option 3** - Require a sequential approach to considering development within Greenfield locations, by requiring an assessment of reasonable brownfield alternatives prior to allowing development on Greenfield development land.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of Brownfield Land Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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<td>Option 3</td>
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8.4 As can be seen in the Table, all of the Options are assessed as having neutral effects, or no direct relationship, with the majority of SA Objectives. This does not mean that there will not be potential effects, but simply that the Options in themselves will not result in direct effects. It is likely that other policies or strategies such as site location; design policies and flood risk mitigation measures will affect the SA Objectives.
Environmental SA Objectives (SA9 and SA10)

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

8.5 For quite obvious reasons SA9 is the only environmental objective likely to be affected by any of the 3 Options and these effects are likely to be positive. This is because all of the Options seek to prioritise the development of Brownfield land first over Greenfield sites, wherever possible.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transport modes (walking, cycling and public transport)

8.6 The effects on SA10 from the Options could generally be assessed as positive although for Options 1 and 3 the effects are less certain as it would depend on the locations of the sites. Option 2 is likely to have significant positive effects on SA10 as it specifically seeks to ensure that the redevelopment of brownfield land is carried out on sites that are in close proximity to sustainable or relatively sustainable settlements and that these sites are accessible to those settlements by public footpath. This will help encourage the travel by cycling and walking in particular.

Social SA Objectives (SA12)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

8.7 SA12 is the only Objective likely to experience effects as a result of the 3 Options as similar to SA10 the effects are likely to be positive but would depend on the location of sites in Options 1 and 3. Option 2 seeks to locate development on brownfield sites close to existing sustainable, and relatively sustainable, settlements with good access by public footpath and so access to services and facilities would be improved for residents.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

8.8 For the economic SA Objectives the effects of the 3 Options are uncertain due to the fact that it would depend on the type of development permitted on brownfield and greenfield sites and not just the location or prioritisation. If sites close to existing sustainable settlements and with good access (Option 2) are allowed employment development then this is likely to have significant positive effects on these SA Objectives in terms of job creation, improving access to jobs and helping to diversify and strengthen the local economy.

Preferred Option for Testing 8

8.1.1 The Preferred Option for Testing for Brownfield Land development takes forward Option 2 above and states that:
With the exception of where permitted development rights apply, allow the redevelopment of brownfield land across the District subject to criteria protecting residential amenities and reflecting environmental constraints. The site should be within or adjoining, and is accessible by means of public footpath, to either a Sustainable Settlement, a Local Settlement or a Neighbourhood Settlement.

Predicting the effects of the Preferred Option for Testing 8 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

8.1.2 The SA assessment of the Brownfield Land Options is applicable to the Preferred Option for Testing 8. In this regard, the SA assessment carried out for this Option is relevant.

8.1.3 This section provides a summary, drawing together the relevant commentary from the previous SA assessment, of the likely effects the Preferred Option will have on the SA Framework and Objectives.

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA9 and SA10)

8.1.4 The Preferred Option has significant positive effects on these SA objectives due to the fact that it seeks to prioritise the development of brownfield sites which are within or adjoin, and have good access by public footpath (or shared surface if appropriate), to more sustainable settlements as contained within the Settlement Hierarchy. This will help encourage more sustainable modes of transport to reach these settlements which will in turn benefit other Objectives such as reducing emissions and ensuring air quality in the District does not deteriorate.

Social SA Objectives (SA12)

8.1.5 In specifying the location of any brownfield site redevelopment as the Preferred Option does, it would ensure that access to services and facilities, and to a degree the countryside and open spaces, is improved particularly through the use of public footpaths. There may also be indirect social benefits as the Preferred Option may help facilitate improved health in the population of the District, current and future, by encouraging more active lifestyles and enabling people to walk or cycle between settlements, services and facilities. It may also help people lead more healthy and active lives.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

8.1.6 The effects of the Preferred Option on these SA Objectives will be dependent not only on the prioritisation and location of brownfield sites for
redevelopment, but also on the type of redevelopment. Having employment provision on sites close to existing sustainable settlements and with good access will help create new employment opportunities within the District as well as improving access as it would bring employment opportunities in close proximity to people and vice versa. There is the potential for significant positive effects on these SA Objectives.
9.0 Development Boundaries

9.1 The Settlement Hierarchy identifies those settlements which are sustainable. Please refer to Section 4.35 of this report to see a list of these settlements.

9.2 Chapter 14 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the Issues to be dealt with in regards to Development Boundaries and sustainable development, together with the reasonable Options considered for policy.

9.3 The Options are divided into two sections; General Options (Option 14) and Determining Development Boundaries Options (Option 15) within the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

9.1 General Options

9.1.1 The General Options for addressing Development Boundaries are:

- **Option 1** - To retain the use of development boundaries in Sustainable Settlements where the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies.

- **Option 2** - To use development boundaries for all settlements, regardless of their sustainability status.

- **Option 3** - To treat the whole of the District as if all locations were sustainable and do not provide development boundaries.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the General Development Boundary Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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9.1.2 As can be seen in the Table, all of the Options are assessed as having neutral effects, or no direct relationship, with the majority of SA Objectives. This does not mean that there will not be potential effects, but simply that the Options in themselves will not result in direct effects. It is likely that other policies or strategies such as site location; design policies and flood risk mitigation measures will affect the SA Objectives.
Environmental SA Objectives (SA2 and SA9)

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

9.1.3 All of the Options have the potential for effects on SA2 but the nature of the effects is uncertain. Options 1 and 2 both seek to retain or use development boundaries but in relation to different settlement types. However, using development boundaries will maintain the principle of sustainable development and may help to focus development which in turn could help conserve the District’s landscape and countryside. In terms of the historic and cultural elements of the District, particularly in the settlements, development boundaries alone will not be sufficient to conserve and enhance these assets and will need to be used in conjunction with other policies such as design to ensure no negative effects occur.

9.1.4 Option 3 would seek to not have any development boundaries and so this would mean all development would come under the area of ‘countryside policies’. On the positive side this would mean developments would face more stringent planning policies and so would help achieve positive effects on SA2, but it would also mean here would be less certainty over where development could go which may result in inappropriate development occurring which would harm the elements contained at SA2.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

9.1.5 For SA9, again all of the Options have the potential for effects, both positive and negative. With development boundaries retained and/or provided at some or all settlements, there is likely to be positive effects in that it is more likely there will be brownfield land within them that could be utilised for development. Without development boundaries it may be the case that more Greenfield sites are utilised for development as there would be a lack of certainty that having development boundaries provides.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes (walking, cycling and public transport)

9.1.6 The use of development boundaries (Options 1 and 2) could help consolidate development within settlements enhancing their sustainability and increasing the services and facilities they offer. This would mean more people would be in close proximity to such services and facilities and with the potential for an improved offer this could minimise journeys and encourage walking and cycling. In this respect there would be positive effects on SA10.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

9.1.7 Similarly to the environmental SA Objectives, all of the Options have the potential for effects on SA17 and SA18 and again the nature of these is uncertain. Having development boundaries and the principle of sustainable
development within them may help create new employment opportunities together with possible regeneration of town centres and diversification of the economy, but this will need to be in combination with other policies in the Local Plan such as site allocations and identifying the employment need.

**Preferred Option for Testing 9**

9.2.1 The Preferred Option takes forward Option 1 above with the additional requirement to take account of other policies within the Local Plan. The Preferred Development Boundary Principle Option is:

‘To use development boundaries to identify the extent of sustainable settlements where the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies, subject to other policies within the Plan particularly regarding design’.

**Predicting the effects of the Preferred Option for Testing (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

9.2.2 The SA assessment of Option 2 previously is applicable to the Preferred Option. This section provides a summary of the SA of the Preferred Option and highlights the likely effects.

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<th>Preferred</th>
<th>SA Objectives</th>
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<td>Option 9</td>
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9.2.3 Again as can be seen from the Table the majority of SA Objectives would experience a neutral effect as a result of the Preferred Option. This does not mean that no effects will occur, simply that they are either dependent on other policies and factors and the Preferred Option will have no direct effect or will cancel each other out in terms of positives and negatives.

**Environmental SA Objectives (SA2; SA4 and SA9-SA10)**

9.2.4 The effects would likely be positive on SA2 due to the fact that using development boundaries will maintain the principle of sustainable development and may help to focus development which in turn could help conserve the Districts landscape and countryside. The addition of being subject to other Plan policies and in particular design, helps achieve overall positive effects as this will help ensure that the historic and cultural elements of the settlements are also conserved and properly taken account of.

9.2.5 The reference to taking account of policies concerning design also provides positive effects on SA4 as this will enable good design criteria to be applied through policies to developments so they can help towards the improvement of the built environment where appropriate and will not detract from the existing. Again however, there are variables that will play a part in determining the nature and magnitude such as location of development, type of development and the environment in which it is situated.
9.2.6 The Preferred Option is likely to have positive effects on SA9 as it focuses development within existing sustainable settlements and the development boundary identifies the area where there is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. By their nature development boundaries are likely to include brownfield land and so will ensure the best use of this resource.

9.2.7 The use of development boundaries could help consolidate development within settlements enhancing their sustainability and increasing the services and facilities they offer. This would mean more people would be in close proximity to such services and facilities and with the potential for an improved offer this could minimise journeys and encourage walking and cycling. In this respect there would be positive effects on SA10. However, again the type and magnitude of any effect would be dependent on other factors as well, particularly the type of development that would be occurring within the development boundary.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

9.2.8 For SA17 and SA18 the effects of the Preferred Option are likely to be uncertain at this time. Having development boundaries and the principle of sustainable development within them may help create new employment opportunities together with possible regeneration of town centres and diversification of the economy. However, this will be dependent to a degree on the type of development that occurs within the boundaries and this will be determined by other Local Plan policies and strategies.

9.3 Determining Development Boundaries Options

9.3.1 The Options for addressing how to determine the development boundaries are:

- **Option 1** - Development boundaries to include the concentration of built environment of the settlement including all gardens and grounds associated with buildings on the edge of the settlement, subject to landscape considerations.

- **Option 2** - Development boundaries to include the concentration of built environment of the settlement including overgrown/ unsightly land uses and redundant buildings on the edge/ close to the edge of the settlement, even if it is defined as Greenfield land, subject to landscape considerations.

- **Option 3** - Development boundaries to include the concentration of built environment of the settlement including brownfield land close to the edge of the settlement, with the associated intervening greenfield land (if it is within the same ownership/ land parcel), subject to landscape considerations.

- **Option 4** - Development boundaries to include the concentration of built environment of the settlement and further small Greenfield land parcels
that facilitate small scale expansion of the area, subject to landscape considerations.

- **Option 5** - Development boundaries to include the concentration of built environment of the settlement, but not to include any land within flood zones 2 and 3 when considering Greenfield land on the edge of the built up area.

- **Option 6** - Subject to landscape considerations, development boundaries to include all land accessible to public transport provision (usually within 800 metres by foot).

- **Option 7** - Development boundaries to include the concentration of built environment of the settlement, and additional land on the edge of the settlement that would be suitable to meet the identified infrastructure needs of the community and safeguard this land.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Determining Development Boundaries Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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9.3.2 From the Table it can be seen that the Options are assessed as having a neutral effect on the majority of the SA Objectives. This does not mean that the potential for effects does not exist but that the Options are unlikely to directly impact on the SA Objectives. The effects may result from other Local Plan policies in combination with the development boundary policy.

**Environmental SA Objectives (SA2; SA9 and SA10)**

**SA2** Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

9.3.3 For SA2 all of the Options have the potential for positive effects except Option 5 and Option 7, which are assessed as uncertain. This is due to the fact that Options 1-4 and Option 6 all include the caveat ‘subject to landscape considerations’ which would mean that the determination of development
boundaries would need to take in to account the potential effects on the landscape. This would indirectly help conserve the District landscape and countryside. The finer detail to allow these considerations would need to be provided in other Local Plan policies and referred to when implementing any development boundary policy.

9.3.4 In addition to the above, having defined development boundaries means that the focus of development will be within the existing settlements or close to them and provide more certainty to developers over potential sites. This in turn could, to a degree, help minimise encroachment into the countryside and landscapes. However, other policies will be needed to account for the conservation of the historic and cultural assets of the Districts settlements when determining development boundaries, such as design and heritage protection.

9.3.5 Options 5 and 7 do not contain reference to landscape considerations and so the effects on SA2 are uncertain and include the same comments in relation to the historic and cultural assets as with Options 1-4 and 6.

SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment.

9.3.6 Option 5 is the only Option to explicitly state that land within flood risk areas will be avoided when considering Greenfield land to be included in development boundaries. In this respect it has a positive effect on SA7. However, although the other Options do not reference flood risk, it is highly likely that this would be a consideration in any development boundary definition as otherwise it would not be in line with the NPPF’s presumption in favour of sustainable development. It makes no sense to potentially allocate land for development under the development boundary principle which is uneconomical to develop due to flood risk.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

9.3.7 For SA9 all of the Options are likely to have a degree of positive effect however, Options 1-3 offer the greatest due to the fact they explicitly include reference to land/buildings that have been previously developed; overgrown and unsightly land-uses and redundant buildings close to the edge/on the edge of the settlement being included in the development boundaries.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes (walking, cycling and public transport)

9.3.8 Again for SA10 all of the Options have the potential for positive effects due to the fact that they would help towards consolidating and providing new development and services within settlements, minimising journey lengths and possibly frequencies as people would be able to access services and facilities closer to them. In particular Option 6 has the potential for significant positive effects as it would include land that is accessible to public transport by foot in
particular within the development boundary. This would mean future development could help encourage the use of public transport and also walking.

Social SA Objectives (SA12)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

9.3.9 Only Options 6 and 7 are assessed as having a direct effect on SA12 and this is likely to be positive. This is due to the fact that Option 6 would ensure that development boundaries, and therefore sustainable development, would be within good access to public transport particularly by foot which could make access to services and facilities for people much easier. Option 7 would include land suitable to meet infrastructure needs of the community which could include improving access also.

Preferred Option for Testing 10

9.4.1 The Preferred Option for Testing combines several of the above Options and states that for development boundaries:

‘Subject to landscape and other environmental considerations such as flood risk, development boundaries to initially include all land accessible to public transport provision (usually within 800 metres by foot). If the concentration of built up area is beyond 800 metres then consider the implications of not including within development boundary. Only in exceptional circumstances should the development boundary exceed the built up area, which may include the inclusion of brownfield opportunities and the incorporation where appropriate of intervening Greenfield land. Any opportunities for housing land created by review of development boundaries will be considered as providing housing to meet the total need as if it were an allocation.’

Predicting the effects of the Preferred Option for Testing 10 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

9.4.2 The SA assessments above are applicable to the Preferred Option. This section provides a summary of the SA of the Preferred Option and highlights the likely effects.

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9.4.3 As a whole the Preferred Option will have positive effects on the SA Objectives although some of these may not be direct.

Environmental SA Objectives
9.4.4 The Preferred Option would have positive effects on SA1 and SA2 not least because the overall strategy for development in the District is a south focus (no significant effect on SA1) but also because it includes the requirement to take account of landscape considerations in the identification of development boundaries and consideration of land/buildings to be included. Of course other Local Plan policies will play their part in combination with the Preferred Option, such as design policies. The Preferred Option would focus development within the existing built up areas and so help conserve the landscape and countryside by limiting encroachment. There is the flexibility, however, within the Preferred Option to incorporate some Greenfield land where appropriate.

9.4.5 Similarly to SA1 and SA2 the effects of the Preferred Option on SA7 are likely to be positive as it states development boundaries should be decided subject to considerations of flood risk. This would indicate that the Preferred Option would avoid flood risk areas but flood risk assessments maybe needed, together with other Local Plan policies to determine land to be included or excluded.

9.4.6 For SA9 the effects are likely to be positive due to the fact that the Preferred Option would include brownfield land beyond the existing built area, however this is only in exceptional circumstances and so the degree of positive effect may be tempered. However, defining development boundaries is likely to be positive overall as in could include land within the existing built up area which hasn't been included before but is classified as brownfield.

**Social SA Objectives (SA12)**

9.4.7 For SA12 the Preferred Option is likely to have positive effects due to its inclusion of all land accessible to public transport. This will enable development to be located in close proximity and with good access by foot and public transport to services, facilities and other settlements.
10.0 Settlements without Development Boundaries

10.1 The Settlement Hierarchy considers all the settlements within the District and in addition to identifying those that are considered ‘Sustainable Settlements’ it identifies two further sub categories, ‘Local Settlements’ and ‘Neighbourhood Settlements’.

10.2 These sub categories have some sustainability attributes but are not considered sustainable for the purposes of the NPPF and the presumption in favour of sustainable development. However, The Government has made it clear that Local Plan Policy should support economic growth to promote a strong and prosperous rural economy. A small amount of economic growth in rural areas could help to make the smaller settlements more sustainable by reducing the need to travel; however, this would need to be offset by the requirement for any new business to service its customers.

10.3 Chapter 15 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be dealt with in regards to unsustainable settlements (Local and Neighbourhood Settlements in the Settlement Hierarchy) and, together with the reasonable Options considered for policy.

10.4 The Options are:

- **Option 1** - Within and adjoining Local and Neighbourhood Settlements, small scale development may make place as long as it is proven to enhance the sustainability of the area by promoting employment opportunities, subject to certain criteria relating to environmental impact and design.

- **Option 2** - Within and adjoining Local and Neighbourhood Settlements market housing will be allowed to facilitate affordable housing to meet the needs of the settlement and the Parish, subject to certain criteria relating to environmental impact and design.

- **Option 3** - Within and adjoining Local and Neighbourhood Settlements housing will be allowed for essential rural workers within the Parish, subject to certain criteria relating to environmental impact and design.

- **Option 4** - Community facilities and other infrastructure can take place within and adjoining all classified settlements within the District, subject to certain criteria concerning the environment and design.

- **Option 5** - Development on brownfield land within and in close proximity to Local, Neighbourhood and Residential Settlements will be supported, subject to certain criteria concerning the environment and design.
• **Option 6** - Within and adjoining the Core Area identified in Local and Neighbourhood Settlements, settlements allocated up to 20 dwellings within the strategic distribution may accommodate small individual housing developments of 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings. Only up to 2 dwellings developments will be allowed up to the number of dwellings identified in the strategic distribution. Permission will be subject to certain design criteria, policies that protect the environment and the prevention of coalescence of new development resulting from the policy.

• **Option 7** - Within and adjoining the Core Area identified in Local and Neighbourhood Settlements, settlements allocated between 21 and 40 dwellings in the strategic distribution may accommodate small individual housing developments of 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings. Only up to 5 dwellings developments will be allowed up to the number of dwellings identified in the strategic distribution. Permission will be subject to certain design criteria, policies that protect the environment and the prevention of coalescence of new development resulting from the policy.

• **Option 8** - Within and adjoining the Core Area identified in Local and Neighbourhood Settlements, settlements allowed between 41 and 50 dwellings in the strategic distribution may accommodate small individual housing developments of 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings. Only up to 10 dwellings developments will be allowed up to the number of dwellings identified in the strategic distribution. Permission will be subject to certain design criteria, policies that protect the environment and the prevention of coalescence of new development resulting from the policy.

• **Option 9** - Instead of housing units being allowed in certain settlements, the emphasis should be on live/ work units.

• **Option 10** - Development within and surrounding Neighbourhood Settlements would not be supported.

• **Option 11** - Development within and surrounding Local Settlements would not be supported.

• **Option 12** - Development within and surrounding Residential Settlements would not be supported.
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Settlements without Development Boundaries Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA2; SA7 and SA9)

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

10.5 All of the Options except Option 9 would have positive effects on SA2 due to the fact they include the caveat that any development within or adjacent to these settlements will be allowed subject to, amongst other criteria, policies which either concern or protect the environment. The nature and magnitude of these effects will be dependent on other Local Plan policies, which will be used in conjunction with whichever Options, or combination Options, is taken forward in regards to settlements without development boundaries.

SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment.

10.6 In terms of SA7, a similar assessment to that of SA2 can be made. Again the effects are likely to be positive as all the Options barring Option 9 contain reference to the protection of the environment. This could include the issue of flood risk. It is likely that other policies within the Local Plan will have more of an effect on the issue of reducing flood risk however; making reference to the environment in these Options highlights its importance. There could be specific mention of avoiding and reducing flood risk it the Option
taken forward for this element of the Local Plan, to strengthen the positive effects in relation to SA7.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

10.7 The majority of the Options are assessed as having uncertain effects against SA9 because they do specifically mention brownfield land but also do not rule its development out within the Local, Neighbourhood and Residential Settlements. Only Option 5 is likely to have a positive effect as it specifically states that development on brownfield land will be supported in relation to the Local, Neighbourhood and Residential Settlements.

Social SA Objectives (SA12; SA13 and SA16)

10.8 All of the Options have the potential for effects on the social SA Objectives and these could be positive and negative. They all seek to provide some element of development, both economic and residential, within those settlements without development boundaries i.e. those not considered sustainable under the NPPF ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. This in turn could help improve a settlements sustainability credentials and hence improve access to services and facilities for the residents. However, if carried out inappropriately there could be negative effects where, for example, a settlement becomes a commuter settlement and attracts no additional infrastructure to service an increased population.

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

10.9 In regards to SA12, Options 1 and 4 are likely to have positive effects. This is due to the fact that Option 1 seeks to make the settlements more sustainable as a result of development and Option 4 seeks to allow community facilities and other infrastructure within all classified settlements. This would mean improved access for the residents with the attraction of new services and facilities including community facilities.

SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

10.10 For SA13, Options 1-3 and Options 6-8 are all likely to have positive effects. They all seek to provide residential development to meet local needs within the Local, Neighbourhood and Residential classified settlements. The provision of affordable housing is specifically sought through Option 2, to meet the local needs of the settlements and Parishes and so is likely to have significant positive effects. Issues of affordability are most prominent in the rural areas and settlements of the District and so these Options would help address this issue as they relate to settlements within the more rural areas of the District. This could indirectly have positive effects on SA15 by improving the wellbeing of residents through affordable housing provision.
SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

10.11 The effects of the Options on SA16 are again mixed but in general positive. Again Options 1-3 and 6-8 are all likely to have significant positive effects through their provision of market and affordable housing developments to meet the local needs of the settlements and Parishes. This in turn could help address the issues of affordability, which are most prevalent in the more rural areas of the District of which the Local, Neighbourhood and Residential settlements are a part, and this in turn could help stem out-migration and maintain vibrant communities. The Options could also help address issues of social exclusion and rural poverty through the provision of affordable housing.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

10.12 Options 1 and 9 are likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as they allow for live/work units to be developed. This means that opportunities for new businesses to locate to these settlements are offered which in turn may improve access to jobs. This will also help support small scale and local businesses through the provision of suitable business premises within close proximity to housing.

10.13 Options 10, 11 and 12 would have negative effects as they would not allow any development to take place around Neighbourhood, Local or Residential settlements.

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

10.14 Options 1 and 9 are likely to have positive effects from the inclusion of live/work units that will help towards the diversification of the rural and local economy of the District. Having the opportunity to locate businesses within these settlements will help enhance the rural economy and increase the vitality of the Districts villages. This in turn will have positive effects on other aspects such as the sense of community and the improvement in people’s general wellbeing

10.15 Options 10, 11 and 12 would have negative effects as they would not allow any development to take place around Neighbourhood, Local or Residential settlements.
Preferred Option for Testing 11

10.16 The Preferred Option for Testing takes forward Options 6-9 above together with Option 12 but adds that community facilities will be allowed where appropriate in regards to Residential Settlements.

10.17 The Preferred Option for Testing is contained in Chapter 15 and states that:

- 'Within and adjoining the Core Area identified in Neighbourhood and Local Settlements, settlements allocated up to 20 dwellings within the strategic distribution may accommodate small individual housing developments of 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings or 1 or 2 bedroom live work units. Only up to 2 dwellings/live work developments will be allowed up to the number of dwellings identified in the strategic distribution. Permission will be subject to certain design criteria, policies that protect the environment and the prevention of coalescence of new development resulting from the policy.

- Within and adjoining the Core Area identified in Neighbourhood and Local Settlements, settlements allocated between 21 and 40 dwellings in the strategic distribution may accommodate small individual housing developments of 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings or 1 or 2 bedroom live work units. Only up to 5 dwellings/live work developments will be allowed up to the number of dwellings identified in the strategic distribution. Permission will be subject to certain design criteria, policies that protect the environment and the prevention of coalescence of new development resulting from the policy.

- Within and adjoining the Core Area identified in Neighbourhood and Local Settlements, settlements allowed between 41 and 50 dwellings in the strategic distribution may accommodate small individual housing developments of 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings or 1 or 2 bedroom live work units. Only up to 10 dwellings/live work developments will be allowed up to the number of dwellings identified in the strategic distribution. Permission will be subject to certain design criteria, policies that protect the environment and the prevention of coalescence of new development resulting from the policy.

- Exceptional circumstances to the number of dwellings per site may exist if development is on brownfield land within or adjoining the Local or Neighbourhood Settlements, subject to criteria regarding design and including suitable densities.

- Development within and surrounding Residential Settlements would not be supported, except the provision of community facilities where appropriate'.
Predicting the effects of the Preferred Option for Testing 11 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

10.18 The SA assessments above are applicable to the Preferred Option. This section provides a summary of the SA of the Preferred Option and highlights the likely effects.

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10.19 As can be seen from the Table, the Preferred Option is assessed as having a neutral effect on the majority of the SA Objectives. This does not mean there is not the potential for effects to occur, merely that they are likely to be as a result of other Local Plan policies interacting with the Preferred Option or arise as an indirect result of the Preferred Option. They cannot be determined at this time. However, the overall effect of the Preferred Option is likely to be positive.

10.20 There may be the potential for negative effects from the Preferred Option in the form of viability issues for developers for example. The limited size of sites and houses may restrict profits for potential developers and also may not fit with land parcels that are submitted for consideration. However, these are not issues that will really affect the SA Objectives; they are more commercial issues but should be borne in mind.

Environmental SA Objectives (SA9)

10.21 In terms of these SA Objectives, the Preferred Option follows the overall distribution strategy and Settlement Hierarchy and so will help towards protecting and enhancing the biodiversity assets of the District together with conserving and enhancing the landscape; countryside; historic and cultural assets.

10.22 SA9 is likely to experience significant positive effects due to the fact that the Preferred Option takes into account the development of brownfield land in ‘unsustainable’ settlements. This will help towards allowing appropriate growth within these settlements to meet local needs and demand.

Social SA Objectives (SA12; SA13; SA15 and SA16)

10.23 The social effects of the Preferred Option are likely to be positive and significantly positive in some respects. For SA12 however, the effects could be positive and/or negative as allowing development within the unsustainable settlements may help them to become more sustainable and hence attract services and facilities and in turn improve access to these for residents. On the other hand allowing development at these settlements could result in an
overwhelming of the infrastructure and hence negative effects. It would depend on the implementation and on other Local Plan policies such as design and infrastructure working in combination with the Preferred Option, which does include reference to other Local Plan policies needing to be taken account of.

10.24 For SA13 the Preferred Option offers significant positive effects. The Preferred Option allows for the growth of unsustainable settlements in a manner that will help meet local needs. Limiting the size of the houses will help towards this by providing low cost housing to those looking to stay within the villages as well as those looking to downsize, which in turn will free up other housing that could meet local needs. Limiting the scale of growth also ensures that growth within these settlements is incremental and is relevant in proportion to the size of the existing settlement.

10.25 The size of housing and scale of growth at these unsustainable settlements will also help improve the health and wellbeing of the resident (SA15) through the provision of decent and low cost housing to meet local needs. Allowing for downsizing also means that people may be able to stay independent in their own homes for longer, particularly if family are also able to remain in the settlement should they wish. This will also have positive effects on SA16 as the Preferred Option helps maintain existing communities whilst offering the opportunity for new residents to locate to the settlements which could help towards creating vibrant and inclusive communities.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

10.26 The Preferred Option is likely to have positive effects on the economic SA Objectives. For SA17 the inclusion of live/work units means that opportunities for new businesses to locate to these settlements are offered which in turn may improve access to jobs. This will also help support small scale and local businesses through the provision of suitable business premises within close proximity to housing.

10.27 In regards to SA18 again the inclusion of live/work units will help towards the diversification of the rural and local economy of the District. Having the opportunity to locate businesses within these settlements will help enhance the rural economy and increase the vitality of the Districts villages. This in turn will have positive effects on other aspects such as the sense of community and the improvement in people’s general wellbeing.

10.28 The small amount of economic growth proposed by the Preferred Option may also benefit SA10 in terms of reducing the need to travel however this would be need to be supported by any new business being able to provide services and facilities to its customers.
Core Areas

10.29 The Wealden Local Plan Issues, Option and Recommendations Consultation paper proposes 26 Core Areas to accompany the Preferred Option for Testing 11 above. These relate to the certain settlements classified as Neighbourhood Centres and Local Centres in the Settlement Hierarchy. The Core Area Maps are contained at Chapter 15 Maps 1 to 26 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Option and Recommendations Consultation paper and comments on them are welcome.

10.30 As for the SA of the approach of defining Core Areas, as it is based on the same principles for each settlement, an overall assessment is provided below for the approach.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of defining Core Areas Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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10.31 As the Core Areas accompany the Preferred Option, they allow for its facilitation and delivery and as such have the same effects as the SA assessment for the Preferred Option for Testing 11. In addition, they have positive effects on SA1 and SA2 as they focus development within the settlements and as such will help towards the protection, enhancement and conservation of the Districts biodiversity; landscape and countryside assets. Design policies will also help towards conserving the historic and cultural elements of these settlements.
11.0 Towns and Village Centres

11.1 Towns and village centres are important to the sustainability of settlements through their provision of a range of services and facilities such as shopping; leisure and culture provision. This is recognised in the NPPF. Changes in shopping habits and the downturn of the market in recent years have led to a change in the nature of towns and village centres and these need to be considered in assessing centres within Wealden and the policies required to support their future vitality, sustainability and unique identity and qualities.

11.2 The Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to address and the Options to potentially achieve it at Chapter 16. The Chapter deals with several aspects of town and village centres and the SA Assessment mirrors this layout:

- Defining the Town and Village Centre Hierarchy
- Town Centre boundaries
- Primary Frontage
- Secondary Frontage
- Primary Shopping Area
- Town Centre
- Retail Allocations

11.1 Defining the Town and Village Centre Hierarchy

11.1.1 The Options for addressing the Town and Village Centre Hierarchy are as follows:

- **Option 1** - Define the centre by the population of the town/village settlement.
- **Option 2** - Define the centre only by the number of A1, A2, A3/A5, and A4 retail uses included within it.
- **Option 3** - Define the centre only by the provision of floor space for A1, A2, A3/A5, and A4 retail uses.
- **Option 4** - Define the centre by the number of A1, A2, A3/A5, A4 retail units and non-retail units (business/employment, residential, social, community, leisure and cultural facilities) which reflect the diversity and potential vitality of the town centre.
- **Option 5** - Define the centre by the accessibility afforded by public transport provision (predominantly bus and train services) and by provision for private vehicle parking.
11.1.2 As the Table shows, the majority of the Options have little or no effect on the SA Objectives as they are not directly related to for example conserving the District landscape or mitigating climate change. However, the approach to town and village centres will be set within the wider strategic approach to development in the District which does take into account such matters and so it is implied that these are inherent in any Options for town and village centres definitions.

11.1.3 Option 1 really does not have any effect on the SA Objectives as it fails to take into account In fact it may result in negative effects, particularly in regards to the economic and social SA Objectives, such as a lack of stimulation for regeneration and a lack of investment.

Environmental SA Objectives (SA10)

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes (walking, cycling and public transport)

11.1.3 The only Option to have a potential effect on the environmental SA Objectives is Option 5 on SA10 as it seeks to define the centres based on their accessibility by public transport, as well as capacity for private vehicle parking. This would help focus development within accessible centres and help to reduce journey lengths and frequencies.

Social SA Objectives (SA12)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

11.1.4 In terms of SA12, Option 1 is likely to have negative effects due to the fact that it does not take into account the nature of the existing offer within town and village centres. Furthermore, a settlement may be very small in terms of its population yet it may provide important services and facilities to a wider area and so to define the centre by means of the population alone would not reflect the importance of the settlement in terms of its role within the
District. This may result in the residents of the settlement having to travel elsewhere within the District to access services and facilities.

11.1.5 The remaining Options seek to define centres in order to focus development and help with the vitality and vibrancy of town and village centres and take into account the use of existing services and facilities to define the centres. However, Options 2 and 3 seek to only define centres using traditional town centre uses and this may have negative effects in respect of SA12 in that residents may be looking for other offers from their town and village centres, such as leisure and cultural facilities. If these are not provided then they may have to travel elsewhere in the District, or outside of it, to access such services.

11.1.6 Option 4 offers more positive effects on SA12 as it seeks to incorporate non-traditional uses as well as traditional uses within town and village centres. This would increase the offer to residents of these settlements, along with visitors, and so will help to improve access to a wide range of services and facilities.

11.1.7 Option 5 offers positive effects in that it would focus development within centres based on their accessibility by public transport as well as parking facilities, which would both help improve access to services and facilities for residents and visitors.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

11.1.8 The whole purpose of defining town and village centres is to ensure their continued vitality, sustainability and unique identity and this includes the economy.

11.1.9 Option 1 again would have likely negative effects on SA17 and SA18 as it would use a settlements population to define the centre which may be out of proportion with the role of the settlement within the District. A settlement may have a small population but a good range of services and be accessible to a wider area which means that defining the centre based on population would not be representative of its role.

**SA17** Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

11.1.10 Option 4 is likely to have positive effects on SA17 as it includes traditional and non-traditional uses to define the centres. This means that it could help facilitate appropriate development to meet the needs of the local economy and the resident population of those settlements.
SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the District’s rural economy, increasing the vitality of the District’s villages and promoting sustainable tourism

11.1.11 For all of the Options, except Option 1, there are likely to be positive effects in respect of SA18 although the magnitude of effect will vary. Options 2 and 3 may not help diversify the local economy as they focus on traditional town centre uses only but could help strengthen the local economy by providing a greater retail offer for example. Option 4 would have more significant positive effects as it takes account of traditional and non-traditional uses, which could lead to greater diversification within the town and village centres. Options 2-5 will all help increase the vitality of the District’s villages and enhance the rural economy.

Preferred Option for Testing 12

11.1.12 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to the Town and Village Centre Hierarchy combines elements of Options 2; 4 and 5 above and is included at Chapter 16 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

11.1.3 The Preferred Option seeks:

“To define the hierarchy of settlements on the basis of the number of retail, non-retail, diversity of uses and accessibility, as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre Categorisation</th>
<th>Draft Description</th>
<th>Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market Town Centre</td>
<td>A Primary Centre with more than 90 units serving a wider area with a good range of convenience and comparison retail provision, banking and post office facilities, leisure (including restaurants), community facilities, and employment opportunities and are accessible by public transport from surrounding areas</td>
<td>Uckfield, Crowborough, Hailsham, and Heathfield,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary District Centre</td>
<td>A centre within a larger settlement comprising between 40 and 90 units and providing a good</td>
<td>Polegate, Wadhurst and Forest Row</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Centre Categorisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre Categorisation</th>
<th>Draft Description</th>
<th>Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Centre</strong></td>
<td>A centre within smaller settlements, or within neighbourhood areas of market towns, comprising of between 10 – 40 units, providing a range of local retail and service facilities and community and leisure facilities.</td>
<td>For example: - Pevensey Bay, Mayfield, Horam, Herstmonceux, Westham, Rotherfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Service Centre</strong></td>
<td>A centre of less than 10 units, that provides a basic range of retail and limited additional facilities</td>
<td>For Example: - Stone Cross, Ninfield, Frant, Hartfield, Groombridge and Buxted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Range of similar facilities to a market town centre - but in more limited numbers.**

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### Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 12 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

| SA Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| **Preferred Option for Testing 12** | 0 | 0 | o | o | o | o | 0 | 0 | + | o | + | o | o | 0 | o | 0 | + | + |

11.1.4 As with the Options previously, the majority of SA Objectives will not be affected by the Preferred Option or the effects will be neutral or will depend on other Local Plan Policies such as design.

**Environmental SA Objectives (SA10)**

11.1.5 In terms of the environment, the Preferred Option is likely to have positive effects on SA10 as it would provide development within areas accessible by public transport as well as helping achieve a focused centre for a diversity of uses which would provide a greater choice for residents and visitors. This could help minimise journey lengths as people would have better access to services and facilities in a focused area.

**Social SA Objectives (SA12)**

11.1.6 Similar to minimising journey lengths, the Preferred Option is likely to have positive effects on SA12 as it will provide a focused centre for all retail
and non-retail use development and hence improve access. This will be
further enhanced through the consideration of accessibility by public transport
to such centres.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

11.1.7 Clearly the economy of the towns and villages will be enhanced
through the Preferred Option and it will also allow for diversity within the
centres through the provision of different uses. This can only help strengthen
the local economies of the towns and villages and help contribute to the
District wide economy. There could also be the creation of new employment
opportunities as a result of the Preferred Option and access to these could be
improved through the consideration of accessibility through public transport.
The regeneration of the town centres is also likely to be achieved with the
Preferred Option providing the impetus and focus.

11.2 Town Centre Boundaries

11.2.1 The NPPF states that in order to plan positively for a town centre, and
its resulting policies, Local Planning Authorities should define the extent of the
town centre, and identify primary and secondary shopping frontages as well
as the primary shopping area.

11.2.2 Chapter 16, Issue 14 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and
Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be addressed and
the Options for addressing it.

11.2.3 The General Options for defining the town and village centre
boundaries are:

- **Option 1** - Town and village centre boundaries to be tightly drawn and
  include retail uses only.

- **Option 2** - Town and village centre boundaries to include retail and
  non-retail uses (business, residential, community, leisure, cultural etc.)

- **Option 3** - Town and village centre boundaries to include retail, and
  non-retail uses, car parking or other facilities associated with the
  functions of the town centre

- **Option 4** - Town and village centre boundaries to be expanded, where
  land or opportunities may make this possible, to include retail, non-
  retail uses, car parking and other facilities and any land adjacent to the
town centre area which might be used for future expansion of the town
  or village centre
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the General town and village centre boundaries Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA Objectives</th>
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11.2.4 Most of the Options are assessed as having neutral effects on the majority of SA Objectives as they will not directly impact on them.

Environmental SA Objectives (SA2 and SA9)

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

11.2.5 Option 4 is the only one that is assessed as having any kind of effect on the environmental SA Objectives. For SA2 the effects are uncertain at this time due to the fact that Option 4 would seek to expand town and village boundaries and include land adjacent to these that may be used for future expansion. This could have an impact on the District’s landscape and countryside if it is located within a settlement close to such assets. This is because land could be important to the setting of the landscape/countryside; access or have historical or cultural links. These factors would need to be taken into account when deciding what land to include, particularly if it is previously undeveloped land i.e. Greenfield. However, it does not mean that there would be negative effects, but other relevant Local Plan policies would need to be taken into account.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

11.2.6 For SA9 the effects of Option 4 are likely to be positive in that the land to be included adjacent to the town centre area may be previously developed and hence good for future expansion of the town centre. This would focus development away from more Greenfield sites.

Social SA Objectives

11.2.7 Although the SA assesses neutral/no effects on these Objectives from any of the Options, on the whole the definition of town and village centre boundaries is likely to have some degree of positive social effect in that it will help ensure the vitality and vibrancy of the town and village centres.
Economic SA Objectives (SA18)

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

11.2.8 SA18 is likely to experience positive effects from Options 2-4 due to the fact they seek to include a diversity of uses within the town and village centre boundaries which will help strengthen the local economy and increase the vitality of the Districts settlements. They may also help stimulate regeneration of town centres through the attraction of new uses and businesses. Option 1 is very restrictive in its definition and would not account for the changes in town centre habits of people such as internet shopping which means just focusing on traditional retail uses to define the centres may mean missing out on opportunities to diversify the offer.

11.3 Primary Frontage

11.3.1 Primary frontages are identified as those areas with a high proportion of retail uses and in line with the definitions in the National Planning Policy Framework. Chapter 16, Paragraph 16.28 details the methodology used for the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper in defining primary frontages in the Districts centres.

11.3.2 The Options considered for defining Primary Frontages are:

- **Option 1** - A frontage that contains a high proportion of A1 uses
- **Option 2** - A frontage which does not necessarily contain a high proportion of A1 uses but is located in close proximity to the main shopping areas or between other primary shopping frontages.
- **Option 3** - Where a predominantly A1 or A class shopping frontage is broken up by other uses such as, for example, a church, health centre etc. and the primary shopping frontage continues beyond this use, the frontage is shown as primary frontage.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Primary Frontage Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1  2  3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Option 1</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Option 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Option 3</strong></td>
<td>o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  ?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
11.3.3 Clearly the Options here related to a very narrow policy topic area and as such are only assessed as having an effect on the economic SA Objectives directly. This does not mean that other effects on other SA Objective will not occur, but they will not be as a direct result of the Options.

**Economic SA Objectives**

**SA18** Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

11.3.4 The purpose of defining primary shopping frontages is to enable a Local Authority to plan positively for a town or village centre, a requirement of the NPPF. As such, Option 1 is likely to have positive effects as it would provide a clear policy to define a primary shopping area as that where the predominant use is retail A1. This could have positive impacts on this SA Objective as it would provide a clear focus for retail development proposals and could also provide a robust basis upon which to resist any loss of A1 to another use. However, it could have negative effects in that it may not offer the flexibility for other uses to be introduced that may help with regeneration efforts particularly if for example a village centre is small.

11.3.5 Option 2 may have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would define a primary shopping frontage more broadly which could allow for dome diversification within that frontage which may help with regeneration efforts. However, there may also be negative effects in that without a predominantly high proportion of A1 uses it may be more difficult to resist the loss of such units to other uses which could adversely affect the retail offer in settlements, particularly smaller rural villages. This may lead to them becoming less sustainable.

11.3.6 Option 3 would offer positive effects in that it would provide a clear direction for the location of retail frontages and hence uses but would combine this with a wider variety of uses which could ensure active frontages are maintained and help with regeneration efforts.

11.3.7 All of the Options would be enacted in conjunction with any policy to address town and village centre boundaries as well as primary shopping areas and so the SA Assessments for these should be read in conjunction with this assessment of the primary frontages.

**11.4 Secondary Frontages**

11.4.1 Secondary Frontages are generally identified as those frontages which include a more diverse range of uses. Chapter 16, Option 20 contains the Options considered for defining secondary frontages and these are:
- **Option 1** - Those frontages which include a more diverse range of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses, and less ‘A’ class uses.

- **Option 2** - Frontages which tend to be towards the periphery of the primary shopping areas

- **Option 3** - Frontages in areas where A1 retail units are generally separated from the main concentration of A1 shopping uses either on the periphery of the primary shopping area or outside of the primary shopping area, even where they represent a use (such as a supermarket) where the draw and footfall may be considerable.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Secondary Frontages Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA Objectives</th>
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<td><strong>Option 1</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Option 3</strong></td>
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</table>

11.4.2 As with the primary frontages, the secondary frontage Options also focus on a narrow policy area and as such are only assessed as having an effect on the social and economic SA Objectives directly. This does not mean that other effects on other SA Objective will not occur, but they will not be as a direct result of the Options.

**Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)**

**SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces**

11.4.3 Option 1 would have likely positive effects on this SA Objective as it includes a diverse range of uses within the frontage which would give people greater access to a range of services and facilities within the town and village centre boundaries. However, this would depend on where the frontage was located in relation to any sustainable transport modes.

11.4.4 Option 2 is assessed as having a uncertain effect as it would place the frontages on the periphery of the primary shopping area and as such people may not have great access to the services and facilities it offers. Again this would depend on the exact location of the frontage.

11.4.5 Option 3 may have positive effects on this SA Objective because it would define secondary frontages in areas where footfall and draw may be
considerable and as such this would mean access to a wide range of services and facilities for people.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

11.4.6 Option 1 would likely have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would define a frontage with a variety of uses within it and hence provide a positive framework. The Option would give good direction to potential development of where their uses may be acceptable in terms of the town and village centres which in turn could help with the regeneration of those centres and the diversification of the service offer. This would particularly help support the rural economy.

11.4.7 Option 2 may have positive effects for the same reasons as Option 1; however the regeneration benefits and support for the local economy may be affected if the frontage is too far out from the primary shopping area to have an influence.

11.4.8 Option 3 may have positive effects for similar reasoning to Option 1 and 2. However, additional benefits may arise as the Option would enable the protection of A1 uses that are not necessarily related to the Primary Shopping Area but are an important asset for the settlement within which they are located.

11.5 Primary Shopping Area

11.5.1 The primary shopping area is defined in the NPPF as the area where retail development is concentrated. In addition to this basic definition, a number of aspects were also considered in relation to the definition of Primary Shopping Areas. Chapter 16, Option 19 contains the Options considered for defining the primary shopping area and these are:

- **Option 1** – Car parking areas attached to large retail outlets within the primary shopping area, are also included within the primary shopping area.

- **Option 2** - Other car parks which are very central and are predominantly shoppers’ car parks are also included within the primary shopping area.

- **Option 3** - The primary shopping area includes those areas which are regarded to be the most centrally located and attract the greatest footfall within the centre.
• **Option 4** - Where non A1 uses are located adjacent to areas where retail development is concentrated then these are included within the primary shopping area.

• **Option 5** - Primary Shopping areas don't necessarily include all A1 uses or other town centre uses.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Primary Shopping Area Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA Objectives</th>
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<tr>
<td>Option 1</td>
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<td>Option 2</td>
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<td>Option 3</td>
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<td>Option 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Option 5</td>
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</table>

**Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)**

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

11.5.2 Options 1 to 3 are assessed as having positive effects on this SA Objective due to the fact that they would all provide some degree and form of protection to access to the Primary Shopping Areas of the towns and villages.

11.5.3 Including car parks within the definition (Options 1 and 2) would help ensure that there are areas to park for people in order to access the services and facilities of the Primary Shopping Area. This may conflict with the Objective of encouraging more sustainable transport use however and encourage people to use their cars.

11.5.4 Option 3 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would define the Primary Shopping Area as that which is most centrally located and hence accessible. This could also help achieve a shift towards the use of more sustainable transport modes such as the bus provided improvements to the public transport network in the District is also followed.
Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the District’s rural economy, increasing the vitality of the District’s villages and promoting sustainable tourism

11.5.5 Options 3-4 are assessed as having positive effects on this SA Objective due to the fact that they would all provide a clearly defined Primary Shopping Area which would give a good sense of where retail and other town centre use proposals would be accepted and also a robust basis upon which to resist changes of use to residential for example. These Options would help support the local economy and more importantly the rural economy through the positive approach to retail development and protection.

11.5.6 Options 4 and 5 would also allow for diversification within the Primary Shopping Area as its definition would include non-A1 uses as well. However, care would be needed in regards to these two Options if taken forward so as to ensure that the fundamental A1 environment is not lost.

11.6 Town and Village Centres

11.6.1 Leading on from the hierarchy, primary and secondary frontages and primary shopping areas, the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Option and Recommendations Consultation Paper puts forward several Preferred Options for Testing in regards to the Town Centres of several settlements. These are contained in Chapter 16 of the Consultation paper and will be assessed in the subsequent sections.

11.6.2 As such the SA Assessment for the Preferred Option for Testing in relation to Defining the Town and Village Centre Hierarchy; and the SA assessments of the Options for Town Centre Boundaries; Primary Frontages; Secondary Frontages and Primary Shopping Areas are applicable.

Uckfield

11.6.3 Please refer to Map 28 in the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Option and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

Preferred Option for Testing 13

11.6.4 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Uckfield Town Centre is contained within Chapter 16 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

11.6.5 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Town Centre boundary to include the High Street from just south of Norfolk Way on the West and Bedford Place to the West of the High Street, to the
Railway line in the south. To the west the boundary of the town centre will extend to include Bell walk, the eastern part of Bell Lane (including parts of the Bell Lane industrial estate/retail Park, the allotments, the Fire Station, and Tesco superstore and car park) and extend to Belmont Road in the west, incorporating all land around the Civic centre, Luxford Fields and adjoining car park areas to the rear of the High Street and Church Street. To the east the town centre boundary will extend to the rear of the Waitrose Car Park and include all land within the boundaries of properties on the eastern side of the High Street, and office and retail buildings to the rear of the High Street.

The Primary Frontages are defined along the length of the High Street between Church Street and the railway line. Both Church Street and the railway line represent perceived barriers within the shopping centres and they help to define different areas which have different characteristics within the town centre. Bell Walk at the south of the High Street is also a Primary Frontage.

The Secondary Frontages are defined in areas to the north of Church Street and Hempstead Road.

The Primary Shopping area encompasses the High Street up to Church Street/Hempstead Road and the areas around Bell Lane and Bell Walk at the south of the High Street.

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 13 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

| SA Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| **Preferred Option for Testing 13** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | 0 | + | + | + |

**Environmental SA Objectives**

11.6.6 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Uckfield Town Centre are unlikely to have a direct relationship on most of these SA Objectives. There may be some potential conflict with SA1 in terms of the Ashdown Forest and air quality as the proposals may lead to an increase in traffic on the roads if the town centre and its uses expand. However, this is a common issue raised with potential growth anywhere in the District and the overall Preferred Option for Testing in relation to Strategic Growth seeks to avoid any negative impacts on the Ashdown Forest.

**Social SA Objectives**

11.6.7 The policy approach here in relation to the primary shopping areas would consolidate the main town centre area and could lead to improvements to public transport and access to services and facilities for people. However
there could be highways issues that arise from any potential development proposals.

11.6.8 In terms of community cohesion and vibrancy, the approach will help reshape and refocus the town centre which could enable change in line with any local masterplan. The production of a masterplan could enable the engagement of the local community in shaping its town centre giving them a sense of ownership.

**Economic SA Objectives**

11.6.9 It is these Objectives upon which the policy approach is likely to have the most impact. The proposed town centre boundary includes land for town centre expansion which could provide additional employment land and employment opportunities in the future, through retail allocations as well as other commercial uses. The policy approach also contains the flexibility to allow other town centre uses within the areas defined which could help diversify the offer within the town and attract inward investment which would support the local economy. The policy approach may allow more speciality retail along the High Street which could help with regeneration of the town centre in Uckfield. At present Uckfield has a vibrant town centre and this policy approach could enhance this further.

11.6.10 However, the proposed town centre boundary may skew the focus of the town centre away to the west and this could raise issues with regards to access and also to issues of viability within the existing town centre. It may take uses away which could be detrimental to the existing town centre. Better pedestrian links within this area would help address this issue.

**Hailsham**

11.6.11 Please refer to Map 29 in the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Option and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

**Preferred Option for Testing 14**

11.6.12 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Hailsham Town Centre is contained within Chapter 16 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

11.6.13 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘The Town Centre Boundary for Hailsham Town Centre extends from and includes all areas bounded by The Cuckoo trail to the north-west of North Street, up to Eastwell Place and the London Road/Battle Road Junction, Vicarage Lane including the District Council Offices, Leisure Centre and associated car parking areas, Telephone Exchange and The Seaforth Doctors Surgery, Vicarage Road/Market street including the Market Yard and properties to the west of the Market Yard, properties to the western side of George Street, part of Station Road including Station Road car park and part
of Victoria Road including the Police Station, Fire Station and car parking areas, South Road including the properties either side of the road, down to an including the Petrol station, the green triangle, Ropemakers Park and part of the eastern end of Diplocks Industrial estate.

Primary Frontages have been defined along both sides of the High Street below the North Street/High Street/Vicarage Lane junction and includes the heart of the town centre around the Quentins and Vicarage Field shopping areas as well as the mews development of St Mary’s Walk.

Secondary Frontages are shown along the northern section of the High Street north of the North Street/High Street/Vicarage Lane junction, the northern part of North Street (including Tesco and Prezzo), the western side of the southern part of North Street, along Market Street and George Street and the George Street/Station Road corner.

The Primary Shopping Area has been drawn to encompass the Primary Frontages and service/car parking areas behind the High Street, as well as the Secondary Frontages along the northern part of North Street and the eastern end of George Street/Market Street.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 14 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

| SA Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
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Environmental SA Objectives

11.6.14 Environmentally, the Preferred Option for Testing is unlikely to have any direct effect on most of these SA Objectives, provided issues of surface water runoff and drainage are addressed in relation to the Pevensey Levels.

Social SA Objectives

11.6.15 The policy approach will help consolidate the existing main town centre area and the town centre boundary will help to provide opportunities for a range of additional retail and non-retail uses close to the main town centre area, all of which will help facilitate improved access to services and facilities for people. However, at present there are issues with infrastructure within the town centre, particularly the road network which would need to be addressed if access is to be improved. Furthermore if there is a net loss in surface parking within the town centre this could have negative effects on access, however improvements to pedestrian access that perhaps utilises the Cuckoo Trail could mitigate this impact together with improvements to public transport.
and the road network in general. The town is well served by bus routes at present which provides sustainable transport and could help facilitate access.

**Economic SA Objectives**

11.6.16 The proposed town centre boundary will provide opportunities for a range of retail units to be provided within the town which will provide some employment opportunities.

11.6.17 The policy approach will help improve the vitality of the town centre through the provision of a greater range and variety of services and facilities with opportunities for small scale speciality retail development. The policy approach also allows for leisure and night time economy uses to be provided which again will help with the vibrancy of the town centre as well as offering diversification. All of this will help support the local economy in Hailsham as well as contributing towards the regeneration of the town centre.

11.6.18 However, there should be caution as the policy approach may lead to expansion away from the main town centre which may not aid the regeneration efforts as uses would be too far out from the main centre.

**Crowborough**

11.6.19 Please refer to Map 30 in the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Option and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

**Preferred Option for Testing 15**

11.6.20 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Crowborough Town Centre is contained within Chapter 16 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

11.6.21 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

The town centre boundary for Crowborough extends from the Mill Lane/Beacon Road Junction north-eastwards towards the Beacon Road/High Street/St John's Road crossroads (The Cross) and includes the small retail area along St John's Road, all properties to the east of the High Street down to the Broadway as far as the Town Council offices, follows the rear boundary of properties to the east of Croft Road down to opposite the end of the Waitrose Car Park, follows the boundary between the Waitrose car park and the woodland area, along Pine Grove to Mill Lane. The area includes the Waitrose and Morrisons supermarkets, the Fernbank Centre, the Pine Grove office building, the community centre, old people's home, the Fire Station and buildings along the south side of Beacon Road, the High Street, Croft Road and The Broadway.

The Primary Frontage has been influenced by the presence of the busy A26
Beacon Road to the north of the High Street, which acts as a perceived barrier to pedestrian movement. For this reason, Primary Frontage is defined as frontages along the High Street to the south of Beacon Road.

Frontages on the east side of Broadway, have been defined as being a Secondary Frontage as, although they do include town centre uses, they include few retail uses as such and are considered to be perceived to be separated from the centre of the shopping area.

The Primary Shopping Area includes those areas where Primary Frontages have been defined, as well as the Secondary Frontages along the Broadway and Croft Road. Supermarkets adjacent to the Primary Frontages have been included within the Primary Shopping Area. Secondary Frontages along London Road to the north of the Crowborough Cross have also been excluded from the Primary Shopping area, due to the accessibility and severance issues caused by the A26 Beacon Road. The supermarket located along Beacon Road, however, which is not adjacent to either primary or secondary frontages, is not included within the primary shopping area as it is considered to be geographically separated from the primary shopping area.

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 15 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

| SA Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
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| Preferred Option for Testing 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | +  | ?  |

**Environmental SA Objectives**

11.6.22 The Preferred Option for Testing is unlikely to have any direct effect on these SA Objectives. It is acknowledged that any increase in retail or town centre uses could lead to an increase in traffic on the road network which could in turn have negative effects in terms of the Ashdown Forest. However, the overall Preferred Option for Testing for Strategic Development within the District seeks to avoid any impacts on the Ashdown Forest as a result of any development.

**Social SA Objectives**

11.6.23 The Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have a positive effect in terms of improving access to services and facilities within the town centre. The policy approach has ensured it has taken into account the severance issues of the A26 when defining the primary shopping area and so will facilitate ease of access to the town centre and retail offer particularly by addressing issues of barriers to pedestrian access.
11.6.24 The free car parking offered in the town provides good access for those with a car; however it may conflict with the environmental objectives of reducing emissions and encouraging more sustainable transport modes.

**Economic SA Objectives**

11.6.25 The policy approach includes land at Pine Grove which could enable further town centre expansion which in turn could provide new employment opportunities, particularly if a range of services and facilities is allowed to develop such as community and business uses. These could also help achieve some social objectives. The primary frontage provides a focus for retail development and a clear steer towards potential development as well as a robust basis on which to resist loss of A1. This will all help with regeneration efforts in the town and help strengthen the local economy.

**Heathfield**

11.6.26 Please refer to Map 31 in the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Option and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

**Preferred Option for Testing 16**

11.6.27 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Heathfield Town Centre is contained within Chapter 16 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

11.6.28 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

The town centre boundary for Heathfield extends from the Youth Centre at the western end of the High Street, along the rear of properties to the north of the High Street including the Co-op supermarket and car park, up to The Parade to the eastern end of the High Street. The town centre boundary follows the boundaries of properties to the east of Station Road, including the Sainsbury supermarket, telephone exchange and adjoining car parking areas, follows the boundaries of properties to the south of Station Approach, along the edge of the old railway tunnel and along the boundaries of properties to the south of the High Street towards Tilsmore Road/Mill Road, including the Fire Station and Mill Road car park to the west.

The Primary Frontage has been defined as all retail frontages to the north of the High Street from the Co-op Supermarket to New Parade, and along the south of the High Street from Kensington’s electrical store at the corner of the High Street and Tilsmore Road, to the Union Church at the High Street/Station Road Junction. Both sides of Station Road have also been defined as Primary Frontages, down to the Sainsbury supermarket on the eastern side and the Tesco metro store on the western side.

Secondary Frontages have been defined along the southern side of the eastern end of the High Street, where the Library and Post Office Sorting Office are located, due to the nature of uses in this part of the High Street.
The shops to the western side of Station Approach off Station Road are also designated as Secondary Frontages.

The Primary Shopping Area has been drawn to encompass all of the primary and secondary frontages, as well as the supermarket and car parking areas adjacent to the High Street.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 16 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

11.6.29 There is the potential for the Preferred Option for Testing to conflict with the conservation of the countryside objective due to the fact that the town is tightly constrained by the High Weald AONB. Any potential development could have adverse impacts on the setting of the AONB and so careful consideration of proposals would be needed. However as a result of this constraint, likely further town centre development will be in the form of the redevelopment of existing sites and so this may go some way to ensuring negative effects are minimised.

Social SA Objectives

11.6.30 The policy approach could have positive and negative effects in terms of access to services and facilities. The constraint of the AONB means that any potential future town centre development is likely to take place as redevelopment of existing sites or as development on existing surface car parking, which would result in a net loss of parking provision. Whilst this would affect access to the facilities and services of the town centre by car it may provide the opportunity to improve public transport, cycle and footpath links to encourage people to use more sustainable transport modes.

11.6.31 In addition to the above, Heathfield is already tightly constrained and so the town centre is also tightly defined. This would mean that new town centre development would be in close proximity to existing services and facilities which would enhance access further as everything would be in close proximity to each other.

Economic SA Objectives

11.6.32 The tight constraint of the AONB means that there is limited potential for expansion of the town centre and hence new employment.
opportunities. Redevelopment potential may provide some new employment opportunities but these are likely to be limited.

11.6.33 The policy approach does however indicate the likely attributes of the town centre and so will help guide development which will support the continued vitality and vibrancy of the town centre.

**Polegate**

11.6.34 Please refer to Map 32 in the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Option and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

**Preferred Option for Testing 17**

11.6.35 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Polegate Town Centre is contained within Chapter 16 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

11.6.36 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

The boundary of Polegate Town Centre follows the rear boundaries of properties on either side of the High Street from the parade to the north of the High Street along Station Road, to the south of the Railway down to St John's Road. It also incorporates the Station, station car park and shopper’s car park to the east of the High Street.

Primary Frontages have been defined along both sides of the central section of the High Street, including the Mall.

Secondary Frontages have been defined along both sides of the northern part of the High Street and a small parade along Station Road. Secondary Frontages also exist to the south of the High Street, on the western side north of Old Drive.

The Primary Shopping area includes the Primary Frontages and the Secondary Frontages to the north of the High Street but not the Secondary Frontages north of Old Drive, which are considered to be detached from the main shopping area. The shopping area includes service and parking areas where these are contiguous with the High Street retail.

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 17 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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Social SA Objectives

11.6.37 The Preferred Option for Testing will have positive effects in terms of access to the town centre as it safeguards the limited car parking available within Polegate by incorporating it into the primary shopping area. This may conflict with the objectives to lower emissions and encourage more sustainable transport modes, however Polegate town centre is served by 8 bus routes and has a rail link in the centre of the High Street and parking is limited anyway.

Economic SA Objectives

11.6.38 In economic terms the policy approach is unlikely to provide significant employment land potential however there is likely to be small redevelopment opportunities that could provide employment. In addition, the definition of the primary and secondary frontages along with the primary shopping area provides a clear policy framework for future retail and town centre use provision which can help direct development and hence support the vitality of the town centre, whilst also providing some flexibility to the provision of uses which could help diversify the local economy.

Wadhurst

11.6.39 Please refer to Map 33 in the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Option and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

Preferred Option for Testing 18

11.6.40 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Wadhurst Village Centre is contained within Chapter 16 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

11.6.41 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘The Village Centre boundary for Wadhurst includes land up to Hillside Cottages on the southern side of the High Street to the west, and follows the rear boundaries of properties fronting onto the High Street, to the rear of the small car parking area off Washwell Lane. The boundary continues to the rear of properties to the east of Washwell Road, down as far as The Square and the Greyhound PH. Continuing across the High Street opposite the Greyhound PH, the boundary follows the rear of properties to the north of Church Street and the High Street, up to and including the Old Vicarage and Vicarage to the western end of the High Street.

The western end of the High Street includes a mix of uses and not necessarily predominantly A1 uses, but because of the smaller nature of the settlement, all of the shopping frontages are designated as Primary Frontage.

No Secondary Frontages have been identified.
The Primary Shopping area includes the Primary Frontages, associated land to the rear of frontages and available car parking provision’.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 18 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

11.6.42 The Preferred Option for Testing has the potential to conflict with the conservation of the countryside and landscape due to the fact that the village is within the High Weald AONB. Any potential development could have adverse impacts on the AONB. However, other Local Plan policies, such as those on landscape and design, will help ensure negative effects of any development are avoided or at least mitigated. In addition there is limited scope for expansion of the town centre in Wadhurst.

Social SA Objectives

11.6.43 The Preferred Option for Testing will have positive effects in terms of access to the town centre as it safeguards the limited car parking available within Wadhurst by incorporating it into the primary shopping area. This may conflict with the objectives to lower emissions and encourage more sustainable transport modes, however Wadhurst is served by 2 bus routes and has a rail link and parking is limited in any case.

Economic SA Objectives

11.6.44 In economic terms the policy approach is likely to have positive effects, although it is unlikely to provide any significant development opportunities for new retail or village centre uses within the village centre boundary as this is tightly drawn. There may be opportunities through redevelopment of existing parts of the High Street which could help provide positive effects on the vitality and vibrancy of the village centre. The policy approach does identify the key attributes of the village and hence will help guide appropriate development to ensure the continued vitality of the village centre and to support the local economy.
**Forest Row**

11.6.45 Please refer to Map 34 in the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Option and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

**Preferred Option for Testing 19**

11.6.46 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Forest Row Village Centre is contained within Chapter 16 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

11.6.47 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘The boundary of the Village Centre extends from the edge of the built up area along Lewes Road to the north, along the rear boundaries of properties fronting the western side of Lewes Road down to the junction with Priory Road, then follows the rear of properties to the south of the junction, to include the church, Health Centre and properties down to the Vicarage at Gilham Lane. On the eastern side of Lewes Road, the boundary extends from the edge of the built up area along Lewes Road to the north, along the rear boundaries of properties to the east of Lewes Road, extends down Lower Road to include the Medway buildings and car park of the Forester Arms PH along Hartfield Road. Crossing the Road, the boundary follows along the rear of Newlands Place, and adjacent premises to the junction with Lewes Road.

Primary Frontages have been defined along Lewes Road, Hillside, and the north-eastern side of Hartfield Road.

Buildings at the northern end of Hartfield Road and the northern end of Lewes Road have been defined as Secondary Frontages due to the fact that the premises are used for office and service industry use. Units 20-28 Hartfield Road include a high proportion of A1 use; however, they are considered to be in a peripheral location and therefore are classified as a Secondary Frontages.

The Primary Shopping Area includes the Primary and Secondary Frontages, as well as associated land to the rear of these frontages and any available car parking areas’.

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 19 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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Environmental SA Objectives

11.6.48 The Preferred Option for Testing has the potential to conflict with the conservation of the countryside and landscape as well as the objective to protect biodiversity due to the fact that the village is within the High Weald AONB and in close proximity to the Ashdown Forest. Any potential development could have adverse impacts on the AONB and the Ashdown Forest. However, other Local Plan policies, such as those on landscape, the Ashdown Forest and design, will help ensure negative effects of any development are avoided or at least mitigated.

11.6.49 Furthermore the policy approach to strategic development within the District seeks to avoid any potential impacts on the Ashdown Forest as a result of development and growth.

Social SA Objectives

11.6.50 The Preferred Option for Testing will have positive effects in terms of access to the town centre as it safeguards the limited car parking available within Forest Row by incorporating it into the primary shopping area. This may conflict with the objectives to lower emissions and encourage more sustainable transport modes; however Forest Row is served by 3 bus routes.

Economic SA Objectives

11.6.51 In economic terms the policy approach is likely to have positive effects, although it is unlikely to provide any significant development opportunities for new retail or village centre uses within the village centre boundary as this is tightly drawn. There may be opportunities through redevelopment of larger sites on the periphery of the Lewes Road area, which is included as a part of the defined primary shopping area and could help provide positive effects on the vitality and vibrancy of the village centre. The policy approach does identify the key attributes of the village and hence will help guide appropriate development to ensure the continued vitality of the village centre and to support the local economy.

11.6.52 Furthermore, the primary shopping area includes all the secondary frontages which include office and service industry uses and so this could help diversify the offer within the village and support the local economy.

11.7 Change of Use in Town Centres

11.7.1 As a result of changes to the Use Classes Order, it is now possible to change the use from A1 (shops) to A2 (financial and professional services) or A3 (restaurants and cafes up to 150 m²) as well as to D2 (Assembly and leisure uses e.g. Cinemas, bingo halls, swimming pools etc. - up to 200 m² if in A1 use on 5/12/13) and C3 (housing – if the cumulative floorspace of the building is under 150 m²). This means that there is considerable scope for
change from shopping to other uses, which could have positive and negative impacts upon the vitality of a town centre.

11.7.2 The Options considered for addressing change of use in Town centres are:

- **Option 1** - A Policy to restrict changes from A1 (Shop) use to A3 (Restaurants and Cafés) above 150 m², to D2 (Assembly and Leisure) above 200m² or to C3 (Dwelling houses) where the cumulative floorspace of the building is under 150m².

- **Option 2** - A Policy to control change of use from A1 (Shops) to uses other than A2 (Financial and Professional), A3 (Restaurants and Cafés), D2 (Assembly and Leisure) and C3 (Dwelling houses) on the basis that changes to uses other than these could detract from the vitality of the town centre. This would provide a useful form of control to help protect the viability of town centres. An analysis of planning history in the District’s town centres indicates that similar trends seem to apply to the various centres and in this respect it would seem that such a policy should apply equally to all centres.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Change of Use in Town Centres Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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11.7.3 As the scope of the Options is narrowly focused on changes of use of retail units in town centres, they are unlikely to directly impact on the environmental SA Objectives.

**Social SA Objectives**

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

11.7.4 Both Options would have positive effects on this SA Objective because they would both result in a policy which seeks to ensure the retention of local facilities and services within the town and village centres for people to access. The Options may not directly improve access however in combination with other Local Plan policies such as on transport and infrastructure improvements to the centres may be improved and retaining the services and facilities there is clearly important.
Economic SA Objectives

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

11.7.5 Both Options are likely to have positive and negative effects on this SA Objective. In terms of positive effects, the Options both ensure the retention of A1 uses within the town and village centres to some degree, which can contribute to the continued vitality and viability of the centres. This could be particularly important in rural areas and for the rural economy where one village centre may serve several smaller settlements.

11.7.6 However, negative effects could arise as a result of the inflexibility of the Options to accommodate changes within the town and village centres which could in fact enhance their sustainability and vitality.

Preferred Option for Testing 20

11.7.7 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Change of use in Town Centres is contained within Chapter 16 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

11.7.8 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘The preferred option is for a policy which restricts changes of use from A1 (shops) and A3 (restaurants/cafes) to uses other than A2 (financial and professional services), A4 (drinking establishments), A5 (Hot food takeaways) and D1 (non-residential institutions such as clinics, health centres, crèches, churches etc.) unless certain criteria are met which ensure the protection of the vitality of the town centre or unless the change of use is otherwise permitted by the 2015 Use Classes Amendment Order’

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 20 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Social SA Objectives

11.7.9 Socially the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have positive effects as it would result in a policy which seeks to ensure the retention of local facilities and services within the town and village centres for people to access. In combination with other Local Plan policies such as on transport and
infrastructure improvements to the centres may be achieved and retaining the services and facilities there is clearly important.

**Economic SA Objectives**

11.7.10 The policy approach will ensure the retention of A1 uses within the town and village centres and contribute to the continued vitality and viability of those centres. This could be particularly important in rural areas and for the rural economy where one village centre may serve several smaller settlements.

11.7.6 However, negative effects could arise as a result of the inflexibility of the policy approach to accommodate changes within the town and village centres which could in fact enhance their sustainability and vitality.

**11.8 Sizes of retail units within Town and Village Centres**

11.8.1 Wealden’s town and village centres are characterised by large supermarkets and by a number of small retail units, which often do not meet the requirements of many national retail chains. Such retail chains can be essential for the attraction and retention of a centre’s customer base and thus to its vitality and success.

11.8.2 There was only one reasonable Option considered to address the size of retail units in Town and Village Centres are:

- **Option 1** - Encourage and enable a range of unit sizes in town centres, through re-development or combining adjacent smaller units to provide larger premises.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the size of retail units in Town and Village Centres Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)**

**SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings**

11.8.3 The Option is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would result in the redevelopment of existing sites and hence promote the use of brownfield land for development. However the impacts are likely to be localised to the settlement within which the redevelopment is located and as such may not prove positive for the District as a whole.
Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

11.8.4 The Option is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective in so far as it would provide a range of unit sizes within town and village centres that could be used to accommodate a range of uses, which in turn could help diversify the local and enhance the rural economy. The Option could result in the attraction of larger national chains to the town centres which would not only improve the economy but also enhance the range of retail facilities offered to people.

11.8.5 Having smaller units also available may help to retain existing small or specialist/independent retailers which could diversify the retail offer further. This could also help retain the character of the village and town centres whilst supporting the economy, maintaining their distinctiveness.

Preferred Option for Testing 21

11.7.12 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to sizes of retail units within Town and Village Centres is contained within Chapter 16 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

11.8.7 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘The preferred option is a policy which ensures that any proposal for new retail development or conversion of existing retail units contributes to the range and size of retail units available in order to help protect the vitality of the District's town and village centres’.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 21 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Economic SA Objective

11.8.8 The Preferred Option for Testing will positively affect the economy of the District’s village and town centres through the provision of a range of retail unit sizes that would attract national retail chains as well as provide for small, specialist and independent retailers to remain. This will help support the local
economy and enhance the vitality and viability of the District’s town and village
centres whilst also ensuring their individual characters and distinctiveness are
maintained.

11.9 Retail Allocations

11.9.1 The NPPF supports a sequential approach to retail allocation within
town centres and states that the local planning authority should allocate
appropriate edge of centre sites for main town centre uses that are well
connected to the town centre where suitable and viable town centre sites are
not available. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, the local
planning authority should set policies for meeting the identified needs in other
accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre.

Uckfield Town Centre

11.9.2 Please refer to Map 35 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and
Recommendation Consultation paper. Within Uckfield Town Centre there is
the need to ensure that the additional floorspace provided to support growth
enhances the vitality and viability of the town centre, and supports the
retention of specialist markets as part of the unique qualities and
characteristics of the retail offer in Uckfield.

11.9.3 The Options considered for additional retail provision are:

- **Option 1** - Bell Lane south
- **Option 2** - Bell Lane north and Luxford area
- **Option 3** - High Street north
- **Option 4** - High Street south
- **Option 5** - South of Uckfield Railway Station

SA Assessment

**Predicting the effects of the Uckfield Town Centre Retail Provision
Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment

11.9.4 Due to the presence of flood risk areas Option 1 and 4 would not result in development being guided away from such risk and so would have negative effects on this SA Objective. They could also result in exacerbating any flood risk through development itself and the increase in hard surfacing. Option 1, the Bell Lane south sector has the most flood risk associated with it as it is within the flood risk area of the River Uck.

11.9.5 The remaining sectors have no flood risk issues associated with them.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes (walking, cycling and public transport)

11.9.6 Option 2 offers the most potential for beneficial impacts on this SA Objective as it would result in retail allocations being located in close proximity to the existing High Street as well as public transport interchanges. This could help promote the inclusion of sustainable transport links with any development. There would also be opportunities to create linkages between any new retail development and the existing town centre with its range of services and retail offers. This could help promote walking and cycling.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

11.9.7 The achievement of this SA Objective is linked to that of SA10 and Option 2. Option 2 would offer the most potential positive effects as it would locate new retail development close to the existing town centre and public transport. This would improve access and affordability of access to services and facilities within any new retail development and the existing town centre using sustainable transport choices.

11.9.8 Furthermore, the creation of linkages between any new retail development and the existing town centre would provide opportunities to encourage walking and cycling within Uckfield to access facilities and services. This could also help improve the health of the local population.

11.9.9 Option 5 would have a negative effect on achieving this SA Objective as the sector is severed from the main town centre of Uckfield by the River Uck and the railway line. Any development here would be isolated from the main town centre and access would be an issue.
SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities

11.9.10 Option 2 has the potential for positive effects on this SA Objective as it could result in some retail provision fronting onto Luxford Field which is a key community asset. Small scale retail and other development here could help create a vibrant community and enhance the community asset.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

11.9.11 The Bell Lane south sector (Option 1) may provide some limited potential for new retail development which would provide employment opportunities however it is unlikely this sector alone would result in significant employment provision due to the constraint of the flood risk area.

11.9.12 The High Street south sector (Option 4) may also provide some limited potential for new retail development which would provide employment opportunities, however it is unlikely this sector alone would result in significant employment provision due to flood risk issues, multiple land ownership issues and land availability.

11.9.13 South of the railway (Option 5) could provide some potential for new retail development and hence employment opportunities but there are issues of severance from the main centre.

11.9.14 The Bell Lane north and Luxford area offer the most potential for positive effects on this SA Objective as it has the least constraints and the most land availability and hence could provide some, if not all, of any potential retail allocation. This would help create employment opportunities and also facilitate access to those jobs through the close proximity to the public transport interchange and any connections made with the existing town centre.

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

11.9.15 Options 1; 4 and 5 may have positive effects on this SA Objective through accommodating some new retail provision within Uckfield to help support the existing retail offer and local economy. However they all suffer from some form of constraint that would prevent the full realisation of this SA Objective and Option 5 would pose significant issues in terms of severance.
11.9.16 Option 2 offers the most potential for positive effects due to the fact that the sector could accommodate all of the potential retail allocation for Uckfield and that this would be in close proximity to the existing main town centre with the potential for beneficial influences. Furthermore, it could help stimulate the regeneration of the town centre through provision of the right infrastructure, in so far as creating linkages with the existing town centre and its proximity to the public transport interchange.

**Preferred Option for Testing 22**

11.7.12 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Uckfield Town Centre Retail Provision is contained within Chapter 16 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

11.9.17 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘The preferred Option for the focus of additional floorspace in Uckfield Town Centre is to the west of the High Street, north of Bell Lane, east of Belmont Road, Luxford Field and car parking area’

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 22 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**Environmental SA Objectives**

11.9.18 In terms of the SA Objectives, the Preferred Option for Testing will have overall beneficial effects. Flood risk areas are avoided and the bus and rail interchanges are in close proximity which will help encourage sustainable transport use.

11.9.19 However, the policy approach could lead to a change in the built character of the existing town centre in that it is linear at present but the approach could alter this through expansion.

**Social SA Objectives**

11.9.20 The Preferred Option for Testing will ensure good access is afforded to any new retail development as well as the existing town centre and its facilities. This is due to the fact that new development would be adjacent to the existing High Street and offers the potential to create better linkages and circular routes. This could include walking and cycling routes. The new development would also be in close proximity to the train station and bus...
services which will promote sustainable transport use as well as facilitating ease of access to services and facilities.

**Economic SA Objectives**

11.9.21 In terms of the economy, the Preferred Option for Testing will have positive effects as it will result in the allowance of additional development to support the growth within the town centre are of Uckfield as proposed through the Wealden local Plan. It will also allow for a range of retail unit sizes and retail types which will help diversify the local economy whilst also supporting it. The policy approach will also allow for a different type of retail outlet to be provided and may allow for some relocation of existing uses and speciality shopping along the High Street.

**Hailsham Town Centre**

11.9.13 Please refer to Map 36 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendation Consultation paper.

11.9.3 The Options considered for additional retail provision are:

- **Option 1** - West of North Street
- **Option 2** - East of North Street, west of the High Street and north of George Street
- **Option 3** - East of the High Street, west of Vicarage Lane and north of Vicarage Road
- **Option 4** - South of Station Road, south of George Street and east of Market Street
- **Option 5** - To the east of Vicarage Lane adjacent to the Wealden District Council offices and Leisure Centre
- **Option 6** - Parts of 1,2 and 3 - creating an east - west focus within the Town Centre
- **Option 7** - Station Road/South Road and the eastern end of Diplocks Industrial Estate/Ropemakers Park
Predicting the effects of the Hailsham Town Centre Retail Provision Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA4 Improve the quality of the built environment

11.9.4 Option 1-3 and Option 7 all offer potential positive effects on this SA Objective as they offer the opportunity to remodel the space within the existing town centre which could help improve the architectural quality of the buildings, townscape and public realm.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes (walking, cycling and public transport)

11.9.5 All of the Options have the potential to achieve positive effects on this SA Objective as they all offer the opportunity to consolidate the existing town centre and its uses and hence locate new development in close proximity to existing.

11.9.6 However encouraging the use of sustainable transport will need to be combined with any sector to ensure benefits are fully realised. There is a known accessibility issue within Hailsham at present however this is being worked on through the Hailsham Forward and MASHH strategies.

11.9.7 Option 5 would provide a different retail offer, adjacent to existing town centre facilities and in close proximity to new pedestrian and cycle links to the residential development to the east

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

11.9.8 All of the Options have the potential to positively affect this SA Objective and all acknowledge that accessibility and connectivity to any new development with existing development would be needed.
11.9.9 Option 3 in particular would enable improvements in access to be made between new development, the existing town centre and residential development under construction to the east of Hailsham. This Option would also provide better linkages to the leisure centre and community hall. These linkages could encourage the provision of walking and cycling opportunities which in turn could help improve people’s health and wellbeing.

11.9.10 Option 4 may pose some issues with improving access as it is separated from the town centre by George Street.

11.9.11 Options 5 and 6 may offer significant positive effects on this SA Objective as it would provide opportunities to improve accessibility and connectivity between the various parts and functions of the town centre, and existing and new residential development adjacent to the town centre and to the east of Hailsham. Option 5 would provide a different retail offer, adjacent to existing town centre facilities and in close proximity to new pedestrian and cycle links to the residential development to the east.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

SA17 employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

11.9.12 Although assessed as having no direct relationship with this SA Objective, the provision of retail floorspace will result in some element of job creation although this may be limited.

11.9.13 However Option 7 may result in the relocation of some commercial/industrial uses which could have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would result in additional space to accommodate displaced industrial premises being provided in new industrial/employment areas, which could be within the A22 Growth Corridor that is being promoted by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, where improved access and infrastructure could be provided. This could encourage further employment provision and hence job creation.

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

11.9.14 All of the Options, except Option 4, have potential to provide positive effects on this SA Objective as they all seek to provide additional retail development that could help diversify the offer and local economy within Hailsham Town Centre. However each acknowledges that in isolation they won’t be able to accommodate the full allocation posed by the Local Plan.

11.9.15 In particular Option 4 states that it is unlikely that this sector could accommodate the Core Strategy allocation or additional retail floorspace.
in a way that contributes to the overall vitality and vibrancy of the Town Centre
and hence would negatively affect this SA Objective.

**Preferred Option for Testing 23**

11.7.16 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Hailsham Town Centre Retail Provision is contained within Chapter 16 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

11.7.17 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

The preferred option for new retail provision within Hailsham is a combination of two of the options considered.

‘The preferred Option for additional floorspace within Hailsham Town Centre is to focus on consolidating and reinforcing retail provision as much as possible around an east west axis across the centre of the High Street, as outlined in Option 5. This would take in parts of three sectors, the southern part of Sector 1, Sector 2 and parts of Sector 3, and would provide opportunities to improve accessibility and connectivity between the various parts and functions of the town centre, and existing and new residential development adjacent to the town centre. New development could provide a range of retail spaces which together with improved linkages to the High Street, would help to draw more people into the town centre, supporting the community, the economy, diversity of uses and the overall vitality of the town centre.

However, it is considered that there will be insufficient space to accommodate the projected allocation required to support growth in Hailsham though this plan. For this reason additional provision for retail, leisure and cultural facilities will be required within the new town centre area, as proposed through this plan, subject to sequential tests. Option 7, adjacent to the main town centre shopping area, extending via Station Road/South Road to the eastern end of Diplocks Industrial Estate/Ropemakers Park with access to the adjacent A22, provides opportunities to support additional retail provision, subject to re-location of existing industrial units, further retail assessment and sequential tests’.

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 23 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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Environmental SA Objectives

11.7.18 In terms of these SA Objectives the Preferred Option for Testing will have positive effects as it will seek to locate new development in close proximity to the existing town centre and its uses which will facilitate ease of access. The policy approach will also provide opportunities to improve accessibility and connectivity between various parts and functions of the town centre and this could be conducive to encouraging walking and cycling as well as improvements to public transport and the road network within Hailsham to promote sustainable transport. The policy approach would also put new retail development in close proximity to the A22 which will, further enhance access.

Social SA Objectives

11.7.19 The positive effects on these SA Objectives are linked to that of improvements to accessibility and connectivity, which the Preferred Option for Testing would help facilitate, particularly between new development, the existing town centre and the new residential development under construction adjacent to the town centre and to the east of Hailsham. The inclusion of the sector under Option 7 would also improve access via the A22 and could help promote sustainable transport.

11.7.20 In addition the policy approach would help retain essential local facilities within the town centre which would improve access for people also.

Economic SA Objectives

11.7.21 In economic terms the Preferred Option for Testing will have positive effects in so far as it would allow room for additional expansion to help support growth in Hailsham and the town centre in the east end of Diplocks Industrial Estate and Ropemakers Park, which would be in close proximity to the Primary Shopping Area (as defined and assessed in Chapter 11 of this SA Report). This would enable provision of a range of unit’s sizes to help increase the range and choice of retail offer within the town, which would help support the local economy.
12.0 Broad locations around towns and villages

12.1 The Preferred Option for the overall development strategy for the District includes the development of broad locations around towns and villages with a large scale urban extension(s) associated with the Hailsham/ Hellingly/ Polegate area.

12.2 Chapter 10 of this document and Preferred Option for Testing 11 within the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper (and also contained in Chapter 10 of this document) show that villages identified with up to 50 dwellings will be dealt with through a criteria based policy to allow for incremental growth.

12.3 Table 30 at Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the settlements with associated housing numbers, which will be subject to land allocations. This is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Number of additional dwellings</th>
<th>Percentage Increase</th>
<th>Core Strategy and Village greenfield consents that are included within the number of additional dwellings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hailsham</td>
<td>9,380</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polegate &amp; Willingdon</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Cross</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathfield</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowborough</td>
<td>140 and any windfalls that do not have an adverse impact upon Ashdown Forest SAC</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edge of Tunbridge Wells</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herstmonceux</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Hoathly</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ninfield</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayfield</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wadhurst</td>
<td>285</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Westham</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horam</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
12.4 Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper considers the general location of growth including the above housing figures for possible future allocation in the Proposed Submission Wealden Local Plan. It should be stressed that this does not mean that all land identified in the preferred options for this topic area is necessarily suitable for development and also that some land may be required for other uses.

12.5 The allocations to these settlements have been assessed in relation to the SA Objectives in Chapter 4, Section 4.7 of this SA Report as the Preferred Option for Testing 3. Please refer to paragraphs 4.7.48 – 4.7.83 for that assessment.

12.6 The assessments that follow are based on the principle of developing within each of the sectors under each of the Options; however in reality land availability will be a key consideration and at present is a part of an ongoing piece of work being carried under the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). The results of this piece of work may alter the assessment in the future and this will be provided within the Proposed Submission Wealden Local Plan and its accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Assessment later in 2016.

12.1 Hailsham, Hellingly, Polegate and Arlington

12.1.1 Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be considered in relation to the above settlements, principally to accommodate the 9,380 dwellings within and around Hailsham and Hellingly and the 418 outstanding from the Core Strategy.

12.1.2 The Options considered to accommodate the above are:

- **Option 1** - North Hailsham, with Greenfield land within the Parish of Hellingly.
- **Option 2** - East Hailsham.
- **Option 3** - South East Hailsham.
- **Option 4** - South Hailsham in the Parish of Hailsham and Polegate.
- **Option 5** - West Hailsham, with Greenfield land within in the Parish of Arlington.
- **Option 6** - North West Hailsham, with greenfield land within the Parish of Hellingly.
12.1.3 Please refer to paragraphs 17.3 to 17.8 and Map 37 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper for a description of each sector.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Hailsham, Hellingly, Polegate and Arlington Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA Objectives</th>
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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1; SA5; SA7 and SA9)

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

12.1.4 All of the sectors proposed through the 6 Options record positive effects against SA1 due to the fact that all of the locations are within the south of the District and hence avoid any direct impact on the Ashdown Forest. However, it may prove through the testing of the Preferred Option for the Strategic Housing Strategy, and other modelling such as for transport, that there is some impact on the Forest from a south Wealden approach to development. This will need to be addressed if and when it is proven. In regards to the Pevensey Levels, Southern Water do have a proposed solution to the WwTWS issues and so the phasing of development will ensure no adverse impacts occur as a result of developing under these Options.

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

12.1.5 Whilst none of the Options directly contribute towards the conservation and enhancement of the Districts countryside, landscape and historic/cultural assets (SA2), the locations of the sectors around the existing built up area mean that any impact would be minimised provided appropriate consideration and mitigation measures were introduced. These will be dependent on other Local Plan policies such as design. This would be particularly important in regards to the sectors which adjoin the Pevensey Levels as this is a very flat landscape and development may be visually prominent in the landscape. Option 5 could have a negative effect on SA2 due to the presence of Abbotts Wood, and ancient woodland. Careful consideration of this asset would be
needed. Furthermore under Option 5, a separate settlement to the west of the A22 would have significant effects on views to and from the South Downs National Park and so would also result in negative effects on SA2.

SA5 To maintain and improve the water quality of the District’s rivers and groundwater, and to achieve sustainable water resources management

12.1.6 The effects of development in any of the sectors on SA5 will to a degree be dependent on other Local Plan policies such as those on flood risk, design, sustainable construction and SuDS. SuDS in particular will be important especially in relation to Options 2 and 3 which lie close to the Pevensey Levels and flood risk areas. Whilst the issues of the WwTWS may be addressed, surface water flooding and the conveyance of pollutants to the Pevensey Levels would need to be considered. Therefore, the effects on SA5 are considered uncertain at this time.

SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment.

12.1.7 Development within the sectors proposed in Options 2 and 3 could have negative effects on SA7 as they are located close to flood risk areas. Development here could increase the risk further. However, with appropriate mitigation measures the negative effects may be able to be addressed and some development allowed. For the remaining Options the effects are considered uncertain due to the fact that other Local Plan policies are likely to play more of a role.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

12.1.8 For all of the Options, except Options 1; 4; 5 and 6, the effects on SA9 are considered uncertain. Within all of the sectors there is some brownfield land which would be prioritised for development where appropriate, however the scale of development proposed for this area means that it is likely to result in large areas of Greenfield land being used for development and this is present in all of the sectors. Options 4 and 5 in particular seek to open up extensive tracts of Greenfield land for development through proposed new transport links and improvements to existing. Options 1 and 6 make specific reference to the development of Greenfield land within those sectors. Whilst the effects on SA9 may be considered uncertain and potentially negative, in order to accommodate the growth needed within the District it is inevitable that Greenfield land will be used, however brownfield land would be prioritised wherever possible.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes (walking, cycling and public transport)

12.1.9 Whilst all of the Options are considered to have a neutral effect on SA10, some of the sectors offer good connectivity to Hailsham Town centre and to Polegate (Options 2; 4 and 5) and as such may have positive effects
on SA10 minimising journey lengths and encouraging walking and cycling. This could be achieved in particular by connecting any new development to the Cuckoo Trail for example and improving this connectivity.

Social SA Objectives (SA12 and SA13)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

12.1.10 In regards to SA12 and improving access to services, facilities, the countryside and open space, the likely effects are mixed and reflect the sectors included within each Option. Improvements to access are not explicit in any of the Options however the potential for development in some of the sectors offers better access than others.

12.1.11 Option 1 is likely to have some negative effects on SA12 as it includes the north sector which is at some distance from Hailsham Town Centre and even further from Polegate.

12.1.12 Option 2 is likely to offer positive effects on SA12 as it includes the east sector which is particularly well related to Hailsham Town Centre, although it is noted that there are some access issues which would need to be overcome.

12.1.13 Option 3 has the potential for positive effects on SA12 but these would be dependent on significant infrastructure improvements. However the improvements to the infrastructure could help with improvements to public transport and hence access to services and facilities within Hailsham and Polegate.

12.1.14 Option 4 offers perhaps the most significant positive effects in terms of SA12 as development within the southern sector could link to Hailsham town centre from the roundabout on the A22 to the west through Ersham Road. This would provide more of a direct link to the town centre and hence improve access for people by bypassing the A22.

12.1.15 Option 5 would involve development in the west sector which is restricted as any sizable potential land is on the west side of the A22. This would have negative effects on SA12 as the A22 would present a physical barrier to accessing Hailsham town centre and Polegate. Any development could result in a disjointed settlement separate from Hailsham which could become subservient to it.

12.1.16 Whilst Option 6 is noted as being an accessible location, taking in the north west sector, it is quite a distance from Hailsham town centre and the services and facilities it provides. However, access would not be difficult for people but journeys could be longer.

12.1.17 For all the Options and sectors, improving access in terms of SA12 will be dependent to a degree on policies concerned with infrastructure and design as well as any initiatives to improve public transport. Furthermore,
new connections to the Cuckoo Trail and improvements to existing should be considered so as to encourage walking and cycling along safe, transport free routes.

**SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home**

12.1.18 In terms of SA13 it will be site specific policies together with an overall affordable housing policy that will determine the effects rather than which sectors are chosen for development. Of course the sectors have a role to play as some have more potential land for development which in turn may make the provision of affordable and decent homes more viable because it is not just affordable housing in the traditional sense of the word that will determine the effects on SA13 but housing which is affordable as well. In particular however, Option 3 could have significant positive effects on SA13 as it includes the sector with relative issues of deprivation which development could help address, especially in relation to housing.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

12.1.19 For both SA17 and SA18, the effects of all the Options are assessed as uncertain at this time. This is because it will depend on the type of development allocated within the broad locations that are taken forward. However, development in general within these sectors will have more positive effects if it is located in accordance with Options 2-4 as these are the sectors best related to the existing built form and also which have the best access to Hailsham and the surrounding area, or where access could be improved/created through infrastructure improvements. Furthermore, locating housing development close to employment development and vice versa, will help improve access to jobs as well as aiding regeneration efforts.

12.1.20 In addition, the scale of development proposed within this area, regardless of its location, will help foster wider economic growth in the south of the District, which will provide positive effects on the economic SA Objectives.

**Preferred Option for Testing 24**

12.1.21 The Preferred Option Hailsham, Hellingly, Polegate and Arlington is contained in Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

12.1.22 The Preferred Option is:

“To test the provision of around 4,000 dwellings in the North, South East and Southern Sectors adjoining Hailsham Town, and to include infill development/redevelopment of the existing urban area the exact amount of which will be provided through a capacity study. This will include the provision of the remaining 418 homes to the East of Hailsham identified in the Core Strategy.
This will however, not allow any further incursion towards the Pevensey Levels in this Sector.

The first choice to provide for the remaining 5,380 dwellings is the provision of an urban extension on land at West Hailsham with the re-routing of the A22 and the down grading of the existing A22. However it is acknowledged that there are significant issues with regards to delivery and the second choice is the development within South Hailsham in the Parish of Hailsham and Polegate with the third choice of land at West Polegate.

The option of 9,380 dwellings is predicated on the improvements to the A27, or another alternative, and the delivery of other road and social infrastructure as well as the improved waste water treatment in Hailsham".

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 24 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred Option for Testing 24</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.1.23 It should be noted that the SA Assessment for the Options above is relevant to the Preferred Option for Testing 24. The following paragraphs will provide an overall assessment.

12.1.24 It should also be acknowledged that at this time there is no indication of land availability within the Preferred Option for Testing's approach. This work is underway but not yet completed.

Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

12.1.25 Overall the effects of the Preferred Option for Testing on these SA Objectives is uncertain at this time with some having no relationship. The Preferred Option for Testing focuses development within the south of the District, as per the preferred overall development strategy, and as such affords protection to the biodiversity asset that is the Ashdown Forest. The Preferred Option for Testing also states that no further incursion to the east of Hailsham will be permitted and so also affords protection to the Pevensey Levels. The Preferred Option for Testing does note however that it is predicated on improvements to the A27 or another alternative as well as other road and social infrastructure delivery, as these will provide alternative routes northwards that do not cross the Ashdown Forest. If these improvements do not occur then it cannot be ruled out that there will not be some effect on the Ashdown Forest.
12.1.26 In landscape terms there could be effects on the Pevensey Levels from a visual perspective even if development is restricted to the east. Similarly, development to the west in the form of a large urban extension may have effects on the South Downs in terms of visual impact and setting and also on the ancient woodland at Abbotts Wood. However, any effects on these assets could be offset by appropriate mitigation measures such as landscaping within developments and other design criteria and protection policies for the ancient woodland. These will emerge as part of other Local Plan policies and will be assessed when site specific locations have been determined at subsequent iterations of the Wealden Local Plan.

12.1.27 The Preferred Option includes sectors which are close to flood risk areas but not within flood risk areas. Therefore the effects on SA7 at this time are uncertain as they will depend on the implementation of the Preferred Option and any measures to reduce the risk of flooding from development within the south east sector specifically.

12.1.28 The Preferred Option is likely to have positive effects on SA9 as it seeks to provide infill/redevelopment opportunities within the existing urban area of Hailsham. The extent of the positive effects will be dependent on the urban capacity study which the Preferred Option makes provision for. Notwithstanding this, the scale of development proposed here will require significant Greenfield land development also.

12.1.29 Whilst not explicitly stating that the Preferred Option will help minimise journey lengths and encourage more sustainable modes of transport (SA10), the scale of development proposed could lend itself to helping achieve such measures through developer contributions for example to improving bus routes and services. Linkages between the new development and the Cuckoo Trail could also be explored to help facilitate walking and cycling, as it is a valuable existing resource. Furthermore, road and social infrastructure improvements will be required to accommodate this scale of development and this is contained within the Preferred Option.

**Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)**

12.1.30 The effects of the Preferred Option on SA12 are assessed as uncertain at this time as they would largely be dependent on the implementation of the Preferred Option along with the road and social infrastructure improvements required to support it. There is the potential for significant benefits in terms of improving access to services and facilities by locating large scale housing close to employment and leisure facilities including the retail offer in the town centre. The effects are uncertain because, as the Preferred Option acknowledges, there are significant issues with the delivery of the large urban extension and the re-routing of the A22 and the downgrading of the existing A22.

12.1.31 For SA13 the effects are likely to be positive as the scale of development will call for larger sites which will make provision of all types of affordable housing more viable. The benefits will be significantly positive due
to the fact that the Preferred Option seeks to locate development, and hence affordable housing, within the south east sector where deprivation levels are a particular issue. This will also apply to SA16 with the issues of social exclusion being addressed and positive effects occurring as a result together with the creation of vibrant and inclusive communities. Decent and sustainably constructed housing (SA13) will be a matter of other Local Plan policies such as design and construction.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

12.1.32 Economically the Preferred Option is likely to have positive effects in that the large urban extension would help foster wider economic growth especially accompanied by the road and infrastructure improvements that would be required to support this level of development. Employment development would place potential employees within accessible reach of jobs and hence improve access to job opportunities (SA17) whilst the scale of development would help regenerate the town centre of Hailsham and to a lesser degree Polegate.

**12.2 Polegate and Willingdon**

12.2.1 Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be considered in relation to the above settlements, principally to accommodate 1,000 dwellings within and around Polegate and Willingdon, including the 700 dwellings identified within the Core Strategy.

12.2.2 The Options considered for accommodating the above are:

- **Option 1** – North Polegate
- **Option 2** – Mid Polegate and Willingdon
- **Option 3** – South west Polegate and Willingdon
- **Option 4** – West Polegate

12.2.3 Please refer to paragraphs 17.9 to 17.2 and map 39 within Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Polegate and Willingdon Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

12.2.4 In terms of SA1 again the Options are all based in the south of the District and hence afford protection to the Ashdown Forest. They are within proximity of the Pevensey Levels however they are not close enough to have any impact, provided the necessary improvements to the WwTWS at south Hailsham are addressed.

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

12.2.5 For SA2 Options 1 and 2 are likely to have positive effects due to the fact that Option 1 is less visually sensitive within the landscape in general terms and Option 2 includes the area where the 700 dwellings from the Core Strategy are to be located. As such, no further development is recommended here and the principle of development in terms of landscape impact has already been deemed appropriate within the Core Strategy.

12.2.6 Option 3 is likely to have negative effects on SA2 as it is covered by a Conservation Area and the majority of the sector is within the South Downs National Park and out of the scope of the Wealden Local Plan. Limited development could mitigate any potential negative effects on the part of the sector not within the South Downs through careful design considerations.

12.2.7 Option 4 has even more significant issues with regards to the South Downs National Park as it is extremely prominent in views to and from it and hence would have likely significant effects on the visual enjoyment of the National Park as well as its setting.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

12.2.8 In terms of ensuring the best use of previously developed land (SA9) none of the Option make specific reference to it however from the map it is clear that there will be some element of brownfield land within each sector but
again land availability will play its part in the effects on SA9 as well as the eventual site selection.

**Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)**

**SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces**

12.2.9 In terms of improving access to services and facilities the effects of Option 2 on SA12 are likely to be negative. This is due to the presence of known capacity issues with, and issues of access to and from, the A2270. Further development in this area above that contained within the Core Strategy would exacerbate these issues and would hinder access to the surrounding services and facilities for existing and any future residents.

12.2.10 For Options 1 and 4 the effects on SA12 are uncertain. Option 1 is close to the existing Bypass and so would afford good access into the road network and hence access to services and facilities within the surrounding area. For Option 4 there are significant issues of severance with the existing built form of Polegate due to the presence of the A22. Any development here would have issues with access to the wider area initially but once onto the A22 access would be relatively normal. Road improvements as part of a comprehensive development under Option 4 could address the issues of severance however. Option 3 has no direct effect on SA12 as the majority of the sector is outside of the scope of the Wealden Local Plan and there are known issues with the A2270 and access.

**SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home**

12.2.11 As the location of development will have little impact on the provision of affordable homes for people; the effects of the Options on SA13 are assessed as neutral. However, the scale of development may make the provision of affordable housing on sites more economically viable. There could be issues in general with locating development under Option 1 and the effects on SA13 regardless of affordable housing provision due to the presence of relatively significant road noise from the Bypass. However, there has been some development in this sector recently and the noise levels are not dissimilar to those at Stone Cross where there has been significant development. Mitigation measures could address this.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

12.2.12 In relation to the economic SA Objectives, the Options are likely to have mixed effects. Option 2 carries forward the development from the Core Strategy and so includes the element of employment provision that proposed. This will help create opportunities for employment provision as well as improving access to jobs. As for the other Options, the effects are uncertain.
Preferred Option for Testing 25

12.2.13 The Preferred Option for Testing for Polegate and Willingdon is contained in Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

12.2.14 The Preferred Option is:

“To retain the provision of 700 dwellings within the Mid Sector known as South Polegate and East Willingdon. As reasonable alternatives have already been considered in this area the preferred area for the delivery of 700 dwellings is shown in Map 40. The remaining 300 dwellings are identified to be delivered within North Polegate and as infill within the existing urban area, the exact amount of which will be provided through a capacity study.

Land at West Polegate is the third preference for a large scale urban extension after land at West Hailsham and Land at South Hailsham in the Parish of Hailsham and Polegate. Any development of land at West Polegate would require reconfiguration of the Town Centre as well as significant infrastructure including improvements to the A27, or another alternative, and the delivery of other road and social infrastructure as well as the improved waste water treatment in Hailsham”.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 25 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

| SA Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Preferred Option for Testing 25 | + | + | o | o | o | o | o | + | o | o | ? | + | o | o | o | + | ? |

Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

12.2.15 The Preferred Option for Testing would have positive effects on SA1 and SA2 due to its southern focus for development and the fact that the sectors included are those with the least landscape impact on the South Downs National Park and Pevensey Levels. Other measures will be needed such as landscaping and design considerations as well as SuDS measures to manage surface runoff and prevent this conveying pollutant to the Pevensey Levels. Improvements to the WwTWS at south Hailsham will also be required to ensure no adverse impacts on the Pevensey Levels occurs. This is also required for any potential large scale urban extension at West Polegate.

12.2.16 SA9 is likely to be positively affected by the Preferred Option for Testing due to the fact it identifies the remaining 300 of the 1,000 dwellings (700 to be delivered in accordance with the Core Strategy) to be delivered as
infill development within the existing built up area of north Polegate. This will ensure previously developed land is prioritised. However, a large urban extension at West Polegate would require extensive Greenfield land to be developed and this would move away from the achievement of SA9. However, it is acknowledged, in particular through the SA assessment of the overall strategic housing strategy and distribution that brownfield land is scarce within the District but will be prioritised first with any potential development where appropriate and achievable.

**Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)**

12.2.17 For SA12 the Preferred Option for Testing is assessed as having uncertain effects at this time. This is due to the fact that there are known existing capacity issues with the A2270 which could hamper improvements to access for services and facilities however there may be opportunities as a result of development to improve the capacity or the road network. Indeed the Preferred Option for Testing makes reference to the fact that any large scale urban extension at West Polegate would need improvements to the A27 and other road infrastructure and so this could provide the opportunity to improve access to services and facilities.

12.2.18 For SA13 it will be the implementation of an affordable housing policy which will determine the effects of delivery however there will be potential noise mitigation requirements for development under the Preferred Option for Testing in relation to development at north Polegate if there are to be positive effects on SA13. Of course the large scale urban extension at West Polegate, if it were to go ahead, would provide significant opportunities to provide affordable housing. Decent and sustainably constructed housing will be a matter of other Local Plan policies such as design and construction.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

12.2.19 In regards to the economic SA Objectives, the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have overall positive effects. The carrying forward of the site at South Polegate and East Willingdon ensures that the element of employment provision is also carried forward. This will create new employment opportunities for existing and new businesses as well as facilitating improved access to jobs. Of course this will also involve other Local Plan policies such as employment land provision as a standalone policy. The Preferred Option for Testing notes that the large urban extension at West Polegate, if it were to go ahead, would require the reconfiguration of the town centre in Polegate to enable it to satisfy the requirements of such large development. Policies on the town centres are likely to have more of an effect than the location of development however the scale of the potential development here may help towards efforts to regenerate the town centre of Polegate.
12.3 Heathfield

12.3.1 Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be considered in relation to Heathfield, principally to accommodate the delivery of 800 dwellings within and around Heathfield.

12.3.2 The Options considered for accommodating the above are:

- **Option 1** – North Heathfield
- **Option 2** – North-east Heathfield
- **Option 3** – East Heathfield
- **Option 4** – South Heathfield
- **Option 5** – West Heathfield
- **Option 6** – Central Heathfield

12.3.3 Please refer to the text paragraphs 17.13 to 17.16 and Map 41 within Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper for a description of the sectors under each Option.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Polegate and Willingdon Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

|          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Option 1 | o | ? | o | o | o | o | o | - | o | o  | ?  | ?  | o  | o  | ?  | ?  | ?  |     |
| Option 2 & 3 | o | ? | o | o | o | o | o | o | ? | o | o  | ?  | ?  | o  | -  | -  | ?  |     |
| Option 4 | o | - | o | o | o | o | o | - | o | o  | ?  | ?  | o  | o  | o  | ?  | ?  |     |
| Option 5 | o | ? | o | o | o | o | o | - | o | o  | ?  | ?  | o  | o  | o  | o  | ?  |     |
| Option 6 | o | + | o | o | o | o | o | + | o | o  | ?  | ?  | o  | o  | o  | o  | o  |     |

12.3.4 The scale of development proposed at Heathfield is very high considering the settlement is surrounded by the High Weald AONB. Policies within the Wealden Local Plan concerned with landscape and particularly the AONB will need to be considered alongside any allocations for development. Furthermore, land availability is not taken into account in the following assessment.

**Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)**

12.3.5 In regards to the environmental SA Objectives, the majority are assessed as having no direct relationship with any of the Options or sectors. This does not mean that there is not the potential for effects, rather that effects are likely to occur in combination or as a result of other Local Plan policies.
SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic
environments and cultural assets

12.3.6 For SA2 however all of the Options will have some degree of effect due
to the fact that Heathfield is surrounded by the High Weald AONB. Therefore
any form of development is likely to have an impact on the landscape
designation.

12.3.7 Option 1 would propose development on sites outside of the AONB,
although these are limited, as well as on some sites within it. Therefore there
could be negative effects in terms of visual intrusion. However, with
appropriate mitigation measures development could be made acceptable and
effects on the AONB minimised. It may even result in parts of the AONB which
are not necessarily of the best quality being improved or enhanced through
development.

12.3.8 Option 2 and 3 combines the north-east and east sectors. Again these
sectors lie within or adjacent to the AONB or and so any development could
have potential negative effects but as with Option 1 appropriate mitigation
could be introduced. In addition, Heathfield Park Registered Park and Garden
is also within this sector and could be adversely affected by any development.
However, along the A265 to the north for development there would be a lesser
effect on the AONB. Furthermore there is some land within the north-east
sector that has poor visual quality and negatively impacts on the AONB.
Development here could improve this and help enhance the AONB in this
area.

12.3.9 Option 4 is likely to have negative effects on SA2 as it is wholly within
the AONB and any development would be harmful to the landscape setting.
The sector is also of high landscape value. It may be possible to introduce
mitigation measures however being wholly within the AONB makes this
difficult.

12.3.10 Option 5 would have landscape impacts again due to the presence of
the AONB but like Option 1 there are development opportunities within the
sectors outside of the AONB that with appropriate mitigation measures could
minimise the effects and even enhance the AONB in some instances.

12.3.11 Option 6 offers positive effects on SA2 due to the fact that it would
propose development within the existing built up area of Heathfield and hence
would not be close to the AONB. However, some consideration would need to
be given to any potential sites that were prominent in the centre and may have
visual impacts on the AONB.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

12.3.12 In regards to SA9 Options 1, 4 and 5 would have likely negative
effects due to the fact that the majority of the sectors are within the AONB and
by default brownfield land is not likely to be present. The exception here is
Option 2 and 3 as this includes the north east sector of Heathfield within which
there is a large quantity of brownfield land which is of particularly poor visual quality. Therefore there could be some positive effects on SA9 if this area were developed appropriately.

12.3.13 Option 6 offers perhaps the most positive effects due to the fact that it would involve infill and redevelopment opportunities within the existing built up area of Heathfield and so maximise the use of brownfield land available.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

12.3.14 Notwithstanding the environmental constraints, socially development in and around Heathfield as a whole is likely to be positive although there is always the potential for negative effects if development is not undertaken appropriately.

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

12.3.15 In regards to SA12, all of the Options have the potential to improve access to services and facilities. Due to the constraints of the AONB, any new housing development would be located in close proximity to existing services and facilities and vice versa thus improving access. Opportunities for improvements to walking and cycling could also be accommodated. However, under Option 4 it is noted that the sector does experience some highways and access issues which would need addressing. The centre of Heathfield is vibrant and has a unique vitality however the scale of development proposed, if not carefully managed, could overwhelm the existing services and facilities and hence make access worse. The close proximity of the AONB means that more people would be able to access the countryside and open spaces it offers.

SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

12.3.16 In terms of SA13, the scale of development proposed is likely to have positive effects due to the fact that it would enable, in combination with an affordable housing policy, significant provision of affordable housing. There has been a lack of affordable housing provision in Heathfield in the past and development here could help address this. Aside from ‘traditional’ affordable housing, other forms of low cost and affordable home could be built but this may rely on other Local Plan policies playing their part.

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

12.3.17 The north-eastern sector is more isolated from the community and health facilities being severed by the main road and a busy junction, the topography furthermore makes the area feel dislocated from the town. This would have likely negative effects on SA15 as well as SA12 in terms of access. The western sector (Option 5) is better located in relation to GP and health services.
There is no obvious potential for the north-eastern location (Option 2) to strengthen the community. The west, central and northern sectors are in closer proximity to the town centre and so offer more potential for community cohesion and hence positive effects on SA16.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism.

The west and north sectors may offer potential to deliver employment floor space as part of mixed use schemes. The north-eastern sector is well related to the employment area to the north, though it may not be appropriate to extend employment in this area. Therefore the effects on SA17 from the Options are uncertain. In terms of SA18, the north-eastern sector is too far from the town centre to offer any positive impacts in terms of regeneration. The north and west sectors have good connectivity to the town centre and so offer the potential to help with regeneration efforts here. This is also true of the central sector.

**Preferred Option for Testing 26**

The Preferred Option for Testing for Heathfield is contained in Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

The Preferred Option is:

‘Initially identify infill development/ redevelopment, the exact amount of which will be provided through a capacity study, and then land outside of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty within and on the edge of the current built up area. Identify, if possible allocations within the North East Sector and possibly towards Cross in Hand for future growth options. The delivery of 800 dwellings will be subject to the exception test identified within the National Planning Policy Framework concerning development within the Area of outstanding Natural Beauty’.
SA Objectives

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Environmental SA Objectives

12.3.21 Overall the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have positive effects on the environmental SA Objectives. The identification of land outside of the AONB for development means that the landscape will be protected, particularly when considered in combination with other Local Plan policies regarding the landscape and countryside. The inclusion of appropriate mitigation measures will help strengthen the achievement of these SA Objectives further. The identification of infill and/or redevelopment opportunities through a capacity study will ensure that brownfield sites are prioritised first for development followed by sites outside of the AONB. Focusing on the north-east sector towards Cross in Hand also means that the large areas of brownfield land here will be fully utilised. Having reference to the NPPF exception test for development within the AONB adds further protection to this landscape designation whilst recognising that development within it may be required to deliver the level of housing proposed.

12.3.22 Other Local Plan policies will determine the effects on the other environmental SA Objectives, such as flood risk, design, climate change and renewable energy.

Social SA Objectives

12.3.23 Socially, the Preferred Option for Testing will have overall positive effects for Heathfield. The existing vibrant centre will be maintained and even enhanced with the provision of 800 homes, including affordable and low cost, although the nature of the housing mix will be determined by other Local Plan policies. Access to services and facilities will be improved through the location of housing in close proximity to the centre and more people will be in close proximity to the countryside, in particular the AONB. Issues of affordable housing provision in Heathfield will be able to be addressed and on the whole people’s health and wellbeing is likely to improve also.

Economic SA Objectives

12.3.24 Again, in economic terms the Preferred Option for Testing for Heathfield is likely to have positive effects provided that employment provision is considered alongside housing provision. The two are intrinsically linked but
if not considered together there may be negative effects in that Heathfield become a dormitory town for nearby settlements or those outside of the District such as Tunbridge Wells.

12.4 Crowborough

12.4.1 Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be considered in relation to Crowborough, principally to accommodate the delivery of 140 dwellings within and around Crowborough.

12.4.2 The Options considered for accommodating the above are:

- **Option 1** – North Crowborough
- **Option 2** – East Crowborough
- **Option 3** – South-east Crowborough
- **Option 4** – South-west Crowborough

12.4.3 Please refer to paragraphs 17.17 to 17.20 and Map 42 within Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper for a description of the sectors under each Option.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Crowborough Options (SA Tasks B3/B4):

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12.4.4 The scale of housing proposed at Crowborough takes forward that contained within the Core Strategy and as such is considered appropriate. The approach also seeks to include any windfall that does not have an impact on the Ashdown Forest SAC. Policies within the Wealden Local Plan concerned with the Ashdown Forest, landscape and particularly the AONB will need to be considered alongside any allocations for development.

Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

12.4.5 In terms of the environmental SA Objectives, the effects of all of the Options vary with the majority not having a direct relationship. For SA1,
Options 1-3 have uncertain effects due to the fact that Crowborough is within a reasonable distance of the Ashdown Forest and so there could be positive and negative effects, although mitigation measures are being worked on to address this. Option 4 on the other hand has some land within 400m of the Ashdown Forest SAC and so is likely to have negative effects regardless of any mitigation measures.

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

12.4.6 For SA2 the effects are mixed due to the fact that the AONB again surrounds the settlement but is tighter to the settlement boundary in some places rather than others. Option 1 and 2 has land wholly within the AONB and so negative effects would be likely against SA2. Option 3 has significant positive effects due to the fact that it has large amounts of land outside of the AONB and potentially more than enough to meet the 140 dwellings. Option 4 has uncertain effects due to the fact that although it is close to the AONB, it is low density and offers opportunities for intensification within the existing built form which could help protect the surrounding landscape and countryside.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

12.4.7 SA9 and the best use of brownfield land will experience the most positive effects under Options 2 and 3 because they contain sectors with the most potential for brownfield sites, particularly in east Crowborough around Jarvis Brook. Options 1 and 4 and to some degree Option 2, contain sectors within the AONB and so brownfield land is unlikely to be that common although there may be some potential.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

12.4.8 In terms of improving access to service and facilities, there are existing issues within Crowborough. In regards to SA12, all of the Options have the potential to improve access to services and facilities by locating new housing development in close proximity to existing services and facilities and vice versa. Opportunities for improvements to walking and cycling could also be accommodated or improved. However, under Option 3 it is noted that the sector does experience some highways and access issues which would need consideration and addressing. The Options all have the potential for improving access to services through good connectivity with the town centre and/or opportunities to deliver new facilities. Development towards the east side of the north sector (Option 1) would require the development of new facilities to compensate the comparatively poor connectivity to existing services and facilities.
SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

12.4.9 For SA13, the north and east sectors (Option 1 and 2) offer good potential to move toward this objective through good potential for deliverability. However this will depend on land availability which will be assessed as part of the SHELAA later in 2016. The southern sectors (Option 3 and 4) may struggle with delivery issues relating to highway impacts, particularly in the south east sector.

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health

12.4.10 All of the Options and sectors would offer good potential to move toward achieving SA15 either through their proximity to health facilities, leisure, sport or open/green space.

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

12.4.11 Option 1 is well located to sports and leisure facilities and has reasonable access to the town centre, therefore it offers opportunities for promoting community vibrancy (SA16). Options 3 and 4, whilst removed from the town centre are well located to the neighbourhood centre of Jarvis Brook and have the potential to provide further facilities and contribute to maintaining the vibrancy of the community.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

12.4.9 Economically, the location of housing in Crowborough per se will not have a direct bearing on the SA Objectives; however the provision of housing development itself will likely have positive effects in locating people close to existing and new employment opportunities. This could also help improve access to jobs. In terms of the regeneration of town centres, the housing development together with policies for Crowborough town centre will help ensure regeneration.

12.4.10 Developing a mix of uses as part of comprehensive development schemes can be a preferred method of ensuring vibrant communities which support and ensure high and stable levels of employment. All the Options have some potential to contribute to achieving SA17 and SA18. The north sector (Option 1) is more limited in potential, the east and the south sectors have perhaps the greatest potential to deliver significant employment floorspace, subject to transport constraints and provide for small firms and local businesses.
Preferred Option for Testing 27

12.4.10 The Preferred Option for Testing for Crowborough is contained in Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

12.4.11 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Due to the low housing numbers and the ability to infill and redevelop, the preferred approach is to restrict the provision within the existing urban area focusing on brownfield development. However, if it considered necessary to look outside of this sustainable area, then the South East of Crowborough would be the next favoured option for testing’.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 27 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

12.4.12 Overall the environmental effects of the Preferred Option for Testing for Crowborough would likely be positive. The relatively small amount of housing proposed means that infill and redevelopment opportunities within the existing built environment are possible and so will minimise or avoid completely any effects on the AONB and wider landscape. There may be some potential negative effects in regards to the Ashdown Forest SAC but these should be able to be addressed through appropriate mitigation measures in combination with this approach to housing delivery. However having the contingency of the south east Crowborough sector included in the Preferred Option for Testing means that there is capacity to use this area whilst maintaining neutral effects on the landscape.

12.4.13 The Preferred Option for Testing also focuses on brownfield development outside of the AONB first and so will have positive effects in achieving SA9.

Social SA Objectives

12.4.14 Socially, the Preferred Option for Testing will have positive effects for Crowborough. Access to services and facilities (SA12) will be improved through the intensification of development within the built up area bringing people in close proximity to the centre. There may also be
opportunities for new services and facilities to locate to the centre or wider built up area as a result of redevelopment opportunities. However, there are likely to still be issues regarding access if development goes ahead in south east Crowborough which would need to be addressed.

**Economic SA Objective**

12.4.15 The Preferred Option for Testing does not make reference to employment provision per se however there is always the opportunity for new employment creation alongside housing development. Providing infill and redevelopment opportunities within the existing built up area may have an indirect effect of helping aid the regeneration of Crowborough town centre, together with the town centre policies themselves.

**12.5 Edge of Tunbridge Wells**

12.5.1 Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be considered in relation to the Edge of Tunbridge Wells, principally to accommodate the delivery of 320 dwellings on the edge of Tunbridge Wells including 120 dwellings identified in the Core Strategy.

12.5.2 The Options considered for accommodating the above are:

- **Option 1** – East of railway line in the Parish of Frant on the edge of Tunbridge Wells
- **Option 2** – West of railway line in the Parish of Frant on the edge of Tunbridge Wells

12.5.3 Please refer to paragraphs 17.21 to 17.22 and Map 43 within Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper for a description of the sectors under each Option.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Edge of Tunbridge Wells Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

| SA Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Option 1      | +/-| + | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | ?  | +  | o  | o  | o  | +  | ?  | ?  |
| Option 2      | +/-| + | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | +  | o  | +  | o  | o  | +  | ?  | ?  |

12.5.4 As the proposed development includes the 120 dwellings allocated under the Corte Strategy, the principle of that quantum of development has already been established and assessed as sound.
Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

12.5.5 In terms of the environmental SA Objectives the majority are unaffected by the Options. For SA1 the effects of Option 1 are mixed due to the fact that the sector it refers to is part of the Hawkenbury Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). There has been some degrading of the SNCI over time through it being unmanaged which has resulted in some loss of floristic diversity, however it is considered to have the potential to be restored with appropriate management. Therefore, there may be further degradation of the site if development were allowed within the sector, and not managed appropriately, however the potential for development could also help restoration efforts through the layout and design and the possible management of the SNCI itself.

12.5.6 Option 2 is likely to have positive effects in terms of SA1 for similar reasoning as Option 1. Option 2 includes a sector which has a former landfill site and an SNCI and development would provide opportunities for improvements to be made to these assets which could help ensure biodiversity connections for flora and fauna.

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

12.5.7 For SA2 the effects of both Options are likely to be positive as the sectors they include are outside of the AONB. However, careful design and layout of any potential development would still be required to ensure there are no negative effects on the setting of the AONB.

12.5.9 Option 2 is likely to have positive effects in achieving SA9 due to the fact it would include the development of brownfield land specifically.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

12.5.10 Both Options are likely to have positive effects on SA12 in terms of improving access to services and facilities. The sectors they incorporate are adjacent to the south-eastern urban edge of Tunbridge Wells and there are good public transport links in the area which could be enhanced as a part of any development.

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

12.5.11 There is the opportunity within both sectors to connect new development with the existing development at the edge of Tunbridge Wells which could help foster community cohesion and vibrancy (SA16)
Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

12.5.12 Both Options have the potential to positively affect SA17 through the provision of employment floorspace as part of a mixed use development scheme. There are opportunities to strengthen the local economy within Frant as part of any development in either of the sectors due to the locating of people within close proximity to services and facilities. However, the proximity and ease of access to Tunbridge Wells from the sectors may mean a loss of any beneficial impacts on SA18.

Preferred Option for Testing 28

12.5.13 The Preferred Option for Testing for the Edge of Tunbridge Wells in the Parish of Frant is contained in Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

12.5.14 The Preferred Option is:

“To maximise the potential for development on Land West of the Railway Line in the Parish of Frant on the edge of Tunbridge Wells, by developing the brownfield land including the former landfill site. In addition seek opportunities to maximise the benefit to the Site of Nature Conservation Importance through development”.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 28 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

| SA Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Preferred Option for Testing 28 | + | ? | o | o | o | o | o | o | + | ? | o | o | + | o | o | + | + | + |

Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

12.5.15 The overall effects of the Preferred Option for Testing 28 on these SA Objectives is likely to be positive. Although the AONB does abut the sector, mitigation measures can be implemented to lessen any potential adverse impacts, particularly landscaping. In addition, the Preferred Option for Testing seeks to maximise the benefits from development to the SNCI which will in turn help move towards achieving SA1 and SA2.
12.5.16 The focus on brownfield development, particularly the former landfill, will make sure positive effects are achieved in relation to SA9. Caution will be needed however as to any land contamination issues that may be present as a result of the former use.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

12.5.17 Socially, the Preferred Option for Testing offers positive effects in terms of the SA Objectives. Access to services and facilities will be improved through the close proximity to Tunbridge Wells and the train station at Frant will help provide sustainable transport links.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

12.5.18 Economically, direct beneficial effects will be achieved from the Preferred Option for Testing as part of mixed use developments and this will depend on specific site selection and developments proposed. The proximity of Tunbridge Wells will play its role and access for people from the new development to employment opportunities within Tunbridge Wells achieved.

12.6 Stone Cross

12.6.1 Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be considered in relation to Stone Cross, principally to accommodate the delivery of 500 dwellings in and around Stone Cross.

12.6.2 The Options considered for accommodating the above are:

- **Option 1** – North-east Stone Cross
- **Option 2** – East Stone Cross
- **Option 3** – South-east Stone Cross
- **Option 4** – West Stone Cross
- **Option 5** – North-west Stone Cross

12.6.3 Please refer to paragraphs 17.23 and Map 44 within Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper for a description of the sectors under each Option.
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Stone Cross Options (SA Tasks B3/B4):
General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

12.6.4 All of the Options would deliver development on greenfield land and so there would be some loss in biodiversity, however there are no significant biodiversity constraints. The north-east and north-west sectors (Option 1 and 5) do contain pockets of ancient woodland which would need to be safeguarded in relation to any development. Any development in the south east sector (Option 3) would need to ensure no adverse effects on the Eastbourne Levels occurred.

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

12.6.5 In terms of SA2, the east and south eastern sectors (Options 2 and 3) raise landscape issues when considering locating new development. Option 2 has long reaching views from the Westham area and beyond and Option 3 has several areas that are prominent within the landscape. The western sector (Option 4) does have longer views to the South Downs National Park however this sector must be seen in context of the existing development at Polegate and Willingdon.

SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment.

12.6.6 For SA7, the north-east; west and north-west sectors are assessed as having positive effects as none of the sectors contain flood risk areas. The east and south east sectors are assessed as having negative effects against SA7 due to the presence of flood risk areas within the sectors. However, appropriate mitigation and avoidance of development within the flood risk areas would address development in these sectors.
SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy

12.6.7 The effects of the Options on SA8 and SA11 are linked. All of the Options raise concerns over air pollution issues (SA8) due to the topography of the area and the proximity to the road network. Good public transport links to Eastbourne help to mitigate this aspect but all new development in the area should focus on reducing future air pollution through enhancing public transport links, walking and cycle routes to services and facilities. This will have positive effects on SA10 which in turn will have knock on beneficial effects on SA11 through the reduction in vehicle emissions. Emissions from new development will need to be addressed through sustainable building design.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

12.6.8 Development of the scale proposed means the use of Greenfield land in any of the sectors and so there may be potential negative effects on SA9. However, opportunities for redevelopment of brownfield land may be present and would need to be explored first.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

12.6.9 The northern and south-eastern sectors (Options 1; 3 and 5) have good connectivity with local centres which provide a range of services and facilities and this would improve access to these assets for residents, although there may be issues with accessing the B2104 in the north-eastern sector (SA12).

SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

12.6.10 In terms of SA13, the northern sectors (Options 1 and 5) present the best opportunities for the delivery of market and affordable housing due to their relative lack of constraints. The western sector (Option 4) may be more appropriate for employment rather than housing development due to its relationship with the employment areas along Dittons Road and access to the A27. It does possess the potential for delivery of some housing development provided landscape issues can be overcome. The south-eastern and eastern sectors (Options 2 and 3) are constrained by landscape and flood risk issues.

SA14 Improve the level of skills, education and training amongst the population and develop a skilled workforce to support long term economic competitiveness

12.6.11 In terms of contributions to meeting SA14 the western and south-eastern locations (Options 1; 3 and 5) may help through providing employment opportunities and ability to maintain a skilled workforce.
respectively. The south-eastern location has good access to Eastbourne schools and could help deliver regeneration to Langney.

**SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health**

12.6.12 In terms of SA15, the north-west and western sectors (Options 4 and 5) offer good access to the health care facilities at the Stone Cross surgery. The north east and east sectors (Options 1 and 2) would also offer access to the Stone Cross surgery however it is slightly further out than Options 4 and 5. The south-eastern location (Option 3) also has good access to health care facilities at Langney. The north and west sectors do raise concerns however over their proximity to the road network and hence to road noise impacts which can affect the health and wellbeing of people. Any development in these sectors would need to consider mitigation measures.

**SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community**

12.6.13 Options 1; 2; 4 and 5 have good connectivity with the settlement centre and offer good potential to create a more cohesive community. Development within the east sector (Option 2) would need to focus on community vibrancy to ensure it overcomes the fact that the sector is on the edge of the settlement. The south-eastern sector has strong associations with the Langney centre to the south and could contribute to the regeneration of Langney. It is on the edge of Stone Cross and is severed by the railway line which gives it a sense of being disjointed from the centre of the settlement.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

**SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses**

12.6.14 In terms of SA17 and the provision of employment opportunities, the north-west and western sectors (Options 4 and 5) offer the most beneficial effects due to their relationship with employment floorspace along the Dittons Road area, their good access to the road network and the A27 which is important for business. These sectors also offer the potential to deliver opportunities for high tech and knowledge based industries. The other sectors may have potential for some employment provision as part of mixed use developments or live/work units.

**SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism**

12.6.15 For SA18, all of the Options except for perhaps Option 3 (south east sector) offer potential for the regeneration of the settlement centre.
Option 3 is rather removed from the centre of Stone Cross and is more likely to help with the regeneration of the centre at Langney.

**Preferred Option for Testing 29**


12.6.14 The Preferred Option is:

“To consider allocating sites within all Sectors, taking into account any issues of access, landscape protection and avoiding areas of flood risk. There may be opportunities to deliver some of the housing as infill within the existing built form; the exact amount of which will be provided through a capacity study”.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 29 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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12.6.15 The Preferred Option for Testing takes forward all of the sectors assessed as broad locations and so the SA assessment of these Options is relevant to the Preferred Option for Testing 29.

**Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)**

12.6.16 Overall the Preferred Option for Testing will have positive effects on these SA Objectives. In considering all of the sectors the amount of growth will be distributed within and around Stone Cross taking into account the issues and constraints of each sector. The Preferred Option for Testing would avoid flood risk areas and take into account mitigation measures for issues such as road noise and landscape impact. The inclusion of seeking infill opportunities will also be positive in terms of SA9 and the use of brownfield/previously developed sites.

12.6.17 The good public transport links with Eastbourne mean development within the settlement as a whole has significant potential to encourage and promote sustainable modes of transport other than the car, and this will be important in mitigating the good access Stone Cross has to the road network. This will have positive effects on SA8; SA10 and SA11.
Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

12.6.18 Socially the Preferred Option for Testing will have overall positive effects on the SA Objectives. Access to services and facilities will be improved provided that infrastructure is provided alongside any development. The Preferred Option for Testing seeks to use all sectors for development taking into account their relative constraints and so the delivery of market and affordable housing will be achieved appropriately and to meet local need.

12.6.19 In regards to SA14 the Preferred Option has no direct effect as it does not deal with employment land provision, however the level of housing proposed would help support a local workforce for any businesses wishing to locate in Stone Cross. Stone Cross itself has a surgery and there is access to health care facilities at Langney, so provided the capacity of the facilities is not exceeded through the provision of development, good access should be maintained (SA15).

12.6.20 The Preferred Option for Testing should help foster vibrant and inclusive communities through opportunities to enhance connectivity with the centre. This would need to be particularly considered if housing development occurs in the south eastern sector.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

12.6.21 Economically, the Preferred Option for Testing would provide housing within close proximity to employment opportunities along Dittons Road and particularly to the west of Stone Cross, development could include an element of employment floorspace as part of mixed use developments. Access to the A27 is also good and would provide opportunities to access employment in other settlements such as Eastbourne and Hailsham. The shopping area within Stone Cross would need further enhancement to support the level of growth proposed and this would need careful consideration.

12.7 Westham

12.7.1 Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be considered in relation to Westham, principally to accommodate the delivery of 350 dwellings in and around Westham.

12.7.2 The Options considered for accommodating the above are:

- **Option 1** – North Westham
- **Option 2** – East Westham
- **Option 3** – South East Westham
- **Option 4** – South West Westham
- **Option 5** – West Westham
- **Option 6** - North West Westham
12.7.3 Please refer to paragraphs 17.24 to 17.29 and Map 45 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper for a description of the sectors under each Option.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Westham Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

| SA Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| **Option 1**  | + | + | o | o | o | o | - | ? | ? | ? | + | + | o | + | + | ? | ? |
| **Option 3**  | + | + | o | o | o | o | - | ? | ? | + | ? | - | + | o | ? | - | + | - |
| **Option 4**  | + | + | o | o | o | o | - | ? | ? | + | ? | - | + | o | ? | - | + | - |
| **Option 5**  | + | + | o | o | o | o | - | ? | ? | ? | ? | + | + | o | - | + | ? | + |

**Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)**

**SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District**

12.7.4 All of the Options would deliver development on Greenfield land and so there would be some loss in biodiversity, however there are no significant biodiversity constraints and therefore overall the effects on SA1 would be positive.

**SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets**

12.7.5 In terms of SA2, the effects are also considered to be positive in that none of the sectors are particularly prominent in the landscape or views. Option 2 however contains the eastern sector within which lie the ruins of Pevensey Castle and the Roman fort and so development here may adversely affect the setting of the asset. Conversely, development in this sector may enhance access to the historic and cultural asset (SA3).

**SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment.**

12.7.6 All of the sectors contain flood risk areas and so are assessed as having negative effects against SA7. However, the north and north-west sectors are less constrained in terms of the area covered by flood risk. Appropriate mitigation and avoidance of development within the flood risk areas would address development in these sectors.

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SA8 Reduces air pollution and ensures local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy.

12.7.7 The effects of the Options on SA8 and SA11 are linked. All of the Options raise concerns over air pollution issues (SA8) due to the proximity to the road network. The presence of the train station offers good public transport links to Eastbourne and Brighton and would help to mitigate this aspect but all new development in the area should focus on reducing future air pollution through enhancing public transport links, walking and cycle routes to services and facilities. Emissions from new development will need to be addressed through sustainable building design.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transport modes (walking, cycling and public transport).

12.7.8 For SA10 Option 6 is likely to have negative effects as it is quite a distance from the train station and has good access onto the road network which would encourage car use. Improvements to public transport would help overcome this. The east, south east and south west sectors have good access to the train station which could be enhanced as part of development to encourage the use of it.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces.

12.7.9 The north; north-west and eastern sectors have good connectivity with the existing settlement which offers some facilities and services and the north-west sector also has a good proximity and access to Stone Cross (SA12). The south east and south west sectors are removed from the settlement and severed by the railway line creating a feeling of them being disjointed from the existing built form.

SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home.

12.7.10 In terms of SA13, all of the sectors have constraints, primarily in the form of flood risk areas. The northern sector (Option 1) and north west sector (Option 6), present the best opportunities for the delivery of market and affordable housing due to the fact it has the least amount of flood risk. There is likely to be small opportunities within the other sectors but these will be limited.

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health.

12.7.11 In terms of health and wellbeing (SA15) Westham shares access to the Surgery at Stone Cross and in this respect the north-west sector
offers the best access. The west and north-western sectors (Options 5 and 6) do raise issues over road noise which can affect the health and wellbeing of people and so have negative effects on SA15.

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

12.7.12 Options 1; 2 and 5 have good connectivity with the settlement centre and offer good potential to create a more cohesive community. Development within the south east and south west sectors (Options 3 and 4) are disconnected from the main settlement and any development here would need to focus on community vibrancy to ensure it overcame that fact. The north-west sector (Option 6) is a little far out from the settlement however development here could lead to the creation of a more cohesive community in combination with development at Stone Cross.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

12.7.13 In economic terms the south east and south west sectors offer the greatest potential for employment floorspace provision (SA17). There are existing employment sites within these sectors and so this makes them more suitable to employment rather than housing development. For the other sectors there are opportunities for employment provision as part of mixed use developments and this would improve access to jobs.

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

12.7.14 For SA18, Options 1; 2 and 5 offer the potential for regenerating the settlement centre. The remaining Options are not particularly well connected to the settlement centre.

Preferred Option for Testing 30

12.7.15 The Preferred Option for Testing for Westham is contained in Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

12.7.16 The Preferred Option is:

“To initially focus the delivery on infill, subject to a capacity study, with potential allocations to meet requirements in North, West and North West Westham, whilst avoiding areas of flood risk”.

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Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 30 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

12.7.17 Overall the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have positive effects on these SA Objectives. There are no biodiversity or particular landscape constraints and the fact that development will initially be focused on infill means that the best use of brownfield land will be achieved first. However, it is clear that there will need to be some element of Greenfield land development as well. The Preferred Option for Testing also avoids any flood risk areas and so will have help achieve SA7. For SA8 and SA11 emissions are likely to increase due to the fact that Westham has such good access to the road network, however the presence of the train station should help mitigate any negative impacts and development could help enhance access to the train station, particularly walking and cycling routes, from the sectors included.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

12.7.18 Socially, the effects of the Preferred Option for Testing are likely to be positive. Westham is an accessible settlement with good links to Eastbourne providing access to services and facilities for people. With the train station this access is further enhanced (SA12). Housing provision will be within the most accessible sectors and will be able to meet local need provided issues of flood risk can be overcome (SA13). The presence of the flood risk areas does reduce the land potentially available for development however the Preferred Option for Testing is seeking to locate development in the least constrained sectors in terms of flood risk.

12.7.19 In regards to SA14 the Preferred Option has no direct effect as it does not deal with employment land provision, however the level of housing proposed would help support a local workforce and attract new businesses. Westham itself does not have a surgery but there is access to health care facilities at Stone Cross and Langney. The scale of development and sector location may provide opportunities for new health care facilities to address this issue (SA15).

12.7.20 The Preferred Option for Testing should help foster vibrant and inclusive communities through opportunities to enhance connectivity with the centre and the wider area including Stone Cross and Eastbourne. This would need to be particularly considered if housing development occurs in the north west sector.
Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

12.7.21 In economic terms the Preferred Option for Testing offers opportunities for employment provision as part of mixed use developments and this would improve access to jobs.

12.8 Herstmonceux

12.8.1 Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be considered in relation to Herstmonceux, principally to accommodate the delivery of 120 dwellings in and around Herstmonceux.

12.8.2 The Options considered for accommodating the above are:

- **Option 1** – North-east Herstmonceux
- **Option 2** – North Herstmonceux
- **Option 3** – West Herstmonceux
- **Option 4** – East Herstmonceux
- **Option 5** – South Herstmonceux

12.8.3 Please refer to paragraphs 17.30 to 17.33 and Map 46 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper for a description of the sectors under each Option.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Westham Options (SA Tasks B3/B4):

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

12.8.4 Any significant development at Herstmonceux is likely to result in the use of Greenfield sites and so there will be some loss in biodiversity however there are no significant biodiversity constraints. The Pevensey Levels do lie to the south of the settlement and there could be potential impacts however at present the WwTWS do have capacity for development. Therefore, SA1
should be positively affected in all but Option 5. The south Herstmonceux sector slopes steeply down to the watercourse and development here could exacerbate surface water runoff which has the potential to convey pollutants to the watercourse. Mitigation measures can be introduced to combat this.

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

12.8.5 In regards to SA2 Options 1 and 2 contain sectors which are within the High Weald AONB and so any development would adversely affect the achievement of this SA Objective. Option 3 contains the east sector which has long reaching views across the Pevensey Levels towards the South Downs and so development here would be highly visible in the landscape. Option 5 contains the south sector which again has long reaching views to the South Downs meaning any significant development would be highly visible within the landscape. Option 3 contains the west sector and this is not visible within the wider landscape and would offer potential for development.

SA5 To maintain and improve the water quality of the District’s rivers and groundwater, and to achieve sustainable water resources management

12.8.6 In terms of SA5, Options 1 and 2 would have likely negative effects due to the fact there are issues of drainage within the sectors as a result of the soil type and also where a Sustainable Urban Drainage System may drain to.

SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy

12.8.7 The effects of the Options on SA8 and SA11 are linked. All of the Options raise concerns over air pollution issues (SA8) due to the topography of the area and the proximity to the road network. Good public transport links to along the A271, which runs through the centre of Herstmonceux, help to mitigate this aspect but all new development in the area should focus on reducing future air pollution through enhancing public transport links, walking and cycle routes to services and facilities.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes (walking, cycling and public transport)

12.8.8 Option 1 contains the north east sector which suffers from access issues and may pose problems for people wishing to access the settlement centre and its facilities, hence having a negative effect on SA10. Option 2 contains the north sector and this is quite far out from the settlement centre and also has access issues which may mean people decide to travel further to access services and facilities. Option 3 has the west sector located within it. There is better access to the settlement centre here with footpaths on either side of the road which could be enhanced to improve access. Development past Buckwell Farm however would be too far removed from the settlement
core. Option 4 and the east sector offer the most positive effects for SA12 as the sector contains the majority of the settlement core and its facilities and hence people would be in close proximity to them. Option 5 and the south sector is closer to the settlement centre than the west sector and so has more beneficial effects on SA10 and there is a footpath along the road to encourage walking from this sector.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

12.8.9 The centre of Herstmonceux is compact and has a good range of facilities and services. In terms SA12, Options 1 and 2 (the north-east and north sectors) suffer from significant access issues including connectivity to the centre, and so are likely to have negative effects on SA12. Option 3, the west sector, is a little far removed from the settlement centre however does still afford reasonably good access although issues with road congestion could arise from significant development. Option 4, the east sector, has the most potential benefits for SA12 as it offers good level access to the settlement core and its facilities and also has footpaths alongside the road to facilitate walking. Option 5, the south sector, has potential for positive effects however the land does slope steeply and this could make walking/cycling difficult.

SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

12.8.10 All of the Options have the potential to deliver market and affordable housing however Options 1 and 2 are more restricted due to access issues and the presence of the AONB; Option 3 could lead to issues with road congestion; Option 4 is constrained by the fact that there are long views to and from the south and development would potentially be visible within views to and from the South Downs and Option 5 has steeply sloping land which is very open.

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health

12.8.11 In terms of health and wellbeing (SA15) Herstmonceux has a new medical centre is the centre of the village and in this respect all Options have potential beneficial effects, albeit some more than others considering other constraints. Options 4 and 5 perhaps offer the most beneficial effects due to their proximity to the medical centre.

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

12.8.12 Herstmonceux is a compact settlement and all Options offer some potential to create more inclusive communities. The settlement has also recently had a new community hall built within the southern sector. Options 4
and 5 have good connectivity with the settlement centre and community hall and offer good potential to create a more cohesive community. Development within the west sector (Options 3) if taken too far past Buckwell Farm would appear detached from the settlement and may lead to a feeling of isolation from the existing community. Options 1 and 2 offer opportunities to consolidate the community however there remain access issues.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

12.8.13 Economically Herstmonceux is relatively well off as it has a thriving centre and community. There are no large areas of economic activity however. There may be opportunities within all sectors for live/work units and small scale business development but no real opportunities for employment development.

**Preferred Option for Testing 31**

12.8.14 The Preferred Option for Testing for Herstmonceux is contained in Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

12.8.15 The Preferred Option is:

‘To initially focus the delivery on infill, subject to an urban capacity study, with potential allocations to meet requirements in all Sectors, whilst avoiding development in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 31 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**Economic SA Objectives**

12.8.16 In terms of these SA Objectives the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have overall beneficial effects, provided the constraints identified in the SA of the Options are adequately addressed. There are no specific biodiversity constraints, despite the presence of the Pevensey Levels to the south. The Preferred Option would avoid development in the AONB however development may take place adjacent or abutting the designation and so issues with design and mitigation will need to be implemented. Whilst there are no flood risk areas, the land does slope away steeply to the south towards a watercourse and so risk may be increased from rapid surface water runoff. SuDS measures would be required to mitigate this. As the A271 runs directly through Herstmonceux, it is likely that any form of development would
increase car usage and hence potential air pollution and increases in emissions. However, improvements to the bus service as a result of development will help mitigate this impact. Focusing on infill development first will positively affect SA9 and ensure the best use of previously developed land. Improvements to walking and cycling routes as well as the bus service will encourage more sustainable transport modes.

**Social SA Objectives**

12.8.17 Increasing connectivity to the settlement centre through improvements to walking and cycling routes will improve accessibility to the services and facilities it offers as well as contributing to lowering emissions and enhancing people’s health and wellbeing. Congestion may also be reduced, further reducing emissions and helping ensure air quality remains good. The level of housing and siting potential allocations in all sectors will help meet local need for housing whilst taking into account the specific constraints. The new medical centre and village hall are centrally located and therefore easy to access and will help improve people’s health whilst creating inclusive and vibrant communities which build on the existing cohesive community present in the settlement.

**Economic SA Objectives**

12.8.18 Economically, there are likely to be opportunities for small scale live/work units and maybe some small scale employment space as a part of mixed development, however there is no large employment area potential. Within the settlement centre opportunities may arise for redevelopment and the locating of existing or new businesses offering local employment opportunities. The settlement has a good range of businesses already located within it.

12.9 Ninfield

12.9.1 Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be considered in relation to Ninfield, principally to accommodate the delivery of 195 dwellings in and around Ninfield, taking into account consents already granted on Greenfield land after April 2015..

12.9.2 The Options considered for accommodating the above are:

- **Option 1** - North West Ninfield
- **Option 2** - North (1) Ninfield
- **Option 3** - North (2) Ninfield
- **Option 4** - East Ninfield
- **Option 5** - South East Ninfield
- **Option 6** - South (1) Ninfield
- **Option 7** - South (2) Ninfield
- **Option 8** - West Ninfield
12.9.3 Please refer to paragraphs 17.34 to 17.41 and Map 47 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper for a description of the sectors under each Option.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Westham Options (SA Tasks B3/B4):
General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

12.9.4 Any significant development at Ninfield is likely to result in the use of Greenfield sites and so there will be some loss in biodiversity, however there are no significant biodiversity constraints (SA1). The exception is Option 1, the north-west sector which contains an SNCI which could be affected by any development.

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

12.9.5 In regards to SA2 there are issues within most of the sectors. Option 1 is within the High Weald AONB and as such development would likely have negative effects. Option 2 abuts the AONB to the north and so there may be some negative effects although these could be mitigated with appropriate measures such as landscaping. Option 3 contains a small area of ancient woodland which again could be negatively affected but protection measures could be put in place. Options 4 and 6 have no landscape constraints whilst Options 5 and 8 could negatively affect SA2 as Option 5 contains a large area of ancient woodland and Option 8 has far reaching views across to the South Downs and Pevensey Levels. Option 7 does have a degree of open landscape which may mean negative effects from development; however mitigation measures could be introduced.
SA5 To maintain and improve the water quality of the District’s rivers and groundwater, and to achieve sustainable water resources management

12.9.6 Option 1 may have negative effects on SA5 due to the presence of the reservoir area. There could be the potential for contamination of the reservoir from any form of development; however protection measures would need to be introduced should any development go ahead.

SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment.

12.9.7 There are some small flood risk areas within the north(2) and south-east sectors which could mean negative effects against SA7 for Options 3 and 5 however they are small and could be avoided should any development go ahead. The other sectors do not have flood risk areas however any greenfield development could result in flood risk and so appropriate measures should be taken.

SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy

12.9.8 The effects of the Options on SA8 and SA11 are linked. All of the Options raise concerns over air pollution issues (SA8) due to the location of the settlement within the District and the fact that the A271 runs directly through the centre of Ninfield. Good public transport links to Bexhill and Hailsham help to mitigate this aspect but all new development in the area should focus on reducing future air pollution through enhancing public transport links, walking and cycle routes to services and facilities. This will have positive effects on SA10 which in turn will have knock on beneficial effects on SA11 through the reduction in vehicle emissions. Emissions from new development will need to be addressed through sustainable building design.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

12.9.9 Development of the scale proposed means the use of Greenfield land in any of the sectors and so there may be potential negative effects on SA9. However, opportunities for redevelopment of brownfield land may be present and would need to be explored first. Options 2; 5; 7 and 8 are likely to contain whatever previously developed land there is as these sectors already contain development. The remaining Options contain large areas of Greenfield land and so are less likely to have beneficial effects in regards to SA9.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

12.9.10 The north 1 and 2; south-east and south 2 sectors (Options 2; 3; 5 and 7) have poor accessibility and hence connectivity with the settlement
centre and so will have negative effects on SA12. Footpaths within north 1 are poor and non-existent in north 2 with little opportunity for provision which makes pedestrian access to services and facilities poor. The south-east sector is disjointed from the settlement making access to services and facilities difficult and in the south sector access issues exist from Church Lane and Church Path. However, these issues could be overcome through development and careful design. East Ninfield (Option 4) offers good potential for improving access to services and facilities as it is well related to the centre of the settlement.

**SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home**

12.9.11 In terms of SA13, the east and south sectors (Options 4; 6 and 7) present the best opportunities for the delivery of market and affordable housing due to their relative lack of constraints. The north-west sector (Option 1) is constrained by the presence of the AONB, the SNCI and the reservoir area. The north sectors (Options 2 and 3) may have some potential if the issues of access, particularly pedestrian access, can be overcome. The south-east sector (Option 5) does possess the potential for delivery of some housing development however careful consideration would be needed as the sector does feel disjointed from the rest of Ninfield. The west sector (Option 8) is constrained by the open nature of the landscape and the long distance views to the South Downs.

**SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health**

12.9.12 In terms of SA15, the north(2); east and south(2) sectors (Options 3; 4 and 7) are in close proximity to the health care facilities at the Ninfield surgery although pedestrian access may be difficult due to the lack of footpaths provision. Option 5 is too far removed from the settlement and Option 1 does have footpaths but these are narrow. Once into the settlement centre, the footpaths do improve.

**SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community**

12.9.13 With regards to SA16, Ninfield does have an active and vibrant community. Development within the north-west, north (1); south (1) and south-east sectors (Options 1; 2; 5 and 6) may feel too detached from the existing settlement to help towards creating a more cohesive community. Issues of connectivity within these sectors exacerbate this fact. The north(2); east and south(2) sectors (Options 3; 4 and 7) are closer to the centre of the settlement and so offer more opportunities to create cohesive communities provided issues of access and connectivity can be overcome.
Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

12.9.14 Option 1 has little capacity for any employment development due to the presence of the AONB and the SNCI, although this could be addressed through suitable mitigation measures. Options 2 and 3 present issues in regards to accessibility and the topography of the land and are unlikely to deliver significant employment land provision or jobs. Option 4 has the potential for some degree of employment development due to its location and relative good accessibility to Bexhill and Hailsham. Employment could be provided as part of a mixed use scheme and consent has recently been granted for residential development at Ingrams Fra mint his sector. The south east sector (Option 5) offers no real opportunities for employment provision due to its distance and isolation from the main village centre. Options 6 and 7 offer potential for employment development as they have existing development within them and also offer access to Bexhill and Hailsham. However issues of access and design would need careful consideration. Option 8 offers no real potential due to the open nature of the landscape which afford long distance view towards the South Downs and Pevensey Levels.

Preferred Option for Testing 32

12.9.15 The Preferred Option for Testing for Ninfield is contained in Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

12.9.16 The Preferred Option is:

“To initially focus the delivery on infill, subject to a capacity study, with potential allocations to meet requirements in Sectors South (1), South (2) and East Ninfield”

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 32 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

12.9.17 The Preferred Option for Testing seeks to locate the development within sectors which avoid any impact on the AONB and so has a positive effect on SA1. Within the south (2) sector careful design would be needed due to the open nature of the landscape to ensure no adverse effects on SA2. The sectors also avoid any flood risk areas (SA7); the focus is placed on infill development which will maximise the use of any brownfield land (SA9).
although Greenfield sites are likely to be utilised also and the development could help attract services and facilities to Ninfield whilst consolidating the existing and providing a local offer, reducing the need for people to make journeys out of the settlement (SA8 and SA10).

Social SA Objectives

12.9.18 Socially the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have overall positive effects. The sectors do have some access issues especially in relation to pedestrian connectivity with the settlement centre; however they are not as severe as in other parts of Ninfield and the potential development offers opportunities to improve access to services and facilities (SA12). The Sectors are also the least constrained and so offer the best opportunity to deliver the housing development needed to meet local needs (SA13). Whilst the Sectors are close to the existing doctor’s surgery, facilitating access to health care (SA15), there may be issues arising regarding the capacity for the surgery which will need to be addressed.

12.9.19 The Preferred Option for Testing should help foster vibrant and inclusive communities (SA16) through opportunities to enhance connectivity with the centre.

Economic SA Objectives

12.9.20 Economically, the Preferred Option for Testing would provide housing within relatively good access to employment centres at Bexhill and Hailsham along the A271. Development could include an element of employment floorspace as part of mixed use developments. The centre of Ninfield would need improvements to attract in businesses and services to ensure that the infrastructure is there to support the housing.

12.10 East Hoathly

12.10.1 Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be considered in relation to East Hoathly, principally to accommodate the delivery of 190 dwellings in and around East Hoathly.

12.10.2 The Options considered for accommodating the above are:

- **Option 1** - North (1) and North west, East Hoathly
- **Option 2** - North (2), East Hoathly
- **Option 3** - North East, East Hoathly
- **Option 4** - East, East Hoathly
- **Option 5** - South East, East Hoathly
- **Option 6** – South, East Hoathly
- **Option 7** - South West, East Hoathly
- **Option 8** - West East, Hoathly
12.10.3 Please refer to paragraphs 17.42 to 17.49 and Map 48 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper for a description of the sectors under each Option.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the East Hoathly Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

12.10.4 Any significant development at East Hoathly is likely to result in the use of greenfield sites and so there will be some loss in biodiversity, however there are no significant biodiversity constraints (SA1).

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

12.10.5 The north(2); east; south-east and south sectors (Options 2 and 4-6) do not have issues with landscape restrictions and hence have a positive effect on SA2. However, the north (2) sector does contain a heritage asset which could be adversely impacted upon from any development. The north (1) and north-east sectors (Options 1 and 3) have some degree of constraint due to the presence of pockets of ancient woodland that may be negatively affected by any development. However, measures can be introduced to mitigate any impacts. The south-west and west sectors (Options 7 and 8) have large areas of ancient woodland within them which would restrict development and may result in negative impacts on SA2.

SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment.

12.10.6 In terms of flood risk (SA7) none of the sectors contain flood risk areas and so the likely effects will be positive for SA7. However, significant

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development within and around East Hoathly would require greenfield sites which could result in increased runoff from heavy rainfall events.

SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy

12.10.7 In regards to SA8 and SA11 all of the Options raise issues of increases in emissions and air pollution due to the proximity of the settlement to the road network, principally the A22. This could encourage car use from new development. However, the settlement is well served by bus routes linking the settlement with Uckfield, Hailsham and Polegate and improvements to public transport links as part of any development could help achieve SA8 and SA11 in terms of vehicle emissions. Emissions from housing would need to be addressed through sustainable construction.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

12.10.8 The north(1); east and south-east sectors offer the most potential for positive effects in relation to SA9 as they contain the majority of the existing built form. The south-east sector has the best potential as it would provide opportunities to consolidate the existing settlement. The remaining sectors contain mainly open fields and land which is unlikely to have been previously developed, although there is always the possibility of small scale brownfield sites being present.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes (walking, cycling and public transport)

12.10.9 For SA10 the south-east sector offers the most potential for positive effects as development here would be close to existing services including the school and doctors and would help consolidate the settlement. The other sectors all contain some type of constraint to minimising journey lengths but all development should contribute to improvements to walking and cycling routes as well as the public transport system.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

12.10.10 In terms of improving access to services and facilities (SA12) the north and north-west sectors (Option 1) and the south-east sector (Option 5) offer the most potential for positive effects. Access to services and facilities from the north and north-west sectors is very good whilst the south-east sector is close to all existing services and facilities and development here would consolidate those further. The north-east sector (Option 3) is too far out from the settlement centre; the east sector (Option 4) is constrained by significantly poor access issues, particularly pedestrian access through a lack
of footpaths along Mill Lane and Butts Field Lane and the south sector (Option 6) is also far removed from the existing settlement centre.

**SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home**

12.10.11 In terms of SA13, the north (1); north-west and south-east sectors (Options 1 and 5) have the most potential for delivery of housing, both market and affordable, and hence the potential for positive effects on SA13. These sectors are the least constrained and offer the best access to the settlement centre and its services and facilities. There may be limited opportunities in the other sectors. The north sector (Option 2) is tightly bound; the north-east sector (Option 3) appears to have land but is at a distance from the centre; the east sector (Option 4) has poor accessibility particularly pedestrian access routes; the south sector (Option 6) is quite separate from the existing form and development here could feel isolated and the south-west and west sectors (Options 7 and 8) have significant landscape constraints in the form of ancient woodland.

**SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health**

12.10.12 The south-east sector (Option 5) offers the most potential to positively affect the health and wellbeing of residents (SA15) as it is close to the existing doctor’s surgery and other services and facilities. The north and north-west sectors (Option 1) also have positive effects as they have good access to the services and facilities including the doctor’s surgery and the recreation ground. The remaining sectors all have some kind of constraint, be that access, landscape or distance from the settlement centre, which limit their potential to positively affect SA15.

**SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community**

12.10.13 Again, as with SA15, the south-east sector (Option 5) offers the greatest potential to create a cohesive and vibrant community (SA16) through the consolidation of the settlement through development. Connectivity with the existing community would be enhanced. Options 1; 2; 7 and 8 offer some potential to foster more cohesive communities if issues of access can be overcome. Options 3; 4 and 6 have too many constraints to allow significant development that would help build inclusive communities.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

**SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses**

12.10.14 There is no large business or industrial areas within or around East Hoathly. Most employment uses here are small. In terms of SA17, the
north (1) and north-west sector (Option 1) would offer some opportunity for small business unit development along the road frontage and there is good access to the rest of the settlement from this location. There are also large areas of land within the north-west sector however it is unclear at this time whether this is available or suitable.

12.10.15 The north (2) sector (Option 2) is too tightly constrained to offer any potential for employment land provision; the north-east sector (Option 3) has land but it is unknown at this stage whether this is available or not and in addition the sector is considered to be quite separate from the rest of East Hoathly. Whilst the east sector (Option 4) may have opportunities for small scale infill employment development, there are major access issues which would likely make it unsuitable.

12.10.16 The south-east sector (Option 5) offers the most potential for beneficial impacts on SA17 as it is close to existing services and facilities including existing businesses but this would only be small scale. The south sector (Option 6) again has potential land that may be available however it is considered too far removed from the existing settlement and gives the green setting to the entrance of the village. The east and west sectors (Options 7 and 8) have no real potential due to the presence of large areas of ancient woodland and the recreation ground.

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

12.10.15 In terms of SA18, the northern sectors (Options 1 and 2) and the south-east sector (Option 5) offer the most potential for regenerating the settlement centre as these sectors offer good access and are close to the existing services and facilities in East Hoathly.

Preferred Option for Testing 33

12.10.16 The Preferred Option for Testing for East Hoathly is contained in Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

12.10.17 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

“To initially focus the delivery on infill, subject to an capacity study, with potential allocations to meet requirements in South East Sector first and then North (1) and North-West East Hoathly”
Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 33 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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**Environmental SA Objectives**

12.10.18 The Preferred Option for Testing would have overall positive effects on these SA Objectives. There are no significant biodiversity constraints and any potential biodiversity loss as a result of greenfield development could be mitigated. The sectors included, together with infill, will avoid impacts on the ancient woodland and hence have a positive effect on the landscape. The heritage assets in the north (2) sector would also be protected from direct adverse impacts.

12.10.19 None of the sectors include flood risk areas and provided suitable measures can be incorporated on greenfield developments as well as infill (i.e. SuDS), flood risk should be avoided.

12.9.20 Air pollution and emissions reductions from traffic may be difficult to achieve due to the proximity of the A22 to the settlement, which may encourage car use. However, public transport connections are good and improvements to these could help achieve SA8 and SA11. In terms of emissions from dwellings, this will be dependent on other Local Plan policies concerned with design and sustainable construction.

12.10.21 Infill development will help achieve SA9 and make the most efficient use of brownfield land however the scale of housing proposed is likely to involve some element of greenfield site development. The Preferred Option for Testing will enable the consolidation of the settlement and this could bring improvements to service provision and facilities as well as placing more people within easy access of them. This could help achieve SA10 by enabling people to access day to day services within the settlement.

**Social SA Objectives**

12.10.22 Socially, the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have overall positive effects for East Hoathly. There are a good range and number of facilities and services within the settlement and the development would be in close proximity to these and within areas which have existing good access. The development may also attract new businesses to East Hoathly to complement the existing offer. The sectors involved, together with infill, will ensure that housing is delivered to meet the local need of East Hoathly and will be located in the most sustainable and accessible areas. Other Local Plan policies will determine the design and mix of market and affordable housing
however the scale of development will ensure that the affordable housing requirement, traditional and low cost market, can be met.

12.10.23 East Hoathly has an existing doctors surgery that subject to capacity would be able to serve any new development and the housing would be placed within close proximity to this or within areas that have good access to the centre of East Hoathly. There is also an existing recreation ground and allotments that could be further enhanced as part of development to help improve the wellbeing of residents also.

12.10.24 As well as consolidating the service provision within East Hoathly, the Preferred Option for Testing offers the opportunity to build strong, inclusive and cohesive communities through better connectivity with the centre and its facilities. New community facilities may be provided as a result of development.

Economic SA Objectives

12.10.25 Whilst economically the Preferred Option for Testing may not lead to extensive provision of employment land, the infill element and the sectors included provide the best opportunities for any that may come forward as they have good access and are well related to the existing services and facilities as well as the road network. The proximity of the areas to the centre of East Hoathly and the infill development element will help achieve SA18 and maintain the vitality of the village.

12.11 Horam

12.11.1 Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be considered in relation to Horam, principally to accommodate the delivery of 400 dwellings in and around Horam.

12.11.2 The Options considered for accommodating the above are:

- **Option 1** - North East Horam
- **Option 2** - East Horam
- **Option 3** - South Horam
- **Option 4** - West Horam
- **Option 5** - North West Horam

12.11.3 Please refer to paragraphs 17.50 to 17.54 and Map 49 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper for a description of the sectors under each Option.
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Horam Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

12.11.4 There are no significant biodiversity constraints in and around Horam and so the effect on SA1 is positive. Any greenfield development may lead some loss in biodiversity but mitigation measures can be introduced to address this.

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

12.11.5 In terms of SA2, the north-east and North West sectors (Options 1 and 5) are constrained by the presence of the High Weald AONB which covers significant swathes of these sectors. The east; south and west sectors (Options 2; 3 and 4) contain areas of ancient woodland, of varying sizes, which would need to be considered in order to avoid negative effects of SA2. The east sector contains the least and the west sectors the most.

SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment.

12.11.6 The north-west; north-east and east sectors (Options 1; 2 and 5) contain flood risk areas and as such are assessed as having negative effects against SA7. However, appropriate mitigation and avoidance of development within the flood risk areas would address development in these sectors. The south and west sectors (Options 3 and 4) have no flood risk areas and so are assessed as having positive effects against SA7. The other sectors do not have flood risk areas however any greenfield development could result in flood risk and so appropriate measures should be taken.
SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy

12.11.7 The effects of the Options on SA8 and SA11 are linked. All of the Options raise concerns over air pollution issues (SA8) due to the fact that Horam lies on the A267 Tunbridge Wells-Eastbourne, which may encourage car use. The north-east sector in particular may have negative effects on SA8 and SA11 as any development would be beyond the flood risk area and would be at some distance from the settlement centre and its services and facilities. However there are good public transport links via various bus routes, as well as the Cuckoo Trail which links Horam with Hailsham and Polegate in the south and Heathfield in the north. These sustainable transport modes could help to mitigate adverse impacts on SA8 and SA11 whilst encouraging the use of more sustainable transport modes. On but all new development in the area should focus on reducing future air pollution through enhancing public transport links, walking and cycle routes to services and facilities. This will have positive effects on SA10 which in turn will have knock on beneficial effects on SA11 through the reduction in vehicle emissions. Emissions from new development will need to be addressed through sustainable building design.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

12.11.8 All of the sectors except the north-east have the potential for positive effects on SA9, although the magnitude of positive effect will not be known until land availability has been assessed. The north east sector lies within the AONB and as such there is unlikely to be much if any brownfield land present. The south sector perhaps offers the most potential for positive effects as it contains the majority of the existing built form.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

12.11.9 In terms of improving access to services and facilities, the south and west sectors (Options 3 and 4) offer the most potential for positive effects on SA12. The south sector contains the majority of the existing built form and would locate new housing and development in close proximity to services and facilities. The west sector has good access and the potential for better access to be opened up in the south west area to enable development. Linkages with the centre of Horam from both these sectors would improve access. The other sectors have some potential to improve access however they have other constraints that would need to be overcome first. The Cuckoo Trail offers safe pedestrian and cycle access to services and facilities in other larger settlements also and linkages to the trail could be included from any new development.
SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

12.11.10 In terms of SA13, the south and west sectors (Options 3 and 4) present the best opportunities for the delivery of market and affordable housing due to their relative lack of constraints and provided that the ancient woodland areas are adequately protected. The north-west and north-east sectors (Options 1 and 5) are constrained by the presence of the AONB and flood risk areas, which would push any development too far out from the existing settlement. The east sector (Option 2) has some limited potential for housing delivery by avoiding the flood risk area.

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health

12.11.11 Implementation details of any development will a key concern in ensuring that improvements to health and wellbeing are achieved. The north-east and north-west sectors (Options 1 and 5), notwithstanding their constraints, would place development at some distance from the health facilities based in the centre of Horam and hence have negative effects on SA15. The south and west sectors (Options 3 and 4) would result in development being well located and within easy access of central health services in the centre of Horam. There may be issues arising from road noise within the south and west sectors which can affect the health and wellbeing of people.

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

12.11.12 The south and west sectors have good connectivity with the settlement centre and offer good potential to create a more cohesive community (SA16). Development within the north-west and north-east sectors would appear disconnected from the main settlement and any development here would need to focus on community vibrancy to ensure it overcame that fact.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

12.11.13 There are no large employment areas in and around Horam. In regards to SA17 and the provision of employment floorspace, the north-east and north-west sectors are too highly constrained by the AONB to be viable. The south and west sectors offer the most potential for beneficial effects however this is likely to be small scale employment opportunities. However the overall level of development may attract new employment opportunities to Horam and will place a lot of people within reasonable access of employment opportunities at Polegate, Hailsham and Heathfield. There may be
opportunities for small scale employment provision in the west, south and east sectors as part of mixed use developments and live/work units.

**SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism**

12.11.14 Again the west and south sectors offer the most potential for stimulating the regeneration of the centre of Horam due to their close proximity and ease of access to the existing. The east sector has some limited potential but the north-east and north-west sectors would result in development too far removed from the centre to offer any effects.

**Preferred Option for Testing 34**

12.11.15 The Preferred Option for Testing for Horam is contained in Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

12.11.16 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘To initially focus the delivery on infill, subject to a capacity study, with potential allocations to meet requirements at West and South Horam’.

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 34 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**Environmental SA Objectives**

12.11.17 Environmentally the Preferred Option for Testing presents overall positive effects in terms of the SA Objectives. There are no significant biodiversity constraints and any potential loss in biodiversity as a result of greenfield or other development can be mitigated. The south and west sectors do contain ancient woodland and this will need to be carefully considered in light of any proposed development.

12.11.18 There are no flood risk areas within the Preferred Option for Testing as provided development does not result in new flood risk issues then the effects are positive against SA7. The proximity of the A267 Tunbridge Wells to Eastbourne road may encourage car use and the south and west sectors are within close proximity to the road network. However, Horam benefits from good bus services and general access in the Preferred Option.
for Testing is good. Improvements to public transport links and linkages to the Cuckoo Trail could help mitigate any potential air pollution (SA8) or emissions increases (SA11) from development. All development should seek to improve and provide sustainable transport modes.

12.11.19 The Preferred Option for Testing will have positive effects in terms of SA9 through the infill element and capacity study. Greenfield sites are still likely to be required however due to the scale of development proposed.

12.11.20 The Preferred Option for Testing would locate development within the most sustainable locations in Horam in terms of being close to the settlement centre and existing services and facilities which could help reduce journey frequencies and lengths (SA10).

Social SA Objectives

12.11.21 Increasing connectivity to the settlement centre through improvements to walking and cycling routes, including the Cuckoo Trail, will improve accessibility to the services and facilities it offers as well as contributing to lowering emissions and enhancing people’s health and wellbeing. Linkages from new development to the Cuckoo Trail will also improve access to other settlements and help encourage walking and cycling. The level of housing and siting potential allocations in the south and west sectors will help meet local need for housing whilst taking into account the specific constraints within and around Horam.

12.11.22 The south and west sectors are in close proximity to the centre of Horam and therefore offer opportunities to for promoting community vibrancy. The scale of housing provision, sited within the most sustainable sectors of Horam, could result in the provision of new community facilities which will help build inclusive and vibrant communities (SA16).

Economic SA Objectives

12.11.23 Developing a mix of uses as part of comprehensive development schemes can be a preferred method of ensuring vibrant communities which support and ensure high and stable levels of employment. The Preferred Option for Testing has the potential to contribute to achieving SA17 although this is likely to be as a part of small scale employment development and redevelopment opportunities within the existing settlement. The west sector appears to have good land available however this will not be fully known until the work on the SHELAA has been completed. The sectors do however offer the most accessible locations for development.

12.11.24 The west and south sectors are the only broad locations to have been assessed as having potential to stimulate regeneration of the centre and High Street within Horam, this may be achieved through the development of new employment facilities, housing provision and contributions to improving public realm and connectivity.
12.12 Mayfield

12.12.1 Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be considered in relation to Mayfield, principally to accommodate the delivery of 185 dwellings in and around Mayfield.

12.12.2 The Options considered for accommodating the above are:

- **Option 1** - North East Mayfield
- **Option 2** - North Mayfield
- **Option 3** - North West Mayfield
- **Option 4** - West Mayfield
- **Option 5** - South West Mayfield
- **Option 6** - South Mayfield

12.12.3 Please refer paragraphs 17.61 to 17.67 and Map 50 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper for a description of the sectors under each Option.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Mayfield Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objective (SA1-SA11)

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

12.12.4 In terms of the environmental SA Objectives, the majority of the Options are assessed as having the same effects. There are no significant biodiversity constraints within any of the sectors and any potential loss in biodiversity from greenfield sites could be mitigated so as to ensure positive effects on SA1. All of the sectors are within the High Weald AONB and so there is the potential for negative effects on SA2. In addition, the north-west sector (Option 3) and north sector (Option 2) contain archaeological interest sites together with part of the conservation area. Therefore, negative effects
could arise as a result of development. However mitigation measures could be introduced as part of any development to counteract this. The north-east and south-west sectors are particularly landscape sensitive.

SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment.

12.12.5 None of the sectors contain flood zones and so the effects of development on SA7 are likely to be positive provided that measures to ensure no risk is created as a result of development are introduced. Development in any of the sectors may lead to an increase in traffic on the roads and hence a negative effect on SA8 and SA11 in terms of increasing emissions and the potential to adversely affect air quality. However, public transport improvements as part of development would help mitigate these potential impacts.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes (walking, cycling and public transport)

12.12.6 In the north-east sector (Option 1) there is good footpath access and combined with the sectors close proximity to the village centre and its services and facilities, this could encourage more sustainable transport modes (SA10).

12.12.7 The north sector (Option 2) is a little far removed from the settlement core and may not be suitable for walking and cycling provision. The north-west sector (Option 3) is close to the village centre however it has access issues that would need to be addressed in order to encourage alternative transport modes to the car. The west sector (Option 4) is on the edge of the existing settlement and so is unlikely to provide opportunities to encourage walking and cycling and may encourage car use due to its proximity to the Mayfield Bypass (A267). The south-west sector may have positive effects on SA10 particularly if development occurs in the top part of the sector as this is close to the existing village centre and within easy reach of services and facilities.

Social SA Objective (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

12.12.8 Mayfield has a large number of shops and services as well as other commercial properties within the High Street. As such, the north-west sector (Option 1) and the top of the south-west sector (Option 5) offer the most potential for beneficial impacts on SA12. Development within these sectors would be within relatively easy access of the services and facilities and this access could be further enhanced as a result of any development, particularly in terms of pedestrian access. The north-west sector already has good footpath access. For the remaining sectors, there are opportunities to
improve access to the village centre and High Street services and facilities however; the west sector (Option 2) is quite removed from the settlement.

**SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home**

12.12.7 In terms of providing good quality and affordable homes (SA13) all of the sectors have potential for positive effects although all have some degree of constraint to development overall. The north-east sector has good access particularly by footpath however is constrained by the landscape sensitivity issues and long distance views. The north sector is constrained by the presence of the recreation ground, the school and its distance from the village centre. The north-west sector presents the best opportunities for housing delivery due to its close proximity to the village centre and relative lack of landscape impact however there are issues of access. The west sector has good potential particularly as it is at present low density however it is on the edge of the settlement and would need to overcome potential issues of severance. The south-west sector has potential towards the top as this area is close to the village centre however the majority of the sector has significant landscape sensitivity issues. The south sector has much the same potential as the north-east. Therefore all the sectors would have to overcome certain issues in order to deliver the housing needed but these are potentially achievable.

**SA14 Improve the level of skills, education and training amongst the population and develop a skilled workforce to support long term economic competitiveness**

12.12.8 Mayfield does have a school catering for years 7-13 (secondary school) and this is located along the High Street. As such the north-west and south sectors offer the best access to the school however this does not directly have an effect on SA14.

**SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health**

12.12.9 In terms of SA15, the west; north-west and south-west sectors (Options 3-5) are well located to the central GP services at Woodhill Surgery, which is on Station Road in Mayfield. This would enable relatively easy access the health care facilities. The other sectors are located quite a way from the surgery. However, issues around the capacity of the surgery to take on extra patients as a result of any development would need careful consideration, as with any potential infrastructure impacts. The north and north sector are located close to the existing recreation ground and so would help improve people’s health and wellbeing by encouraging outdoor activity. The facilities at the recreation ground could be enhanced and potential new facilities provided as part of any new development to compliment this further.
SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

12.12.10 For SA16, the north; north-west and south-west sectors are well located to the recreation ground and village centre and also have good or reasonable access to the village centre and therefore offer opportunities for promoting community vibrancy. The north-east sector, whilst further out, has good footpath access to the village centre and so also offers some potential for enhancing community cohesion. The west sector is on the edge of the settlement and may feel separate from the main settlement leading to a sense of isolation in community terms. This could be overcome with the provision of new community facilities however.

Economic SA Objective (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

12.12.11 There are no large commercial or industrial areas within or around Mayfield. In terms of SA17 and the creation of new employment opportunities these are likely to be small scale for Mayfield. In this regard the north-west and south-west sectors offer potential positive effects on SA17 as they have good access to the existing village centre and connectivity with existing business locations. The west sector, although removed from the main settlement, offers potential for intensification of development due to its low density at present which may lend itself to the provision of small scale employment spaces or live/work units. There is also still good road access into and out of the village.

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

12.12.12 In terms of the effects of developing in each sector on SA18, growth in Mayfield could help support and enhance the prosperity of the village as well as the District as a whole, particularly the rural areas. This has been assessed at the higher level of options. Mayfield has a large number of commercial properties within the High Street area. The north-west sector and top of the south-west sector offer good potential for any regeneration of the High Street and village centre as they have good connectivity with the centre. Although the north-east sector is further out from the village centre, it does have good pedestrian and road access and so could help with any regeneration efforts.
Preferred Option for Testing 35


12.12.14 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Initially identify infill development/ redevelopment, the exact amount of which will be provided through a capacity study. Consider options in all Sectors with potential, whilst avoiding development that has an adverse impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The delivery of 185 dwellings will be subject to the exception test identified within the National Planning Policy Framework concerning development within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 35 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

12.12.15 In environmental terms the Preferred Option for Testing would have an overall positive effect on the SA Objectives. There are no biodiversity constraints per se and any potential loss in biodiversity from development could be mitigated. Mayfield is located within the High Weald AONB and so there would be some degree of effects from the Preferred Option for Testing however it seeks to consider infill and redevelopment first, which would also benefit SA9, and then seeks to avoid development that would adversely impact on the AONB whilst incorporating the NPPF exception test. The positive effects on SA2 could be enhanced through the application of specific design and landscape policies as well.

12.12.16 There are no flood risk areas present and so the effects of the Preferred Option for Testing on SA7 are likely to be positive. This can be further enhanced through ensuring appropriate SuDS measures are included on any development.

12.12.17 Air pollution and emissions reductions from traffic may be difficult to achieve due to the proximity of A267 and the Mayfield Bypass to the settlement, which may encourage car use. However, public transport connections are good and improvements to these could help achieve SA8 and SA11. Furthermore, focusing development through infill and within the sectors with most potential will put more people within easy access, particularly walking, of the village centres services and facilities and hence discourage car
use. All development should look to improve public transport, walking and cycling routes. In terms of emissions from dwellings, this will be dependent on other Local Plan policies concerned with design and sustainable construction.

12.12.18 The Preferred Option for Testing will enable the consolidation of the settlement and this could bring improvements to service provision and facilities as well as placing more people within easy access of them. This could help achieve SA10 by enabling people to access day to day services within the settlement.

Social SA Objectives

12.12.19 Socially the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have overall positive effects. Access to the village centre and its services and facilities is currently good from the majority of the sectors where there is development potential and this can be enhanced through improvements as a result of development (SA12). Subject to other Local Plan policies, the Preferred Option for Testing places housing development within the most appropriate sectors and with the most potential to deliver (SA13). In terms of the health and wellbeing of the population, Mayfield has a GP Surgery which would be accessible from development and new development would be close to the recreation ground and village centre (SA15). This could be enhanced further through improvements as a result of development. The Preferred Option for Testing would allow the consolidation of the existing village and the provision of new community facilities which could help foster cohesive and vibrant communities (SA16).

Economic SA Objectives

12.12.20 Economically, there are likely to be opportunities for small scale live/work units and maybe some small scale employment space as a part of mixed development, however there is no large employment area potential. Within the settlement centre opportunities may arise for redevelopment and the locating of existing or new businesses offering local employment opportunities. The settlement has a good range of businesses already located within it.

12.13 Wadhurst

12.13.1 Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be considered in relation to Wadhurst, principally to accommodate the delivery of 250 dwellings in and around Wadhurst, taking into account consents granted on greenfield land after April 2015.

12.12.3 Wadhurst is made up of the three settlements of Wadhurst Village, Sparrows Green and Durgates.

12.13.2 The Options considered for accommodating the above are:
- **Option 1** - South East Wadhurst
- **Option 2** - East Wadhurst
- **Option 3** - North Wadhurst
- **Option 4** - North West Wadhurst
- **Option 5** - West Wadhurst
- **Option 6** - South (2) Wadhurst
- **Option 7** - South (1) Wadhurst

12.13.3 Please refer to paragraphs 17.61 to 17.67 and Map 51 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper for a description of the sectors under each Option.

**SA Assessment**

Predicting the effects of the Wadhurst Options (SA Tasks B3/B4):

**General Summary**

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**Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)**

**SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District**

12.13.4 In terms of the environmental SA Objectives, the majority of the Options are assessed as having the same effects. There are no significant biodiversity constraints within any of the sectors and any potential loss in biodiversity from greenfield sites could be mitigated so as to ensure positive effects on SA1.

**SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets**

12.13.5 All of the sectors are within the High Weald AONB and so there is the potential for negative effects on SA2. The south-east sector (Option 1) has long distance views from Bewl Water and as such any development here would be highly visible in the landscape. The sector also contains part of the Conservation Area in Wadhurst and as such there may be adverse impacts from development. The same is true of the south (1) sector (Option 7) however here there is the possibility to tidy up the existing built form through
carefully designed development, which may in fact benefit the Conservation Area and have positive effects on SA2.

12.13.6 The east sector (Option 2) contains part of the Conservation Area and numerous listed buildings which could be adversely affected by any potential development. However it is not highly visible within the landscape.

12.13.7 The north sector (Option 3) is exposed to long reaching views to the north and east along the B2100 and so development could potentially have adverse effects on the wider landscape setting.

12.13.8 The north-west sector (Option 4) is less exposed in the landscape in comparison to the north sector and so development would not be as visible here. The density of development here is already high which would further mitigate any potential adverse effect on SA2. However, the sector is still within the AONB and there are pockets of ancient woodland present.

12.13.9 Apart from being within the AONB, the west sector (Option 5) has few other landscape constraints as it is comparatively less exposed in the landscape than the south (2) sector (Option 6). In the south (2) sector there are long distance views to the south as well as there being the presence of Wadhurst Castle, which could be adversely impacted upon from development.

12.13.10 None of the sectors contain flood risk areas and provided that suitable measures such as SuDS are included within any development schemes to ensure flood risk is not created, the effects on SA7 would be positive.

SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy

12.13.11 In regards to SA8 and SA11, all of the Options raise issues of increases in emissions and air pollution due to the proximity of the settlement to the road network and Tunbridge Wells and Crowborough. This could encourage car use from new development. However, the settlement is served by bus routes although the regularity of the services is an issue. Improvements to public transport links as part of any development could help achieve SA8 and SA11 in terms of vehicle emissions. Emissions from housing would need to be addressed through sustainable construction.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

12.13.12 The sectors with the most potential for positive effects in relation to SA9 are the north-west and west (Option 4 and 5) as they contain the bulk of the existing built form. There may be some opportunities within the other sectors but these are likely to be limited.
12.13.13 A key element to achieving positive effects on SA10 in Wadhurst is the proximity or ease of access to the train station, which is situated to the north-west and improvements to the bus services. In this respect the north-west and west sectors (Options 4 and 5) offer the most potential for positive effects as they are located close to the train station. The south (1) and south-east sectors (Options 7 and 1) lie quite a distance from the train station and so this may discourage people from taking the train. In addition the north sector (Option 3) has good access to the A21 which is likely to encourage people to take their car and use the road network. This is also true for the east sector (Option 2).

12.13.14 Wadhurst is served well by bus routes, and all the sectors are within 400m of a bus stop. However to encourage more people to use the bus rather than their cars, improvements to regularity of the services would be needed. This could be achieved as part of any new development. Both access to the train station and bus services would also help achieve positive effects on SA8 and SA11.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

12.13.15 In terms of SA12, the east sector (Option 2) is close to the centre of the existing settlement and its services and facilities including the school, nursery and range of shops. Development here would place people within close proximity and with good access to these and services and so have a positive effect on SA12. In a similar vein, the south-east sector (Option 1) is close to the services and facilities offered at Wadhurst village and so development here would also help improve access, on a day to day basis at least. The north-west sector (Option 4) is close to the existing settlement centre however access to it is an issue, particularly in terms of pedestrian access, as footpath provision is poor with little scope within the highway system to improve this. The north sector (Option 3) and west sector (Option 5) are situated a little further away from the settlement core and its facilities although there may be options as part of any development to improve access.

12.13.16 Within the south (2) sector (Option 6) there may be opportunities to improve access to the settlement services and facilities as the northern part of the sector is well related to settlement core. The south (1) sector (Option 7) is also well positioned in terms of the village centre and amenities at Wadhurst Village, and development here would provide access to these for local people. However, these locations do suffer with issues in regards to parking and traffic flow along the High Street and so these issues would need addressing to fully realise the potential benefits to SA12.
12.13.17 For SA13, the east, north-west and west sectors (Options 2; 4 and 5) are assessed as providing the most opportunities for delivering good quality market and affordable housing due to their relative lack of constraints and provided development avoids adversely affecting the AONB and landscape views into and out of the settlement. The east sector offers a logical linear extension whilst the north-west and west sectors offer significant opportunities for intensification of development as they are currently quite low density.

12.13.18 It is considered that there is no further land available in the south-east sector (Option 1) for development however this view may change once work for the SHELAA is completed, although issues of views from Bewl Water and meeting the objectives of the high Weald AONB Management Plan would remain.

12.13.19 The north sector has quite steeply sloping land which would make development difficult although it may arise that this can be overcome. There would still be issues of distance from the settlement centre to address.

12.13.20 Some limited delivery of housing could be accommodated within the south (2) and south (1) sectors (Option 6 and 7) however careful consideration would be needed in regards to any impact this may have on the historic park and Wadhurst Castle as well as long distance views to the south.

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health

12.13.21 The south-east sector (Option 1); south (1) and south (2) sectors (Options 6 and 7) and the east sector (Option 2) offer the most potential to positively affect the health and wellbeing of residents (SA15) as they are close to the existing doctor’s surgery which is situated in St James Square in Wadhurst Village. The north and north –west sectors (Options 3 and 4) offer positive effects on SA15 as they are close to and have access to the playing field, allotments and Pavilion which could encourage healthier lifestyles and improve wellbeing.

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

12.13.22 The south (1) and south-east sectors benefit from access to open space and are well related to the village centre (Wadhurst Village) which offers opportunities for promoting community vibrancy (SA16). Similarly the north sector, although somewhat removed from the village centre, is well related to the school. Nursery, convenience stores, pubs and shops at Sparrows Green which again could help promote community cohesion from development. However care would be need that coalescence did not occur with Cousley Wood to the north east. Whilst the north-west sector is also close to the village centre, access by foot is difficult due to lack of footpaths and this may have an adverse effect on any community cohesion.
Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

12.13.23 Economically, the location of housing in Wadhurst per se will not have a direct bearing on the SA Objectives; however the provision of housing development itself will likely have positive effects in locating people close to existing and new employment opportunities. This could also help improve access to jobs. In terms of the regeneration of town centres, the housing development together with policies for Wadhurst town centre will help ensure regeneration.

12.13.24 Developing a mix of uses as part of comprehensive development schemes can be a preferred method of ensuring vibrant communities which support and ensure high and stable levels of employment. All the Options have some potential to contribute to achieving this SA17 and SA18. The north sector (Option 1) is more limited in potential, the east and the south sectors have perhaps the greatest potential to deliver significant employment floorspace, subject to transport constraints and provide for small firms and local businesses. The west and north-west sectors are well related to the existing industrial Durgates Industrial Estate which may provide opportunities for new employment development and also development here would improve access to potential jobs on the industrial estate.

Preferred Option for Testing 36

12.13.25 The Preferred Option for Testing for Wadhurst is contained in Chapter 17 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

12.13.26 The Preferred Option is:

“Initially identify infill development/ redevelopement, the exact amount of which will be provided through a capacity study. Consider options in East Wadhurst with potential, whilst avoiding development that has an adverse impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The delivery of 250 dwellings will be subject to the exception test identified within the National Planning Policy Framework concerning development within an Area of outstanding Natural Beauty”.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 36 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

12.13.27 In environmental terms the Preferred Option for Testing would have an overall positive effect on the SA Objectives. There are no biodiversity constraints per se and any potential loss in biodiversity from development could be mitigated. Wadhurst is located within the High Weald AONB and so there would be some degree of effects from the Preferred Option for Testing however it seeks to consider infill and redevelopment first, which would also benefit SA9, and then seeks to avoid development that would adversely impact on the AONB whilst incorporating the NPPF exception test. The positive effects on SA2 could be enhanced through the application of specific design and landscape policies as well.

12.13.28 There are no flood risk areas present and so the effects of the Preferred Option for Testing on SA7 are likely to be positive. This can be further enhanced through ensuring appropriate SuDS measures are included on any development.

12.13.29 Air pollution and emissions reductions from traffic may be difficult to achieve due to the proximity and relatively easy access to the A21 from Wadhurst, which may encourage car use. However, public transport connections are good and improvements to these could help achieve SA8 and SA11 in terms of accessing the immediate Wealden Area. Furthermore, focusing development through infill and within the sectors with most potential will put more people within easy access, particularly walking, of the village centres services and facilities and hence discourage car use. All development should look to improve public transport, walking and cycling routes especially access to the train station which is a major asset for the settlement in terms of encourage more sustainable transport modes. In terms of emissions from dwellings, this will be dependent on other Local Plan policies concerned with design and sustainable construction.

12.13.30 The Preferred Option for Testing will enable the consolidation of the settlement and this could bring improvements to service provision and facilities as well as placing more people within easy access of them. This could help achieve SA10 by enabling people to access day to day services within the settlement.

Social SA Objectives

12.13.31 Socially the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have overall positive effects. Access to the village centre and its services and facilities is currently good and this can be enhanced through improvements as a result of development (SA12). Subject to other Local Plan policies, the Preferred Option for Testing places housing development within the most appropriate sectors and with the most potential to deliver (SA13). In terms of the health and wellbeing of the population, Wadhurst has a GP Surgery which would be accessible from development in the sector proposed and on the wider settlement level. New development would also be close to the recreation ground and village centre (SA15). This could be enhanced further through
improvements as a result of development. The Preferred Option for Testing would allow the consolidation of the existing village and the provision of new community facilities which could help foster cohesive and vibrant communities (SA16).

Economic SA Objectives

12.13.32  Economically, there are likely to be opportunities for small scale live/work units and maybe some small scale employment space as a part of mixed development. The presence of the Durgates Industrial Estate strengthens the employment aspects of the Preferred Option for Testing. There is a good range of small to medium sized businesses within Wadhurst and the settlement centre is a vibrant and thriving entity. Within the settlement centre opportunities may arise for redevelopment and the locating of existing or new businesses offering local employment opportunities.
13.0 Landscape

13.1 The National Planning Policy Framework outlines the importance of protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and specifically states that local planning authorities should set criteria based policies for any development on or affecting protected landscapes. The policies should be set within the hierarchy of designated sites (international, national and local) so that policy requirements are commensurate with the level of designation.

13.2 Wealden District is situated within a diverse and distinctive landscape, including some of the most attractive countryside in the country. The quality of the landscape is a valuable resource and asset contributing to the District’s rural economy, ecosystem services and also providing opportunities for recreation. It also contributes to making Wealden an attractive place to live. The Wealden Local Plan has a vital role to play to ensure that the District’s most valued landscapes and its characteristics are conserved, enhanced and protected from the impact of development.

13.3 The Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issues to be addressed in terms of the Districts landscapes at Chapter 18. The Chapter also details the context of the Districts landscape.

13.4 The Options for addressing the issue of development and the Districts landscape are as follows:

- **Option 1** - Rely on the National Planning Policy Framework and the AONB Management Plan as the Framework for conserving the scenic beauty of the High Weald AONB.

- **Option 2** - Rely on the National Planning Policy Framework to conserve the scenic beauty of the setting of the South Downs National Park.

- **Option 3** - Provide a criteria based policy to ensure that the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the AONB are protected, conserved and enhanced including its historic settlement pattern.

- **Option 4** - Support development in and adjacent to the AONB where it can be demonstrated that no adverse impacts would result either singularly or cumulatively or where development would assist to conserve, manage and enhance the landscape including its setting and long distance views into and out of the AONB.

- **Option 5** - Support development adjacent to the South Downs National Park where it can be demonstrated that no adverse impacts would result either singularly or cumulatively to its landscape setting or where development would assist to conserve and enhance its setting and long distance views into and out of the National Park.
- **Option 6** - Seek to direct development to locations that would least impact on the districts most valued and sensitive landscapes and specific landscape characteristics including those within non-designated landscapes.

- **Option 7** - Identify specific features relevant to National Character Areas that contribute to local character and context and seek to protect, conserve and enhance these.

- **Option 8** - Identify specific features relevant to the County Landscape Character Areas including the use of Local Landscape Character Types and seek to protect, conserve and enhance these.

- **Option 9** - Identify sensitive character areas in which development will be required to have particular regard to specific landscape characteristics.

- **Option 10** - Conserve and enhance the landscape using specific landscape based criteria for specific development types.

- **Option 11** - Undertake further work to identify areas where a policy is required to protect dark landscapes including dark night skies and areas of tranquillity.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Landscape Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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13.5 Clearly from the assessment of the Landscape Options it is the environmental SA Objectives that will be most affected although the landscape does have its role to play in the social and economic life of the District. Where the Options have been assessed as having no direct relationship with an SA Objective, this does not that in every case there will not be an effect but that the Option being considered will not have an effect.

13.6 For example on the issue of flood risk (SA7), the Options will not directly determine impacts as they are not concerned with reducing the risk of flooding as perhaps design measures like SuDS are. However it is noted that green infrastructure, of which landscapes are a part, does offer some form of floor control and mitigation and in this respect having Options that protect and/or enhance the landscapes will be beneficial in an indirect way. The same is true of SA5 and improving water quality. Landscapes can help achieve this but the Options themselves do not have a direct impact.

Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

13.7 The Options are concerned with the landscapes of the District and not the biodiversity assets and so do not have a direct impact on SA1.

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

13.8 For SA2, the majority of the Options would have a positive effect as they contain reference to conserving and enhancing the landscapes. The degree of positive effect may vary however.

13.9 Options 1 and 2 rely on the NPPF, and in regards to the AONB, the AONB Management Plan. Whilst the NPPF provides a strong framework for conserving and enhancing landscapes, it does not provide any detail of how this should be achieved. In essence the NPPF states what Local Plans should do and contain, but does not state how this should be done, nor does it account for local nuances and specific characteristics. Relying on the NPPF alone for conserving and enhancing the AONB and National Park would not allow for local circumstances to be taken into account and this may reduce the magnitude of positive effects on SA2.

13.10 The High Weald AONB Management Plan in contrast provides the specific requirements and objectives for conserving and enhancing the AONB. Furthermore, under the CRoW Act 2000 a Local Authority with land in an AONB is legally obliged to prepare and publish a plan which ‘formulates their policy for the management of the area and for carrying out of their functions in relation to it’. Therefore, relying on the High Weald AONB Management Plan and the NPPF for conserving the scenic beauty of the AONB (Option 1) would offer more positive effects as it is more specifically focused on Wealden and the High Weald AONB.
13.11 Option 3 would provide positive effects on SA2 as it would allow the Local Plan to set criteria against which applications would be judged and this would be locally specific the High Weald AONB. Positive effects could be further strengthened through using the AONB Management Plan as a basis for setting the criteria. Options 4 and 5 would provide positive effects as they actively seek to ensure that no adverse impacts occur on the AONB or South Downs National Park from development and that the landscapes are conserved and enhanced. This could be further strengthened by combining with a criteria based policy and the AONB Management Plan.

13.12 Similarly to Options 4 and 5, Option 6 would have positive effects on SA2 as it applies to non-designated landscapes as well and as such would provide wider policy coverage and protection for the landscape of the District. However, Option 6 does not refer to enhancing and conserving the landscapes, simply to having development in areas of least landscape impact which may not equate to the same thing and may reduce the positive effects on SA2 from this Option.

13.13 Options 7 and 8 would provide positive effects on SA2 in that again they seek to conserve and enhance specific landscape features, which would be identified, but they also include protection and so add an extra layer to the achievement of SA2. Option 9 would offer positive effects on SA2 for similar reasoning but would also be development specific requiring developments to take account of the landscape features in their design and not just merely treat the landscape as a separate entity. Furthermore, this would ensure that the policies were tailored to the specific landscape and its characteristics, as these can vary within the District.

13.14 Option 10 has a similar approach to Option 9 and would positively affect SA2 further by being development specific. Option 10 would recognise that different developments may have different impacts in different landscape settings or designation and would account for this through specific criteria.

13.15 Option 11, once the work was completed, would provide positive effects on SA2 but would be very specific to protecting dark landscapes.

SA3 Where appropriate enhance and provide access to the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets for residents and visitors

13.16 In terms of SA3, the Options are assessed as having uncertain effects. This is due to the fact that depending on how any policy criteria are determined and how development is implemented in line with any policy will have a determining focus. For example, locating development within the AONB and adjacent to the South Downs National Park (Options 4 and 5) may place more people within easy access of these assets, provided development is carried out appropriately and access is enhanced. Siting development to locations which have the least impact on the District’s most valued and sensitive landscapes (Option 6) could place people at quite some distance from any access points to the countryside and landscapes as well as historic
assets. Furthermore the NPPF does not specifically deal with enhancing and providing access to the countryside and landscapes. However, the High Weald AONB Management Plan does contain reference to improving access to the landscape under its Planning Objective UE4 including prioritising public rights of way; improving access for those with impaired mobility and producing visitor management plans for certain sites such as the Ashdown Forest. Therefore Option 1 is likely to have more positive effects on SA3.

SA6 Manage natural resources sustainably, minimising waste and maximise the re-use of materials, recycling and composting

13.17 All of the Options have the potential for positive effects on SA6 as they all contain some element of managing development in respect of landscapes, which is a natural resource. As with the effects on SA2, the degree of positive effect may vary and could be strengthened by combining some of the approaches within the Options themselves. The majority of the Options are unlikely to have any direct impact or relationship. Options 4; 5 and 6 however may have some impacts as they are the only Options which contain reference to locating development. The impacts are uncertain however due to the fact that it will depend on the type of land that is available and this has yet to be determined for the District as a whole. In addition the definition of brownfield land excludes agricultural land and buildings and it is unlikely that there will be much brownfield land available within the AONB although there may be some adjacent to it as well as adjacent to the South Downs National Park. Therefore, the full effects cannot be determined at this time.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

13.18 The effects on SA12 are likely to be similar to those of SA3 in terms of improving access to the countryside and open spaces. Development within and/or adjacent to the High Weald AONB and South Downs National Park may offer opportunities for improvements especially if walking and cycling linkages can be made between any new development and the wider countryside. Locating development in areas with least impact on the landscapes, whilst protecting the landscapes, may not help with access and hence have knock on impacts on other SA Objectives such as SA10 as people may have to travel further to access these resources.

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health

13.19 In terms of facilitating improvements to the health and wellbeing of the population (SA15) the Options do offer a degree of positive effects. Ensuring that the landscape is conserved and enhanced will have the additional benefit of ensuring open spaces are also maintained and locating development close

to these assets can help encourage people to get outside and be active. This is provided access is also enhanced, which relates back to SA3 and SA12.

**SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community**

13.20 Furthermore, the natural environment can help improve people’s general sense of wellbeing by providing an attractive environment within which to live. As a direct consequence this can help foster better community cohesion and help address issues of deprivation (SA16).

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

**SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses**

13.21 In relation to SA17 and the Options, there are unlikely to be any effects as none of the Options deal with employment provision. However, there may be indirect benefits in that having a high quality and attractive natural environment, of which the landscape is an integral part, can help attract businesses to an area. All of the Options offer a degree of conservation, enhancement and consideration of the Districts landscapes which in turn will help make Wealden attractive to businesses. It will be down to other Local Plan policies and the overall economic and housing strategy to determine the provision of employment floorspace but these Options would ensure that any employment development took account of the landscapes. Option 10 may have particular positive effects as it would seek to have landscape based criteria policies linked to the type of development and so would allow tailoring of any policies to be specific to employment developments as well as housing and other developments.

**SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism**

13.22 In terms of SA18 Options 1-8 and Option 11 are likely to have positive effects with regards to enhancing the Districts rural economy; enhancing the vitality of the villages and promoting sustainable tourism. By ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the landscape it may be likely that small businesses may wish to locate within the rural villages to take advantage of the high quality setting. Option 1 and the inclusion of reliance on the High Weald AONB Management Plan would be particularly beneficial to the villages and towns within and adjacent to it as the Management Plan does improvements and enhancements to the rural economy in line with the protecting the characteristics for which the AONB is designated. The Management Plan provides a comprehensive framework for accommodating all types of development within the AONB whilst protecting its designated status and so Option 1 would be significantly positive but restricted to that
landscape designation only. Options 1-8 and Option 11 will also help support sustainable tourism in the District by enhancing and conserving one of the main tourist attractions, the landscapes and associated environments. Option 11 in particular will have positive effects on SA18 and tourism through the designation of dark landscapes and dark skies, which are becoming a popular tourist attraction in an age of increasing light pollution. Indirect benefits of these Options could be felt by local businesses and accommodation providers which will in turn help boost the rural economy.

Preferred Option for Testing 37

13.23 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Landscape is contained within Chapter 18 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

13.24 The Preferred Options for Testing is:

- ‘Provide a criteria based policy to ensure that development seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its key components including its settlement pattern. This will include protecting the setting of the High Weald AONB outside the designated boundary including views into and out of the AONB.

- Provide a specific policy to ensure that development seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park including views into and out of the National Park.

- Seek to direct development to locations that would least impact on the districts most valued and sensitive landscapes and landscape features including those within non-designated landscapes. This would include the consideration of dark landscapes and tranquillity.

- Provide a criteria based policy for non-designated landscapes in the context of national and county landscape character areas and have specific regard to local character, distinctive characteristics and features as identified in relevant Landscape Character Assessments including the Wealden Landscape Character Assessment (2014).

- Support development, subject to other planning considerations, where it can be demonstrated that no adverse impacts would result either singularly or cumulatively or where development would assist to manage, protect, conserve and enhance valued landscapes and features. This includes taking into account settlement patterns, landscape setting and views into and out of valued landscapes’
Environmental SA Objectives

13.25 In terms of these SA Objectives, the Preferred Option for Testing will have overall significant positive effects, both directly and indirectly. The High Weald AONB and South Downs National Park, together with other non-designated but valued landscapes, will be conserved and enhanced and furthermore protected, particularly as the approach includes criteria based policies and the recognition of the key role of the AONB Management Plan and Wealden Landscape Character Assessment (2014). The criteria based policies for the AONB and non-designated landscapes will ensure that their features and characteristics are properly considered and taken into account when determining development proposals. A specific policy for the South Downs National Park will also have the same beneficial effects. Whilst not directly referencing improving access to the countryside and open spaces, this could be strengthened through any criteria based policy. Indirectly the Preferred Option for Testing will help benefit SA7 and the reduction in flood risk as well as contributing to mitigating the causes and effects of climate change (SA11) through the provision of ecosystem services as a result of the conservation and protection of the landscapes.

13.26 The only potential negative effects are that the Preferred Option for Testing relies on other Local Plan policies to take account of issues such as design however this could be strengthened through the inclusion of design elements in the criteria based policies for landscapes, which are yet to be determined. In addition SA9 and ensuring the best use of previously developed land may be negatively affected as not much exists in the District, but could also be positively affected by the landscape policy directing development to the areas with least landscape impacts. This again will depend on other Local Plan policies

Social SA Objectives

13.27 In terms of the social SA Objectives, the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to help facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population by ensuring that the landscapes and hence wider countryside to a degree are protected and enhanced which can have a beneficial impact on people’s sense of wellbeing. It also provides opportunities for people to access and get into the landscapes which could further have health benefits form helping people get more active. This in turn can lead to a greater sense of community cohesion and help address issues of deprivation.
Economic SA Objectives

13.28 Economically, the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have some positive effects but these will not be significant. The protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscapes overall may help attract businesses to the District to take advantage of its unique and special environment but again it will be other Local Plan policies and strategies that determine where and what type of employment land provision is made. However the Preferred Option for Testing will ensure that employment development also takes account of the landscape. In terms of tourism and the rural economy the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have more significant positive effects as the dark landscapes consideration would add a new tourism attraction to the existing offer in the District. The landscape is a particular draw for visitors to the District and any enhancement of tis will be beneficial. As a consequence of this, the rural economy would benefit from an increase in visitors accessing local services and facilities such as shops, tea room and tourist accommodation. Again other Local Plan policies may have more of an impact on the economic SA Objectives when taken in combination with any landscape policies.
14.0 Development in the Countryside

14.1 The countryside in Wealden supports a wide range of services and functions, not just the smaller settlements without development boundaries. Amongst many functions, the countryside supports industrial estates; farm shops; recreational land; caravan and camping sites; tourist accommodation and agricultural land.

14.2 Chapter 19 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper contains summaries of the countryside and its role for the District. The Chapter divides the countryside aspect of policy options into:

- The economy, including tourism
- Agriculture
- Housing, including new isolated dwellings; conversion of agricultural buildings; sub-division; extensions and replacement dwellings
- Recreation and leisure, including equestrian uses
- Rural commercial activities

14.3 These sub-categories will be assessed in the following section.

14.1 The Economy

14.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Planning Authorities should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. Business development in the countryside has the potential to enhance the sustainability of rural communities and support local employment. However, this must be balanced against the strategy to focus development in the most accessible and appropriate locations, the need to secure the long term vitality of Wealden’s towns and villages together with the need to protect the countryside from inappropriate development.

14.1.2 With this in mind, Chapter 19 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper sets out the economic context in regards to the countryside as well as the issue (Issue 33) to be addressed through the Local Plan.

14.1.3 The issue is concerned with balancing the assistance rural businesses give to the economic growth of the District, particularly in the rural economy, with the necessity to ensure that the countryside is protected from inappropriate development.

14.1.4 To address this issue, the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper proposes the following Options:
• **Option 1** - Resist all new business development outside of Sustainable, Local and Neighbourhood Settlements, unless the proposal is for rural/farm diversification, and can be accommodated without harm to the landscape or amenity of the area and the historic significance of heritage assets.

• **Option 2** - Encourage business development in the countryside, where it can be demonstrated that a countryside location is necessary for the proposal, and it can be accommodated without harm to the landscape or amenity of the area and the historic significance of heritage assets.

• **Option 3** - Enable business development to come forward outside of towns and villages, where it can be demonstrated that there are no suitable sites within nearby Business Areas or Town/Village Centres.

• **Option 4** - Encourage the provision of additional buildings for economic use, when there is a core of buildings already in economic use where it can be accommodated without harm to the landscape or amenity of the area and the historic significance of heritage assets.

• **Option 5** - Seek to secure the retention of buildings within the countryside which are within economic use wherever possible.

• **Option 6** - Encourage the provision of new buildings in economic use within farm complexes, even if there is no farm diversification within the complex, where this would help secure the retention of farm complexes and it can be accommodated without harm to the landscape or amenity of the area and the historic significance of heritage assets.

### SA Assessment

**Predicting the effects of the Rural Economy Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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14.1.5 In terms of the environmental SA Objectives, the Options will generally have no direct impact however impacts may occur as a result of other Local Plan policies when taken in combination with any rural economy policies.

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

14.1.6 For SA2, Options 1; 2; 4 and 6 are likely to have positive effects. Option 1 is somewhat restrictive in its allowance of business development within the countryside by limiting this to Sustainable, Local and Neighbourhood settlements, unless it involves farm diversification. This approach in itself means that impacts on the countryside, landscape and historic environments will be limited and this is strengthened further by the inclusion of the requirement to ensure any farm diversification is accommodated without harm to these assets. However, the Option does not apply this requirement to any business development within the other settlement classifications and so there is the potential for negative effects as a result, particularly on those as some of the settlements in those classifications are within or adjacent to designated landscapes such as the AONB. Other Local Plan policies may protection for these settlements and any business development.

14.1.7 Option 2 would allow business development within the countryside on the wider scale which could pose potential negative effects, however the Option includes the need for the proposal to demonstrate a countryside location is required as well as ensuring it can be accommodated without harm to the countryside, landscape and historical assets. This offers more protection and positive effects on SA2. Design policies would also be important in strengthening the positive effects on SA2 under this Option.

14.1.8 Option 3 may have positive and negative effects on SA2 due to the fact that it does not contain any reference to ensuring no harm befalls the countryside, landscape and historical assets of the District from business development. This could lead to inappropriate development within the countryside that could harm these assets. However, the Option does include the need to demonstrate that the business use cannot be accommodated on other suitable sites that are within existing business areas or Towns and Villages which would go some way to mitigating any negative effects on SA2.

14.1.9 Option 4 is likely to have positive effects on SA2 as it would seek to locate additional business premises within existing business areas which would provide some protection to the landscape, countryside and historic environment due to the fact that the existing business uses are already there and having an impact. Any additional buildings would be seen within the context of the existing, and again the Option makes reference to ensuring no harm to the assets occurs as part of the development.
14.1.10 Option 5 would likely have a natural effect on SA2 as it does not seek to introduce any new buildings within the countryside. However, consideration would need to be given to the type of business that may locate within the exiting retained buildings as the use may not be compatible with the countryside location. Other Local Plan policies are likely to have an influence on this.

14.1.11 Similarly to Option 4, Option 6 would likely have positive effects on SA2 as it again seeks to accommodate new business premises within exiting farm complexes and therefore there is already a more industrial environment within the countryside location. Any new buildings would be seen with the context of the farm complex, lessening their potential negative impacts, and the Option includes reference again to ensuring no harm comes to the countryside, landscape and historic environment.

SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy and SA11 Mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and promoting appropriate design measures in development

14.1.12 In terms of SA8 and SA11, all of the Options may have negative effects in that they may increase the need for people to use their cars to access the jobs created by the rural economic and business uses. This in turn would result in an increase in vehicle emissions and hence a move away from the achievement of SA8 and SA11. This could be mitigated if improvements to rural public transport and connectivity with the wider District were introduced.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

14.1.13 For SA9, assessing the effects of the Options is difficult as the NPPF definition of brownfield land/previously developed land does not include land that is, or has been, occupied by agricultural buildings. In light of this Option 1 has the most potential for positive effects on SA9 as it would focus business development within settlements first, unless it is for farm diversification. This offers the most opportunities to reuse exiting land or buildings that have been previously developed.

14.1.14 Option 2, by its nature, will likely have a negative effect on achieving SA9 as it seeks to locate development in the countryside where a countryside location is demonstrated to be needed. It is unlikely that this would encourage the best use of brownfield land.

14.1.15 Options 3 and 4 could have positive and negative effects on achieving SA9. Option 3 would ensure that brownfield land is considered first as it would not allow business development in the countryside if there are suitable sites within nearby Business Areas and towns and villages. Any business development that did go ahead in the countryside however is unlikely to be on brownfield land. Option 4 would focus business development within areas with an existing core of buildings in economic use and whilst this
may not be considered brownfield land by the NPPF definition, it would be within an established economic/business area and hence use land that is within a business use.

14.1.16 Option 5 is likely to have some degree of positive effect on SA9 as it would retain buildings that are already in business/economic use and allow these to be occupied by other businesses and economic uses. Thus buildings would be reused and would negate some of the need for new buildings for economic use, although not strictly defined as brownfield or previously developed land by the NPPF. There would however be some reliance on the retained buildings being fit for purpose for any new business wanting to locate there i.e. in terms of location, size and condition.

14.1.17 Option 6 is again similar to Option 4 in its effects on SA9. New buildings for economic use would be provided within existing farm complexes and again this would provide some degree of positive impact from using land within the farm complex. However, again this is not strictly considered as brownfield land under the NPPF definition.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes (walking, cycling and public transport)

14.1.18 In regards to SA10, all of the Options may have negative and positive effects. The creation of economic and business opportunities within the countryside could enable people to walk to work for example, if their place of employment is within the immediate area. However, it may not benefit those people who cannot access jobs within the countryside due to the reliance on access by car. Public transport within the rural areas and connectivity to larger settlements would need to be improved if people are to be encouraged to get out of their cars. Opportunities for walking and cycling would also need to be improved.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

14.1.19 In terms of these SA Objectives, the Options are most likely to impact upon SA12 and SA16 however the significance of any impact is likely to be small. The provision of business uses within the countryside may help improve access to services and facilities for local residents (SA12), particularly in the rural areas; however it will depend on what type of business is present. On the other hand, the provision of economic and business uses within the rural areas may not benefit those who cannot access them due to reliance on the car, which they may not have access to. Therefore the effects on SA12 are uncertain and may be restricted to the settlements within which the uses are located.
SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

14.1.20 For SA16 the provision of economic uses within the rural economy has the potential for positive effects as it could help a settlement become more sustainable which could have the indirect effect of providing more services for people which could in turn enable people to stay within an area and build cohesive and vibrant communities.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

14.1.21 It is these SA Objectives which the Options are likely to have the most impact upon. All of the Options would enhance business and economic development within the countryside, although there are slight nuances between the Options, which in turn will help stimulate the rural economy, help regenerate rural areas and local centres and provide support to small local business whist improving access to jobs.

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

14.1.22 I regards to SA17, Option 1 would ensure that business development is located within the most sustainable locations whilst also helping to enhance the sustainability of those settlements classified as Local and Neighbourhood settlements. This would help create new employment opportunities, including through farm diversification, and also improve access to jobs by locating business development close to populations.

14.1.23 Option 2 would have positive effects on SA17 as it would provide for appropriate development within the countryside across the District and would not restrict this to certain settlements or areas. This would allow new employment opportunities and access to jobs to be improved although it would depend to some degree on the type of business provided due to the requirements for any proposals to demonstrate that a countryside location is required. This Option would help support small and local businesses as well.

14.1.24 Option 3 would have the same positive effects on SA17 as Option 2 however it would go a step further as it would allow for any type of business/economic use to locate within the countryside, provided no suitable sites are available in existing business areas or towns and villages. Access to jobs would be more wide spread and could involve a range of employment opportunities for people.

14.1.25 Option 4 again has the same positive effects as Options 2 and 3 with the additional benefit of locating business development within established business areas. This could help improve access more than in Options 2 and 3 as the likely infrastructure for business development would already be present. Option 5 would have positive effects in that the retention of existing buildings in economic use could help support local businesses and small firms.
by allowing them to remain in those areas or by providing suitable business accommodation. Option 6 again will help provide support for local businesses through allowing farms to not only diversify but to also attract new businesses such as tourist accommodation.

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

14.1.26 All of the Options are likely to have positive effects on SA18 as they seek to provide economic and business opportunities within rural areas. This could help diversify the local economies of settlements through the provision of new businesses, especially as part of farm diversification, whilst helping to support and grow the rural economy. Sustainable tourism could be promoted as part of farm diversification which could provide tourist accommodation or tourism facilities. Overall the Options would ensure that the vitality of the villages is enhanced and supported through appropriate economic growth that respects the landscape, countryside and historic environment.

Preferred Option for Testing 38

14.1.27 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to the Rural Economy is contained within Chapter 19 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper. The Preferred Option for Testing is quite lengthy and so will not be repeated here, please refer to Chapter 19 Option 39 and paragraphs 19.1 to 19.9 for the detail of the Option.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 38 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

14.1.28 The Preferred Option for Testing contains strict requirements for any business or economic development in the countryside, including the re-use of redundant or disused buildings; change of use of agricultural buildings and the demolition and rebuild of agricultural buildings, to ensure that no harm occurs to the landscape or amenity of the area or to historical and heritage assets. In this respect it is likely to have positive effects on SA2 in particular. This will be dependent to a degree on other Local Plan policies such as design.
14.1.29 The Preferred Option for Testing focuses business development within the most sustainable settlements and the larger settlements and as such may help minimise emissions and reduce any potential air pollution as people will be close to them which may mean they rely less on the car. However, the reverse could be true if business development within the countryside is at some distance from settlements meaning people may have to travel further to reach it. Improvements to public transport in the rural areas and better connectivity with the wider District’s settlements may help mitigate any potential negative effects. In terms of SA9, there are likely to be some positive effects from business development being focused within the settlements first and then looking at the re-use of existing buildings in the countryside, although this element is to strictly classified as brownfield land/sites.

Social SA Objectives

14.1.30 Socially, the Preferred Option for Testing focuses business development within the most sustainable and larger settlements which can help to improve access to the services and facilities they may offer together with assisting in creating more sustainable, inclusive and vibrant communities. Allowing the flexibility for business development within the countryside will also help rural communities become more cohesive and may attract other ancillary services and facilities to business development within the rural area helping sustain rural communities.

Economic SA Objectives

14.1.31 The Preferred Option for Testing allows for farm and rural diversification which will help sustain and enhance the rural economy. It also allows for the re-use and demolition and rebuild of existing buildings which will help towards providing suitable new employment opportunities by allowing appropriate development fit for the needs of new businesses, for example in the types of business premises needed. This in turn could help provide more jobs within the rural areas and improve access to them for people, whilst also support small and local firms. However, this may not necessarily benefit those people who cannot access jobs within the countryside due to the reliance of access by car. Improvements to rural public transport, walking and cycling opportunities to link rural employment areas within the wider District would help strengthen this however. The flexibility allowed by the Preferred Option for Testing would also help promote sustainable tourism in the District through farm diversification to provide tourist accommodation for example. Other Local Plan policies will play their part in achieving the Economic SA Objectives in regards to the Rural Economy.

14.2 Tourism

14.2.1 Tourism plays a significant role in the economy of the District, particularly in the rural economy. The strategic Options for Tourism have been assessed in Chapter 5 of this SA Report and Chapter 9 of the Wealden Local
Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper. The local Options for Tourism are contained in Chapter 19, Option 40 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

14.2.2 The Options are:

- **Option 1** - Resist provision of new accommodation including camping and caravanning sites within rural areas.

- **Option 2** - Support the retention of existing tourist accommodation of all types and the improvement of quality where appropriate.

- **Option 3** - Support the provision of new tourist accommodation within rural areas, and the conversion of redundant buildings to accommodation in rural areas avoiding harm to the significance of heritage assets.

- **Option 4** - Support the provision of new and expansion of existing camping and caravanning sites where there is suitable road access and there is not an adverse impact on the environment including landscape impact.

- **Option 5** - Support the existing tourism businesses in the District to improve quality and expand as appropriate.

- **Option 6** - Manage the impact of tourism on the sensitive landscapes in the District whilst supporting recreational access where appropriate.
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Local Tourism Options (SA Tasks B3/B4):
General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

14.2.3 In terms of these SA Objectives, the majority of Options will have positive effects. Options 1 and 2 would not result in any new or additional tourist accommodation in rural areas and would retain the status quo. As such there would be no impact on the landscape, countryside or historic environment as the uses would already be present, hence positive effects in regards to SA2. Option 3 is likely to have positive effects also on SA2 as it seeks to avoid harm on the significance of heritage assets from any tourist accommodation development. However, it does not afford the same commitment to the landscape or countryside and since it’s seeks to locate new tourist accommodation in the countryside there could be the potential for negative effects on some elements of SA2. However, this would depend on the type of tourist accommodation being developed.

14.2.4 Option 4 is concerned specifically with the provision of new and expansion of existing camping and caravan sites, which require quite extensive sites to accommodate them. In this respect there is the potential for negative impacts on SA2, in particular in terms of visual impact and the impact on setting of landscape, countryside and heritage assets. However, the Options do make it clear that this type of development would only be allowed where there is no adverse impact on the environment, including landscape. The inclusion of ‘historic environment’ and/or ‘heritage assets’ to the Option would strengthen its positive effects on SA2 further.

14.2.5 Option 6 would have positive effects on SA2 as it seeks to specifically manage the impact of tourism on the sensitive landscapes of the District.
14.2.6 Impacts on SA2 are closely linked with those on SA3 for these Options. Option 1 is likely to move away from the achievement of SA3 as it would result in no tourist accommodation provision within the countryside and hence this would not improve access. People would have to travel further to access countryside, landscapes and historic environments of the District which in turn could have negative impacts on SA8 and SA11 though an increase in emissions and potential air pollution from car use.

14.2.7 The remaining Options all seek to provide tourist accommodation or support tourism businesses within the rural areas of the District and as such will place more people within relatively easy access of the countryside, landscape and historic environments (SA3).

SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy and SA11 Mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and promoting appropriate design measures in development

14.2.8 Whilst people may still use their cars initially to reach any accommodation, negatively affecting SA8 and SA11 potentially, walking and cycling opportunities could be enhanced and/or provided to encourage sustainable modes of transport within the countryside (SA10).

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

14.2.9 As with SA3, the Options are all likely to have positive effects on SA12 in terms of improving access to the countryside, except for Option 1. The Options would provide accommodation within the rural areas and hence place people within close proximity to the countryside. Enhancement and/or improvements to existing and provision of new walking and cycling access within the rural areas would strengthen the Options further in respect on SA12. This can have the additional benefit of improving the overall sense of wellbeing and health of people (SA15) by them being able to get out into the countryside and open spaces.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

14.2.10 Economically, Options 1 and 2 are unlikely to affect SA17 as they seek to prevent new tourist accommodation (Option 1) or just retain
existing (Option 2) which will not create new employment opportunities. The remaining Options, through accommodation provision or support for existing tourism businesses and their expansion, will likely have positive effects in providing service related and tourist attraction employment opportunities. This may also help support small local businesses. An indirect benefit may also be the attraction of other businesses to an area to support the tourism offer such as cafes and restaurants, which in turn may offer employment potential.

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

14.2.11 For SA18 the effects of the Options, except Option 1, are likely to be positive. Allowing tourist accommodation provision and supporting tourism businesses in rural areas will help strengthen the rural economy through the provision of a diverse tourism and service offer. In addition this may lead to an increase in people accessing the countryside and rural settlements which could have the indirect benefit of increasing trade to other services, such as shops, which would further support the rural economy. The diversification allowed by the Options could also help stimulate the regeneration of village and town centres through increased footfall and attraction of ancillary services and facilities. Of course measures would need to be in place to ensure no adverse impacts occurred as a result.

Preferred Option for Testing 39

14.2.12 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Tourism in the Countryside is contained within Chapter 19 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

14.2.13 The Preferred Options for Testing is:

‘Encourage the provision of new tourism accommodation, including the conversion of redundant buildings to accommodation in rural areas, where there is no harm to the significance of heritage assets. Support the provision of new and expansion of existing camping and caravanning sites where there is suitable road access and where there is not an adverse impact on the environment including landscape impact. Encourage the provision of new tourism enterprises where appropriate, and support the existing tourism businesses in the District to improve quality and expand as appropriate’.
Environmental SA Objectives

14.2.14 Environmentally, the Preferred Option for Testing will have overall positive effects. It includes provision for ensuring that the landscape, countryside and historic environments of the District’s rural villages and areas are not adversely affected by any development, and this is likely to be made stronger through other Local Plan policies such as design. In addition tourism related development has the potential to be less of an intrusion within rural areas and have a more sympathetic effect than other business, economic or industrial uses. By providing tourist accommodation within rural areas and being flexible with this provision, the Preferred Option for Testing will place more people within relatively easy access and close proximity to the District natural assets and historic environment, thus improving access. The enhancement of rights of way and linkages between areas, particularly through cycle and footpath provision and improved public transport will strengthen the achievement of SA3 even further. Whilst emissions may be increased (SA11) as a result of people accessing the rural areas in the first place may occur, again improvements to rural public transport may help mitigate this.

Social SA Objectives

14.2.15 Socially, the Preferred Option for Testing would place more people within relatively easy access of the countryside and historic environments of the District (SA12) thus achieving positive effects. Improvements to walking and cycling routes could be improved, enhanced or provided to help achieve this further. Furthermore, the provision of tourist accommodation within rural areas and villages may help enhance their sustainability and have benefits for the local community with additional services and facilities provided, as well as help create diverse communities, albeit only temporarily in terms of the meeting of visitors and residents (SA12 and SA16). Improved access to the countryside may also help people’s overall wellbeing and health (SA15) and this includes the residents as well as the visitors.

Economic SA Objectives

14.2.16 Economically the Preferred Option for Testing may help create new employment opportunities (SA17) in the service and tourist sector as well as helping support local and small businesses. It is unlikely to create any
significant new employment floorspace though. It will also allow for economic growth in the rural areas as a result of rural tourism however this may not be as great as with other more productive industries.

14.2.17 Notwithstanding this, the Preferred Option for Testing will enhance the District rural economy (SA18) particularly as it would allow for farm diversification which indirectly could mean the continuation of the farm business as well. Improving the quality of the tourism offer will also help the rural economy by attracting more visitors to the areas and this could also benefit town and village centres through regeneration as a result of visitor demand for services and facilities.

14.3 Agriculture

14.3.1 Certain types of development, buildings and structures have to be located within the countryside in Wealden to support agriculture which is immensely important to the rural economy of the District.

14.3.2 Chapter 19 paragraphs 19.12 to 19.15 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the planning context for agricultural development including what is allowed under the General Permitted Development Order (2015). The section also outlines the issue to be addressed by the Wealden Local Plan in regards to agricultural development in the countryside together with the Options considered.

14.3.3 The Options are:

- **Option 1** - The scale of agricultural development should be limited to that necessary to sustain the operation it is intended to serve and sited and designed to complement existing development wherever possible to minimise its impact on the surrounding countryside.

- **Option 2** - Agricultural development is not limited to the operation of the unit.

- **Option 3** - New development should not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

- **Option 4** - New development should not impede the continuation of lawfully existing agricultural development and land use.
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Agriculture Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

| Option | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Option 1 | o | + | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | + | ? | + |
| Option 2 | o | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | + | + | + |
| Option 3 | o | + | 0 | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | 0 | o | o | o | o | o | + | o | + |
| Option 4 | o | ? | o | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | o | + | ? | + |

14.3.4 The majority of the SA Objectives will not be affected directly by any of the Options. This does not mean that they may not have an ancillary impact on them. For example, ensuring that the best and most valuable agricultural land is retained in such a use will have the added benefits of providing some ecosystem services such as water regulation and flood management even though that is not the principal aim of Option 3 above.

Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

14.3.5 In regards to SA2, Options 1 and 3 are likely to have positive effects. Option 1 limits development to that necessary for sustaining the agricultural operation it is related to whilst also ensuring any impacts on the countryside are minimised. This means that the scale of any development can be controlled so as to limit any adverse impacts on the surrounding environment. Option 3 ensures that agricultural land is retained where appropriate which can add context and setting to the landscape and surrounding rural environment and hence Option 3 would help conserve and enhance the countryside, landscape and historic assets of the District.

14.3.6 Option 2 is likely to have a negative effect as it would allow unrestricted development that went beyond the needs of the operational unit it was related to. Of course this would have to be in line with the GPDO but there would be no local control over the development. This could lead to inappropriate development in terms of scale and type within the countryside which could have adverse impacts on elements such as setting and visual appeal.

14.3.7 Option 4 may result in positive and/or negative effects as it is not development specific but merely refers to any development not impeding that which exists already. This could lead to inappropriate development in terms of scale and type however again this would depend to a degree on the GPDO and other Local Plan policies such as design.
SA6 Manage natural resources sustainably, minimising waste and maximise the re-use of materials, recycling and composting

14.3.8 For SA6 it is considered that only Option 3 would have a potential effect and that this would likely be positive. This is due to the fact that agricultural land is a natural resource and ensuring that the best and most versatile agricultural land is not lost to development equates to the sustainable management of natural resources. Depending on the types of development put forward under the other Options there may be opportunities to manage the natural capital of the District in a sustainable manner.

SA11 Mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and promoting appropriate design measures in development

14.3.9 In a similar vein, Options 1 and 2 may have negative effects on SA11 depending on the type and location of the development proposed. Both Options may lead to an increase in emissions within the District from additional traffic movements on the road network particularly in the rural areas and/or from the operations of any development. Option 2 is likely to have more of a negative effect than Option 1 in this respect as it does not limit the size of any agricultural development. Again the type of development would play a crucial role in emissions, for example green technologies may locate to the rural areas and result in no increase.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

14.3.10 It is SA16 that the Options are most likely to have an effect on and this is likely to be positive. All of the Options would enable the rural economy to continue to function and may lead to improved sustainability of some settlements. This would mean people could stay within their communities as there would be more opportunities and services available and so help build vibrant and socially inclusive communities. The social effects are very much linked with the economic effects.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

14.3.11 Options 1 and 4 are considered to have uncertain effects on SA17 at present. They may not result in a large number of new employment opportunities but they would play their part in employment creation and potential employment land which could improve access to rural jobs. However, the jobs created may not be that accessible for those outside of the rural areas due to transport infrastructure issues.
14.3.12 Option 2 is likely to have more positive effects as it would seek to expand and diversify the agricultural development offer beyond that of the existing unit’s operation. This may create new employment opportunities and result in a wider range of employment offers which could in turn improve access.

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

14.3.13 All of the Options are likely to have positive effects on SA18 as allowing agricultural development in the countryside means that the rural economy is supported and enhanced. Option 2 in particular would be beneficial to the rural economy as it allows for diversification and expansion. This must be done however in such a way as to ensure no harm comes to the countryside, landscape and historic assets of the District however.

Preferred Option for Testing 40

14.3.14 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to agricultural development is contained within Chapter 19 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

14.3.15 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

“The scale of agricultural development should be limited to that necessary to sustain the operation it is intended to serve and sited and designed to complement existing development wherever possible to minimise its impact on the surrounding countryside. New development should not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land or impede the continuation of lawfully existing agricultural development and land use”

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 40 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

14.3.16 Overall the effects of the Preferred Option for Testing are likely to be positive and both direct and indirect. Any development will be required to minimise its impact upon the surrounding countryside wherever possible which will positively affect SA2 in particular. Protecting the best and most
valuable agricultural land is deemed to be managing natural resources sustainably and it does not rule out new development that is appropriate such as renewable energy in the form of solar panels which can be accommodated with ongoing agricultural use without harm. Whether or not there is a positive effect on emissions reductions (SA11) remains to be determined and is likely to influenced by other Local Plan policies and in particular the type and location of any new agricultural development, whether connected to existing operations or new developments. The approach also ensures that overdevelopment within the countryside does not occur which will be beneficial to the environment of the District as a whole.

Social SA Objectives

14.3.17 Socially the Preferred Option is likely to have positive overall effects as it will allow communities to become more sustainable and hence more cohesive and vibrant due to the fact that the rural economy will be supported which in turn could attract new services and facilities as well as new people to rural areas and villages.

Economic SA Objectives

14.3.18 Economically, the effects will be positive as the Preferred Option for Testing allows flexibility for agricultural development which could lead to more job creation. However, the magnitude of positive effects may be tempered slightly by the fact that there will only be provision of agricultural development and therefore agricultural and agricultural related, job opportunities. Notwithstanding this, the rural economy will be supported and in some cases even enhanced albeit without the potential for diversification. This however may come forward as a part of other Local Plan policies for the rural economy and combined provide significant economic benefits.

14.4 Housing in the Countryside

14.4.1 Housing in the countryside within and around certain settlements is assessed within Chapters 10 and 12 of this SA Report. This section assess the Options for housing in the countryside in terms of isolated individual dwellings, which the NPPF says should be avoided except in exceptional circumstances such as the essential need for a rural worker to live close to their place of employment; conversions of rural buildings into dwellings; subdivision of existing rural dwellings and extensions/alterations to dwellings already in existence.

14.4.2 Chapter 19 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issues to be addressed and the reasonable Options considered to this end.
New isolated dwellings

14.4.3 The NPPF contains no guidance on how to determine whether there is an essential need for a rural worker to live on site. Therefore the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper limits the Options for new isolated dwellings to rural workers, and these Options are:

- **Option 1** - Provide a policy relating to rural workers’ dwellings in the countryside with specific criteria concerning what is defined as a rural worker and what is considered to be essential need.

- **Option 2** - Have no policy relating to rural worker’s dwellings and rely on the National Planning Policy Framework.

- **Option 3** - Develop policies to allow new small scale isolated Farmstead type development, if appropriate within the landscape setting.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the New Isolated Dwellings Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)**

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

14.4.4 In terms of the environment, the Options do not have a direct relationship with the majority of SA Objectives. For SA2, Option 1 is unlikely to have an impact as it does not contain any reference to the landscape, countryside or historic environment and would rely on other Local Plan policies to address these matters. Option 2 would follow the NPPF criteria set out in paragraph 55 for new isolated homes which does include the requirement for the design of any new isolated dwelling to significantly enhance its immediate setting be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area and hence have a positive effect on SA2. However this may not allow for the local context of the District to be taken into account and the NPPF does not define what is an ‘essential need’ for a rural worker to live close to their place of employment. Option 3 is likely to have positive effects on SA2 as it includes the requirement to ensure the proposal is appropriate within the landscape setting.
SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve;
SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and 
encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes and SA11 Mitigate 
the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing 
emissions of greenhouse gases

14.4.5 All of the Options have the potential for negative effects on SA8, SA10 
and SA11. This is due to the fact that new isolated dwellings, by their very 
definition, may be placed at some distance from any significant settlement and 
so the person living in the new dwelling is likely to have to travel some 
distance, most likely by car, to access any services or facilities. This would 
mean an increase in emissions potentially from the car use as well as 
journeys having to be longer in length. Rural public transport could be 
improved to mitigate this although the degree of mitigation potential is difficult 
to determine.

14.4.6 In addition the Options are unlikely to result in the best use of 
brownfield/previously developed land as they will be dwellings within the 
countryside and so will have negative effects in the achievement of SA9.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, 
sustainably constructed and affordable home

14.4.7 In terms of the impacts on the social SA Objectives, the Options are 
likely to have positive effects on SA13, albeit on a narrow scope, as they 
would all provide homes for rural workers. These may not be affordable 
homes in the traditional sense; however they would be specifically for rural 
workers and hence would be affordable for them.

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

14.4.8 There may be some negative impacts in terms of access to services 
and facilities (SA12) however as the new dwellings would be isolated and as 
such may be at some distance from any significant settlement.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs 
through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs 
of the economy including support for small and local businesses

14.4.9 Economically all of the Options are likely to have positive effects on 
SA17 and SA18. For SA17 access to rural jobs would be improved through 
the provision of rural workers housing and would facilitate appropriate 
development.
SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

14.4.10 In terms of SA18 the provision of rural workers dwellings will enhance the rural economy, provided the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside is proven. This will be the difficult aspect of any policy concerning new isolated dwellings in the countryside as the NPF does not provide any guidance for determining what an essential need is.

Preferred Option for Testing 41

14.4.11 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to new isolated dwellings in the countryside is contained in Chapter 19 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

14.4.12 The Preferred Option for Testing is to:

“Provide a policy relating to rural workers’ dwellings in the countryside with specific criteria, based on the National Planning Policy framework”.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 41 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

14.4.13 Environmentally the Preferred Option for Testing should have overall positive effects on SA2 as it would follow the criteria within the NPPF which states that one of the special circumstances to allow isolated dwellings in the countryside should be that the design would significantly enhance the immediate surrounding; be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area and where the development would represent the optimal use of a heritage asset. In this respect the approach could lead to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets in the District.

14.4.14 Depending on the location of the new dwelling there may be issues with emissions reductions as they may be quite a distance from any services or facilities resulting in an increased reliance on the car to access the wider District. However, this could be mitigated to some degree through improvements to rural public transport.
Social SA Objectives

14.4.15 Socially, depending on the location, there could be positive and/or negative effects on SA12 in terms of being at some distance from services and facilities in other settlements. However, there would be the provision of decent housing to meet an identified need, that of a rural worker needing to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside, although determining the essential need for this will be difficult to define due to a lack of guidance from national policy. This will need to be worked on for the Local Plan going forward.

Economic SA Objectives

14.4.16 Economically, the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have overall positive effects due to the fact it would provide access to rural jobs for rural workers where being located permanently at or close to your place of work is essential, as well as enhancing the rural economy through ensuring certain rural employment is supported.

Conversion of agricultural buildings to new dwellings

14.4.17 Planning policy in Wealden has historically sought to manage the conversion of rural agricultural buildings and provide business use over residential use preferably. The NPPF supports economic growth in rural areas through the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise, including through conversion of existing buildings. It also promotes the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

14.4.18 Chapter 19, Issue 36 and Option 43 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue related to this topic and also the reasonable Options considered to address it.

14.4.19 The Options are:

- **Option 1** - Where permitted development rights do not apply, support the conversion of agricultural buildings into dwellings and economic uses in all areas of the District, and leave the market to decide what is the best use of the buildings.

- **Option 2** - For change of use of agricultural buildings where permitted development rights do not apply, utilise criteria similar to that within the General Permitted Development Order, including the definition of 'curtilage'.

- **Option 3** - Apply stricter criteria to the change of use of agricultural buildings where permitted development rights do not apply, to ensure that the conversion is appropriate within its landscape setting, including the size of curtilage, and lies within a sustainable location.
• **Option 4** - Where permitted development rights apply, allow the demolition and rebuild to a use allowed under permitted development, subject to strict design criteria, including size of curtilage.

• **Option 5** - Where permitted development rights do not apply, require evidence to demonstrate that the building is no longer needed for its current or intended agricultural use. The change of use of the agricultural building should not reduce the capacity for land management within the associated farmstead or create a need for additional agricultural buildings to replace it as a result of the loss of existing agricultural buildings through conversion. This would take into account the limitations within the General Permitted Development Order 2015 for replacement of and conversion of agricultural buildings where PD rights under Class Q are enacted.

• **Option 6** - Where permitted development rights do not apply, maintain the historic significance of heritage assets and their setting within the rural landscape, and have strict criteria to consider proposals that seek to relocate buildings from their original position.

• **Option 7** - Only allow extension to agricultural buildings proposed for conversion or infilling of previously developed sites in agricultural complexes where the development is proportionate and subservient in appearance, bulk, massing and scale to the original building, taking into account the significance of any heritage asset affected.

• **Option 8** - Where permitted development rights do not apply, restrict the cumulative floorspace of the existing building or buildings where change of use to residential conversion is proposed within an established agricultural unit to no more than 450 square metres, similarly to the General Permitted Development Order 2015, to manage development and intensification of use in the countryside.

• **Option 9** - Restrict the creation of curtilage relating to a converted agricultural building to that defined within Part 3 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Conversion of agricultural buildings Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

14.4.20 Option 1 is the only Option to be assessed as having an impact on this SA Objective, and that effect is likely to be negative. This is due to the fact that the Option would apply to the whole of the District and let the market decide on the best use of the converted buildings. This could result in inappropriate development close to biodiversity sites which would have adverse impacts on those sites, species and habitats. There is no provision within the Option to minimise adverse impacts on species and habitats through human activities and development.

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

14.4.21 Option 1 would likely have a negative impact on this SA Objective. This is due to the fact that the Option would apply to the whole of the District and let the market decide on the best use of the converted buildings. This could result in inappropriate development close to or within landscape sensitive areas which would have adverse impacts on those sites.

14.4.22 Option 2 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective because it would utilise similar criteria to that within the GPDO and that criteria limits conversions of agricultural buildings in the High Weald AONB; if they are listed or if the site forms part of a SSSI. This would ensure that local landscape quality, distinctiveness and character protected from unsympathetic development and changes in land management.
14.4.23 Option 3 would have more significant positive effects on this SA Objective than Option 2 because it would use stricter criteria than that within the GPDO in regards to conversions of agricultural buildings. The Option takes particular account of landscape setting and also references the size of the curtilage. This would ensure that local landscape quality, distinctiveness and character protected from unsympathetic development and changes in land management.

14.4.24 Option 4 would have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would apply strict design criteria to developments allowed under the GPDO. This would mean that local landscape quality, distinctiveness and character would be protected from unsympathetic development, even if that development is permitted development.

14.4.25 Option 6 offers positive effects on this SA Objective as it would include the requirement to maintain heritage assets and their setting in relation to their positioning and not just development. This would protect local landscape quality through ensuring the positioning of heritage assets is carefully controlled. Positioning can play as an important role as the type of heritage assets being affected.

14.4.26 Option 7 would have positive effects on this SA Objective with particular regard to heritage assets. The Option would provide control over the size of any new development or building and its effect on the significance of any heritage asset.

**SA4 Improve the quality of the built environment**

14.4.27 Options 3 and 4 are likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as they would apply strict design criteria to any new development as a result of demolition or to any conversion and change of use. Both Options would ensure that new development is of a high quality and sympathetic to the character of the built environment and the landscape.

14.4.28 Option 6 would have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would conserve features of historic interest and significance by having strict criteria to consider proposals that seek to relocate buildings or heritage assets from their original position.

14.4.29 Option 7 would have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would ensure that the scale of any new extensions, conversions or infilling are appropriate to the built context within which they sit or effects on any environment close to them.

**SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes**

14.4.30 The Options assessed as having negative effects against this SA Objective do so because they may result in homes and businesses that are at some distance from any sustainable settlement and would place
reliance for access on use of the private cars. Public transport provision particularly within the rural areas is not good and so there could be issues raised.

SA11 Mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and promoting appropriate design measures in development

14.4.31 The reliance on the use of the private car in regards to Options 1-4 would mean negative effects on this SA Objective as it would increase carbon emissions within the District.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

14.4.32 All of the Option identified as having appositive effect on this SA Objective do so because they all would allow, in some form, the conversion and change of use of agricultural buildings where appropriate and in line with strict design criteria. Therefore, they support changes of use of existing buildings to ensure their continued viability and contribution to the District.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

14.4.33 All of the Options assessed as having positive effects on this SA Objective do so because they would provide an element of housing within the District and in particular within the rural areas. The conversion of existing agricultural buildings to dwellings may help make housing in the rural areas more affordable for people as it may result in the provision of smaller homes. It could also help towards providing rural housing for rural workers and key workers. Other policies within the Local Plan, such as design and the affordable housing policy will have a greater impact on the quality and affordability of homes, but these Options provide a good source of housing in the rural areas where it can be difficult to get on the property ladder.

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

14.4.34 Similarly to SA13, the Options assessed as having positive effects on this SA Objective do so because providing housing through conversions of agricultural buildings may help stem out-migration from rural areas and hence help to maintain vibrant communities and promote social cohesion.

Economic SA Objectives

14.4.35 Although the Options were assessed as having no direct relationship with these SA Objectives, indirectly the loss of agricultural buildings could have an adverse effect on the rural economy, however Option
5 does require that evidence be produced to demonstrate that the building is no longer required for its current or intended agricultural use and in this respect should ensure that viable agricultural uses, that support the rural economy, are not lost. In addition, depending on the change of use, Option 1-4 could provide positive effects in providing employment space in rural areas. Other policies within the Local Plan will also deal with this aspect.

Preferred Option for Testing 42

14.4.36 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to conversion of agricultural buildings in the countryside is contained in Chapter 19 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

14.4.37 The Preferred Option for Testing is very long and so please refer to pages 236 - 238 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper at this point.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 42 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

14.4.38 The Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have positive effects on the whole in relation to these SA Objectives. The policy approach would allow for a level of control over development in the countryside which, if left unchecked, could lead to adverse impacts. The policy approach will ensure development is carried out appropriately and that the landscape and countryside, together with historic assets are protected.

14.4.39 The policy approach also allows a degree of flexibility for the enhancement of buildings within the countryside which can help improve the quality of the built as well as natural environments. This flexibility also ensures that buildings are re-used where appropriate.

14.4.40 However, there may be some conflict with these SA Objectives in that the policy approach does place a reliance on the private car as the mode of transport which would increase carbon emissions. Furthermore, any dwellings created may be at some distance from a sustainable settlement and so journey lengths would be longer. This may not result in a very sustainable form of development.
Social SA Objectives

14.4.41 The policy approach would increase the provision of housing in the market in the desirable rural locations which could help meet the housing need within those areas as well as from outside. However, the policy approach may not necessarily result in smaller more affordable housing and could tend to provide larger more expensive housing. However, other Local Plan policies, such as those which allocate dwellings to smaller villages, the affordable housing policy and policy on housing provision within unsustainable settlements will help mitigate some negative effects from this policy approach.

Subdivision, extensions and replacement of existing dwellings

14.4.42 Chapter 19, paragraph 19.28, Option 44 details the issue concerned with the above within the countryside together with the Options considered to address it.

14.4.43 The Options are:

- **Option 1** - All physical changes to existing dwellings within the countryside (land outside the development boundary) should have special design policies regarding impact on the countryside with particular regard to scale and level of change.

- **Option 2** - Subdivision of property to create multiple dwellings should be more restrictive than urban subdivisions.

- **Option 3** - Subdivision of property to create multiple dwellings should be allowed and treated the same within the development boundary and in the countryside (outside the development boundary) in terms of consideration of impacts.

- **Option 4** - Allow self-contained annexes in the form of an extension, where the extension is capable of being incorporated into the existing dwelling when no longer required; or construction of a new building within the curtilage where it is well-related to the existing dwelling.

- **Option 5** - Replacement of existing dwellings within the countryside should be of a comparable size to the existing building, in keeping with the character of the locality, having regard to the appearance and general design of the building, not result in the loss of a building of valuable local character, unless it is not reasonably capable of being made structurally sound or otherwise improved. For replacement of existing dwellings, relocation within the plot may be acceptable if it would result in landscape, highway or local amenity benefits.

- **Option 6** - Proposals for extensions to existing dwellings will be allowed, subject to certain criteria regarding design, including consideration of impacts on the landscape and heritage assets.
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Subdivision, extension and replacement Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

14.4.44 Option 1 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would apply special design policies to all physical changes to dwellings in the countryside. These design policies would ensure landscape quality, distinctiveness and character protected from unsympathetic development.

14.4.45 Option 3 is likely to have negative effects on this SA Objective as it would not account for the fact that impacts of development on an urban landscape are not likely to be the same as on the countryside and so it would not distinguish between the two. This could result in inappropriate and unsympathetic development within the countryside. Conversely, if the tighter requirements for the consideration of impacts within the countryside were applied to the development boundary, this may result in an overly restrictive policy approach.

14.4.46 Options 5 and 6 would have positive effects on this SA Objective for the same reasoning. Both would ensure that new dwellings or extensions to existing dwellings were considerate of their impact on the landscape and heritage assets. Option 5 in particular would provide protection form the actual design and individual development itself.

SA11 Mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and promoting appropriate design measures in development

14.4.47 None of the Options address this SA Objective as they do not include measures to reduce emissions from developments and may result in a higher reliance on car use. However, other Local Plan policies such as those of energy efficiency and design are likely to address this issue and would be
applied in conjunction with any policy on the sub-division, extension or replacement of dwellings in the countryside.

**Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)**

**SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home**

14.4.48 Options 2 and 3 are assessed as having uncertain effects on this SA Objective at this time as whilst they will result in additional homes which is a positive effect, there may be other issues arising. Option 2 would be more restrictive in its allowance for sub-division which may result in limited housing being provided, or housing that is not appropriate for the local needs being developed. Option 3 may provide more housing as it would be allowed within the countryside under the same rules as that in urban areas.

14.4.49 Option 4 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would provide additional housing within the countryside through annexes that could be affordable for people particularly if it is for extended family to live in.

**SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health**

14.4.50 Option 4 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective through its provision of housing in the form of annexes. This could allow for example an elderly person to remain independent in the annex whilst still having the reassurance of family members close by. This could also benefit those people with a disability for similar reasoning.

**Preferred Option for Testing 43**

14.4.51 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to subdivision, conversion and extensions is contained within Chapter 19 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

14.4.52 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

“Proposals for extensions to existing dwellings will be allowed, subject to certain criteria regarding design including consideration of impacts on the landscape and heritage assets.

Subdivisions will be considered on an equal basis across the District.

Allow self-contained annexes in the form of an extension, where the extension is capable of being incorporated into the existing dwelling when no longer required; or construction of a new building within the curtilage where it is well-related to the existing dwelling.

Replacement of existing dwellings within the countryside should be:
• of a comparable size to the existing building;
• in keeping with the character of the locality, having regard to the appearance and general design of the building;
• not result in the loss of a building of valuable local character, unless it is not reasonably capable of being made structurally sound or otherwise improved, and

For replacement of existing dwellings, relocation within the plot may be acceptable if it would result in landscape, highway or local amenity benefits.”

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 43 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

14.4.53 The Preferred Option for Testing would have likely positive effects in that it seeks to prevent or at least mitigate any adverse impacts of residential development on the countryside, landscape and historic environment. However, it may conflict with the objective of reducing emissions as it does not include any requirements for energy efficiency measure within development for example. However, other Local Plan policies such as those on design and energy efficiency should address these issues in conjunction with any policy on sub-division, extensions and replacement dwellings. The policy approach may also place reliance on the private car which would increase carbon emissions.

Social SA Objectives

14.4.54 The Preferred Option for Testing would have likely positive effects in that it would provide for housing within the countryside and for different sizes of housing, however this may result in larger properties. But it does create some flexibility in rural residential development.

14.5 Recreation and Leisure

14.5.1 There are a variety of recreational and leisure developments within the countryside ranging from golf courses to equestrian uses. Some of these overlap with tourism facilities some may need to be considered on their own merits.

14.5.2 The NPPF states that local authorities should support activities which contribute to the rural economy and/or promote recreation in, and the
enjoyment of, the countryside. At the same time account needs to be taken of the need to protect natural resources and features of landscape value.

Equestrian uses

14.5.3 Within Wealden District we have a number of equestrian facilities on a commercial and non-commercial level. Whilst Government guidance supports equestrian development, horse related activities such as stables and paddocks, both individually and cumulatively can have a significant impact on the character of the area

14.5.4 Chapter 19 Issue 37 and Option 45 of the Wealden Local, Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue concerned with equestrian uses in the countryside as well as the Options considered to address this.

14.5.3 The Options are:

- **Option 1** - Allow small scale equestrian development subject to criteria concerning the scale of buildings and consideration of transport issues such as parking and accessibility.

- **Option 2** - Allow small scale equestrian development subject to criteria concerning the scale of buildings, the cumulative impact with surrounding equestrian uses and consideration of transport issues such as parking and accessibility.

- **Option 3** - Only allow large scale equestrian uses in accessible locations close to Sustainable Settlements, subject to landscape criteria.

- **Option 4** - Require that sufficient grazing and off road riding areas are available.

- **Option 5** - Require that residential amenity is protected.

- **Option 6** - Require that the buildings be designed and constructed in materials appropriate to a rural area and should not be of a size and degree of permanence that they could be adapted for other use in the future.

- **Option 7** - Require that buildings are closely associated with existing buildings and not isolated within the landscape.

- **Option 8** - Require that the scale of the development is appropriate to the landscape, including the High Weald Area of outstanding Natural Beauty, and the setting of any heritage asset, and where the cumulative impact of other buildings, does not harm the landscape character. This should take into account the landscape character of the
area and the form and function of rural areas including how farmsteads function within the landscape.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Equestrian Options (SA Tasks B3/B4):**

**General Summary**

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### Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

**SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets**

14.5.4 Options 1 and 2 may have positive and negative effects on this SA Objective. The Options do include reference to criteria in regards to scale and transport impacts which could be such that they take account of the impacts on these on the landscape and countryside within which the development is likely to be located, however they do not specifically refer to considering the impact on the landscape and countryside. It would depend on the criteria used and the context it would be used in.

14.5.5 Option 3 would likely have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would only allow large scale equestrian developments close to sustainable settlements provided landscape criteria are met. However, this does not account for small scale equestrian development which could, cumulatively have a negative impact on the local landscapes quality, distinctiveness and character.

14.5.6 Option 6 is likely to have a positive effect on this SA Objective as it specifically requires development to be designed in such a way as to be appropriate to the rural setting. It also provides additional protection in that it states the buildings must not be able to be adapted for other uses in the future, thus protecting the local landscapes quality, distinctiveness and character.
14.5.7 Option 8 would offer the most potential for positive effects on this SA Objective as it specifically relates to the scale of any development being appropriate to the AONB; setting of heritage assets and landscape character and it includes cumulative effects. This Option would offer significant protection to the local landscape quality, distinctiveness and character as well as accounting for historic landscape sensitivity and the need to protect it as well.

Social SA Objectives

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

14.5.8 Option 4 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective in terms of improving access to the equestrian development itself rather than wider access to services and facilities. Option 4 would locate equestrian development close to sustainable settlements which would enhance access. This may indirectly improve access for people to the countryside.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

14.5.9 Option 1-3 offer potential positive effects on this SA Objective through the provision of employment opportunities within the equestrian development. This could increase the job opportunities within the tourism sector however the jobs may be seasonal and lower paid or lower skilled.

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

14.5.10 Again Options 1-3 offer the most potential for positive effects on this SA Objective in terms of enhancing and supporting the rural economy as well as the tourism industry within the District. Location developments such as this close to sustainable settlements will enhance the positive effects further through improved access to the development.

Preferred Option for Testing 44

14.5.11 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to the equestrian uses is contained within Chapter 19 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

14.5.12 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Subject to environmental considerations, proposals for equestrian facilities and buildings are acceptable subject to:

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• the buildings/facilities being appropriate in scale to their landscape setting and closely related to existing farm buildings;
• the cumulative impact of other buildings/facilities is acceptable in terms of landscape and other matters;
• sufficient grazing land and off road riding areas would be available;
• development would not harm the amenity of surrounding residents; and
• the buildings are designed and constructed in materials appropriate to a rural area and should not be of a size and degree of permanence that they could be adapted for other uses in the future.

Any proposal for large scale commercial equestrian centre/facilities should be only located in accessible locations close to Sustainable Settlements, subject to landscape criteria, and consideration of harm to the setting of heritage assets in the countryside"
14.6 Rural Commercial Activities

14.6.1 Other recreational and commercial activities also have the potential to assist the rural economy and impact on the countryside. Commercial activities have been assessed within Chapter 5 of this SA Report and it is the preferred option for opportunities to be considered within the town centre, edge of centre or associated with new development. However some activities can require extensive areas of land and as such may need a countryside location.

14.6.2 Chapter 19, Issue 38 and Option 46 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issues to be addressed in relation to rural commercial activities and the Options considered in relation to this.

14.6.3 The Options are:

- **Option 1** - All commercial activities, which predominately involve building with associated ancillary land must be associated with a Sustainable Settlement and must initially consider a town/village centre location, before considering edge of centre, and before considering elsewhere within and adjoining the settlement prior to locating in association with new housing development proposals as part of an allocation.

- **Option 2** - Any isolated development should be designed and constructed in materials appropriate to a rural area and should not be of a size and degree of permanence that they could be adapted for other use in the future.

- **Option 3** - All commercial activities, which predominately involve a building with associated ancillary land, must be associated with an area with existing business interests, and where it is deemed suitable for intensification or expansion or any newly allocated business area.

- **Option 4** - All commercial actives can be located anywhere in the District.

- **Option 5** - Only commercial activities which require significant land and ancillary buildings can be located outside of any Sustainable Settlement, subject to strict criteria. The options for criteria include:
  
  - Take into account environmental constraints such as biodiversity, landscape and flood risk;
  - The development must prove that a rural location is required;
  - The development must be located as close as possible to a Sustainable Settlement;
  - The development must have footpath links to the nearest Sustainable Settlement or other centres;
• Require that the scale of the development is appropriate to the landscape, including the High Weald AONB, and where the cumulative impact of other buildings, does not harm the landscape character;
• The development must not be harmful to the setting of heritage assets; and
• Require that residential amenity is protected.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the rural commercial activities Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

14.6.4 Option 4 is likely to have negative effects on this SA Objective as it would allow commercial development anywhere in the District and does not include any measures to ensure biodiversity and geodiversity is protected from adverse impacts.

14.6.5 Option 5 is likely to have significant positive effects as it specifically requires that any commercial development within the countryside takes into account environmental constraints such as biodiversity. However it would be in combination with other local plan policies that this Option achieves the most positive effects as it doesn’t state itself what development should do about any adverse impacts that may be likely to occur.

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

14.6.6 All of the Options assessed as having positive effects on this SA Objective do so because they all take into account the landscape and countryside impacts of commercial development. Option 1 would apply the sequential test to locating commercial development with locations in the countryside being the last option.

14.6.7 Option 2 would ensure that isolated commercial developments in the countryside are constructed and designed so as to be appropriate to their
location and setting. Furthermore it would prevent the future conversion of such sites into residential development.

14.6.8 Option 3 Would locate commercial development in the countryside in relation to existing business areas and as such any potential impacts would be lessened by the virtue that business development already exists.

14.6.9 Option 4 would have negative effects as it would allow any commercial development anywhere in the District with no mechanism to ensure the protection of local landscape quality and the countryside.

14.6.10 Option 5 would provide the most significant positive effects as it would offer a comprehensive policy with specific criteria which commercial developments in the countryside would have to meet before being permitted.

SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment.

14.6.11 Option 5 would provide some level of positive effect as it includes within its criteria that flood risk must be taken into account. However it is likely that other Local Plan policies will have more effect on this SA Objective when applied in conjunction with this Option.

SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy

14.6.12 Whilst not assessed as having a direct relationship with this SA Objective, all of the Options may result in an increase in traffic on the road and hence an increase in air pollution.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

14.6.13 Option 1 offers the most potential for positive effects on this SA Objective. This is because Option 1 requires all commercial development to first consider a town or village centre location and this is likely to be where the most previously developed land will be located. The Option may however offer the opportunity to redevelopment large former industrial estates for example which would also help achieve this SA Objective.

14.6.14 The other Options may have positive effects but it would depend on the location of the development.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes (walking, cycling and public transport)

14.6.15 Options 1 and 5 offer the most potential for positive effects on this SA Objectives due to the fact they would seek to ensure commercial
development was located as close to an existing Sustainable Settlement as possible. This would help to encourage use of and improvements to public transport and more sustainable transport. Option 5 in particular states that commercial development would be required to have footpath links to the nearest Sustainable Settlement.

14.6.16 Option 2 would result in isolated development which could increase car use for journeys. Options 3 and 4 would depend on where the commercial development was located.

SA11 Mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and promoting appropriate design measures in development

14.6.17 The Options are assessed as having the same effects on this SA Objective as on SA10 as they are linked. In particular the effects relate to transport use and hence emissions. Options 1 and 5 would likely have positive effects as they would be located close to Sustainable Settlements with Option 5 requiring footpath links. This could help remove cars from the road and reduce emissions. These Options could also help promote and improve public transport. Option 2 would result in isolated development which could increase car use for journeys and hence emissions. Options 3 and 4 would depend on where the commercial development was located.

14.6.18 None of the Options address reducing emissions from the developments themselves however.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

14.6.19 Options 1 and 5 again would have likely positive effects on this SA Objective in terms of access to services and facilities. The requirement for commercial development to be located close to Sustainable Settlements means that access to services and facilities would be improved for those within the commercial development.

14.6.20 Option 2 would result in isolated development which would limit accessibility to services and facilities and would encourage car use. Options 3 and 4 would depend on where the commercial development was located.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

14.6.21 All of the Options would result in some form of new business and commercial development and hence an increase in employment opportunities. The types of employment offered would be dependent on the
businesses that decide to locate within the District. It would lead to the creation of job opportunities within the rural areas which could open up the job market to those within the rural areas.

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

14.6.22 All of the Options would enhance the rural economy and hence have beneficial impacts on this SA Objective. Options 1 and 5 would have the most potential for aiding the regeneration of town and village centres as they would locate commercial development close to existing Sustainable Settlement and so have knock on beneficial impacts. Option 2, as it would result in isolated development is less likely to have positive effects on the town and village centres. And the regeneration effects of Options 3 and 4 would depend on the location of the development.

Preferred Option For Testing 45

14.6.23 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to rural commercial activities is contained within Chapter 19, of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

14.6.24 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘All commercial activities, which predominately involve a building with associated ancillary land, must be:

- associated with a Sustainable Settlement; and
- must initially consider a town/village centre location, before considering edge of centre, before considering elsewhere in the settlement, before considering edge of settlement/locating in association with new housing development proposals as part of an allocation; or
- must be associated with an area with existing business interest, is deemed
- suitable for intensification or expansion or is a newly allocated business area.

Only commercial activities which require significant land and ancillary buildings can be located outside of any Sustainable Settlement, subject to:

- taking into account environmental constraints such as flood risk;
- proving that a rural location is required;
- locating development as close as possible to a Sustainable Settlement with footpath links to the nearest Sustainable Settlement;
- the scale of the development is appropriate to the landscape, including the High Weald Area Outstanding Natural Beauty, and where the cumulative impact of other buildings, does not harm the landscape character;
- Ensuring that the setting of heritage assets is not harmed; and
• residential amenity is protected.

Any isolated development should be designed and constructed in materials appropriate to a rural area and should not be of a size and degree of permanence that they could be adapted for other use in the future'.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 45 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

14.6.25 Overall the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have positive effects as it ensures that responsible commercial development is carried out in the countryside and that this must ensure it meets certain strict criteria when it is necessary to locate the development outside of the town and village centres. The policy approach will ensure local landscape quality, distinctiveness and character protected from unsympathetic development and changes in land management as well as protecting heritage assets.

14.6.26 However there may be some conflict as the policy approach would allow development within the countryside that has adverse impacts on tranquillity. Furthermore, the policy approach may result in an increase in carbon emissions from vehicles; however it seeks to mitigate this where possible by locating development close to existing sustainable settlements with good footpath links.

Social SA Objectives

14.6.27 Socially the Preferred Option for Testing doesn’t really have any specific impacts, however it does seek to locate new commercial development close to existing Sustainable Settlements and provide good footpath links, all of which will help improve accessibility to the wider area. However, it may still lack accessibility to those who do not have access to a car.

Economic SA Objectives

14.6.28 In economic terms the Preferred option for Testing is likely to have positive effects as it would provide new employment land and employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas, which will help support the rural and local economy. The policy approach also retains the economic function of the site by restricting the development of new buildings that may later be converted into housing.
15.0 Design

15.1 Design is an important aspect of development as it can have a significant impact on its surroundings and can either be positive or negative. Chapter 20 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the legislative framework with regards to design and development, as set out in the NPPF and NPPG, together with the Options considered in relation to the design of development within Wealden.

15.2 The Options considered in relation to Design are:

- Option 1 - Permit development that is of a high quality in terms of design and local distinctiveness, which helps to provide a sense of place, and promote community cohesiveness and social well-being.

- Option 2 - Require the plan form of all new development to relate to its immediate surroundings, building on the foundations of the historic form and layout of the settlement, having regard to context, urban structure, urban grain and the immediate landscape setting.

- Option 3 - Be more flexible with the plan form of new development to encourage higher density design, in both our towns and villages.

- Option 4 - In areas of additional sensitivity, such within or adjacent to heritage assets and their setting, require developments to demonstrate that particular design consideration has been given to ensuring proposals enhance the locality, that the setting of heritage assets (including Conservation Areas) is sustained and enhanced, and that any negative impacts are mitigated.

- Option 5 - Have a presumption in favour of the retention, re-use and interpretation of heritage assets (designated and non-designated) in new developments, and require reference to the heritage assets in the design and layout of development to help reinforce cultural and social identity of an area.

- Option 6 - Require new buildings to be of a similar scale to other buildings in the surrounding area, unless they are necessary to reflect a development’s function or to create a landmark in an appropriate location. In such cases larger scale buildings may be appropriate provided that important views, especially of landmark features, from public places, including transport corridors and rights of way, are retained.

- Option 7 - Require development to be undertaken using materials and styles that complement those found in the local area to maintain and strengthen the local distinctiveness.
• Option 8 - Require the height, mass, form, scale, orientation, siting, setbacks, access, overshadowing, articulation, detailing, roof form, materials and landscaping of new development to relate to neighbouring buildings as well as the wider locality.

• Option 9 - Require materials to be appropriate to their sense of place, and locally sourced where possible; with consideration given to the use of recycled building materials from any existing building which is to be replaced.

• Option 10 - Require extensions or alterations to be subsidiary to the original building and not dominate in scale.

• Option 11 - Require the design of the public realm to facilitate social interaction, walking/cycling, health and wellbeing, and inclusive communities; particularly in areas of high pedestrian activity through the integration of new development with the existing public realm.

• Option 12 - Require the design of new development to create unique and attractive streets, without unnecessary clutter, where traffic and other activities are successfully integrated, promoting accessible and permeable road networks, and providing car-parking and service areas appropriate to the context of the area, without rigid adherence to highway engineering standards, subject to achievement of high levels of safety.

• Option 13 - Require layout of new development to provide sufficient quality and quantity of public and private space, with usable, private and regularly shaped private/communal amenity space readily and directly accessible to dwellings, designed to receive sunlight for at least part of the day and avoiding overlooking and loss of privacy.

• Option 14 - Require development (buildings, open space and the public realm) to be designed for easy access and to be inclusive, as well as safe, secure and accessible and to reduce the fear of and opportunities for crime and to ensure there is a clear definition between public and private space to support privacy and security.

• Option 15 - Require the layout and design of buildings to be durable and adaptable to meet the changing needs of the occupant(s).

• Option 16 - Require the layout of new development to help to reduce energy and water use and mitigate against flooding, pollution and overheating. This includes the use of passive solar energy, and design solutions to avoid overheating and the need for air conditioning.

• Option 17 - Encourage original and innovative designs to enliven areas and that promote high levels of sustainability.
- Option 18 - Require within new development accessible and adaptable inclusive public spaces, with functional and attractive landscaping and a range of facilities, along with the integration of public art that reflects local character and heritage to help create interesting and exciting places for people to use and vibrant neighbourhoods.

- Option 19 - Require new development to meet the service needs of dwellings without impacting on the character and attractiveness of the area, by providing, for example, adequate space for the internal/external storage of bins for the disposal of recycling and refuse, space for storage of bikes, adequate access to meter boxes and space for drying clothes.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Design Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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15.3 Many of the Options have no direct relationship with any of the SA Objectives or only impact on certain SA Objectives. The Options are quite specific and so this is not surprising.
Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

15.4 Option 2 is likely to have significant positive effects on this SA Objective. The Option would ensure that local landscape quality distinctiveness and character are protected from unsympathetic development as well as protecting the historic forma and context of the settlement or area where the development is taking place.

15.5 Option 3 is assessed as having uncertain effects at this time as it could result in development that is not appropriate to the existing context within which it sits. However, the Option does refer to flexibility and so theirs would imply that considerations as to the local area would still be taken into account.

15.6 Option 4 offers positive effects as it would ensure the character and appearance of heritage assets including Conservation Areas are protected and enhanced together with their settings and surroundings, as a result of development proposals.

15.7 Option 5 would provide positive effects as it would conserve and enhance heritage assets through their inclusion within the design of any new development. This would help sustain the local identity of the settlements and areas as well.

15.8 Option 6, whilst not strictly related to the landscape and countryside, would provide positive effects as it would protect local character through the careful use of materials. This could also help enhance local distinctiveness and character.

15.9 Options 8 and 9 would provide positive effects as they would ensure that developments themselves do not adversely impact the local as well as wider context of the District. This could also lead to enhancements in the local character.

15.10 Option 18 would have likely positive effects due to the fact that it would incorporate attractive landscape and local art to reflect local heritage.

SA4 Improve the quality of the built environment

15.11 All of the Options assessed as having positive effects on this SA Objective have elements of design considerations within them that could help improve the existing built environment within which the new development is located. For example they contain requirements to ensure that new developments take account of and respect their local surroundings; use materials suitable to their locality; reflect the built form and grain of the existing environment; ensure the built form is accessible and contains good quality and accessible public spaces; require new developments to create unique and attractive streets and that climate change is taken into account.
15.12 This does not mean that the other Option will have negative effects, they just do not directly relate to improving the built form.

SA5 To maintain and improve the water quality of the District’s rivers and groundwater, and to achieve sustainable water resources management

15.13 Option 16 is the only Option to be assessed as having positive effects against this SA Objective due to the fact it specifically states that the layout of new development should be required to help mitigate against flooding and reduce water use. The Option would ensure that sustainable drainage systems are widely used within developments and would lead to the effective management of demand for, and use of, water.

15.14 Option 17 has the potential for positive effects as it promotes high levels of sustainability within developments, but it just doesn’t specify what these would be in relation to, but they are likely to include water resources.

SA6 Manage natural resources sustainably, minimising waste and maximise the re-use of materials, recycling and composting

15.15 Option 9 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would promote the use of locally sourced materials which is a sustainable construction approach, as well as the added benefit of minimising the transportation of building materials.

SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy

15.16 Option 11 would have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would development to build into their design and layout facilities to promote walking and cycling which can help reduce air pollution by removing cars from the roads.

15.17 Option 16 would have positive effects on this SA Objective as it includes the requirement for developments to incorporate measures that can help encourage the use of renewable energy technologies. It will also help reduce emissions through the use of measures such as passive solar design which can reduce the need to use air conditioning in summer.

SA11 Mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and promoting appropriate design measures in development

15.18 Option 11 again will have positive effects on this SA Objective for the same reasoning as for SA8. The Option includes the use of design measures such as passive solar design which can mean less reliance on air conditioning in summers, which are likely to become warmer as a result of climate change impacts, and less need for heating in the winter. The Option is specifically focused on strategies to adapt to and mitigate climate change impacts and for
developments to include sustainable design measures to enable them to mitigate the effects of and adapt to the impacts of climate change, such as increased temperatures and rainfall events.

**Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)**

**SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces**

15.19 Option 13 will have positive effects on this SA Objective in regards to promoting and facilitating access to, and opportunities to enjoy, the countryside, open and green spaces. The Option would require development to provide sufficient quality and quantity of open space and ensure that there is usable access for residents.

15.20 Option 18 will have positive effects on this SA Objective due to the fact it would require developments to include accessible, adaptable and inclusive public spaces with a range of facilities. This would ensure access is improved as part of any development and could help promote walking and cycling as well.

**SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home**

15.21 Option 9 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as it promotes sustainable construction through the use of locally sourced materials and the use of recycled building materials where appropriate.

15.22 Option 14 is likely to have positive effects as it requires developments, including buildings to be designed with easy access and to be inclusive which means accessible to all members of society. This would promote sustainable design in particular.

15.23 Option 15 focuses on ensuring that buildings are designed so as to be easily adaptable for the changing circumstances of the occupant, which means they need to take into account the needs of people as they grow older and may wish to adapt their homes or those who may suffer a disability later in their lives. This would ensure that housing would be accessible and available to all.

15.24 Option 16 focuses on ensuring new development helps to reduce energy and water usage and in doing so this will ensure that good quality, resource efficient, affordable housing with reduced environmental impact is available to all.

15.25 Similarly to Option 14, Option 17 is likely to have a positive effect on this SA Objective due to the fact it would promote high levels of sustainability within developments.

15.26 Option 19 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as it promote good design standards within individual homes for things such as
refuse storage and drying space, all of which can add to quality of a home and the comfort and quality of life of residents.

**SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health**

15.27 Option 11 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as it advocates sustainable modes of transport through provision of walking and cycling routes which can help improve people’s overall health and wellbeing.

15.28 Option 13 is likely to have positive effects as it requires development to provide quality and accessible open space which again can help improve people’s health and wellbeing.

15.29 Option 14 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as it requires developments to be designed to offer safe environments and help reduce the fear of crime. This will help create a healthy and safe working and living environment for residents.

15.30 Option 15 will have likely positive effects on this SA Objective as it will help ensure that homes are adaptable and in so doing will improve people’s health and wellbeing as they will know there home can be adapted to suit their changing needs.

15.31 Option 18 will have positive effects as it would seek to ensure the public realm is attractive and functional which can all help improve people’s sense of wellbeing.

**SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community**

15.32 Option 1 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as it focuses on ensuring development promotes a sense of community identity and encourages social cohesion through its layout and design.

15.33 Option 5 will have likely positive effects on this SA Objective as it would protect heritage assets within new development and hence promote them within the local and wider community. This could help enhance social cohesion through the protection of cultural and historic elements.

15.34 Option 11 is very specific in that it would require new development to encourage social cohesion through social interaction as a result of well-designed public realm amenities including walking and cycling opportunities.

15.35 Option 14 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as it requires developments to be designed so that they are inclusive and accessible which will help facilitate social interaction which can address issues of social isolation and help create vibrant communities.
15.36 Option 18 includes the integration of public art into public spaces that are functional and offer a range of facilities. This will ensure positive effects on this SA Objective as it combines recreational and cultural activity embracing the arts, heritage and the environment, all of which can help build vibrant and cohesive communities.

**Preferred Option for Testing 46**

15.36.1 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to design is contained within Chapter 20 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

15.36.2 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Create a consistent and positive policy framework within which good design can be secured; through which new development can make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and through which vibrant and safe neighbourhoods are created by:

- Ensuring new development to relates to its immediate surroundings, having regard to context, urban structure, urban grain, the immediate landscape setting, and the context and setting of heritage assets (designated and non-designated); and that it relates to neighbouring buildings as well as the wider locality.

- Reinforcing cultural and social identity and the local distinctiveness of an area;

- Considering the sustainable use of materials and ensuring building styles complement those found in the local area to maintain and strengthen local distinctiveness.

- Considering outstanding or innovative design through the use of materials and techniques to enliven areas and promote high levels of sustainability.

- Considering design of extensions and alterations to existing buildings to ensure that local distinctiveness is reinforced.

- Ensuring that the design of the public realm facilitates social interaction, walking/cycling, health and wellbeing, and inclusive communities through the integration of new development with the existing public realm and by the creation of unique and attractive streets appropriate to the context of the area.

- Ensuring sufficient quality and quantity of accessible, adaptable and inclusive public and private amenity space is provided.

- Considering the integration of public art that reflects local character and heritage to help create interesting and exciting places for people to use.'
• Ensuring that the layout of development is designed for easy access and to be socially inclusive, as well as safe, secure and accessible and to reduce the fear of and opportunities for crime and to ensure there is a clear definition between public and private space to support privacy and security.

• Ensuring that the layout and design of buildings is durable and adaptable to meet the changing needs of occupants; as well as meeting the service needs of dwellings without impacting on the character and attractiveness of the area.

• Ensuring that the layout of new development helps to reduce energy and water use and mitigate against flooding, pollution and overheating.'

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 46 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

15.37 The Preferred Option for Testing will have positive effects on these SA Objectives. The policy approach includes measures to ensure the design of new development respects its immediate surroundings including the landscape setting and that sustainable construction measures and the reuse of building materials where appropriate are used. The policy approach also requires design to factor in measures to help reduce the use of energy and water and to ensure that developments are adaptable to the impacts of climate change and mitigate any potential flood risk, now and in the future. The design criteria also include ensuring any new buildings are of a scale, massing and design to respect the existing built environment including any heritage assets and historic features. This would ensure that all new buildings would be carefully designed to respect and enhance their surroundings. Furthermore, the criteria include making sure the public realm is also taken into consideration and that new development provides sufficient accessible open space and contributes to enlivening the local context. In addition, the criteria require that new developments encourage walking and cycling and hence will help promote sustainable transport modes which can reduce emissions as well.

15.38 In general the Preferred Option for Testing will provide significant beneficial effects to the environmental SA Objectives. However there may be some areas of conflict. For example if an areas character is predominantly low density then this could conflict with SA9 and ensuring the best use of
previously developed/brownfield land if new development is required to be in conformity with its immediate surroundings. In addition innovative designs could conflict with the protection of local character and heritage assets and it may be the case that criteria become too onerous and over prescriptive that they stifle any development. However, in combination with other Local Plan policies the design policy approach should ensure the best possible outcome in terms of new development and provide overall protection for the environment, provide the criteria are flexible.

**Social SA Objectives**

15.39 Again the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have positive effects on these SA Objectives. The policy approach would ensure that the public realm is considered from the inception of any development proposal and this is more likely to achieve development which acknowledges diversity and difference and creates, safe, inclusive and accessible development, which is adaptable to the future needs of users and residents. The policy approach would also require that new buildings and the layout of development are designed in such a way, and include measures, to ensure they are adaptable to meet the changing needs of occupants and users as well as meeting the service needs of dwellings. This will ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home that is appropriate for their needs now and in the future. The promotion of cycling and walking, together with the provision of high quality and accessible open spaces will help foster community cohesion and social interaction as well as helping improve people’s health and overall sense of wellbeing.

**Economic SA Objectives**

15.40 Although it is assessed that the policy approach will not have any direct relationship with these SA Objectives, indirectly a high quality built and natural environment can help attract and retain businesses and a workforce. Together with other Local Plan policies this approach to design could have some degree of beneficial impact, although not as a direct result of design policy alone.

**Location of Development**

15.41 The location of development and impacts on amenity are key considerations for all forms of development to ensure that high quality environments are delivered and protected. The National Planning Policy Framework requires that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

15.42 Chapter 20 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issues surrounding location of development in Wealden and the Options considered to address this.
15.43 The Options are:

- **Option 1** - Development should conserve, restore and enhance the environment wherever possible, including air and water quality, land, soil, habitats/biodiversity and geodiversity;

- **Option 2** - Development should not result in unacceptable impacts, individually or cumulatively, on the District’s environment or public health when considering amenity factors;

- **Option 3** - Development should not cause significant harm to the residential amenities of adjoining occupiers, and would provide adequate residential amenities for future occupiers of the development, when assessed in terms of daylight, sunlight and privacy;

- **Option 4** - Proposals which are incompatible with existing neighbouring uses, as a result of likely unacceptable impacts on amenity factors of new development, taking into account suitable mitigation, should not normally be permitted.

- **Option 5** - Development should not impede the continuation of lawfully existing uses where there is a reasonable prospect of the site continuing to be used for such purposes.

- **Option 6** - The nature and intensity of proposed uses should be compatible with neighbouring uses and would not cause significant harm to the amenities or character of the area in terms of noise, vibration, smell, safety or health impacts, or excessive traffic generation;

- **Option 7** - A criterion based policy could be used to help inform lighting schemes for new development to avoid adverse impact in relation to the above considerations in relation to amenity, dark landscapes and nature conservation. For example, details could include: position, height, directionality, lighting levels and glare; luminance and type of light; times of lighting.

- **Option 8** - Development on former landfill sites in the District should not be permitted unless the generation of landfill gas has ceased or declined to a level such that it can be demonstrated that there would not be a risk to the safety of future users of the proposed development from gases, or increased risk to neighbouring uses and users as a result of gas migration. Planning applications on or in the immediate vicinity of landfill sites should be accompanied by a full technical analysis of the site and its surroundings, in accordance with Environment Agency requirements, to establish that landfill gas will not represent a hazard on development of the site.

- **Option 9** - Signage and advertisements should be of a scale, quantity and design, including illumination, that is sympathetic to the building.
and locality particularly when considering impact to the significance of heritage assets (designated or non-designated) or their setting.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Location of Development Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA2)**

**SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District**

15.44 Option 1 would have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would ensure any policy would minimise adverse impacts on species and habitats through human activities and development together with protecting and conserving habitats and species. Furthermore it would ensure protection for elements of the natural environment that help sustain biodiversity such as soil, water quality and air quality and geodiversity. The approach would also ensure biodiversity sustainability by requiring developments to enhance and restore the elements of the natural environment that contribute to and support species and habitats.

15.45 Option 7 would help achieve positive effects on this SA Objective by protecting biodiversity assets from the adverse impacts of light pollution as a result of development. Some species may be particularly sensitive to light or the intrusion of light within their habitat may alter their behaviour for example. This Option would ensure development proposals take these issues into consideration and address them appropriately.

**SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets**

15.46 Option 2 would have a positive effect on this SA Objective as it would require developments to ensure that they do not have adverse impacts on the
environment of the District. This Option also refers to the entire environment and not just those of biodiversity or geodiversity importance. However, this would need to be in combination with other Local Plan policies, such as design above, to ensure maximum positive effects are achieved.

15.47 Option 6 has positive effects on this SA Objective as it takes into account the need for development to be compatible with neighbouring uses, which could include landscape areas, historic assets or cultural assets. This would help avoid any inappropriate developments and unacceptable impacts.

15.48 Option 7 would again have positive effects on this SA Objective in specific relation to protecting the environment from light pollution. The approach would ensure that development takes into account the environment and landscapes, including dark landscapes, when locating any potential light sources within the development.

15.49 Option 9 would have positive effects on this SA Objective in particular to the conservation of heritage assets. It would ensure that historic landscape sensitivity is protected or at the very least is considered and that local landscape quality, distinctiveness and character are protected from any impacts of commercial or business development. This Option specifically covers business and commercial development.

SA5 To maintain and improve the water quality of the District’s rivers and groundwater, and to achieve sustainable water resources management

15.50 Option 1 is the only Option considered to have a direct effect on this SA Objective and that effect is likely to be positive. This is due to the fact that it would ensure that development conserves and enhances the water quality of the District wherever possible. The detail of how this would be achieved would be a matter for the application stage but this Option could be used in conjunction with those on drainage and SuDS within the Local Plan to ensure the best possible outcome on this SA Objective from this Option.

SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy

15.51 It is Option 1 again which is assessed as having the most likely positive effects on this SA Objective. This is due to the fact that the Option would ensure that local air quality is enhanced and improved as a part of development proposals. As identified in the Scoping Report, the District does not suffer any air quality issues in relation to human health at present however the scale of development proposed could alter this fact and so this Option would ensure it is taken into consideration through development proposals and that wherever possible those proposals do not lead to adverse impacts on air quality. Of course there are the issues of air quality and the Ashdown Forest and this Option could go some way to addressing this, in combination with the specific Local Plan policies concerning the Ashdown Forest.
Combined with other Local Plan policies, this Option would help achieve benefits in terms of this SA Objective.

15.52 Option 2 is also likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would ensure development does not have adverse impacts on human health, which air quality can have a significant effect on.

**Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)**

15.53 All of the Options have the potential for positive effects on these SA Objectives as they seek to ensure developments are appropriate for their location and result in a higher quality environment, built and natural, which in turn can improve social aspects. However not all have direct impacts.

**SA13** Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

15.54 Option 3 will have positive effects on this SA Objective in terms of ensuring existing homes are protected from any loss of sunlight and daylight and protected in terms of privacy from new development. Whilst not directly affecting the type of home being built, it would ensure that the living environment was of a good standard for existing and new residents and this would contribute to a good quality home. Combined with other Local Plan policies, in particular those concerned with housing and affordable housing, the maximum benefits should be achieved.

15.55 Option 4 is similar to Option 3 in its assessment as it too would seek to ensure any new development is compatible with existing neighbouring uses in terms of not adversely affecting amenity factors. Again this would ensure a good living environment and so a good quality home for existing and new residents. Combined with other Local Plan policies, in particular those concerned with housing and affordable housing, the maximum benefits should be achieved.

15.56 Option 6 again has positive effect on the living environment of existing and new development by ensuring adverse impacts in terms of noise, vibration, smell, safety and health impacts do not occur. This will contribute to a good living environment and hence a good quality home for existing and future residents. Combined with other Local Plan policies, in particular those concerned with housing and affordable housing, the maximum benefits should be achieved.

15.57 Option 8 would have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would ensure new homes are not adversely affected by issues connected to former landfill sites. This will ensure that the living environment is not harmful for people and hence will provide decent and good quality housing for people.
SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health

15.58 Option 2 would have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would seek to ensure development does not have adverse impacts on public health. It does not however state how this would be achieved, but this is likely to be covered by other Local Plan policies in particular those on infrastructure. The Option is a statement of intent which in combination with other Local Plan policies will ensure that a healthy and safe working and living environment is created for all and which will help reduce health inequalities.

15.59 Similar to Option 2, Option 3 would have positive effects on this SA Objective in terms of ensuring adverse impacts on daylight; sunlight and privacy are not caused by new development. These elements can all help improve people’s overall health and wellbeing and so ensuring their protection from harm would be beneficial to existing and future residents.

15.60 Again Option 6 would have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would protect amenities from adverse impacts of noise, vibration and small, all of which can affect people’s health. It does not specify how this would be done and this level of detail is likely to be discussed at the planning application level and in conjunction with other Local Plan policies such as design and any site allocation work.

15.61 In terms of Option 7, it too would have positive effects on this SA Objective for similar reasoning to Options 2; 3 and 6. It again seeks to protect the amenity of an area from adverse impacts of lighting schemes, which can have negative impacts on people’s health particularly for example if there is glare from street lighting into a bedroom. However, the Option could pose issue of compromising the safety and security of developments, including road and footpath safety, if specific lighting schemes or types of lighting are required. Careful consideration on any criteria would be needed in this respect. Other Local Plan policies would likely play their part in achieving beneficial impacts with this Option.

15.62 Option 8 would ensure that new development is not adversely affected by issues with former landfills which will only have positive effects on people’s health and wellbeing.

Preferred Option for Testing 47

15.63 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to location of development is contained within Chapter 20 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

15.64 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Create a consistent and positive policy framework within which to assess the impact of development on amenity by:
• Consideration of the potential impacts of development on the conservation, restoration and enhancement of the environment wherever possible, including impacts on air quality and water quality, land, soil, habitats/biodiversity and geodiversity and provision of mitigation measures where appropriate;
• Avoiding unacceptable impacts, individually or cumulatively, on the District’s environment or public health when considering amenity factors;
• Avoiding significant harm to the residential amenities of adjoining occupiers, through provision of adequate residential amenities for future occupiers of development, when assessed in terms of daylight, sunlight and privacy;
• Considering the compatibility of development with existing lawful neighbouring uses, and whether suitable mitigation can be provided, particularly where this could impact on the continuation of lawfully existing uses where there is a reasonable prospect of the site continuing to be used for such purposes.
• Considering the compatibility of new development with neighbouring uses to avoid significant harm to the amenities or character of the area in terms of noise, vibration, smell, safety or health impacts, or excessive traffic generation.
• Having criteria to help inform lighting schemes for new development to avoid adverse impact in relation to amenity, dark landscapes and nature conservation.
• Only allowing development on former landfill sites in the District where the generation of landfill gas has ceased or declined to a level such that it can be demonstrated that there would not be a risk to the safety of future users of the proposed development from gases, or increased risk to neighbouring uses and users as a result of gas migration; and by requiring a full technical analysis of the site and its surroundings, in accordance with Environment Agency requirements, to establish that landfill gas will not represent a hazard on development of the site.
• Ensuring that signage and advertisements are of a scale, quantity and design, including illumination, that is sympathetic to the building and locality, particularly where it relates to impact on the significance of a heritage asset (designated or non-designated) or to its setting’.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 47 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

15.65 The Preferred Option for Testing combines elements of the Options already assessed above. In terms of the environmental SA Objectives, the policy approach will ensure that the impacts of development on the environment, landscape, heritage assets, biodiversity and geodiversity are properly taken account of within any development proposal and appropriate mitigation measures introduced where necessary. The approach will seek to ensure that air quality is not adversely affected and improved where possible.

Social SA Objectives

15.66 Socially, the Preferred Option for Testing would ensure that residential amenity is protected for existing and future residents as a part of development proposals. The policy approach ensures that good quality homes are provided for all in terms of the living environments being of high quality. This policy approach would also help improve people’s overall health and wellbeing through appropriate design location measures.

Economic SA Objectives

15.67 In terms of economic benefits, whilst not providing jobs or employment land, the Preferred Option does make reference to ensuring that any proposed new development is compatible with its adjoin uses and does not result in adverse impacts on them, and this will include business and commercial development.
16.0 Historic Environment

16.1 The NPPF requires LPA’s to set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other assets. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.

16.2 Chapter 21 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the historic context of the District and the Options considered for policies within the Local Plan. The Chapter deals with:

- The Historic Environment in general
- Archaeology
- Conservation Areas
- Non-designated or Locally Designated Heritage Assets
- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Energy Efficiency and Responding to Climate Change in the Historic Environment

16.3 Each sub topic shall be assessed in the following sections.

The Historic Environment

16.4 The reasonable Options considered in terms of the general historic environment are:

- Option 1 - The requirement for development proposals that would affect any designated or non-designated heritage asset and/or their setting to:
  - describe and assess the significance of the asset and/or its setting to determine its architectural, historic or archaeological interest using up to date evidence on the historic environment, including that held by the East Sussex Historic Environment Record (ESHER);
  - identify the impact of the proposed works on the special character of the asset; and
  - provide a clear justification and mitigation strategy for the works to help offset impact on the identified significance, especially if works would harm the asset or its setting, so that the harm can be weighed against public benefits.

The level of detail required should be proportionate to the asset’s importance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance and/or setting, with a minimum consultation with the ESHER. All research results to be deposited with the ESHER to ensure the evidence base is continually updated.
• Option 2 - The consideration and management of the cumulative impact of incremental small scale change on heritage assets (both designated and non-designated and on their setting) through appropriate policy, to ensure a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

• Option 3 - The use of planning obligations to secure the enhancement of the significance of any heritage asset, where development might impact on that significance (including impact on setting).

• Option 4 - Identifying non-designated heritage assets that warrant formal designation and working with Historic England and other partners to update the existing list of designated heritage assets through a combination of targeted research and development-led research.

• Option 5 - Taking steps, where possible, to reduce the number of heritage assets in Wealden on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, through working with applicants and relevant stakeholders.

• Option 6 - Encouraging sympathetic maintenance and restoration of listed buildings and retention and maintenance of historic shop fronts, through provision of additional guidance, to ensure there is a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, and a positive contribution to sustainable communities, including economic vitality.

• Option 7 - Identifying historic farmsteads and considering local or statutory listing of buildings to sustain and enhance their historic significance and their contribution to the landscape character of the District.

• Option 8 - Encouraging new uses for heritage assets, where appropriate, that helps to sustain and enhance their significance and that of their setting, where there is a positive contribution to sustainable communities, including economic vitality and to facilitate tourism opportunities.
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Design Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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<th>Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)</th>
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<td>SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets</td>
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16.5 All of the Option would have positive effects on this SA Objective due to the nature of what they are trying to achieve, the protection and enhancement of the historic environment and all that entails.

16.6 Option 1 would have positive effects in that it would require very detailed evidence from any development proposal likely to affect a heritage asset to demonstrate that all impacts have been identified and justification given for the mitigation measures used to offset any potential adverse impacts. This would ensure the character and appearance of heritage assets are protected and that historic landscape sensitivity is protected.

16.7 Option 2 would provide positive effects on this SA Objective as it would ensure that small scale developments, which may not individually impact on heritage assets but cumulatively could have adverse impacts, contribute to the protection of the historic environment.

16.8 Option 3 would offer positive effects in that it would provide funding from developments to help towards the protection of heritage assets and the historic environment. This may indirectly make development proposals consider more closely their impact on any heritage asset, so as to avoid additional costs to development in the form of commuted sums. However, there may be issues as planning obligations can be amended or altered particularly if arguments of viability are cited. This could lead to inappropriate development taking place that may have an impact on a heritage asset.
16.9 Option 4 has the potential for positive effects as it would provide a comprehensive list of non-designated heritage assets that may otherwise get overlooked in terms of impacts from developments. This would ensure that any development proposal is aware of the assets they may need to ensure protection of from their development, which could be beneficial to the applicant as well as the local authority.

16.10 Option 5 has the potential for positive effects as it would seek to work with applicants to reduce the number of heritage assets on Historic England’s at risk register. This could lead to the enhancement and conservation of these assets as a part of development proposal and may actually enhance the proposal itself.

16.11 Option 6 offers positive effects from a slightly different angle as it seeks to ensure then conservation of heritage assets through maintenance and restoration rather than in conjunction with new development. This would help in terms of conservation of the historic environment. However, requiring the maintenance and restoration of the historic environment may involve costs that are outside of the Council’s control and with grant funding being limited it could be difficult to implement such a policy approach.

16.12 Option 7 offers positive effects as it would provide protection to the local landscape quality, distinctiveness and character of the rural areas of the District from development.

SA4 Improve the quality of the built environment

16.13 Option 2 would have likely positive effects on this SA Objective as it would ensure that new development, individually and cumulatively, is of high quality, sympathetic to the historic character of the built environment, would strengthen local distinctiveness, enhancing the public realm and helping to create a sense of place.

16.14 As Option 6 would be concerned with the sympathetic maintenance and restoration of listed buildings and retention of historic shopfronts, it would have positive effects on this SA Objective through conserving features of historic importance. Furthermore, it would help improve the quality of the built environment by helping to restore buildings that may have fallen into disrepair and hence are having a negative effect on the local environment. However, requiring the maintenance and restoration of the historic environment may involve costs that are outside of the Council’s control and with grant funding being limited it could be difficult to implement such a policy approach.

16.15 Option 8 would have positive effects on this SA Objectives as it would promote the adaptive re-use of buildings, that being heritage assets, which would help contribute to improving the quality of the built environment.
Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

16.16 Option 6 would have positive effects on this SA Objective through its improvements to the local environment as a result of maintenance and restoration of heritage assets which in turn could provide a positive contribution towards creating sustainable communities. It would promote the heritage of a place and a sense of local and community identity. However, requiring the maintenance and restoration of the historic environment may involve costs that are outside of the Council’s control and with grant funding being limited it could be difficult to implement such a policy approach.

16.17 Option 8 would provide positive effects on this SA Objective as it would enable the continued use of heritage assets, or at least help to sustain their significance and that of their setting which, could positively contribute towards creating sustainable and vibrant communities. The Option could help continue valued local traditions through the enhancement of the existing heritage assets.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

16.18 In terms of the economy, the Options are unlikely to result in significant provision of employment land or jobs. However all of them do have the potential for positive effects on this SA Objective as they would result in the conservation, enhancement and continued use in some instances of heritage assets which can help support rural tourism as well as the rural economy. Option 8 in particular would enable new uses for heritage assets to be explored and allowed where appropriate which could lead to diversification in the local economy through the provision of a shop for example inside an old barn.

Preferred Option for Testing 48

16.18.1 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to the historic environment in general is contained within Chapter 21 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

16.18.2 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Create a consistent and positive policy framework within which the significance of heritage assets (designated and non-designated and their settings) can be sustained and enhanced; through which new development can make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
through which heritage assets can make a positive contribution to sustainable communities, including their economic vitality by:

- Ensuring that the significance of heritage assets (designated and non-designated) and their settings is properly understood through use of up-to-date evidence on the historic environment to prevent harm or loss of significance when considering applications for planning permission and listed building consent, including the recording, management and interpretation of heritage assets, and ensuring that the results of development-led research are used to continually update the ESHER.
- Ensuring the cumulative impact of incremental small scale change to heritage assets (both designated and non-designated and on their setting) does not harm significance, and lead to loss of local character and local distinctiveness;
- The use of planning obligations to secure the enhancement of the significance of any heritage asset (designated and non-designated), where development might impact on that significance (including impact on setting), to include future interpretation and management where appropriate;
- Taking steps, where possible, to reduce the number of heritage assets in Wealden on Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register.
- Encouraging sympathetic maintenance, repair and restoration of heritage assets (designated and non-designated) and historic shop fronts to enhance their significance.
- The identification of non-designated heritage assets that may warrant formal designation (buildings, archaeology and landscapes) and working with Historic England and other partners to update the existing list of designated heritage assets through a combination of targeted research and development-led research.
- Identifying historic farmsteads and using appropriate measures to sustain and enhance their historic significance and to ensure they continue to contribute positively to the historic landscape character of the District.
- Encouraging new uses for heritage assets, where appropriate, that helps to sustain and enhance their significance and conservation, and that of their setting, where there is a positive contribution to sustainable communities, including economic vitality and tourism opportunities.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 48 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

16.19 The overall effects of the Preferred Option for Testing are likely to be positive. The policy approach would ensure that then historic environment; cultural assets and heritage assets (designated and non-designated) are protected from any adverse impacts of development. The policy approach would allow for improvements to be made to the existing built environment through the maintenance and restoration of listed buildings and other heritage assets. However this has cost implications for development that may be outside of the control of the Council and if grant funding is limited it may be difficult to achieve such improvements.

16.20 Furthermore, planning obligations, whilst providing a vehicle to help mitigate the impact of otherwise inappropriate development on heritage assets, can be changed particularly if issues of viability arise and so this could result in unacceptable development which has an adverse impact on heritage assets. However, combined with other local Plan policies these issues should be able to be minimised.

16.21 Control over the cumulative impact of development would ensure that the historic environment is sustained and enhanced where possible.

Social SA Objectives

16.22 The Preferred Option for Testing would have social benefits though the fact that it would promote the heritage of a place and a sense of local and community identify. Furthermore, it would improve the overall environment local environment as a result of maintenance and restoration of heritage assets which in turn could provide a positive contribution towards creating sustainable communities.

16.23 The policy approach would also enable the continued use of heritage assets, or at least help to sustain their significance and that of their setting, which could positively contribute towards creating sustainable and vibrant communities. The policy approach could help continue valued local traditions through the enhancement of the existing heritage assets.

Economic SA Objectives

16.24 Economically, the Preferred Option for Testing will have positive effects in terms of supporting sustainable tourism through the conservation, protection and restoration of the historic environment. Finding new uses for heritage assets, providing there is no harm to the asset including its setting will help contribute towards supporting the local economy, particularly the rural economy. It will also ensure the protection of the asset itself. Any new uses for heritage assets would need to be carefully considered to ensure no harm to their significance or setting.
Archaeology

16.25 The National Planning Policy Framework identifies two categories of non-designated sites of archaeological interest (in addition to designated sites); those that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments and so considered subject to the same policies as those for designated heritage assets; and other non-designated heritage assets.

16.26 Chapter 21 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Option and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue of archaeology in the District and the reasonable Options considered to address it in the Local Plan.

16.27 The reasonable Options are:

- Option 1 - Promote the identification, recording, interpretation, protection and enhancement of archaeological sites, monuments and historic landscape features.

- Option 2 - Set out a positive and consistent approach to assess the impact of development on archaeological features and their setting, including the approach to development within Archaeological Notification Areas (ANAs) mapped in the District; and providing clarity on how applications affecting archaeological remains will be determined where they are of less than national importance.

- Option 3 - Support the preservation in situ of archaeological features.

- Option 4 - Where archaeological remains cannot be preserved in situ, appropriate provision of investigation and recording will be required and arrangements made for post-exavcation assessment, analysis and publication of the results, and deposition of the archive in a suitable, accessible repository.

- Option 5 - Require the archaeological implications of proposals to be understood (including for standing buildings and designated and non-designated heritage assets), through proportionate research, investigation and interpretation, and understanding of significance.

- Option 6 - Promote the enhancement of the recreational, educational and tourist potential of archaeological features through appropriate management and interpretation.
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Design Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

16.28 All of the Options would have positive effects on this SA Objective as they each would ensure that areas of high archaeological and historic landscape sensitivity are identified, conserved and protected. Option 1 offers the most positive effects as it covers sites, monuments and landscape features.

16.29 Option 2 would allow full assessment of a developments potential impact on any archaeological features within the landscape and would offer this to features that are of less than national importance but which maybe of local significance.

16.30 Option 3 would allow for archaeological remains to be conserved in situ ensuring that the character and appearance of designated and non-designated archaeological sites and their settings to be protected.

16.31 Option 4 would have positive effects as it would ensure that any archaeological remains that have to be removed from a site are still protected in a suitable and accessible repository.

16.32 Option 5 would have positive effects through enabling the understanding of the importance of any archaeological finds which can then lead to their protection. B having a better understanding and knowledge of them they can be better protected.

16.33 Option 6 offer positive effects in the form of the management of the archaeological features, which can also help protect and preserve them.
SA4 Improve the quality of the built environment

16.34 Again all of the Options have the potential; for positive effects on this SA Objective as they all provide the opportunity to conserve features of historic and archaeological importance which can enhance and improve the quality of the built environment around them. Some of the Options do this through direct conservation on site (Option 3); others through education, research and interpretation (Option 1, Option 4 and Option 5); some require assessments from development proposals on their impact so that this can be mitigated (Option 2) and others through incorporating the assets into recreational and leisure opportunities (Option 6).

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

16.35 Option 6 is the only Option to be assessed as having a direct impact on this SA Objective and that it is likely to result in positive effects. This is due to the fact that it would help improve access to and understanding of the historic environment of the District.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

16.36 All of the Options have the potential for positive effects on this SA Objective due to the fact that they would protect and conserve the historic environment of the District which is an important resource for tourism. In particular Option 6 would likely have significant positive effects as it would promote the management and interpretation of Archaeological features within the District, ensuring information about their significance is publically accessible which could in turn promote recreational, educational and tourism potential. This would also help support the local economy though sustainable tourism.

Preferred Option for Testing 49

16.36.1 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to archaeology is contained within Chapter 21 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

16.36.2 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Promote the identification, recording, interpretation, protection and enhancement of archaeological sites, monuments and historic landscape features, and set out a positive and consistent approach to assess the impact of development on archaeological features and their setting, including the
approach to development within Archaeological Notification Areas (ANAs) mapped in the District; and providing clarity on how applications affecting archaeological remains will be determined where they are of less than national importance;

Support the preservation in situ of archaeological features and, where this is not possible, have appropriate provision of investigation and recording and arrangements made for post-exavavation assessment, analysis and publication of the results, and deposition of the archive in a suitable, accessible repository.

Require the archaeological implications of proposals to be understood (including for standing buildings and designated and non-designated heritage assets), through proportionate research, investigation and interpretation, and understanding of significance and have policy to promote the enhancement of the recreational, educational and tourist potential of archaeological features through appropriate management and interpretation’.

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 49 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**Environmental SA Objectives**

16.37 The Preferred Option for Testing would provide a positive strategy for the District to ensure that areas of high archaeological and historic landscape sensitivity are identified, understood, conserved and protected. The policy approach would allow the local context to be taken into account when determining development proposals and their impact on the historic environment.

**Social SA Objectives**

16.38 The Preferred Option for Testing would allow the management and interpretation of archaeological features that would ensure information about the significance of the historic environment is publically accessible and would be able to be used for educational purposes. This could help improve access to the historic environment though understanding it and help build a sense of community identity.

**Economic SA Objectives**

16.39 In economic terms the Preferred Option for Testing would have positive effects on regards to tourism provision as it would enhance and protect a key
tourism resource, the historic environment. It could also provide educational and recreational opportunities for people who would support tourism and the local economy especially in rural areas.

**Conservation Areas**

16.40 The National Planning Policy Framework requires that Local Planning Authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. Such a strategy should recognise that conservation is not a passive exercise and, in developing strategy, specific opportunities should be identified within the area for the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets, to ensure that designation of a Conservation Area is justified because of its special architectural or historic interest.

16.41 Chapter 21 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Option and Recommendation Consultation paper details the issue to be addressed in terms of Conservation Areas within the District and the reasonable Options considered.

16.42 In addition, the Conservation Areas – Local Issues and Options 2015 paper, has been created that recommends updated boundaries for existing conservation areas and identifies recommended new conservation areas not previously designated. This can be viewed as part of the Issues and Options consultation and commented on separately. That document contains assessment of each of the recommendations it makes and should be read in conjunction with this SA Assessment. Further assessment against the SA Objectives for the existing and any new Conservation Areas shall be undertaken as part of the work for the Submission Local Plan in 2016.

16.43 The reasonable Options considered are:

- **Option 1** - Consideration of Article 4 Directions to manage future change in conservation areas.

- **Option 2** - Consideration of policy to manage cumulative impact of incremental change to the identified significance of buildings, structures and boundary treatments, within conservation areas and within their setting, to ensure that there is no harm to local distinctiveness and character through erosion of detail and character.

- **Option 3** - Presumption in favour of the retention of non-designated heritage assets in conservation areas to ensure that the identified character, appearance and significance of the designated area is sustained and enhanced.
### Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

**SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets**

16.44 All of the Options would have positive effects on this SA Objective due to the fact their purpose would be to ensure that local distinctiveness and character were protected from unsympathetic development. Option 1 would provide most protection through the use of Article 4 Directions. Option 2 would offer positive effects as it would not only look at individual developments and their effect on conservation areas but also at the combined cumulative effect of numerous small developments that on their own may not have an impact but together they would. Option 3 would provide positive effects as it would protect those heritage assets that do not benefit from national designation and hence protection.

**SA4 Improve the quality of the built environment**

16.45 Again all of the Options would have positive effects on this SA Objective as protecting the historic environment and Conservation Areas can help improve the quality of the built environment overall. However, Option 1 may be too prescriptive and hence could stop innovative designs coming forward that may improve and/or enhance the quality of the built environment.

### Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

**SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community**

16.46 All of the Options are assessed as having uncertain effects in relation to this SA Objective. They may present positive effects through the protection of Conservation Areas and heritage assists which can help create a sense of community identity and hence help promote social cohesion and inclusion. However, Option 1 again may provide too restrictive a policy which does not allow for flexibility and therefore could stifle any innovative development and this could include community facilities for example.
Economic SA Objectives (SA17-SA18)

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the District's rural economy, increasing the vitality of the District's villages and promoting sustainable tourism.

16.47 Again the Options are all assessed as having uncertain effects against this SA Objective. This is due to the fact they could all help contribute towards enhancing tourism within the District through the protection of Conservation Areas and the historic environment, which is a large tourism resource for the District. However Option 1 poses potential negative effects through the fact that it could be too prescriptive and hence not have the flexibility, for example, to allow changes of use that may help diversify the economy and help support regeneration of town and village centres.

16.48 Similarly, Option 2 may potentially limit development that would otherwise be acceptable outside of designated Conservation Areas, which could affect the local economy and stifle some development and regeneration efforts.

Preferred Option for Testing 50

16.49 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Conservation Areas is contained within Chapter 21 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

16.50 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

'Create a consistent and positive policy framework within which to assess the impact of development on newly reviewed and updated Conservation Areas and their setting within Wealden District and to enable the enhancement of the significance of designated areas. Adopt new conservation area boundaries and newly designated conservation areas with updated appraisals and consider future management of conservation areas through Article 4 Direction.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 50 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

16.51 In terms of the environmental effects of the Preferred Option for Testing, the approach will provide a positive framework within which the local
distinctiveness and character of Conservation Areas and their settings will be protected from unsympathetic development. However, careful consideration of any criteria or Article 4 Direction use would be needed to ensure that the policy requirements were not overly prescriptive so as to prevent suitable innovative designed development to come forward.

Social SA Objectives

16.52 Socially the Preferred Option for Testing will ensure that a sense of local identity is maintained and enhanced within the District through the protection of Conservation Areas which can help build cohesive and inclusive communities. Again, any criteria or Article 4 Direction use would need careful consideration so as to allow flexibility for some development that may help contribute to sustaining the community and creating vibrancy within it.

Economic SA Objectives

16.53 In economic terms the Preferred Option for Testing will help contribute towards tourism initiatives though the protection of Conservation Areas and their assets. However, it could be too inflexible if not carefully considered and this could stifle regeneration efforts for example by not allowing change of use that would otherwise be acceptable outside of designated Conservation Areas.

Non designated or Locally Designated Heritage Assets

16.54 Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated heritage assets.

16.55 The National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance and Historic England support the identification of local heritage assets as part of a positive heritage strategy to help recognise local distinctiveness and character to ensure these values are taken into account when changes affecting the historic environment are proposed. Local listing criteria incorporated into Local Plans can be a positive way for the local planning authority to identify non-designated heritage assets against consistent criteria so as to improve the predictability of the potential for sustainable development.

16.56 Chapter 21 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the Options considered in relation to non-designated and locally designate heritage assets in the District.

16.57 The reasonable Options considered are:

- Option 1 - Set out the criteria for identifying non-designated heritage assets within the Local Plan.
• Option 2 - Use criteria agreed with Historic England to identify non-designated heritage assets within the District that will be used to create a Local Heritage List.

• Option 3 - Set out a positive and consistent approach to assess the impact of development on non-designated heritage assets within the Local Plan.

• Option 4 - Support the retention of locally designated heritage assets, including buildings, structures, features and gardens of local interest.

• Option 5 - Consider the use of Article 4 Directions to manage change to non-designated heritage assets identified on a Local Heritage List.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Non-designated or Locally Designated Heritage Assets Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

16.58 All of the Options would have a positive effect on this SA Objective in one way or another due to the fact that the nature of all the Options is to protect the historic environment of the District, ensuring that local character, distinctiveness and historic landscape sensitivity is taken account of in development.

SA4 Improve the quality of the built environment

16.59 Again all of the Options would have positive effects on this SA Objective as protecting the historic environment, and especially those assets that may not enjoy national protection can help improve the quality of the built environment overall. However, Option 5 may be too prescriptive and hence could stop innovative designs coming forward that may improve and/or enhance the quality of the built environment.
Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

16.60 Option 2 has the potential for positive effects on this SA Objective as it would provide the opportunity for the community to be involved in the identification of heritage assets that should be considered for the Local Heritage List. This could provide a sense of community cohesion and also enable people to feel they have played a part in protecting their community.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

16.61 All of the Options are assessed as having uncertain effects against this SA Objective. This is due to the fact they could all help contribute towards enhancing tourism within the District through the protection of the historic environment and those assets which do not enjoy national protection or designation. However Option 5 poses potential negative effects through the fact that it could be too prescriptive and hence not have the flexibility, for example, to allow changes of use that may help diversify the economy and help support regeneration of town and village centres. The control over more minor changes to identified non-designate heritage assets that would normally be considered permitted development could significantly limit the changes allowed to buildings and properties, which could affect the local economy and stifle some development and regeneration efforts.

Preferred Option for Testing 51

16.62 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Non-designated and Locally Designated Heritage assets is contained within Chapter 21 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

16.63 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Create a consistent and positive policy framework within which to assess the impact of development on non-designated heritage assets within Wealden District, with a presumption in favour of retention within development; and to use criteria agreed with Historic England to create a consistent approach to the identification of non-designated heritage assets within the District for inclusion on a continually evolving Local Heritage List, whether through nomination by the public or identification through the development management process. Consider future management of non-designated heritage assets on a Local Heritage List through Article 4 Direction’.
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**Environmental SA Objectives**

16.64 In terms of the environmental effects of the Preferred Option for Testing, the approach will provide positive effects in terms of a heritage strategy that would ensure a consistent methodology for identifying non-designated heritage assets within the District and ensuring their protection and conservation. Local distinctiveness and character will be protected from unsympathetic development. However, careful consideration of any criteria or Article 4 Direction use would be needed to ensure that the policy requirements were not overly prescriptive which could prevent suitable innovative designs coming forward.

**Social SA Objectives**

16.65 Socially, the Preferred Option for Testing would not only provide protection for non-designated heritage assets and their settings, helping enhance and conserve local distinctiveness, but would also allow participation from the public in putting forward nominations for inclusion on a Local Heritage Assets List. This could provide communities with a sense of ownership over their locality and help build inclusive and vibrant communities.

**Economic SA Objectives**

16.66 In economic terms the Preferred Option for Testing will help contribute towards tourism initiatives though the protection of non-designated heritage assets and their setting. However, it could be too inflexible if not carefully considered and this could stifle regeneration efforts for example by not allowing change of use that would otherwise be acceptable outside of designated Conservation Areas.

**Historic Parks and Gardens**

16.67 Historic parks and gardens are a significant part of the historic environment of Wealden and are an important historic landscape feature that also makes a positive visual contribution to the District. Historic England has identified that one of the greatest threats to historic landscapes, such as Registered Parks and Gardens are proposals for development. Although no additional statutory protection is given to a site on the register of historic parks and gardens, they are protected under national policy as a designated
heritage asset in the National Planning Policy Framework and their historic and architectural significance has to be taken into consideration as part of the planning process.

16.68 Chapter 21 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issues to be addressed in the District.

16.69 The reasonable Options considered are:

- Option 1 - Set out a positive and consistent approach to assess the impact of development on designated historic parks and gardens.

- Option 2 - Set out a positive, consistent and proportionate approach to assess the impact of development on non-designated historic parks and gardens.

- Option 3 - Require an assessment of the implications of proposals within historic parks and gardens or their setting, through proportionate research, interpretation, and understanding of significance, including impacts on planned design, on trees, landscaping and architectural features.

- Option 4 - Promote the use of management plans to promote good land management practice for historic parks and gardens (designated and non-designated), taking into account the planned design of the asset.

SA Assessment

**Predicting the effects of the Historic Parks and Gardens Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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16.70 Whilst most of the SA Objectives have been assessed as having no direct relationship with the Options, this does not mean effect would not occur but that they would not be as a direct result of a policy on historic parks and gardens. The policy area is very narrow in its focus.
Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

16.71 All of the Options would have positive effects on this SA Objective as they would all result in the protection of historic parks and gardens and their settings within the District.

SA3 Where appropriate enhance and provide access to the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets for residents and visitors

16.72 Option 4 would have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would enable, though a management plan, the enhancement and provision where appropriate of access to the historic parks and gardens whilst ensuring that their landscape quality, distinctiveness and character are protected from poor access management.

Preferred Option for Testing 52

16.73 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Historic Parks and Gardens is contained within Chapter 21 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

16.74 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Have a policy in the Local Plan setting out a positive and consistent approach to assess the impact of development on designated and non-designated historic parks and gardens, requiring an assessment of the implications of proposals within historic parks and gardens or their setting, through proportionate research, interpretation, and understanding of significance, including impacts on planned design, trees, landscaping and architectural features, along with a policy to promote the use of management plans for historic parks and gardens’.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 52 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

16.75 The Preferred Option for Testing will have positive effects on the environmental SA Objectives in particular as it will provide a positive planning
policy framework within which to ensure landscape quality, distinctiveness and character are protected from unsympathetic development. The policy approach will also ensure that through management plans, access to historic parks and gardens and their settings is enhanced and provided whilst ensuring that local landscape quality, distinctiveness and character protected from poor access management.

Energy Efficiency and Responding to Climate Change in the Historic Environment

16.76 The National Planning Policy Framework core principles state that any development should '…support the transition to a low carbon future… (and) encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings and encourage the use of renewable resources.' This includes within the historic environment.

16.77 Chapter 21 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Option and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be addressed in relation to this and the reasonable options considered.

16.78 The reasonable Options are:

- Option 1 - Set out a positive and consistent approach to assess the impact of energy efficiency improvements, micro-generation and climate change measures in the historic environment, including to designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting.

- Option 2 - Require an assessment of the implications of such proposals, through proportionate research, interpretation, and understanding of the significance of any heritage asset(s) affected so that any potential loss of significance to the asset or its setting can be assessed and weighed against potential public benefit.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Energy Efficiency and Responding to Climate Change in the Historic Environment

Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

| SA Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

16.79 Option 1 would have positive effects on this SA Objective as it would ensure that energy efficiency measures and microgeneration technologies could be accommodated without causing harm to the historic environment and heritage assets. The approach would be consistent across the District ensuring a cohesive approach. The Option would also ensure that climate change impacts are considered in relation to heritage assets and how they may be affected so that appropriate protection can be implemented.

16.80 Option 2 would also provide positive effects for the same reasoning as Option 1; however it would also allow for the understanding of the impacts of such measures on heritage assets and so help better inform their protection and conservation whilst achieving energy efficiency.

SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy

16.81 Both Options would provide positive effects on this SA Objective for the same reasons. They would both ensure that the use of microgeneration renewable technologies together with energy efficiency measures were achieved within the historic environment, where it can be the case that buildings are not the most energy efficient.

SA11 Mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and promoting appropriate design measures in development

16.82 Again both Options would have positive effects on this SA Objective due to the fact that improving energy efficiency can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions from energy consumption. Historic buildings can often be very inefficient in their energy use and so these policies would be able to address this whilst Option 2 would also ensure that no adverse impacts arise on the heritage assets as a result.

Preferred Option for Testing 53

16.83 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Energy Efficiency and Responding to Climate Change is contained within Chapter 21 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

16.84 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Have policy in the Local Plan setting out a positive and consistent approach to assess the impact of energy efficiency improvements, micro-generation and climate change measures in the historic environment, including designated
and non-designated heritage assets and their setting. Require an assessment of the implications of such proposals, through proportionate research, interpretation, and understanding of the significance of any heritage asset(s) and their setting affected so that any potential loss of significance/harm to setting can be assessed and weighed against potential public benefit.

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 53 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

| SA Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| **Preferred Option for Testing 53** | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | + | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**Environmental SA Objectives**

16.85 The Preferred Option for Testing combines Options 1 and 2 above and would have positive effects on the environmental SA Objectives. The policy approach ensures that energy efficiency measures, microgeneration technologies and climate change issues are accommodated within the historic environment and on designated and non-designated heritage assets whilst still ensuring no adverse impacts occur on the assets. The policy approach would be consistent across the District and allow for a balance to be struck between such improvements and any harm to the historic environment.
17.0 Natural Environment and Climate Change

17.1 The National Planning Policy Framework acknowledges that the environment has a part to play in the achievement of sustainable development by contributing and protecting and enhancing our natural environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change.

17.2 The National Planning Policy Framework identifies that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible;
- contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and
- Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

17.3 Chapter 22 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the elements of the natural environment and climate change that are considered within the planning policy environment for Wealden together with the issues and reasonable options considered to address them.

17.4 Each element will be assessed in its own right against the SA Objectives within the following sections of this report.

17.1 Biodiversity

17.1.1 In terms of biodiversity the National Planning Policy Framework states that sustainable development includes moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature. It further states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.

17.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework also identifies that Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value. It also
states that local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks.

17.1.3 Chapter 22, Issue 47 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendation Consultation paper details the issue around biodiversity to be addressed by the Wealden Local Plan and the reasonable Options considered to address this. In broad terms the issue is to balance the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats and ecological networks, together with protection for the hierarchy of designated sites, with development pressures.

17.1.4 The Options considered are:

- **Option 1** - Reiterate the National Planning Policy Framework with regards to the level of protection for the hierarchy of sites and that development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted.

- **Option 2** - Identify and designate areas for restoring and maintaining biodiversity for offsetting schemes in line with Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.

- **Option 3** - Review and if required identify new Sites of Nature Conservation Importance.

- **Option 4** - Encourage woodland management through participation in tree and hedgerow planting schemes by farmers, voluntary organisations and others, and where appropriate, as part of development proposals.

- **Option 5** - Identify a 15 metre buffer zone around Ancient Woodland on development sites, as defined by Natural England, in order to protect the Ancient Woodland.

- **Option 6** - Encourage on-site biodiversity proposals such as green roofs, provision and retention of wildlife corridors and stepping stones.

- **Option 7** - Develop policies that resist development proposals that involve the clear felling or otherwise prejudice the ecology of Ancient / Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands, as defined by Natural England including a buffer zone to provide protection from the effects of development.

- **Option 8** - Support and designate Nature Improvement Areas with corresponding policies should they be identified within the District.
- **Option 9** - Seek to prevent a net loss of biodiversity, ensure a comprehensive network of habitats, and maximise opportunities to ensure habitats, biodiversity features and ecological networks are maintained, restored, enhanced and where possible created to achieve a net gain in biodiversity and sustain wildlife in both rural and urban areas.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Biodiversity Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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17.1.5 The element of the natural environment that is the subject of these Options is very narrow, biodiversity, and as such many of the SA Objectives will not be affected by the Options. They are focused on biodiversity.

**Effects on SA Objectives common to all Options**

**Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)**

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

17.1.6 Clearly all of the Options will have some degree of positive effect on SA1 as they are focused on protecting, conserving and enhancing the biodiversity assets of the District. This includes designated sites as well as individual elements such as Ancient Woodland. However, Option 2 is assessed as having uncertain effects at this time due to the inclusion of biodiversity offsetting. It would depend on the implementation of such an approach as to its effects on SA1 due to the fact that some biodiversity assets cannot be offset. For example the loss or damage to an area of Ancient Woodland cannot be offset by simply providing trees elsewhere in the District as the Ancient Woodland has taken hundreds of years to establish itself. This type of biodiversity asset is irreplaceable. A further issue with this approach...
under Option 2 is that it relies on an underlying method which allows habitats and the impacts upon them, to be quantified into ‘biodiversity units’. In essence this approach places a numerical value on the natural world in order to know what has to be done to offset its loss. There are issues around how to evaluate habitats in terms of their value and in measuring what is to be lost and what an offset scheme might offer. There is currently no mechanism for this or guidance for local authorities.

SA6 Manage natural resources sustainably, minimising waste and maximise the re-use of materials, recycling and composting

17.1.7 All of the Options achieve positive effects in respect of this SA Objectives as they all seek to achieve net gains and prevent net losses or harm coming to the biodiversity of the District. This translates into the sustainable management of natural resources as biodiversity is a natural resource.

17.1.8 Option 4 in particular is compatible with this SA Objective as it involves the management of woodland within the District and this could be for commercial or environmental purposes but in either case it would be a sustainable use of a natural resource that would be embedded within planning policy.

**Effects on SA Objectives that differ between Options**

**Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)**

**SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets**

17.1.9 Options 1-4 and Option 9 are likely to have positive effects on SA2 as they involve protecting the biodiversity assets of the District which are often an integral part of the wider landscape, countryside and historic environment. By ensuring the biodiversity is taken account of the protection of the landscape, countryside and some historic elements are also protected and enhanced.

17.1.10 Options 5-8 seek to take account of individual elements of biodiversity, principally Ancient Woodland and the creation of SNCI’s and so may not have a direct impact on SA2 but cumulatively they will add to the enhancement of the landscape and countryside as they are features within it.

**SA4 Improve the quality of the built environment**

17.1.11 On the whole the biodiversity Options would all help improve the quality of the built environment (SA4) to some degree as they would improve the natural environment within which development would sit. However, some of the Options have specific beneficial impacts on SA4. Option 4 includes woodland management as part of development proposals where appropriate which could help improve the local environment of the particular development.
proposal in terms of visual quality and also in terms of the ecosystem services it would offer such as reducing air pollution and improving people’s sense of wellbeing. Option 5 involves the protection of Ancient Woodland on development sites which could have the same positive effects as woodland management and Option 7 seeks to ensure there is no loss of Ancient Woodland as a result of development, which also could help achieve SA4.

17.1.12 Option 6 involves initiatives that would improve development proposals at the building scale as well as the immediate environment. Green roofs not only provide biodiversity benefits but they also can improve the aesthetics of developments and individual buildings, often making them less intrusive in the wider landscape; offer water management services and help address climate changes issues by helping keep buildings and urban environments cooler in summer and warmer in winter. They can also help achieve energy efficiency within buildings. All of these services would help improve the quality of the built environment.

17.1.13 Option 9 has positive effects on SA4 as it encompasses all of the aims of ensuring no net loss in biodiversity and applies this to urban environments as well as rural environments. Having a good biodiversity resource will improve the built environment overall.

SA5 To maintain and improve the water quality of the District’s rivers and groundwater, and to achieve sustainable water resources management

17.1.14 Option 6 is the only Option to have a likely direct effect on this SA Objective and that is effect is likely to be positive. The inclusion of on-site biodiversity measures such as green roofs at the building scale will help with sustainable water management as they can help slow down any excess runoff from rainfall events through allowing infiltration and reducing the amount of water that reaches the ground. This could also help improve water quality as the green roofs can filter pollutants. This can also be applied to green/living walls and rainwater gardens. These initiatives have additional benefits in that they encourage biodiversity gains as well as improving the environment in which development sits and making development more aesthetically pleasing. This in turn can help with people’s overall sense of wellbeing.

SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment.

17.1.15 As with SA5, it is Option 6 which offers the most potential positive effects on SA7 although the other Options would have indirect effects by simply existing. Option 6 however is very much focused on the individual development scale both urban and rural and the inclusion of measures such as green roof can help slow down the transition of water from buildings to the ground and hence help reduce the amount of runoff and flood risk. Combining green roofs with other SuDS measures would strengthen the achievement of this SA Objective through Option 6 as flood risk as well as managing surface water and improving water quality is more achievable as part of a suite of SuDS measures at the development site scale.
SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy

17.1.16 All of the Options could benefit this SA Objective as the natural environment and its individual elements such as trees can help reduce air pollution. In this respect Option 4 is likely to have the most positive effects as it would involve the planting of new trees, as well as woodland management, which help absorb pollutants such as CO$_2$ and clean the air. This could help at the local and individual site level in particular.

SA11 Mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and promoting appropriate design measures in development

17.1.17 Again all of the Options have the potential for positive effects by protecting the natural environment as a whole. However, Options 4 and 6 have the most potential for positive effects on SA11 due to their focus on design and site measures. Encouraging woodland management and tree planting as part of development schemes will help mitigate the effects of climate change as the trees will provide a cooling effect in summer and a warming effect, through insulating any development, in the winter. They will also be able to manage increased rainfall through slowing the transition of the rain to the ground below which in turn can help mitigate any flood risk.

17.1.18 Option 6 promotes building level measures such as green roofs which can have similar climate change mitigation effects as trees as they can absorb some of any excess rainfall that may occur and reduce the amount reaching the ground, offer cooling effects to buildings in summer whilst providing insulation in the winter.

17.1.19 The cooling and insulating effects of both green roofs, trees and other measures can also help reduce emissions as there may be less need to turn on heating/air conditioning within buildings. A combination of design measures at the development/building level would strengthen this further.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

17.1.20 The Options have a narrow focus that does not necessarily have a direct effect on the social SA Objectives. However, having a high quality natural environment within the District as well as at the development site level can help facilitate improved health and overall wellbeing of a population. In this respect all of the Options could indirectly benefit SA15 and have an ancillary positive impact on community cohesion and vibrancy (SA16).

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

17.1.21 As with the social SA Objectives, the Options do not have a direct relationship with the economic SA Objectives however having a high
quality environment can attract businesses to an area and in particular high environmental credentials could attract high technology businesses such as green businesses the area.

Preferred Option for Testing 54

17.1.22 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to biodiversity is contained within Chapter 22 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

17.1.23 The Preferred Option for Testing is to:

“Promote a net gain in biodiversity across the District. Reiterate the importance of preventing a net loss of biodiversity, and the way in which that will be considered on specific sites, through the identification of the hierarchy of sites. Direct restoration and maintenance of habitats in Biodiversity Opportunity Areas for use as compensatory measures where there is an acceptable net loss of biodiversity on development sites. Also, identify a sequential approach to maximise biodiversity on the development site itself before agreeing off site compensatory measures, and ensuring that green corridors emanating from the site are in place to allow biodiversity to move to compensatory areas. Consider such on-site biodiversity improvements such as green roofs and review and if required identify new Sites of Nature Conservation Importance. Identify Sites of Nature Conservation Importance as a contributor to the District's ecological network with the potential to promote a net gain in biodiversity through improved management, restoration and enhancement as part of compensatory measures”.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 54 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

| SA Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
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| Preferred Option for Testing 54 | + | + | o | + | + | + | + | o | o | + | o | o | o | ? | o | o |

Environmental SA Objectives

17.1.24 Clearly the Preferred Option for Testing will have positive effects on these SA Objectives. It will ensure that any development proposal has to take account of, and include where appropriate, biodiversity gains or enhancements on sites before any offsite compensatory measures for loss are considered. Including a sequential approach and the identification of a hierarchy of sites strengthens this Option further.

17.1.25 Including design measures such as green roofs will ensure that climate change, sustainable water management and reducing the risk of flooding are taken into account however this could be strengthened through
the inclusion of additional SuDS measures and measures such as tree planting/greening of developments to help reduce emissions, although this may come forward as part of any specific design policies.

17.1.26 The Preferred Option for Testing also places the promotion of a net gain in biodiversity across the District at the heart of the approach and clearly highlights the importance the Council places on this asset. It will ensure that development takes the biodiversity resource of the District seriously.

Social SA Objectives

17.1.27 As with the Options, the Preferred Option for Testing is unlikely to have a direct relationship with any one particular SA Objective in this category, however the provision of a high quality environment, District wide and at the development/building level, can help facilitate improvements in health and wellbeing overall and the protection, enhancement and creation of biodiversity assets will help achieve overall environmental improvements.

Economic SA Objectives

17.1.28 The effects are the same as with the social SA Objectives in that there is no direct relationship however an attractive and high quality natural environment can help attract new businesses to an area. High environmental and biodiversity credentials can also attract different businesses that may be more environmentally focused or high tech businesses such as those involved in renewable energy development.

17.2 Climate Change

17.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework states that local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking full account of flood risk, coastal change and water supply and demand considerations.

17.2.2 Chapter 22, of the Wealden Local Plan Issues Options and Recommendations Consultation paper outlines the issues related to this topic area under 3 sub topics; low carbon and renewable energy; water supply; flood risk and coastal change. Each of these elements will be assessed against the SA Objectives in the subsequent sections.

Low carbon and Renewable Energy

17.2.3 The Local Plan overall seeks to reduce the reliance upon private transport, reduce out commuting and develop local skills in order to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions as part of its overall growth strategy. Government policy also seeks to increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy through the NPPF which involves local authorities:
• having a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources;
• design policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts;
• consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources;
• support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy and;
• identify opportunities where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers

17.2.4 On the 18th of June 2015 however the Government published a Ministerial Statement regarding schemes involving more than one wind turbine. It identified that suitable areas for wind energy development will need to have been allocated clearly in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan and following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed.

17.2.5 The issue for Wealden in regards to low carbon and renewable energy is to increase its use and supply. Chapter 22, Issue 48 of the Wealden Local Plan contains the reasonable Options considered in relation to this issue.

17.2.6 The Options are:

• **Option 1** - Only areas that are submitted for consideration and considered appropriate should be identified and designated for commercial scale solar farm and wind turbine development.

• **Option 2** - In principle standalone renewable and low carbon energy proposals and one for small scale (micro generation) householder proposals are acceptable subject to design criteria.

• **Option 3** - Encourage the use of a decentralised low carbon/district heating system associated with the large urban extension and development around the Hailsham and Hellingly area.

• **Option 4** - Allow the market to decide whether to provide renewable and low carbon energy proposals for small scale (micro generation) householder proposals in response to an increasingly environmentally aware client base.

• **Option 5** - Introduce a requirement for consequential improvements to the energy efficiency of existing properties as part of planning permission.
- **Option 6** - Wherever viable, pro-actively seek incorporation of additional renewable energy into development proposals, in order to meet local targets for a percentage of energy from renewable sources.

- **Option 7** - Rely upon national targets for additional renewable energy in development proposals.

### SA Assessment

**Predicting the effects of the Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)**

**SA1** To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

17.2.7 Option 1 is likely to have positive effects on SA1 as it states that areas would have to be considered appropriate for commercial scale solar farm and wind turbine development to be designated. However, there would need to be criteria or guidelines in place for determining the ‘appropriateness’ of the area. These could be linked to criteria used to decide on a developments impact on biodiversity assets, the landscape and countryside.

**SA2** Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

17.2.8 Option 1 has the potential for positive effects on SA2 provided that criteria can be put in place to determine the ‘appropriateness’ of an area for designation. For example, there may be suitable areas for wind turbines within the High Weald AONB especially on the ridgelines; however this may impact on the landscape in terms of visual impact. Similarly there may be potential for solar farms within the Low Weald however this could have a visual impact in the landscape in terms of views from the South Downs National Park. An area may be suitable in terms of the resource available (wind or sun) but not in terms of other elements such as the landscape.
17.2.9 Option 2 has the potential for positive and/or negative effects depending on elements such as the scale of the proposed standalone renewable energy development, its design and its location. However, it does include the requirement for any proposal to be subject to design criteria which would need to be carefully put together. For the microgeneration householder proposals the effects are likely to be more positive than negative due to the fact they would be incorporate within a development as part of the overall design.

17.2.10 Option 3 is likely to have positive effects on SA2 as would be included as part of the large scale development at Hailsham/Hellingly and as such would be incorporated into the built form and design of any proposal. Focusing around an existing built up area and as part of such a large development would minimise any impacts further and would be subject to general design criteria.

17.2.11 The remaining Options do not have a landscape element associated with them and so do not have a direct relationship with SA2.

SA6 Manage natural resources sustainably, minimising waste and maximise the re-use of materials, recycling and composting

17.2.12 Only Option 6 is considered to have an effect on this SA Objective because it deals with a decentralised district heating system, a system where energy/heat is produced close to the point where it is consumed. The effects are assessed as uncertain at the moment however because it will depend on what type of fuel is used to power the system and indeed what system is used. These types of systems can use a variety of fuels, which means that the fuel mix can include fossil fuels like natural gas but, as cleaner fuels like biogas and biomass become more available, they can switch to those. This in turn could help the District manage its woodland (natural) resource sustainably to provide a fuel source and these types of systems are flexible enough that they can be designed based on what resources are available locally and what is needed by the people.

SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy

17.2.13 Options 1-3 and Options 5-6 offer the most potential for beneficial effects on SA8. This is because they are all promoting renewable and low carbon energy development in some form or another with the goal of encouraging renewable energy use. Option 1 would give greater certainty to developers of wind turbines and solar farms as to where their proposal would be supported and thus encourage the use of such technologies. Option 2 would offer the same positive effects but be focused more on the detail of schemes. Option 3 would encourage the use of a decentralised heating system and so by default would be helping achieve SA8. Options 5 and 6 would promote energy efficiency measures as well as renewable energy.
within existing building stock as well as at the individual planning application stage and within new developments.

17.2.14 Option 4 and 7 are assessed as having uncertain effects at this time due to the fact that they do not have a local focus on the need for renewable/low carbon energy development. Option 4 would let the market decide which may have mixed effects. Smaller developments for example may find it difficult to accommodate renewable energy technologies within their proposals due to high costs or lack of space for example. Larger developments may find it easier due to economies of scale. In addition the market may decide that improvements to buildings energy efficiency are more viable than the inclusion of renewable technologies and hence follow that path and leave out renewables altogether. However, as renewable technologies become more widely used within developments and the development industry as a whole, and due to people being more environmentally aware, costs of incorporating renewables may be reduced and in fact profits from house sales may increase as people are prepared to pay more for a low carbon home.

17.2.15 Relying on national targets (Option 7) may have positive effects in that the requirements for renewable energy technologies will have come from central government and hence be UK wide, however they leave out any flexibility for Wealden to take into account its particular local circumstances. Resources in Wealden may be more accommodating to one type of renewable energy technology than another for example and as such may not be able to meet national targets in one particular area.

**SA11 Mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and promoting appropriate design measures in development**

17.2.16 The assessment for this SA Objective and the Options is similar to that for SA8. Options 1-3 all promote renewable technology provision in one form or another and as such will help reduce emissions from energy generation and use. Option 3 in particular will have significant positive effects in that having a heating system located close to where the energy is consumed minimises the distance the energy has to travel and hence minimises energy loss and emissions whilst improving efficiency. However, there may be issues with the type of fuel used and whether this has to be transported to the system. Electricity would still need to be produced and the waste heat from this process would be piped around the local area to provide heating.

17.2.17 Options 5 and 6 would have likely positive effects on SA11 as they promote appropriate design measures within development to help reduce emissions and improve energy efficiency.

17.2.18 Option 4 and 7 would again leave out any local control over renewable energy target setting and design measures and so would have uncertain effects on SA11.
Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

17.2.19 Socially, most of the Options have no direct relationship with the SA Objectives. However, Option 3 does offer the potential to build active, open minded and cohesive communities through the use of a decentralised heating system as this could provide local people with the opportunity to operate and govern their own energy services, thus giving a sense of empowerment.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

17.2.20 Economically, the Options do not have direct relationships with the SA Objectives. However, indirectly all of the Options could create new employment opportunities (SA17) through the provision and promotion of renewable energy. This could attract green businesses to the area as well as higher tech businesses.

Preferred Option for Testing 55

17.2.21 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to renewable and low carbon energy is detailed in Chapter 22 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

17.2.22 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

“Only areas that are submitted for consideration and considered appropriate including in landscape terms should be identified and designated for commercial scale solar farm and wind turbine development. In principle standalone renewable and low carbon energy proposals for smaller (microgeneration) householder proposals are acceptable subject to design criteria. Encourage the use of a decentralised low carbon/ district heating system associated with the large urban extension and development around Hailsham/ Hellingly/ Arlington/Polegate. Rely upon national targets for additional low carbon/ renewable energy in development Proposals”.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 55 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

17.2.23 In terms of these SA Objectives the Preferred Option for Testing will have overall positive effects. The inclusion of the requirement to take landscape impact into account when determining areas for designation for
solar farm and wind turbine developments will ensure positive effects are achieved in relation to SA2 and these could be strengthened further by additional design criteria and in combination with the overall approach to development and the landscape. Natural resources would be managed sustainably in regards to the district heating system depending on the fuel type used and waste in terms of heat loss and energy loss would be minimised through the reduced distance the heat would have to travel to reach homes and businesses. Renewable energy technologies would be included as part of the design of developments which could help minimise emissions from homes and could be maximised when combined with energy efficiency measures and sustainable construction methods.

**Social SA Objectives**

17.2.24 Socially the provision of a decentralised district heating network in the south of the District may help empower local people to take control of their energy services and help build inclusive communities. This could be further enhanced if community schemes in terms of standalone renewable developments or parts of the decentralised system are part of community initiatives. The Preferred Option for Testing could allow community renewable energy projects to come forward.

**Economic SA Objectives**

17.2.25 Economically, the Preferred Option for Testing offers the opportunity for the attraction of new businesses, particularly green or high technology businesses if combined with the Preferred Option for Testing for the Strategic Economic Strategy (See Chapter 5 of this SA Report) which includes maximising the potential for engineering clusters and green energy technology including the consideration of a renewable energy centre.

**17.3 Water Supply, Flood Risk and Coastal Change**

**Water Supply**

17.3.1 In March 2015 the Government announced that the local planning authorities have the option to set additional technical requirements exceeding the minimum standards required by Building Regulations in respect of water.

17.3.2 It is acknowledged that Wealden District is an Area of Serious Water Stress. This means that:

- The current household demand for water is a high proportion of the current effective rainfall which is available to meet that demand; or
- The future household demand for water is likely to be a high proportion of the effective rainfall available to meet that demand
17.3.3 Chapter 22, Issue 49 details the issue in regards to water efficiency to be addressed by the Local Plan and the reasonable Options considered in respect of this.

17.3.4 The Options are:

- Option 1 - Not to include a policy on water efficiency and rely upon Building Regulations standards.
- Option 2 - Require new dwellings to meet the tighter Building Regulations optional requirement of 110 litres/person/day.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Water Efficiency Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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17.3.5 The Options are extremely narrow in their focus and thus only impact on SA5 and SA6 of the environmental SA Objectives. They have no direct relationship with the other SA Objectives.

**Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)**

**SA5 To maintain and improve the water quality of the District’s rivers and groundwater, and to achieve sustainable water resources management**

17.3.6 Both Options are likely to have positive effect on SA5 as they will both result in sustainable water resource management. However, Option 2 may offer more significant positive effects as it provides a higher level of water efficiency in developments. Considering the fact that Wealden is acknowledged as being in an area of serious water stress it is likely that Option 2 is going to offer the most positive effects.

**SA6 Manage natural resources sustainably, minimising waste and maximise the re-use of materials, recycling and composting**

17.3.7 Again both Options are likely to have positive effects on SA6 as they will achieve water efficiency and hence minimise wastage in terms of water. The higher standards required by Option 2 are again likely to offer the most potential for significant positive effects on SA6.
Preferred Option for Testing 56

17.3.8 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to water efficiency is detailed in Chapter 22 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

17.3.9 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Require new dwellings to meet the tighter Building Regulations optional requirement of 110 litres/person/day’.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 56 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

17.3.10 The Preferred Option for Testing will provide positive effects in terms of maximising the potential for water efficiency within developments. However this does not stop future residents from changing appliances for example from high efficiency to lower efficiency. Yet the industry as a whole and appliances are becoming more efficient anyway and so this will likely negate any potential negative impacts. Furthermore, people are becoming more conscious of their water usage as a result of water meters and so this is likely to discourage the swapping of appliances as well.

Flood Risk

17.3.11 The NPPF requires that development be directed away from areas at the highest risk of flooding (zones 2 and 3) and that Local Plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development to avoid where possible flood risk to people and property and manage any residual risk, taking account of the impacts of climate change.

17.3.12 Chapter 22, paragraph 22.21 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the sequential approach. It also contains the Options for addressing flood risk.

17.3.13 The Options are:

- **Option 1** - When allocating land for development all land within flood zones 2 and 3, taking into account the impacts of climate change, will not be considered suitable.
• **Option 2** - Whilst reconsidering development boundaries, and considering applications for development around and within Local, Neighbourhood and Residential Settlements development will not be encouraged or permitted on land within flood zones 2 and 3, including taking into account the impacts of climate change.

• **Option 3** - Allow development boundaries to include flood zones 2 and 3 as the sequential test will only allow suitable development.

• **Option 4** - In the absence of adequate flood storage, within Willingdon Levels Catchment Area, require that all development provides adequate drainage and does not exceed its current contribution to surface water runoff.

• **Option 5** - Set in policy the onus on the developer to provide sufficient evidence that capacity exists if discharging surface water to the combined sewer.

• **Option 6** - Any surface water discharge from new development on greenfield land should not exceed greenfield run off rates.

• **Option 7** - Seek sustainable urban drainage systems that are integral to development proposals and not an ‘add-on’.

• **Option 8** - Set requirements for developers/applicants to submit evidence as part of the Flood Risk Assessment to show the drainage hierarchy has been followed and sustainable urban drainage systems used. Sustainable urban drainage systems must ensure water quality is not harmed (including taking into account the potential for land contamination).

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Flood Risk Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

| SA Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
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| Option 2      | o | o | o | o | o | o | + | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | + | o | o | o |
| Option 3      | o | o | o | o | o | o | ? | o | o | o | ? | o | o | o | ? | o | ? | o |
| Option 4      | o | o | o | o | o | o | + | o | o | o | ? | o | o | o | ? | o | o | o |
| Option 5      | o | o | o | o | o | o | + | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Option 6      | o | o | o | o | o | o | + | o | o | o | o | ? | o | o | o | + | o | o | o |
| Option 7      | o | o | o | + | o | + | o | o | o | + | o | o | o | + | o | o | o | o |
| Option 8      | o | o | o | + | o | + | o | o | o | + | o | o | o | + | o | o | o | o |
Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA4 Improve the quality of the built environment

17.3.14 Options 7 and 8 are likely to have the most potential for positive effects on this SA Objective because they specifically incorporate an element of flood risk management design. The provision of SuDS not only helps to manage flood risk by helping control the rate and amount of surface water runoff from a development, but they also contribute to enhancing the natural environment within which the development sits and this can be at the local scale or more District wide.

SA5 To maintain and improve the water quality of the District's rivers and groundwater, and to achieve sustainable water resources management

17.3.15 It is Options 7 and 8 again that offer the most potential for positive effects on this SA Objective due to the fact that SuDS measures can help filter pollutants out of any surface water and minimise the risk of conveyance to and pollution of the Districts waterbodies. This would be particularly beneficial to any development close to the Pevensey Levels where the quality of the watercourses is one of the reasons for its designation as a Ramsar site and Site of Community Interest, both international designations.

SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment.

17.3.16 The majority of the Options are likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as they all seek to reduce the risk of flooding and also to not increase the risk of flooding as a result of development.

17.3.17 Option 1 would not allow any development within the most high risk flood areas and hence be beneficial to SA7. Option 2 has the same effect although this is limited to the lower order settlements within the Settlement Hierarchy. It does not omit land around the sustainable settlements which may be at risk of flooding or within flood risk areas. Option 3 has uncertain effects as it would effectively establish the principle of development of land within flood risk zones 2 and 3 which goes against the achievement of SA7; however it mitigates this to a degree by incorporating the sequential test from the NPPF, which would require site specific flood risk assessments. The remaining Options would all have positive effects on SA7 as they include the requirements for appropriate measures to be taken on sites, or in relation to sites (Option 6) to ensure flood risk from surface water is mitigated.

SA11 Mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and promoting appropriate design measures in development

17.3.18 Options 7 and 8 in particular will have positive effects on SA11 as they are seeking to future proof development in terms of addressing flood risk. Both Options would require SuDS measures to be incorporated into
developments and these not only provide immediate beneficial effects in terms of managing water but can be designed in such a way as to allow them to accommodate likely climate change impacts such as an increase in rainfall and rainfall events. These Options are promoting appropriate design measures to address climate change impacts. This will allow adaptation for developments in the face of climate change. Furthermore, they can have additional climate change benefits in that they can help cool urban areas down through greening and waterbody provision.

17.3.19 Options 1 and 2, whilst not promoting design or adaptation measures and therefore not having a direct relationship with SA11, are still addressing the Objective indirectly by omitting land within flood zones 2 and 3 taking account of the impact of climate change on these zones, from any potential development.

17.3.20 Options 3 and 4 are assessed as having uncertain effects at present. Option 3 would allow flood risk areas within development boundaries, thus establishing the principle of development being acceptable here; however it would have the protection of requiring the sequential test to be applied to any development proposals on such land. Therefore, it would be down to individual site flood risk assessments to determine the full effects on SA11. Option 4 fails to take account of the potential impacts from climate change on rainfall events and flood risk.

17.3.21 Option 5 does not take into account the need to consider the impacts of climate change. Greenfield runoff rates now may not be the same in 10 years’ time, for example, as climate change results in greater rainfall and more intense rainfall events. Option 5 just requires account to be taken of existing runoff rates from greenfield sites which may risk negative impacts further down the line in the life of any development on that site.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health

17.3.22 Socially the Options do not have a direct relationship with the majority of SA Objectives. However, SA15 is likely to be positively affected by the majority of the Options due to the fact they seek to reduce flood risk within and as a consequence of developments which in turn will protect people’s homes, businesses and communities, facilitating improvements in overall wellbeing.

17.3.23 Option 3 is assessed as having uncertain effects on SA15 because whilst it should ensure flood risk is not created or increased in terms of development due to the use of the sequential test, there is always a possibility. Option 4 does not account for future impacts from climate change which could increase flood risk under this Option and hence put people’s home, businesses and communities at risk. However, site specific flood risk assessments should be able to mitigate some of this potential.
Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

17.3.24 Option 3 is perhaps the only Option to have any type of impact on these SA Objectives as it would allow a greater amount of land to be considered for development and some business development may be able to be accommodated under the sequential test.

17.3.25 In general the other Options are likely to have indirect positive effects in terms of the economy by reducing the risk of flooding to businesses, but only if the impacts of climate change are taken into account as well.

Preferred Option for Testing 57

17.3.26 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to flood risk is detailed in Chapter 22 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

17.3.27 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘When allocating land for development all land within flood zones 2 and 3, including taking into account climate change, will not be considered suitable.

Whilst reconsidering development boundaries, and considering applications for residential development around and within Local, Neighbourhood and Residential settlements development will not be encouraged or permitted on land within flood zones 2 and 3, including taking into account climate change.

In the absence of adequate flood storage, within Willingdon Levels Catchment Area require that all development provides adequate drainage and does not exceed its current contribution to surface water runoff.

Any surface water discharge from new development on greenfield land should not exceed greenfield run off rates.

Set requirements for developers/applicants to submit evidence as part of the Flood Risk Assessment to show the drainage hierarchy has been followed and where possible sustainable urban drainage systems used. Sustainable urban drainage systems must ensure water quality is not harmed’.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 57 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

17.3.28 In terms of these Objectives, the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have positive effects. The inclusion of SuDS measures together with the avoidance of flood risk areas in terms of allocating sites will help improve the quality of the environment within which development sits and hence have an effect on improving the quality of the built environment (SA4). In addition the SuDS measures will help achieve improvements in water quality (SA5) through their ability to facilitate filtration, provided a suite of appropriate SuDS measures are used. The beauty of SuDS measures is they can be tailored to the specific requirements of the site be that storage or pollution control for example in relation to the Pevensey Levels in particular. Ensuring the drainage hierarchy is followed will also help achieve sustainable water resource management. Flood risk will be reduced as a result of the approach and as the impacts of climate change are also required to be taken into account, SA11 will be achieved.

Social SA Objectives

17.3.29 Socially, the reduction in flood risk, including the impacts of climate change, together with the improvements to the local environment of developments that SuDS can bring will help achieve SA15 by improving peoples overall sense of wellbeing.

Economic SA Objectives

17.3.30 In economic terms the Preferred Option for Testing will reduce the flood risk to businesses as well as homes and may help attract new business opportunities to the District through the indirect benefits of a high quality natural environment. Therefore, indirectly it is likely to be positive for the economy of the District.

Coastal Change

17.3.31 Wealden District has a small strip of coastline that runs across Pevensey Bay adjacent to Eastbourne and Rother District. This area of coastline is at risk from breaches to the sea defences. However the current policy from the Environment Agency is to hold the (existing defence) line. This means that the artificial defences and the position of the shoreline will remain.  

17.3.32 It is not considered that this stretch of coastline will be subject to any significant physical changes requiring the consideration of designation as a Coastal Change Management Area within the Plan, due to the continued maintenance of the sea defences.

17.3.33 However, the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper still considers reasonable Options due to the fact this may change in the future. The Options are:
• **Option 1** - Seek to identify a Coastal Change Management Area as part of the Local Plan process.

• **Option 2** - Not to seek to identify a Coastal Change Management Area as part of the Local Plan process.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Coastal Change Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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17.3.34 It is considered that neither of the Options will have a direct impact on any of the 18 SA Objectives, however it was reasonable to consider them given the national approach to coastal management and the fact that the Environment Agency could change their stance in the future.

**Preferred Option for Testing 58**

17.3.35 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Not to identify a Coastal Change Management Area’

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Preferred Option for Testing 58 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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17.3.36 There is no need to identify a Coastal Change Management Area as part of the Local Plan and therefore there is no policy approach to assess.
17.4 Drainage

17.4.1 In general terms the impact of development on drainage within the District will be assessed at the planning applications stage and there will be specific requirements contained within the design policies. It is considered that there are no reasonable alternatives to this approach.

17.4.2 However, it is considered necessary to address the issues of water quality in the District in regards to the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and drainage can affect this. Poor water quality may arise from pollutants or the prevention of the water course from having certain physical requirements for example sunlight. It is therefore considered necessary to raise the awareness of the need to maintain or improve water to a good status.

17.4.3 Chapter 22, Issue 51 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issue to be addressed in regards to water quality in the District, namely to maintain or improve water quality of water bodies to a good status in line with the Water Framework Directive.

17.4.4 The reasonable Options (Option 60) considered are:

- **Option 1** - Not to specifically consider impacts upon water quality.

- **Option 2** - Resist development that would pose a threat to quantity/quality of surface water and ground water resources (includes pollution runoff into nearby waterways).

- **Option 3** - Ensure all development takes into consideration the Water Framework Directive objectives to maintain good water quality status and seek to improve to a good status any failing water body.

- **Option 4** - If the river/water body has a ‘poor’ status under the Water Framework Directive, then any development affecting such water bodies should be encouraged to improve the water quality in that area.

- **Option 5** - Identify the water bodies assessed as being of poor quality and encourage strategies through development to improve water quality.
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Drainage Options (SA Tasks B3/B4):
General Summary

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17.4.5 The Options are seeking to address a very narrow issue, that of achieving good water quality status in line with the WFD Objectives and as such they will only affect two specific environmental SA Objectives. The Options have no direct relationship with the other SA Objectives although overall good water quality can lead to improvements in the general environment and hence the social and economic aspects.

Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

And

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

17.4.6 Option 1 would be likely to have negative effect on SA1 and SA2 as it would not take into account the need to improve and maintain good water quality within the Districts waterbodies. The Option would not protect or enhance in particular the Pevensey Levels where some of the waterbodies are considered to be in poor or moderate condition. This could adversely affect the habitats and species within the Pevensey Levels that rely on the waterbodies and hence would move away from achieving SA1 as well as harming the biodiversity assets for which the Pevensey Levels are designated.

SA5 To maintain and improve the water quality of the District’s rivers and groundwater, and to achieve sustainable water resources management

17.4.7 Option 1 would also have likely negative effects on SA5 as it would not ensure that the water quality of the Districts rivers and groundwater was improved and maintained and would not require development to take account of the need to ensure no adverse impacts occur as a result of the development.
17.4.8 The remaining Options would all have positive effects on SA1 and SA5 as all take into account the need to protect the Districts waterbodies from adverse impacts of development. Option 2 would prevent any development from coming forward that would pose a risk to the quantity and/or quality of surface water and ground water. Whilst this would prevent further deterioration it would not necessarily lead to improvements being made to existing waterbodies that are already in poor quality status (SA5). This would however protect the areas which drain to the Pevensey Levels from any pollution runoff (SA1).

17.4.9 Option 3 would offer significant positive effects on SA1 and SA5 as it would require both elements, improving quality and maintaining quality, to be taken account of by any development proposals. Taking into consideration is just the first step however, and this Option would likely be strengthened by inclusion of design measures and the requirements to put in place onsite and possible offsite measures to ensure quality is maintained and where possible improved. The Option does place the WFD firmly in the Local Plan context.

17.4.10 Option 4 would provide positive impacts on SA1 and SA5 as it would encourage development to improve water quality where a waterbody has a poor status. However, this could place unnecessary burdens on development to remedy an historic deficit in quality terms. The development could take all necessary measures to ensure the water quality is not made worse however it could be argued that it should not be the responsibility of the development to improve water quality if it is proven it will not make it worse.

17.4.11 Option 5 would provide positive effects on SA1 and SA5 as again it would seek to improve water quality. Furthermore it would allow a more strategic approach to be taken in terms of addressing waterbodies that are classified as being of poor quality status under the WFD. These strategies could be developed to include development proposals but could also involve other approaches such as standalone SuDS measures that would take some of the burden off of developments.

Preferred Option for Testing 59

17.4.12 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to water quality and the WFD requirements is detailed in Chapter 22 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

17.4.13 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Ensure all development takes into consideration the objectives of the Water Framework Directive to maintain good water quality status and seek to improve to a good status any failing water body.

Identify the water bodies assessed as being of poor quality and encourage strategies through development to improve water quality’.
Environmental SA Objectives

17.4.14 The Preferred Option for Testing will have overall positive effects due to the fact it includes the requirement for development to take into consideration the objectives of the WFD. Improving water quality will have a direct positive effect on the Pevensey Levels though the prevention of the conveyance of pollutants through surface water runoff and drainage. This in turn will help conserve and protect the biodiversity within the Pevensey Levels. This will be true of other waterbodies within the District, both designated and non-designated. In addition the WFD objectives have to be met and therefore having the requirement in Local Policy embeds the principles in the local context. The Preferred Option for Testing also recognises that achieving the WFD objectives is a wider task than merely linking them to development and so the inclusion of encouraging strategies will help ensure that the wider picture and other measures are also considered but that development is a key contributor.
17.5 Pevensey Levels

17.5.1 There are specific issues regarding the Pevensey Levels that need to be addressed as part of the Local Plan process. These include:

- Requirements under the Habitats Regulations in relation to maintaining the conservation objectives of the designations i.e. in terms of water quality/quantity and the flora and fauna that depend on it
- Issues in relation to drainage from windfall/small scale/permitted development including loss of permeable surfaces, hardstanding’s and conveyance of pollutants
- Alterations to the hydrological regime of the catchment such as increased abstraction and faster runoff to watercourses
- The issue of failing water-bodies within the Pevensey Levels under the Water Framework Directive.

17.5.2 Growth within the catchment area of the Pevensey Levels is likely to have significant effects on the above issues and as such Chapter 22 paragraphs 22.32 to 22.34 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the reasonable Options considered to address these.

17.5.3 The Options are:

- **Option 1** - Introduce an overall drainage policy for the Pevensey Levels to expect all new development not to have a negative effect on the hydrological regime or increase pollutants entering the Pevensey Levels.

- **Option 2** - Use the objectives and actions within the Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan to develop appropriate policies for the Pevensey Levels.

- **Option 3** - Include a policy setting out the drainage hierarchy which new development must follow.

- **Option 4** - Require all new developments to incorporate suitable Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems where appropriate and feasible and for the suitability of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to be demonstrated.
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Pevensey Levels Options (SA Tasks B3/B4):
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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

17.5.4 Clearly due to the scope of the Options, to address issues regarding the Pevensey Levels, the environmental SA Objectives are going to be most affected.

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

17.5.5 All of the Options will have likely positive effects on SA1 as they are all concerned with conserving and enhancing the Pevensey Levels, which is a Ramsar site (International biodiversity designation) and Site of Community Importance (European biodiversity designation).

SA5 To maintain and improve the water quality of the District’s rivers and groundwater, and to achieve sustainable water resources management

17.5.6 Option 2 will have likely positive effects as the WFD and River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) have improving water quality and maintaining good water quality at the heart of their objectives. This would allow any policies for the Pevensey Levels to incorporate these and the RBMP identifies the specific issues facing specific waterbodies together with the actions required to address them, which would give firm guidance to policy development within the Local Plan to achieve SA5.

17.5.7 Option 3 will also have likely positive effects as setting a drainage hierarchy will ensure account is taken of the need to avoid adverse impacts on water quality first, giving it the highest priority. Having a hierarchy will ensure SA5 can be met whilst ensuring there are Options available to developers as well. In addition, Option 3 would take account of the issues around the WwTWS at Hailsham and other settlements which do have an impact on the water quality of the Pevensey Levels as they discharge treated effluent to the Levels. This actually makes up a significant amount of the water within the Pevensey Levels.
17.5.8 Option 4 will have likely positive effects on SA5 as it places the inclusion of SuDS within Local planning policy and confirms their importance. SuDS can help filter pollutants out of surface water before it reaches any watercourses or water bodies and hence help prevent further deterioration in water quality. They can also help improve the quality of waterbodies that are already classified as being in poor quality status as some measures can involve vegetation which removes pollutants from the water. Other measures would also be needed particularly as the Pevensey Levels contains a lot of farmland where agricultural runoff can be a significant cause of water quality issues. This would need to be addressed by other agencies however such as the Environment Agency.

SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment.

17.5.9 Option 1 in particular would have positive effects on this objective as it seeks to ensure that the hydrological regime of the Pevensey Levels catchment area is not adversely affected by any development. As the catchment area is wider than just the Pevensey Levels ensuring that the natural processes are not altered by development will help reduce the risk of flooding and allow the catchment area to act in its natural way. Together with avoiding development in flood risk areas this should have significant positive effects on SA7.

17.5.10 Options 3 and 4 will have more localised positive effects as they are more focused on the development scale and individual sites although cumulatively this could lead to wider positive effects. SuDS (Option 4) are measures that not only improve water quality but also slow down the transition of runoff to watercourses which can help reduce flood risk, particularly from intense rainfall events. Having the drainage hierarchy will also help reduce flood risk as it provides the optimal framework for managing surface water runoff.

SA11 Mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and promoting appropriate design measures in development

17.5.11 Option 4 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective due to the fact that SuDS are designed to manage excess water created as a result of development, primarily that from increased runoff as a result of impermeable surfaces. The inclusion of SuDS on developments, provided they are the most appropriate and are developed as a suite of measures, will be able to be designed to cope with the impacts on climate change.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

17.5.12 Although there are unlikely to be any direct social impacts as a result of the Options, those which would reduce the risk of flooding within the catchment area will protect people’s homes and businesses which is overall a social positive.
Economic SA Objectives

17.5.13 Again the Options would not have any direct relationship with these Objectives however protecting businesses from flood risk is a positive in economic terms.

Preferred Option for Testing 60

17.5.14 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to renewable and low carbon energy is detailed in Chapter 22 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

17.5.15 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Introduce an overall drainage policy for the Pevensey Levels to expect all new development not to have a negative effect on the hydrological regime or increase pollutants entering the Pevensey Levels. This should include a drainage hierarchy which new development must follow regardless of size’.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 60 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

17.5.16 The Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have significant positive effects on these SA Objectives. The Pevensey Levels will be protected from further pollution or deterioration in water quality together with its habitats and species (SA1) although this could be strengthened further through the inclusion of strategies to improve those waterbodies within it that are classified as being in poor status at present. However, this may be beyond the scope of the Local Plan and may rely on other policies and strategies.

17.5.17 The water quality of the rivers and groundwater resources within the Pevensey Levels catchment area will also be positively affected (SA5) through the fact that the approach would seek to prevent pollutants entering the Pevensey Levels which would mean preventing them reaching the watercourses that feed it.

17.5.18 Ensuring that development does not alter the hydrological regime of the catchment area will also help reduce flood risk and allow the catchment to act in its natural form.
17.6 Ashdown Forest

17.6.1 It is considered that the development strategy identified as the preferred option for testing, and in particular in relation to housing distribution and the economy, is likely to have a significant effect on the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) by reason of visitor pressure and Nitrogen deposition.

17.6.2 As such, Chapter 22 Option 53 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendation Consultation paper details the issue to be considered by the Local Plan process in relation to the Ashdown Forest SPA. Broadly the issue is that without appropriate mitigation it is considered that development within around 15km of the Forest is likely to have a significant effect and therefore not providing mitigation is not a reasonable alternative.

Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA)

17.6.3 There are a number of Options that the Council has considered in relation to mitigating any effects of development on the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and these are detailed in Appendix I.

17.6.4 Not all of the Options are considered to be reasonable and these are identified within the Table in Appendix I. They are considered ‘unreasonable alternatives’ due to the fact that they are either not legally possible; they are not enforceable or it has been indicated to the Council that they are outside of our control to insist upon them being implemented and they are also unlikely to be implemented by the third party.

17.6.5 The Options considered to address the issue of development and the impacts on the Ashdown Forest SPA are contained in Chapter 22 Option 62 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper. The Options are:

- **Option 1** - Resist all new development that may increase visitors on Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area and in particular within 15 kilometres.

- **Option 2** - Resist all new residential development within 400 metres of Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area to prevent cat predation.

- **Option 3** - Allow development between 400 metres and around 15 kilometres of Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area with appropriate mitigation. The options for mitigation include:
  
  a) Measures to change behaviour only including a Code of Conduct; Access Management Officer (s) and Volunteer Dog Rangers; signs, interpretation and leaflets; off-site provision of information to local residents and users; on-site and off-site
interactive initiatives; responsible dog ownership training; visitor surveys; and bird surveys.

b) Measures to provide alternatives to Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area including: alternative places to dog walk/recreational purposes of a comparable experience to that of Ashdown Forest (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space - SANGS); provide additional places to dog walk/recreational purposes; and provide dog gyms.

c) Measures to change behaviour with measures to provide alternatives to Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area including: a Code of conduct; Access Management Officer(s) and Volunteer Dog Rangers; signs, interpretation and leaflets; off-site provision of information to local residents and users; on-site and off-site interactive initiatives; responsible dog ownership training; alternative places to dog walk/recreational purposes of a comparable experience to that of Ashdown Forest (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space - SANGS); provide additional places to dog walk/recreational purposes; and provide dog gyms.

- **Option 4** - Consideration of 1 to 3 above at varying ranges from 0-400 metres, 400metres to 1 kilometre, 1 - 2 kilometres, 2 - 3 kilometres, 3 - 4 kilometres, 4 - 5 kilometres, 5 -6 kilometres, 6 - 7 kilometres, 7 - 8 kilometres, 8- 9 kilometres, 9 - 10 kilometres, 10 - 11 kilometres, 11 - 12 kilometres, 12 – 13 kilometres, 13 - 14 kilometres, 14 – 15 kilometres and 15 kilometres+.

- **Option 5** - Consideration of different scales of development

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Ashdown Forest SPA Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

17.6.6 The scope of all of the Options is to conserve and protect the Ashdown Forest SPA and as such they will all have likely positive effects on SA1, although the degree and magnitude of positive effect may vary.

17.6.7 Option 1 would have a positive impact as it would reduce the numbers of visitors to the Ashdown Forest from any new residential development. However this would not stop visitors coming from beyond 15km distance although beyond 15km it is considered that the potential for visits to the Ashdown Forest is commensurate with that of other tourism and that mitigation would not be required.

17.6.8 Option 2 would provide positive effects in that it would reduce visitor numbers to the Ashdown Forest reducing visitor pressure and protecting the habitat as well as protecting birds including the species for which the Ashdown Forest is designated from the impacts of cat predation. However, cats may roam further than 400m from their homes and so new residential development beyond the 400m may result in some cat predation as it is outside of the Council’s control to insist on restrictions to cat ownership.

17.6.9 Option 3 as a whole would provide positive effects on the Ashdown Forest SPA as it seeks to allow development with the appropriate mitigation to ensure no adverse impacts occur as a result. This would protect and conserve the Forest habitats and species. However the types of mitigation will play an important role in the degree of positive effects.

17.6.10 Option 3a) is assessed as having uncertain effects due to the fact that it relies only on mitigation measures designed to influence behavioural change (measures 13 and 15-19 in Appendix I). It can be difficult to change people’s behaviours and this may cause some negative effects on SA1 as new residents will still likely visit the Ashdown Forest. Some may change their behaviours and behaviours can change over time and so these measures may prove fruitful in the long term.

17.6.11 Option 3b) is also assessed as having uncertain effects as it seeks to implement measures that provide alternatives to the Ashdown Forest but again the Council has no control over whether people would visit these alternatives or not. This may result in negative effects as new residents visit the Forest still. Visitor surveys do show that people will travel to other places but that the Forest remains an attractive location. The introduction of dog gyms may help reduce number of visitors who visit the Forest to walk their dog, but people visit for other reasons too which the dog gym would not address. This could result in negative effects on SA1.

17.6.12 Option 3c) offers the most potential for achieving positive effects in terms of SA1 as it combines the approaches in 3a) and 3b) and would seek to change behaviours as well as offer alternatives. Combined these are likely
to reduce the number of visits to the forest to some degree and help conserve and enhance the Ashdown Forest SPA.

17.6.13 Option 4 is assessed as having uncertain effects. At any distance up to 15km, Option 1 is likely to have positive effects as it resists all development that may increase visits to the Ashdown Forest; this includes tourism development, business and residential. Option 2 in a similar fashion would likely have positive effects as it resists all residential development which would help reduce visitor numbers, although these may not be as significant as with Option 1.

17.6.14 At any distance up to 15km the measures proposed in 3a) and 3b) may have some limited positive effects for the same reasoning as described for Option 3 above. Beyond 15km visits do reduce to once a day or twice a week and so the measures may have more effect beyond this distance.

17.6.15 Option 3c) at any distance (Option 4) is likely to have the most potential for positive effects as it combines behavioural measures with alternative measures. These are likely to become more influential the further away from the Ashdown Forest the development is. However, beyond 7km it is considered that proportional onsite behavioural measures are sufficient mitigation and beyond 15km visits are commensurate with long range tourism visits of an ad-hoc nature and so mitigation is not required.

SA3 Where appropriate enhance and provide access to the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets for residents and visitors

17.6.16 Option 1 is likely to have negative effects on this SA Objective as resisting all development within 15km of the Ashdown Forest is not commensurate with improving access to the District’s countryside and landscape, of which the Ashdown Forest is a part.

17.6.17 Option 3 as a whole is likely to have a positive effect on this SA Objective although depending on which sub-option is being considered the effects will vary. The purpose of the approach to the Ashdown Forest SPA is to reduce impacts from visitor pressure and so it could be assumed that Option 3 would have an adverse effect by allowing visitors. However, Option 3 seeks to manage access through appropriate mitigation and so could achieve SA3 whilst minimising the effects on the Forest. In this respect, Option 3c) presents the most potential for achieving positive effects.
Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

17.6.18 Although the Options are focused on reducing visitor pressure and associated impacts on the Ashdown Forest, economically, Option 1 is likely to have some degree of negative effect on SA18 as it resists all development that may increase visitor numbers, which would include any type of tourism related business. This could affect the tourism offer within the north of the District.

Preferred Option for Testing 61

17.6.19 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Ashdown Forest SPA is detailed in Chapter 22 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

17.6.20 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Resist all new residential development within 400 metres of Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area to prevent cat predation. Allow development between 400 metres and around 15 kilometres of Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area, which will increase the number of visitors on Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area, subject to mitigation.

Suitable mitigation for development between 400 metres and around 15 kilometres includes the provision of measures to change visitor behaviour including: a Code of Conduct; Access Management Officer(s); Volunteer Dog Rangers; signs, interpretation and leaflets; off-site provision of information to local residents and users; on-site and off-site interactive initiatives; responsible dog ownership training; visitor surveys; and bird surveys. This is collectively known as Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM).

Suitable mitigation for development between 400 metres and around 7 kilometres includes the provision of an alternative place to dog walk providing a comparable experience for recreational purposes to that of Ashdown Forest known as Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS). This is required in addition to Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM).

Notwithstanding the above it is acknowledged that development outside of these zones may be subject to an assessment of likely significant effects, depending on the nature of the development, and may also be subject to mitigation not identified in this preferred option for testing’.
Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 61 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

17.6.21 The Preferred Option for Testing will have an overall positive effect on the achievement of these SA Objectives. The mitigation measures put forward will help protect and conserve the habitats and species for which the Ashdown Forest is designated an SPA by seeking to minimise any adverse impacts from development. The approach seeks to moderate people’s behaviour in regards to the Ashdown Forest and their visiting patterns and habits combined with offering alternatives to the Forest as a destination to visit. Ultimately planning policy cannot control what a person will do but the approach offers the best possible chance of achieving positive effects.

Social SA Objectives

17.6.22 Socially the Preferred Option for Testing may have likely positive effects on SA12 in terms of improving access to the Forest. The approach is to reduce visitor pressure through mitigation and this does include visitor access management. Whilst it may seem at odds that the approach could have positive effects on SA12 whilst not having a negative effect on the Forest itself, the approach provides for sustainable management of visitors and as such offers a level of control and protection to the Forest which may not be possible if access management initiatives were not implemented.

Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

17.6.23 It is considered that there would be likely significant effects from new development that would increase the amount of traffic using the A26 between Uckfield and Crowborough. This includes consideration of in combination effects of other plans and programmes.

17.6.24 The Preferred Option for Testing in terms of the overall strategic development strategy for the District takes this into account and seeks to provide an approach that does not have an impact on the A26 and other roads which cross the Forest by focusing development in the south of the District and at locations routed away from the Forest.

17.6.25 However, the potential impact is not yet known and work is ongoing to establish this at present. On that basis, and until such time as an Appropriate Assessment can be undertaken, development that is likely to
have a significant effect on the SAC can effectively take place. As a result of this fact, it is considered that the only reasonable alternative is to prohib
relevant development and follow the precautionary principle.

**Preferred Option for Testing 62**

17.6.26 As such Chapter 22 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the Preferred Option for Testing in relation to the Ashdown Forest SAC which is:

'Until such time as an Appropriate Assessment can take place it is considered that there are no reasonable alternatives to prohibiting development that increases traffic on the A26 adjacent to the Ashdown Forest, and all development that may increase traffic on any road adjacent to the Ashdown Forest should be subject to an assessment of its likely significant effect'

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 60 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**Environmental SA Objectives**

SA1 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

17.6.27 As the Preferred Option for Testing adopts the precautionary approach it is likely to have positive effects on theses SA Objectives, in particular on SA1. The approach will conserve the qualifying habitats and species of the Ashdown Forest whilst maintaining the site’s integrity until such time as evidence is produced and an Appropriate Assessment can be undertaken to determine likely significant effects.

**Social SA Objectives**

SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

17.6.28 By not allowing any development that may increase traffic on the roads affecting the Ashdown Forest, it is likely that the approach would have a negative effect on housing development (SA13). However, the overall Preferred Option for Testing in regards to the strategic development of the District shows that the housing needs of the District can be met without having to necessarily locate close to the Ashdown Forest.
Economic SA Objectives

17.6.29 Economically the approach is likely to have negative effects in the short term as it would restrict the development of employment floorspace and therefore provision and access to jobs.
18.0 Affordable Housing

18.1 Chapter 23 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the context of affordable housing within the District. House prices are high within the District and wages in comparison to them are low. Therefore there is a significant need for affordable housing in Wealden.

18.2 It is acknowledged that meeting affordable housing need does not solely rely upon the provision of new affordable housing, and there are a number of mechanisms to meet this need.

18.3 From previous knowledge regarding the viability of housing provision, including affordable housing, within Wealden District there is potential for new market housing developments to provide an element of affordable housing. That evidence also confirms that there is a potential for smaller housing sites and sites within more affluent areas to support a higher proportion of affordable housing.

18.4 The Council’s planning policy of affordable housing is contained in a single policy Local Plan, the ‘Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan’ which is currently undergoing examination. As that Local Plan relates specifically to the Core Strategy, it is considered necessary to include provision for an affordable housing policy in the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation Paper.

18.1 The Options are:

- **Option 1** - To proceed with the Council’s policy contained within the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan to maximise the amount of affordable housing.

- **Option 2** - To use a different policy with higher thresholds for affordable housing which would mean that affordable housing would only be required if 6 or more houses are built on site.

- **Option 3** - To use a different policy with lower thresholds for affordable housing which would mean that affordable housing would only be required if 1 or more houses are built on site.

- **Option 4** - To use a higher percentage of affordable housing which would mean that development would be required to provide more than 35% of affordable housing as part of new development.

- **Option 5** - To use a lower percentage of affordable housing which would mean that development would be required to produce less than 35% of affordable housing as part of new development.
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Affordable Housing Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

18.2 None of the Options have a direct relationship with these SA Objectives. Issues affecting these SA Objectives are dealt with elsewhere in the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper and have been assessed in the relevant chapters of this SA Report. Considered in combination with the relevant preferred options for testing from the Wealden local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendation Consultation paper, the Options for affordable housing are likely to have a neutral effect on these SA Objectives.

18.3 There is the potential for any of the Options to conflict with SA1; SA2 and SA3 due to their very nature - delivering housing development. However, within the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper, and the relevant Chapters of this SA Report, there are specific policies relating to the conservation and enhancement of the District’s biodiversity; environmental resources; countryside; landscape; historic and cultural assets which when read in conjunction with any of the affordable housing Options will help meet these SA Objectives. Therefore the impact is likely to depend on the implementation of any policies and the relative weight given to them in the final Wealden Local Plan.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

18.4 Option 1 would provide either neutral or positive effects on SA13. The Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan provides a framework to ensure an adequate supply of affordable homes with an appropriate tenure mix to meet the needs of all sectors of the society and communities of Wealden. This will therefore provide beneficial effects for SA13. There is also flexibility within the policy to adjust affordable housing provision on allocated sites.
18.5 Increasing the threshold to require affordable housing only on sites of 6 or more houses (Option 2) would have negative effects on SA13. This would result in a lower proportion of affordable housing being delivered and would exclude small sites which are likely to come forward in the villages where affordable housing is in short supply. It would provide the potential opportunity for developers to submit several sites for development under the 6 house threshold and hence avoid the need to provide affordable housing whilst achieving larger housing developments.

18.6 Lowering the threshold to require affordable housing on sites of 1 or more house (Option 3) would potentially increase the provision of affordable housing and hence have positive effects on SA13, however it could present other issues principally the need to increase the amount of legal agreements through S106, which could cause delays to developments and increase costs to the Council. Furthermore, it could lead to the need to collect commuted sums requiring other sites to be found and financed which carries risks in terms of loss of funds due to lack of use.

18.7 Option 4 would likely have positive effects on SA13 as in theory it would provide more affordable housing as a proportion of market developments. However, it may result in site viability issues and have the potential to stifle or delay development, which could ultimately result in less affordable housing being delivered.

18.8 Option 5 would have likely negative effects on SA13 as reducing the threshold to below 35% would result in less affordable housing being delivered within the District which would not meet SA13.

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population

18.9 Option 1 would provide positive effects on SA15 as it will help ensure a high proportion of affordable housing is provided across the District which will help meet the need of overcrowded households and households in unsuitable accommodation. However, commuted sums in lieu of onsite provision will require finding appropriate sites which may impact on delivery. The tenure split as set out in the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan policy considers both viability and seeks to ensure the housing is more affordable for those in greatest need. The split also provides flexibility within the Policy and there is flexibility to adjust affordable housing provision on allocated sites.

18.10 As Option 2 would result in a lower proportion of affordable housing being delivered as a result of having a higher site size threshold, it is likely to have negative effects on SA15.

18.11 Providing a lower site threshold, as with Option 3, may have positive effects on SA15 by providing more affordable housing on a wider range of sites including small rural sites, helping to meet the need of overcrowded households and households in unsuitable accommodation as well as the local need in rural areas. However, it could present issues of viability and the delay in delivery due to an increase in the amount of S106 agreements required or
the requirement that other sites need to be identified in response to commuted sums collected in lieu of onsite provision.

18.12 Requiring more than 35% affordable housing on development sites (Option 4) is likely to have positive effects on SA15 as it will result in a higher delivery of affordable homes on sites. However, it could pose issues of viability although the Council’s evidence base for the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan shows that higher percentages are achievable.

18.13 Lowering the proportion below 35% (Option 5) would result in less affordable housing being delivered within the District which would not meet SA Objective 13 and subsequently SA15.

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion

18.14 The aim of the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan is to seek to provide for affordable housing and hence create sustainable communities with associated infrastructure. This needs to be balanced with the provision of market housing to create a mix of housing to sustain vibrant communities. Therefore Option 1 is likely to have positive effects on SA16.

18.15 Option 2 would result in less affordable housing being provided within the District due to the fact it would exclude small sites. This will move away from the promotion of social inclusion and creation of cohesive communities and hence have negative effects on SA16.

18.16 Option 3 would allow for the delivery of a greater number of affordable homes which would help address issues of deprivation within the District and hence promote social inclusion. This needs to be balanced with the provision of market housing to create a mix of housing to sustain vibrant communities.

18.17 Option 4 would result in a higher proportion of affordable housing which would promote social inclusion provided it is balanced with market houses to ensure a mix of housing to sustain vibrant communities.

18.18 Option 5 would have the opposite effect on SA16 to that of the other Options due to the fact it would deliver less affordable housing overall and in proportion to market housing on sites this could cause tensions within communities, moving away from the achievement of SA16.

Economic SA Objectives

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs

18.19 Providing affordable housing within the District will help households requiring accommodation close to small businesses firms and businesses. Therefore Options 1; 3 and 4 would have likely positive effects on SA17 as they would provide the most potential for the delivery of sufficient affordable
housing. Option 2 and 5 would deliver less affordable housing and so have potential negative effects against SA17.

Preferred Option for Testing 63

18.20 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to affordable housing is contained within Chapter 23 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

18.21 The Preferred Option for Testing is to use the Policy from the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan:

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

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

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

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

The affordable housing will be distributed within the site to ensure it is integrated and indistinguishable within the new development and surrounds. It will also be comparable in design terms with the market housing on site.

Affordable housing should be delivered on site; however, in exceptional circumstances Wealden District Council will accept a commuted sum or free serviced land in lieu of on-site provision. These circumstances may include
provision where a Registered Provider finds it uneconomic or impractical to provide the units in the scale or form agreed’.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 63 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives

18.22 In terms of these SA Objectives, the Preferred Option for Testing follows the AHDLP Policy which focuses on the delivery of affordable housing and the issues associated with these SA Objectives are addressed through other policy Options in the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper. Considered in combination with the relevant policy Options, the Preferred Option for testing it is likely to have neutral effects on these SA Objectives.

Social SA Objectives

18.23 Socially, the Preferred Option for Testing will have overall beneficial impacts on the SA Objectives. The approach provides a framework to ensure an adequate supply of affordable homes with an appropriate tenure mix to meet the needs of all sectors of the society and communities of Wealden. The Preferred Option for Testing will have a significant beneficial effect for improving the health and well-being of the population as it deals with the provision of affordable housing to meet local need. The approach is particularly aimed at reducing inequalities in the provision of housing through enabling the delivery of affordable housing. In so doing this will ensure that new housing does not socially exclude due to its location and connectivity. Ensuring that the tenure mix is given priority over the proportion of affordable housing on sites in exceptional circumstances goes even further to address these SA Objectives and will have a beneficial impact. The flexibility to adjust the percentage of affordable housing provision for allocated sites gives greater positive effect to the social SA Objectives.

Economic SA Objectives

18.24 The Preferred Option for Testing may have an indirect beneficial impact on SA18 when considered in combination with other relevant policies, by ensuring affordable homes are delivered throughout the District, which will include villages which in turn may increase or enhance their vitality.
18.1 Exception sites

18.1.1 The Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper proposes policies that allow for a certain amount of development within unsustainable villages, including Local and Neighbourhood settlements.

18.1.2 In the past, any housing development outside of development boundaries has only been allowed in exceptional circumstances, which include the provision of affordable homes, and these are known as ‘rural exception sites’. The new proposed policy for affordable housing may have an impact on these exception sites as landowners may seek to market value as opposed to the reduced value of a rural exception site.

18.1.3 However, as these sites within unsustainable settlements are constrained and the overall numbers are constrained, there is still a role for rural exception sites.

18.1.4 In this regard, Chapter 23 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper sets out the Options to address the matter of rural exceptions sites. The Options are:

- Option 1 - To retain a rural exceptions policy, similar to that within the Core Strategy.
- Option 2 - Not to include a rural exceptions policy.
- Option 3 - To retain a rural exceptions policy, similar to that within the Core Strategy but to also allow for circumstances where market housing can enable a significant amount of affordable housing.
- Option 4 - If circumstances arise where market housing can enable a significant amount of affordable housing, identify a ratio of market to affordable housing starting with a consideration of 1 market house to 10 affordable homes.
- Option 5 - If a rural exceptions policy is provided, to allow only rural exceptions in all settlements and to be greater than the threshold set for Local and Neighbourhood Settlements and not to count towards the overall total for that settlement and to allow the overall total to be exceeded.
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Rural Exceptions Sites Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

18.1.5 As with the affordable housing policy Options, all of the Options above have the potential to conflict with the environmental SA, in particular with SA2 due to the fact these sites would be within the countryside and rural areas and so likely to impact more on the landscape. However there are other proposed policies within the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation document, and assessed in this SA Report, that seek to address these issues and so in combination with any rural exception site policy negative impacts should be able to be mitigated.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

18.1.6 It is these SA Objectives that are likely to be most impacted upon by the above Options.

SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

18.1.7 Option 1 is likely to have positive effects as it provides the opportunity to improve access to affordable homes in areas where it can be particularly difficult to access market housing due to high affordability to wage ratios.

18.1.8 Option 2 would have a negative effect on SA13 as it would remove any specific focus on affordable housing need in rural areas and restrict access to housing in areas where it can be particularly difficult to access the market on account of affordability issues.

18.1.9 Options 3 and 4 would both have likely positive effects on SA13 as they would provide for affordable housing within areas where it is difficult to access market housing and in some cases would significantly increase the
provision of affordable housing in combination with market housing. These Options may increase the viability of sites within the rural areas and hence, maximise the affordable housing provision. Combined with policies on tenure mix this will ensure appropriate type and size of affordable housing is provided to meet local need.

18.1.10 Option 5 is also assessed as having positive effects as it too would maximise the provision of affordable housing for rural areas and enable more people to access the housing market and get on the property ladder. Combined with policies on tenure mix this will ensure appropriate type and size of affordable housing is provided to meet local need.

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population

18.1.11 All of the Options except Option 2, would have positive effects on the health and wellbeing of residents as it gives more people a chance to access housing. Scale, landscape requirements and accessibility should ensure that developments do not adversely affect existing residents and allow new residents integration within settlements.

SA16 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population

18.1.12 The ability to provide exception sites for affordable housing in areas of need should help to maintain the vibrancy of communities and promote social inclusion. This is very much tied to the achievement of SA 15 also. In this regard, Options 3; 4 and 5 perhaps offer the most potential for significant positive effects as they would maximise the provision of affordable housing on these sites. The additional market housing element of Options 3 and 4 would help facilitate social integration provided the tenure mix and distribution of the affordable and market homes was balanced. This is likely to come forward as part of other Local Plan policies as well as within the general affordable housing policy; however reference to tenure mix would strengthen these Options further.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs

18.1.13 Whilst the Options above may not directly impact SA17 and the provision of employment land or employment opportunities, they would have positive effects on SA18, except Option 2.

18.1.14 All of the Options, except Option 2, would help maintain the vitality of villages and the rural economy through making housing accessible to lower wage earners and key workers who may be employed in rural industries and agriculture. This in turn would enable people to stay within their local communities and may result in the attraction of new services and facilities to the villages and rural areas, helping improve their sustainability.
Preferred Option for Testing 64

18.1.15 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to rural exception sites is contained within Chapter 23 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

18.1.16 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘To retain the rural exceptions policy, similar to that within the Core Strategy, but to also allow for circumstances where market housing can enable significant amount of affordable housing with a ratio of market to affordable housing starting with a consideration of 1 market house to 10 affordable homes. Rural exceptions will be allowed outside all development boundaries and they are allowed to be greater than the threshold set for the overall growth of Local and Neighbourhood Settlements and do not to count towards the overall total for that settlement and can exceed the overall total of the Local and Neighbourhood Settlements.

It must be demonstrated that the development:

- meets an identified local housing need among those people unable to compete in the normal housing market;
- Is located within or be well-related to a settlement identified as a Sustainable, Local and Neighbourhood or Residential Settlement, and connected by suitable pedestrian footpaths;
- Is appropriate in relation to the size of the settlement;
- Is not isolated or intrusive within the landscape;
- Is not located within an area of Flood Zone 2 or 3, taking into account climate change; and
- Meets design criteria contained within the document.

Sites developed under this policy will be subject to controls on the occupancy of the housing to ensure it continues to provide affordable homes which address local housing needs in perpetuity. The affordable homes will be managed by an approved Registered Provider’.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 64 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

| SA Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Preferred Option for Testing 64 | + | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | - |
Environmental SA Objectives

18.1.17 The Preferred Option for Testing has the potential to conflict with some of the environmental SA Objectives, namely SA1 and SA2 due to the fact that it seeks to deliver housing development, albeit affordable, within the rural areas and villages of the District. In this respect it is likely to be development within the countryside that could affect landscapes and historic assets. However, the approach includes requirements to ensure that any development proposed under such a policy would have to take into account the landscape and ensure that the no adverse impacts occur as a result of the development. This combined with landscape and other natural environment and design policies should ensure development proposals under this policy would be appropriate for their location.

Social SA Objectives

18.1.18 The policy provides the opportunity to improve access to affordable homes in areas where it can be particularly difficult to access market housing due to high affordability to wage ratios. The approach should be good for the health and wellbeing of residents as it gives more people a chance to access housing and stay within their local communities. The criteria contained in the policy should ensure that developments do not adversely affect existing residents and allow new residents integration within settlements, whilst ensuring the environment is also not adversely affected.

18.1.19 This combined with the ability to provide exception sites for affordable housing in areas of need should help to maintain the vibrancy of communities and promote social inclusion. Where market housing is also introduced to facilitate the provision of significant affordable housing, the two should be balanced and distributed so that they are indistinguishable from one another so as to further promote social inclusion and avoid segregation.

18.1.20 The requirement to ensure any new homes under this potential policy have good access to services and facilities within Sustainable, Local and Neighbourhood Settlements, particularly connected by suitable pedestrian footpaths, should help to support the viability of local services and facilities whilst also contributing towards improved health and wellbeing and the promotion of more sustainable transport modes, all of which would benefit the environmental SA Objectives as well.

18.1.21 The potential policy will also help maintain the vitality of villages and village centres, and perhaps enhance their sustainability, together with supporting the rural economy through providing accessible housing for lower wage earners and key workers who may be employed in rural industries or serve rural communities for example teachers at a rural school.
19.0 Housing

19.1 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies that house prices in the District are high yet average incomes are lower than in some other parts of the South East. This result in an affordability issue in the District. It is also anticipated that the District will experience a significant growth in household numbers over the plan period due in part to inward migration mainly from nearby Districts and Boroughs. There is also anticipated to be economic growth within the District and therefore additional homes will be needed for the extra workers.

19.2 This means that as well as allocating land for new housing, existing housing needs to be safeguarded.

19.3 Chapter 24 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the issues surrounding existing housing within the District and the measures needed to safeguard it.

Redevelopment and Conversions

19.4 The Options are:

- **Option 1** - To ensure that no development, including redevelopment and conversions, results in a net loss of residential accommodation.

- **Option 2** - To ensure that any loss of residential accommodation is replaced through additional land being allocated for new residential development

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Redevelopment and Conversion Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

19.5 The majority of the SA Objectives would not be directly affected by the above Options. However, the provision of housing in any guise does have the potential to conflict with the objectives of protecting the landscape, countryside, cultural and historic assets of the District simply by providing housing development. In this respect Option 2 could have potential effects if the land allocated to compensate for any residential development lost has
particular sensitivities. However, other proposed policies will address such issues including design and landscape and so in combination any adverse impacts should be minimised.

**Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)**

SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

19.6 In terms of the social impacts of the Options, both are likely to have positive effects on SA13 as they seek to ensure that existing housing is retained, or replaced where net loss is unavoidable, which will help meet the housing needs of the District through the provision of adequate numbers of homes. This in turn would have beneficial impacts on maintaining communities and the vibrancy of settlements, particularly in the more rural areas.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

19.7 None of the Options will have a direct relationship with, or effect on, these SA Objectives

**Preferred Option for Testing 65**

19.8 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to redevelopment and conversions of residential premises is contained within Chapter 24 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

19.9 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘New developments involving existing housing provision, including redevelopment and conversions, will be expected to result in no net loss in residential accommodation. Where a net loss in residential accommodation is unavoidable then any loss of residential accommodation should be replaced through additional land being allocated for new residential development’.

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 65 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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Environmental SA Objectives

19.10 There is the potential for the Preferred Option for Testing to conflict with SA1; SA2 and SA3 due to the fact that it may result in replacement housing being developed in sensitive areas to compensate for unavoidable net losses on development sites. However, within the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper, and the relevant Chapters of this SA Report, there are specific policies relating to the conservation and enhancement of the District's biodiversity; environmental resources; countryside; landscape; historic and cultural assets which when read and applied in conjunction the Preferred Option for Testing 65 and the other approaches to housing delivery, will help meet these SA Objectives. Therefore the impact is likely to depend on the implementation of any policies and the relative weight given to them in the final Wealden Local Plan.

Social SA Objectives

19.11 The policy approach ensures that there is no net loss of residential accommodation as a result of any new development, either through retention or replacement, within the District and as such will have positive social impacts in maintaining a supply of housing to meet the needs of the District. This in turn will help maintain vibrant and inclusive communities and improve people’s overall sense of wellbeing.

Economic SA Objectives

19.12 Economically, the policy approach may have to the potential for negative effects as it limits the flexibility in relation to redevelopment and conversions. However, there are other proposed policy approaches within the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendation Consultation paper, and assessed in the relevant Chapters of this SA Report, to ensure that the economy is supported and encouraged to grow in an appropriate manner. Therefore the impact is likely to depend on the implementation of any policies and the relative weight given to them in the final Wealden Local Plan.

Space Standards

19.13 The government has introduced national space standards which set out minimum standards for residential development. These can only be applied where there is a local plan policy in place based on evidenced local need and where viability of development is not compromised.

19.14 The average 3 bedroom house in Wealden is approximately 90m². The national standards state that a 3 bedroom house should be between 84m² and 102m². Therefore Wealden is broadly in line with national standards. It is important that new housing meets minimum space standards to ensure a good standard of living.
19.15 The Options for space standards policies are:

- **Option 1** - To ensure that all new development meets the Government's nationally described space standards.

- **Option 2** - To ensure that a proportion of new development meets the Government's nationally described space standards.

- **Option 3** - To have no control over space standards for new dwellings.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Space Standards Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

| SA Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
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| Option 1      | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | +  | +  | o  | o  | o  | o  | o  | o  | o  |
| Option 2      | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | ?  | o  | ?  | o  | o  | o  | o  | o  |
| Option 3      | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | o | ?  | o  | ?  | o  | o  | o  | o  | o  |

**Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)**

19.16 None of the Options will have a direct relationship with, or effect on, these SA Objectives.

**Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)**

**SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home**

19.17 Option 1 has the most potential for positive effects on this SA Objective as it will ensure that all housing is of size that offers a good standard of living for its occupants.

19.18 Option 2 is likely to have positive effects as it will enable flexibility in the provision of accommodation on development sites. This should lead to a good mix of housing sizes and types. However, this could also lead to a reduction in smaller houses as developers seek to build larger homes which will likely make more profit, which may mean people cannot access the housing market either because they cannot afford to or that the size of house they require is not available. A suitable balance would need to be sought in relation to the proportionality aspect of this Option to ensure maximum benefits on SA13.

19.19 Option 3 would still have positive effects as new residential development would still have to follow nationally prescribed space standards however it would remove the element of local control from the equation. This would mean that the Council would have no say in the size of housing that
came forward in the District which could result in an imbalance in the supply of suitable housing to meet local need.

**SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population**

19.20 All of the Options would have positive effects on this SA Objective as providing decent sized housing ensures a good standard of living, which in turn can improve people’s overall sense of wellbeing and health. Options 1 and 2 offer the most potential for positive effects as they would follow national standards and offer some degree of local control. Option 2 may however lead to a disparity between the size of new houses developed and the local need as it may result in higher proportions of larger houses which could be out of the purchasing capacity of local people. However both Options would provide suitable living accommodation. Option 3 would leave no local control over space standards although new housing would still need to meet national minimums.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

19.21 None of the Options will have a direct relationship with, or effect on, these SA Objectives.

**Preferred Option for Testing 66**

19.22 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to residential space standards is contained within Chapter 24 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

19.23 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘All new residential development should meet the Government's nationally described space standards’.

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 66 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**Environmental SA Objectives**

19.24 The Preferred Option for Testing will have no direct effect on any of these SA Objectives.
Social SA Objectives

19.25 Socially the Preferred Option for Testing will help ensure that all new residential development provides suitable and decent living standards for residents. This will help improve people’s overall wellbeing and health, particularly as it will help meet housing needs of those people in poor accommodation and overcrowded accommodation. It does however restrict some flexibility in the provision of new housing.

Economic SA Objectives

19.26 The Preferred Option for Testing will have no direct effect on any of these SA Objectives.

Special Needs Housing

19.27 In addition to general needs housing, there is a need for housing to meet special needs, including those for the elderly and those with particular disabilities. The SA Scoping Report and Wealden SHMA identify that the District has a high proportion of elderly residents and that the numbers are likely to increase over the plan period.

19.28 New Building Regulations come into force in October 2015 which define 3 categories of buildings:

- Category 1 – Visitable dwellings
- Category 2 – Accessible and adaptable dwellings
- Category 3 – Wheelchair user dwellings

19.29 Please refer to paragraphs 24.7-24.9 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper for a description of each category. For information, Category 1 is a minimum category and applies to all dwellings unless higher standards (Categories 2 and 3) are required and supported by a robust local evidence base including viability assessment.

19.30 The Wealden Local Plan will need to address the accommodation requirements of a high and likely growing proportion of elderly residents and also people with disabilities over the plan period.

19.31 The policy Options are:

- Option 1 - To allow social housing providers and market housing providers to make provision for special needs housing in accordance with their own wishes.
- Option 2 - To ensure that a specific proportion of new residential development is built to meet Category 2 and Category 3 standards.
SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Special Needs Housing Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

19.32 None of the Options will have a direct relationship with, or effect on, these SA Objectives.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

19.33 Option 1 is assessed as having uncertain effects against this SA Objective. This is due to the fact that whilst most social and market housing providers may wish to provide an element of Category 2 and 3 homes on their developments, the additional costs of meeting these standards may mean they choose not to. This will reduce the amount of decent housing available for those with disabilities and the elderly and may limit their housing options.

19.34 Option 2 would have the opposite impact and provide positive effects in relation to SA13. Requiring within policy a specific proportion of suitable special needs housing will ensure that this is provided on site and gives those with disabilities and the elderly more choice in their accommodation.

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population and SA16 Create vibrant, active, and inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion

19.35 Option 1 again has been assessed as having uncertain effects on these SA Objectives due to the fact that it may lead to no suitable housing provision being made for those with disabilities and the elderly which I turn could mean they are excluded or socially isolated within the community which could lead to adverse impacts on their health and wellbeing. The lack of appropriate housing that may occur under this Option would impact on the health of these members of the population as there will be little or no suitable housing to meet their health needs.

19.36 Option 2 offers positive effects due to the fact it will provide for an appropriate proportion of housing on sites to meet the needs of those with disabilities and the elderly. This will enable social integration and help create more inclusive communities and in turn this may help improve people’s overall
wellbeing. Having access to housing to suit their needs also means that the health of those with disabilities and the elderly will also be improved.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

19.37 None of the Options will have a direct relationship with, or effect on, these SA Objectives.

**Preferred Option for Testing 67**

19.38 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to residential space standards is contained within Chapter 24 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

19.39 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘New residential developments should include specific minimum proportions of Categories 2 and 3 dwellings to meet the needs of the elderly and those with specific disabilities. The specific proportions will be subject to more detailed work in relation to Wealden population projections and viability assessment’.

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 67 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**Environmental SA Objectives**

19.40 The Preferred Option for Testing will have no direct effect on any of these SA Objectives.

**Social SA Objectives**

19.41 The Preferred Option for Testing will have overall positive effects in terms of social impacts due to the fact that it will provide suitable housing to meet the needs of the elderly and those with disabilities and thus help improve their overall health and wellbeing. In addition, the policy approach will integrate the Category 2 and 3 houses within new development which will help to facilitate social cohesion and interaction.
Economic SA Objectives

19.42 The Preferred Option for Testing will have no direct effect on any of these SA Objectives; however it could add costs on to development which may affect viability. This will be a matter for further detailed policy development in regards to mix and size of housing.

Subdivision of Larger Properties

19.43 A means of making housing more affordable would be through the subdivision of larger properties. The subdivision of larger properties would also help to meet the need for smaller properties which has been identified in the Wealden SHMA. Overall therefore, the subdivision of larger houses within urban areas would help to meet the District's housing need and would specifically help in the provision of smaller units.

19.44 Chapter 24 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the context with previous policy on the subdivision of larger properties. There are no Options proposed, just a Preferred Options for Testing.

Preferred Option for Testing 68

19.45 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to residential space standards is contained within Chapter 24 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

19.46 The Preferred Option for Testing is to:

‘Encourage the subdivision of larger properties, subject to safeguards in relation to retaining the character, appearance and massing of the specific properties concerned’.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 68 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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<td>Preferred Option for Testing 68</td>
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Environmental SA Objectives

19.47 The Preferred Option for Testing will have no direct effect on any of these SA Objectives.
Social SA Objectives

19.48 The Preferred Option for Testing will have positive effects in terms of making housing more affordable as a result of smaller units being created which in turn will help ensure people have access to housing that is suitable for them in terms of size. The identification of a need for smaller properties was confirmed in the Wealden SHMA. In turn this will have positive effects on people’s health and wellbeing by ensuring they have access to housing appropriate for their needs.

Economic SA Objectives

19.49 The Preferred Option for Testing will have no direct effect on any of these SA Objectives.
20.0 Shopping Policies Outside of Town Centres

20.1 The NPPF states that a sequential approach should be taken to the location of proposals for main town centre uses. Where suitable sites are available main town centre locations should be located within town centre boundaries. If suitable sites are not available then locations adjacent to the town centre should be considered. Only where suitable sites are not available in the town centre boundaries or adjacent to it should out of town locations be considered.

20.2 In light of this, the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper sets out the approach to be taken in regards to shopping policies outside of town centres and divides these into retail provision; farm shops and garden centres. This is in Chapter 25 of that each is assessed in this SA Report under the subsequent sub-sections.

Retail Provision outside Town and Village Centre Boundaries

20.3 There may be circumstances where insufficient space is available within or adjacent to town and village centres to accommodate the retail provision needed to support the housing growth proposed in the Local Plan. This may result in the need for retail provision to be identified outside of the town and village boundaries.

20.4 The policy Options considered are:

- **Option 1** - Allow all applications for retail provision outside Market Town and Primary District town centre boundaries that can meet sequential tests.

- **Option 2** - Specify locations outside town and village centres, including sites within large urban extensions in the south of the District, where out of town retail provision policies would apply, where these locations have been identified and assessed through further detailed retail capacity need assessments and subject to sequential tests.

SA Assessment

**Predicting the effects of the Retail Provision outside Town and Village Centre Boundaries Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

20.5 Option 1 is assessed as having uncertain effects on this SA Objective due to the fact that it could result in retail development of any size in locations that may be within the countryside and unsympathetic to the local landscape quality, distinctiveness and character. However, there are other policies, particularly in regard to development in the countryside and design, which should take account of any potential adverse impacts. In combination this may reduce the likelihood of negative impacts and may increase the likelihood of positive effects.

20.6 Option 2 is also assessed as having uncertain effects on this SA Objective and these may be to a more significant degree than Option 1. Option 2 would result in out of town retail provision which is likely to be located within the countryside, in order to provide the site sizes that would be necessary. And so may have negative effects on the local landscape quality, distinctiveness and character. However, the Option does include the requirement that any sites are assessed in further detail and are subjected to the sequential approach to site selection, which should ensure that any adverse impacts on the landscape and countryside are either avoided or mitigated.

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

20.7 Both Options are assessed as having positive effects on this SA Objective as they may offer the opportunity to redevelop existing land and buildings that are not in use or are unviable for the present use to continue. The policies would maximise the use of previously developed land and existing buildings before considering other ‘Greenfield’ sites, although the positive effects of Option 2 may be less significant as they may require substantial areas of land. The effects will not be fully known until a detailed retail capacity need assessment is undertaken, which will form part of the work for the Submission Wealden Local Plan in late 2016.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes

20.8 Option 1 is likely to have a degree of positive effect on this SA Objective due to the fact that the retail locations would still be close to existing market town and primary District town centres and the existing facilities and services they offer. This will facilitate ease of access to the new retail offer however only if there are appropriate linkages, particularly by footpath and cycle route provision to encourage more sustainable modes of transport.

20.9 Option 2, due to the fact it would result in out of town shopping areas, is likely to have potential positive and/or negative effects on this SA Objective. This is due to the fact that the developments could be at some distance from
any settlement and hence encourage car use within the District to access it. Improvements to public transport linkages could help mitigate any adverse impacts.

SA11 Mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change

20.10 Both Options may have negative effects on this SA Objective due to the fact that they may lead to an increase in cars on the road network with people accessing the new developments as well as any potential delivery vehicles to the new units, which would result in an increase in emissions from vehicles. However, as with Option 10, improvements to public transport links would help mitigate this by promoting more sustainable modes of transport. These improvements could be as a direct result of the new retail developments, such as a Park and Ride scheme. This could be potentially achieved under Option 2 with the large urban extension(s) in the south of the District as these will require significant infrastructure improvements, particularly in the transport network.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

20.11 Option 1 would result in new development that would still be relatively accessible, however improvements to public transport and walking and cycling routes linking the new retail provision with the existing centres would help strengthen the achievement of this SA Objective under this Option. The Option would also locate new retail development close to existing centres and as such could help retain essential local facilities and services.

20.12 Option 2 may make access more difficult especially for people without access to a car. However, as with Option 1, improvements to public transport links which facilitate better connectivity with the new retail areas and the existing settlements and centres, which could come about as a result or in conjunction with the retail development, would help address these issues and help achieve positive effects in relation to SA10 and SA11 as well. However, there may be negative impacts on the local infrastructure in terms of highways and transportation which would need to be addressed.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs

20.13 Both Options have the potential for positive effects on this SA Objective as they not only provide retail development but also potential employment opportunities within these new sites.

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy

20.14 Again both Options have the potential to help achieve this SA Objective. Option 1 would locate new retail development close to existing
centres and hence offer opportunities to help regenerate the town centres through the attraction of new investment. However, this Option could also lead to a loss of business to the town centres as people prefer to visit the edge of town sites which may be easier to access and also have more of a retail offer.

20.15 Option 2 is likely to have more of a potential negative than positive effect on this SA Objective because again it may result in a loss of business to the town centres from a lack of people shopping there, preferring to shop in the larger out of town retail sites. Furthermore, new businesses apart from retail may wish to locate in the new developments where units are perhaps more accommodating rather than a site in the town centres. This could potentially harm any regeneration efforts. Yet, depending on the actual location of the out of town sites there may be positive effects through the attraction of new businesses into the town centres that prefer that location and are more suited to that location, as well as into the rural areas of the District. This would add diversification to the local and rural economy.

20.16 However with both the effects will now be fully known until a further retail capacity study is undertaken, which will form part of the work for the Submission Wealden Local Plan in late 2016.

Preferred Option for Testing 69

20.17 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Retail Provision outside Town and Village Centre Boundaries is contained within Chapter 25 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

20.18 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘The preferred option for a Policy to guide retail provision outside town and village boundaries, is to specify locations where out of town retail provision may be acceptable (subject to certain criteria). Such areas should be identified and assessed through further detailed retail capacity need assessments and subject to sequential tests’.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 69 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

| SA Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
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Environmental SA Objectives

20.19 The Preferred Option for Testing is likely to impacts on some of these SA Objectives due to the nature of the policy approach. Locating new retail
development in out of town retail locations may mean they are within the
countryside and therefore may have potential adverse impacts on the local
landscape quality, distinctiveness and character. However, the policy
approach includes the requirement that any such development adheres to
certain criteria and is subjected to the sequential test, which adds a layer of
protection to the landscape and countryside provided the criteria are
appropriate. The achievement of positive effects on the environmental SA
Objectives identified will be determined through a combination of careful site
selection and the assessment of retail need. Other proposed policy
approaches cover these aspects such as development within the countryside
and design.

20.20 The approach will however provide potential opportunities to redevelop
existing land such as industrial estates which will help ensure the best use of
previously developed land. Depending on the site location and other factors
such as infrastructure provision, particularly the road network and
transport/public transport, there may be adverse effects in terms of increased
emissions from road traffic and increased distances people travel to access
the new retail offer. However, other Local Plan policies will address these
issues and improvements to public transport will also help mitigate any
adverse impacts.

Social SA Objectives

20.21 The Preferred Option for Testing will have no direct effect on any of
these SA Objectives.

Economic SA Objectives

20.22 The Preferred Option for Testing may have adverse impacts on the
existing town centres of the District by taking away shoppers and therefore
business. However, the policy approach will enable a wider range and choice
of modern retail premises to be offered, and a wider range and choice of
shopping facilities, particularly comparison shopping, which is not currently
well provided for within Wealden. This will create greater opportunities for
employment provision and access to jobs as well as helping support the local
economy. The redevelopment of existing land such as industrial estates for
out of town retail facilities may also enable the relocation of existing industry
and businesses to more suitable locations with modern office/industrial space,
parking, and communications infrastructure.

20.23 The policy approach also allows for bespoke policy guidance and
strategies to be developed for specific out of town allocations enabling policy
to be tailored to the local area within which it sits or is close to.

Farm shops

20.24 Farm shops are an important part of the rural economy, enabling farms
to diversify and sell their produce direct to the public. They may also provide
local employment for people in rural areas, and additional facilities to support rural communities and the tourism economy. However, there may be implications regarding the expansion of farm shops in relation to traffic and landscape impacts that need to be considered.

20.25 The policy Options are:

- **Option 1** - Allow all applications for farm shops outside Market Town and Primary District town centre boundaries, to contribute to the rural economy and tourism.

- **Option 2** - Specify locations outside specific town and village centres, where policies for farm shops would apply, where these locations have been identified and assessed through further detailed rural need assessments.

- **Option 3** - Have a criteria based policy for the provision of farm shops outside town and village centres, based on further detailed rural need assessments.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Farm Shop Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)**

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

20.26 All of the Options have the potential for negative effects on this SA Objective due to the fact they would result in development within the countryside. This may affect the local landscape quality, distinctiveness and character. However, many farm shops are a part of the rural economy and can contribute to the character of a settlement or area and so there development may have positive effects, particularly if they have an historical or cultural connection. Option 3 may have more likely positive effects as the criteria could include measures to ensure that adverse impacts on the countryside and landscape do not occur or are at least mitigated. The same can be applied to Option 2.
SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transport modes

20.27 All of the Options would allow farm shop development and as such would facilitate the selling of local produce, such as eggs and milk, to local people. This could minimise the number and frequency of journeys, and hence distance travelled by people, by providing some of their day to day needs. However, it is not likely that any positive effect will be significant due to the fact people will still travel to access other services and facilities. The Options are unlikely to have any impact on the promotion of sustainable transport modes, except for perhaps walking and cycling.

Social SA Objectives

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

20.28 All of the Options are likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as they would provide a local facility to local people from which to buy day to day essentials. Furthermore the provision of a farm shop may help retain other essential local facilities. This could be particularly important for elderly or less mobile residents who may rely on the farm shop.

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

20.29 All of the Options are likely to have a positive effect on this SA Objective due to the fact that farm shops can often be at the heart of a community and may be a valued local tradition. Allowing their development will help maintain this focal point and hence enhance community cohesion and vibrancy.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

20.30 All of the Options are likely to have a positive effect on this SA Objective as they would increase the number of farm shops and therefore offer employment opportunities which may be as a part of social enterprises or community projects within the rural areas. They would also allow for farm diversification which could help support the local economy two-fold; by allowing a new business type to vary the employment offered but also by supporting the farms and enabling them to continue their operations. These Options would support local businesses and enterprises also.

20.31 However, there could be issues with Option 3. If the criteria are too onerous this may in fact stifle the development of farm shops and farm diversification which may have adverse impacts on SA17. This would need careful consideration.
SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the District’s rural economy, increasing the vitality of the District’s villages and promoting sustainable tourism.

20.32 As with SA17, all of the Options have the potential for positive effects on this SA Objective. The Options would provide opportunities for farm/rural diversification which could help support the rural economy including rural tourism. The diversification could help enable farms to continue operating and hence preserve jobs as well as traditional rural life and help maintain the vitality of villages and the surrounding rural area.

20.33 Again the criteria based Option (Option 3) could have adverse impacts on this SA Objective if the criteria are too onerous for applicants to apply.

**Preferred Option for Testing 70**

20.34 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to farm shops is contained within Chapter 25 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

20.35 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘The preferred option is to have a criteria based policy for the provision of farm shops outside town and village centres, based on further detailed rural need assessments in line with the ‘Development in the Countryside’ chapter’.

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 70 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**Environmental SA Objectives**

20.36 Although there is the potential for conflict with SA2 it is likely that the effects on the environmental SA Objectives will be positive due to the fact that there would be a criteria based policy in place and that that would be based on further assessment work and in line with policies that would be contained under Development in the Countryside. These potential policy approaches have been assessed against the SA Objectives in Chapter 14 of this SA Report. Depending on the location of the farm shop it could result in more car journeys being made to access it, particularly if a proposal is to expand an existing farm shop. However better footpath and cycle links would help minimise any potential adverse effect and the farm shop is likely to serve people in the local area who will be in close proximity.
Social SA Objectives

20.37 Socially the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have positive effects overall. The approach would improve access to a service and goods within the local community and could also help retain other essential services by enabling a village or rural area to become more sustainable. The presence of a farm shop can offer a social hub for a local community and promote social inclusion and cohesion and help address issues of rural isolation for people. It can also provide essential services and goods to those who may have difficulty accessing other areas on a day to day basis such as the elderly and those with disabilities.

Economic SA Objectives

20.38 Economically the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have the most positive effects as it allows farm and rural diversification, carried out in an appropriate manner as the result of a criteria based approach, which can help support and enhance the rural economy. It will offer job opportunities to local people and could also enable farms and other rural businesses to continue operating. Farm shops can also help support rural tourism for example through further diversification of farms, such as visitor days, and the selling of local produce to those tourists. The farm shops themselves may even become a tourism attraction.

20.39 Any criteria however would need to be carefully considered so as not to be over burdening or onerous of potential proposals.

Garden Centres

20.40 Garden centres have expanded their service offerings to include cafes and a range of franchises selling comparison goods such as clothing, shoes, garden related products and local produce which are often not available in town centres nearby. They also offer employment opportunities. As such the range and location of garden centres can make them a destination or ‘stop off’ point for coach and day trips. However the provision of new and expansion of existing garden centres may pose issues with potential traffic and landscape impacts.

20.41 The Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper proposes the following Options for addressing the issue of allowing new and expansion of existing garden centres.
The Options are:

- Option 1 - Allow all applications for garden centres outside Market Town and Primary District town centre boundaries, to contribute to the rural economy and tourism.
- Option 2 - Specify locations outside specific town and village centres, where policies for garden centres would apply, where these locations have been identified and assessed through further detailed rural need assessments.
- Option 3 - Continue to have a criteria based policy for the provision of garden centres outside town and village centres.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Garden Centre Options (SA Tasks B3/B4):
General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

20.43 All of the Options are assessed as having uncertain effects as there is the potential for positive and negative impacts which would depend on the implementation of any policy. Option 1 would likely have more negative effects as it does not make provision for any type of landscape protection, although other policy areas, such as policies within the Development in the Countryside’ chapter could address this and ensure development is appropriate. Option 2 has more protection as it would seek to allocate specific sites in accordance with assessment work carried out on rural needs and again policies within other sections of the Local Plan could help mitigate any potential impacts on the landscape and countryside. Option 3 offers perhaps the most potential for positive effects as it would not restrict the location of garden centres, as in Option 2, but would provide criteria upon which applications would be judged. The criteria would need to ensure that landscape and countryside impacts are considered although again other policies within the Local Plan could add weight to these.

SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve

20.44 All of the Options have the potential for negative effects on SA8 as they may all result in an increase in traffic on the road which could lead to issues of
local air pollution and deterioration in air quality. At present the SA Scoping Report states that the District has no air quality issues in terms of human health. However, the location of any proposal would be important as locating close to existing centres enable more sustainable transport modes to be used and promoted.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes

20.45 All of the Options have the potential to negatively affect this SA Objective, but this will depend on the location of any proposals put forward. Option 1 would locate proposals close to existing centres and so this may not result in an increase in journey length and could help promote use of more sustainable modes of transport. The effects of Option 2 on this SA Objective would also be very location specific and depend on the proximity of other centres. Option 3 would need to ensure that access was taken into consideration in any criteria put forward. Improvements to public transport and walking and cycling links will help to mitigate any potential negative effects.

SA11 mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases

20.46 Again the effects of all of the Options will depend on their location and whether they result in an increase in traffic on the roads. The nature of the offer provided by garden centres now however makes them popular shopping destinations and so this may result in an increase in traffic and hence an increase in emissions. Improvements to public transport and walking and cycling links will help to mitigate any potential negative effects.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

20.47 All of the Options have the potential for positive effects on this SA Objective. Option 1 would locate garden centres close to existing centres which could ease access to them as a result of connectivity with the Market and District Town centres. This would depend on the location of the development and the quality of exiting connections into and out of the Market and District town centres. Option 2 may have more positive effects as it would allow locations to be allocated for new garden centres and so this could take into account accessibility issues, both by car and by other sustainable modes of transport in particular walking and cycling routes. Option 3 is similar to Option 2 in that the criteria could specify that good access or improvements to existing access are provided by or at least a consideration of any proposal.
Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy

20.48 All of the Options would have positive effects on this SA Objectives as they would all provide employment opportunities and help support the rural economy through the flexibility and ability for diversification.

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

20.49 The Options all have the potential to positively affect this SA Objective as they would allow for rural diversification which in turn could support other local businesses. In addition, as garden centres have become visitor destinations in themselves, the Options would also help support rural tourism. Option 3 perhaps offers more potential for positive effects as it does provide an element of local control through the provision of a criteria based policy. Similarly Option 2 would follow assessment work carried out into rural needs and so may offer more positive effects.

20.50 However, all of the Options have potential for negative effects due to the fact that garden centres now offer so much more in terms of retail offers and leisure. This could have an adverse impact on existing town and village centres. This could be a particular issue with Option 1 as it would allow for garden centre development within close proximity to existing Market and District town centres.

Preferred Option for Testing 71

20.51 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to garden centres is contained within Chapter 25 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

20.52 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘To continue with a criteria based policy to guide the provision of Garden Centres outside town and village centres in line with the ‘Development in the Countryside’ chapter’.
Environmental SA Objectives

20.53 Environmentally the Preferred Option for Testing is likely to have positive effects. The inclusion of a criteria based policy and any policy working in combination with other policies in the Development in the Countryside chapter should ensure no adverse impacts occur on the landscape and countryside assets of the District. The policy approach may have adverse impacts on air quality and emissions as well as journey lengths and by which transport, due to the fact it may result in more cars and traffic on the road. However, other policies in the Local Plan such as those in the Development in the Countryside chapter and the infrastructure chapter should help mitigate any negative impact.

Social SA Objectives

20.54 In terms of the social aspects, the Preferred Option for Testing may improve access to services and facilities particularly if proposals are located close to existing market and town/village centres and in combination with any policies to improve public transport and connectivity.

Economic SA Objectives

20.55 The Preferred Option for Testing is most likely to affect these SA Objectives the most. The policy approach will provide opportunities for rural diversification and rural employment which would help support the rural economy. Furthermore the approach would provide encouragement and guidance for applicants wishing to locate outside of town and village boundaries, giving them more certainty and therefore more incentive.

20.56 However, any new retail provision offered by garden centres may attract people way from the existing centres and hence effect the regeneration of town centres and the settlement specific economies. Although the attraction of people to a garden centres on the edge of an existing market or town centre may encourage visitors to also venture into those centres and hence could provide beneficial impacts.

20.57 Any criteria would need careful consideration so as to ensure they are not too onerous on potential developments which may discourage them from locating within the District. Combining with the Development in the Countryside policies will help mitigate this.
21.0 Infrastructure

21.1 Chapter 26 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper details the context for infrastructure and infrastructure policy within the District.

21.2 Infrastructure is divided into 5 sub areas:

- The effective provision of infrastructure
- Safeguarding of land for strategic infrastructure provision
- Protecting existing infrastructure provision
- Social and community infrastructure
- Green infrastructure

21.3 Each of these sub topics has issues to be considered and Options put forward to address them. Each will be assessed against the SA Objectives in the subsequent sections.

The Effective Provision of Infrastructure

21.4 Within the Core Strategy, Policy WCS7 links the release of land for development for the provision of infrastructure. It is anticipated that the additional infrastructure required to support the growth proposed in the Plan will be considerable. Ongoing discussion with key service providers has given the Council a good steer regarding the impact of proposals on current infrastructure provision across the District including indications of where there is currently stress in service provision, where there is surplus service capacity, and where growth would require totally new infrastructure provision.

21.5 The reasonable Options for addressing the effective provision of infrastructure are:

- **Option 1** - Replicate Policy WCS7 of the Core Strategy Local Plan within this plan.

- **Option 2** - Rely on additional policies within the plan and the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure the delivery of infrastructure.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Effective Provision of Infrastructure Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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21.6 As the focus of the Options would be to ensure that the infrastructure is provided to support the growth proposed, the effects on all the SA Objectives would likely be positive. However, they are assessed as uncertain due to the fact that it is possible there may be some delay to some proposed development in order to enable the appropriate infrastructure to be put in place.

Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA5 To maintain and improve the water quality of the District’s rivers and groundwater, and to achieve sustainable water resources management

21.7 Option 1 would replicate the Core Strategy policy and as such would ensure that the effective infrastructure provision is provided to support the growth proposed. This would be particularly beneficial for the Pevensey Levels in terms of the provision of the improvements to the WwTWS put forward by Southern Water. This will help maintain and improve the water quality within the Pevensey Levels.

21.8 Option 2 would have likely positive effects as the NPPF seeks to ensure that sufficient infrastructure is in place to support proposed growth and other policies within the Plan deal with this issue of the Pevensey Levels and water quality overall.

SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy

21.9 Adequate infrastructure can help to ensure that public transport arrangements encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling, which could help to reduce air pollution. Option 1 would ensure this infrastructure was in place.

21.10 Option 2 would have likely positive effects as the NPPF seeks to ensure that sufficient infrastructure is in place to support proposed growth and other policies however, there are not specific policies proposed within the Local Plan to address issues of air pollution, in regards to human health at least, and so this Option would remove some element of local control. However there are specific policies relating to the air quality issues and the Ashdown Forest within the proposed Local Plan.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes (walking, cycling and public transport)

21.11 Adequate infrastructure can help to ensure that public transport arrangements encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling. Option 1 would ensure this infrastructure was in place.
21.12 Relying on the NPPF (Option 2) would mean that local circumstances were not necessarily taken into account and other policies within the local plan may not go far enough to ensure adequate infrastructure to encourage sustainable transport measures was in place.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

21.13 Infrastructure includes the provision of adequate transport to ensure access to services and facilities as well as the provision of services and facilities. In this respect Option 1 would provide positive effects.

SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

21.15 Option 1 may result in a delay in development or development not going ahead in the longer term as existing infrastructure capacities may be fully utilised and costly new infrastructure may jeopardise the viability of smaller developments, which considered cumulatively could affect housing delivery.

21.16 Option 2 may also have the same effects and other local plan policies may not be sufficient to ensure infrastructure required for the level of growth proposed is in place.

SA14 Improve the level of skills, education and training amongst the population and develop a skilled workforce to support long term economic competitiveness

21.17 Infrastructure provision does include educational facilities, which may also open up additional opportunity to provide higher and adult educational opportunities and in this regard Option 1 would likely have positive effects.

21.18 Option 2 may also have the same effects however there are no other specific local plan policies dealing with educational provision and so there may be the potential for negative effects as the local context is not taken into account.

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health

21.19 Infrastructure delivery is important for ensuring that new development is not placing a burden on existing health services and ensuring health services and facilities are adequate for the size of population - this should help ensure the health wellbeing of the population. Option 1 should provide positive effects in this regard.
21.20 Option 2 would likely have negative effects on this SA Objective as it would not account for local circumstances or the local context as there are no other proposed policies within the local plan that deal with education and training facility provision.

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

21.21 Adequate infrastructure for a communities needs can help to create vibrant communities. Option 1 should have positive effects in this regard.

21.22 Option 2 is also likely to have positive effects as the NPPF would provide the overall strategic framework and there are other polices within the local plan that could help achieve this SA Objective.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

and

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

21.24 Infrastructure underpins the ability of the district to function effectively and so therefore the adequate provision of infrastructure will help to enhance the prosperity of the district whilst supporting the local and rural economy. Option 1 would provide positive effects in this regard.

21.25 Option 2 would provide some positive effects as the NPPF provides an overarching framework however it would not take into account local circumstances and context. Other proposed policies in the Local Plan may be able to achieve some positive effects however they may be limited and not sufficiently strategically focused.

**Preferred Option for Testing 72**

21.26 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to the effective provision of infrastructure is contained within Chapter 26 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

21.27 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘The preferred option is to replicate Policy WCS7 of the Core Strategy Local Plan within this plan, to ensure the effective provision of infrastructure’.
Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 71 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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General Assessment

21.28 The Preferred Option for Testing would have an overall positive effect on all of the SA Objectives. Policy WCS7 was found sound through the examination of the Core Strategy and there is no reason to believe it would not be beneficial for the new Wealden Local Plan. The infrastructure policy should help to ensure that the new development in the district does not swamp local services and facilities and is delivered in time to service new development as needed.

21.29 The effects are recorded as uncertain purely because of issues regarding the longer term delivery of development if costly infrastructure affects the viability. However, the final policy would be modified to meet the new Wealden Local Plan and the growth it proposes as this does vary significantly from that of the Core Strategy in terms of scale and strategic distribution. The policy approach would ensure that effective infrastructure provision is provided to support the growth within the plan; ensure that the requirements for infrastructure are identified at an early stage in the planning process and would that infrastructure required, delivery and funding mechanisms are identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Infrastructure Provision

21.30 Replicating WCS 7 from the Core Strategy Local Plan however does not provide for the safeguarding of existing infrastructure and the provision of new infrastructure not directly associated with the growth proposed in this plan, nor the provision of infrastructure outside of development boundaries. There is a need to ensure that adequate land is available through safeguarding to enable the delivery of Strategic Infrastructure, both within new development areas and outside development boundaries, to meet the growing needs of the community in the future.

21.31 The reasonable Options for consideration are:

- **Option 1** - A policy which provides safeguarding provision for:
  - any National Strategic Infrastructure in the area which may be required in the future
• the three rail projects from the Wealden Local Plan of 1998 (Uckfield to Lewes line, Polegate to Pevensey line and the Eridge to Tunbridge Wells line) through reference in the policy text and on the Proposals Map;

• known strategic cross boundary provision in the plans of other agencies such as the provision of new road routes or strategic improvements to existing routes (e.g. The A27) and water resources (extension to Arlington Reservoir etc.); and

• strategic infrastructure provision for educational, health or recreational provision to support this plan, that has been identified through the IDP and supported by further feasibility and need studies, the three rail projects from the Wealden Local Plan of 1998 (Uckfield to Lewes line, Polegate to Pevensey line and the Eridge to Tunbridge Wells line) through reference in the policy text and on the Proposals Map.

• **Option 2** - A policy which only provides safeguarding provisions in relation to any National Strategic Infrastructure provision that may be identified in the area in the future.

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the safeguarding of existing infrastructure Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)**

SA5 To maintain and improve the water quality of the District’s rivers and groundwater, and to achieve sustainable water resources management

21.32 Option 1 would have likely positive impacts on this SA Objective as it takes into account the need to address the issue of the reservoir expansion at Arlington. Safeguarding land for the expansion of the reservoir will ensure that the infrastructure can be delivered to help ensure sustainable water resource management is able to go ahead. This is particularly important in regards to Wealden being in a known area of high water stress.

21.33 Option 2 would likely have negative effects as the expansion of the reservoir may not be classed as being part of National Strategic Infrastructure. It is very much a local issue and this Option would remove any local control over protecting land for its expansion.
SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes (walking, cycling and public transport)

21.34 Option 1 may provide positive effects on this SA Objective through its provision of safeguarding land for the 3 rail projects contained within the 1998 Local Plan. The development of these routes would significantly enhance the sustainable transport offer within the District and may help reduce air pollution by encouraging people to use the services. This will be needed in conjunction with other policies that promote sustainable transport as well as walking and cycling. The Option would promote the inclusion of sustainable transport links within the District.

21.35 Option 2 may have positive effects for the same reason as Option 1; however this would only be the case if the 3 rail projects were considered National Strategic Infrastructure which is unlikely. Given the fact that the improvements to the A27 have not resulted in any government pledge for the Wealden area, this has gone to the stretches around Arundel; it is unlikely that Option 2 would be of benefit to the District. It would result in land that could be utilised for the infrastructure needs of the District and cross boundaries being used for housing and other development with no real mechanism for the Council to resist this.

SA11 Mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and promoting appropriate design measures in development

21.36 The achievement of this SA Objective is partly linked to SA10. Option 1 would safeguard land that could be used for sustainable transport (the 3 rail projects) and this could encourage people out of their cars and hence reduce emissions from vehicles. Emissions from homes and commercial/industrial use will need to be addressed through other policy mechanisms.

21.37 Option 2 would have likely negative effects as it is unlikely to see the rail projects as National Strategic Infrastructure.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

21.38 Option 1 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as it will safeguard land not only for the 3 rail projects, which could provide good links with the wider area including Lewes and Tunbridge Wells, but also for new road infrastructure and improvements to the A27 as needed. All of this would improve access to services and facilities within the District as well as outside of the District.

21.39 Again Option 2 would have likely negative effects as it may not consider any National Strategic Infrastructure projects for Wealden. This would leave the District without a policy framework upon which to resist this.
inappropriate development on land that would be suitable for infrastructure provision.

SA13 Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a good quality, sustainably constructed and affordable home

21.40 Whilst not necessarily having a direct effect on housing provision, Option 1 is likely to have a positive effect in this regard as sufficient and appropriate infrastructure provision is required in order to support the housing growth, as well as the growth proposed overall in the District, and Option 1 would ensure that future provision could be met which enables the level of growth to be accommodated. It also takes into account the cross boundary nature of any future infrastructure provision.

21.41 Option 2 would likely have a negative effect as it would not provide land for infrastructure that is locally important and required. There may never be any National Strategic Infrastructure projects put forward in or close to the District and so there would be no policy protection for land to provide infrastructure in the future as and when it is needed. This would mean that the growth proposed would most likely be unsustainable and undeliverable.

SA14 Improve the level of skills, education and training amongst the population and develop a skilled workforce to support long term economic competitiveness

21.42 Option 1 makes specific reference to safeguarding land for strategic educational infrastructure and in this respect it will have a positive effect on this SA Objective and support the level of growth proposed.

21.43 Option 2 would not provide land for this purpose as it would only focus on safeguarding land for National Strategic Infrastructure projects which are unlikely to involve educational provision within the District.

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health

21.44 In a similar vein to SA14, Option 1 also references safeguarding land for future health care infrastructure to be provided and links this with the IDP. The IDP states the infrastructure that is going to be needed to accommodate the growth planned and so safeguarding land to address this is a positive step.

21.45 Option 2 would likely have negative effects as it would only safeguard land for National Strategic Infrastructure projects which would not take into account local need and context.
Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy including support for small and local businesses

21.46 As with the provision of housing, Option 1 is likely to have a positive effect on this SA Objective as it is important to provide the infrastructure necessary to accommodate the economic growth proposed over the plan period and this includes ensuring there is the infrastructure present to enable access to new employment opportunities but also good connectivity for businesses in order for them to grow, Option 1 would safeguard land that could be used for such purposes. The 3 rail projects will also be of benefit economically and so it is important to safeguard land for their potential development.

21.47 Option 2 would have likely negative effects as again it would not account for local strategic infrastructure needs.

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

21.48 Option 1 would help create the right conditions and infrastructure provision to encourage private sector investment in the District as well as attracting business to the District. This is due to the fact that it would safeguard land for future local strategic infrastructure and give more certainty to prospective developers that the infrastructure will be there to serve their particular development. This is particularly true as Option 1 includes the 3 rail projects and improvements to the road network.

21.49 Option 2 whilst providing a safeguard for land for National Strategic Infrastructure, this would not account for local strategic need and as such land may be lost to other forms of development making future provision of adequate infrastructure difficult. This is unlikely to be attractive to private investment and business/commercial developments.

Preferred Option for Testing 73

21.50 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to the safeguarding of land for strategic infrastructure provision is contained within Chapter 26 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.
21.51 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

'A policy which provides safeguarding provision for:

- any National Strategic Infrastructure in the area which may be required in the future

- the three rail projects from the Wealden Local Plan of 1998 (Uckfield to Lewes line, Polegate to Pevensey line and the Er ridge to Tunbridge Wells line) through reference in the policy text and on the Proposals Map;

- known strategic cross boundary provision in the plans of other agencies such as the provision of new road routes or strategic improvements to existing routes (e.g. The A27) and water resources (extension to Arlington Reservoir etc.); and

- strategic infrastructure provision for educational, health or recreational provision to support this plan, that has been identified through the IDP and supported by further feasibility and need studies, the three rail projects from the Wealden Local Plan of 1998 (Uckfield to Lewes line, Polegate to Pevensey line and the Er ridge to Tunbridge Wells line) through reference in the policy text and on the Proposals Map.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 73 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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General Assessment

21.52 Clearly the SA Assessment of Option 1 above under each of the SA Objective areas is applicable to the Preferred Option for Testing. The Preferred Option for Testing will ensure sufficient land is available to accommodate and provide the strategic infrastructure required to accommodate and support the growth proposed by the Local Plan.
Protecting Existing Infrastructure Provision

21.53 As services and resources become more stretched there is a need to address the loss of premises in particular to conversion or redevelopment for residential which may in turn add pressure to those services that remain.

21.54 The reasonable Options for addressing the protection of existing infrastructure are:

- **Option 1** - Provide a criteria based policy to enable the protection of all existing infrastructure facilities from conversion or redevelopment unless criteria are met.
- **Option 2** - Provide a criteria based policy to enable the protection of the following facilities (unless criteria are met) to include:-
  - Education facilities including playing fields
  - Health facilities
  - Bus and train services
  - Post offices
  - Churches
  - Church and community halls
  - Pubs; and
  - Sports and leisure facilities

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Protecting Existing Infrastructure Provision Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

SA9 Ensure the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings

21.55 Both Options have the potential for negative effects as they would restrict the flexibility for conversion and redevelopment of existing buildings that are perhaps no longer in use or the use is not viable. However providing a criteria against which to judge the need to protect certain services and facilities may help address this issue provided that the criteria are not too narrow in their scope. Option 1 is slightly more restrictive as it applies to all existing infrastructure facilities. Option 2 may have more positive effects as it would only relate to certain types of infrastructure, namely those that are important to communities.
Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

21.56 Both Options provide potential positive effects for this SA Objective. Option 1 would apply to all existing infrastructure which may be too restrictive and result in some services being retained in areas where they may not be particularly accessible to people or the location may no longer be appropriate.

21.57 Option 2 offers more potential for positive effects as it focuses on what are considered to be key and essential local facilities, protecting these from conversion and redevelopment and hence maintaining access. This may be particularly important in rural areas where services may be situated in one settlement but serve a wider rural area.

SA14 Improve the level of skills, education and training amongst the population and develop a skilled workforce to support long term economic competitiveness

21.58 Again both Options have potential for positive effects on this SA Objective. Option 1 would seek to protect all existing infrastructure which would include schools and training facilities however this may lead to the retention of some services in areas where it is no longer viable to remain or in areas where the needs of the population have changed in relation to that service or facility. However the criteria drawn up for the Option could address this issue.

21.59 Option 2 is more specific and includes education facilities and sports fields as being protected. It too includes having a criteria against which to judge any proposals for conversions and redevelopment and would mean policy could be tailored to the local circumstance.

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health

21.60 Much the same as the assessment for SA14. Option 1 includes all existing infrastructure which would include health care facilities and leisure facilities for example.

21.61 Option 2 specifies health facilities and sports and leisure facilities as being protected and the criteria would provide guidance on when conversion or redevelopment would be allowed.

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

21.62 Option 1 would include protecting all existing services and facilities and so would likely have positive effects on this SA Objective.

21.63 Option 2 would also have positive effects on this SA Objective as it lists community and church halls amongst the infrastructure to be protected but it
also includes pubs which can often be at the heart of a community and provide social interaction which can create vibrant and socially inclusive communities. The same could be said of the Post Offices, also listed, as these too can be a community asset especially in rural areas.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

SA17 Create new employment opportunities and improve access to jobs through facilitating appropriate development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy

21.64 Option 1 may have more negative effects on this SA Objective as it would limit the premises and land that could be redeveloped for commercial and employment purposes as it is all encompassing in terms of protecting existing infrastructure. However, the criteria could include details of where exceptions could be made.

21.65 Option 2 on the other hand allows more flexibility as it would seek to target specific infrastructure and so could free up other land and buildings not on the list and allow these to be converted and/or redeveloped to provide new employment floorspace and job opportunities. However, the criteria would need to be quite specific and other plan policies would need to play their part as most conversions and redevelopments are to residential which could restrict the amount of previously developed land that can be used for commercial purposes.

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

21.66 Option 1 would limit diversification and could stifle town centre regeneration if it results in protecting existing infrastructure that may no longer be suited to its location or the use is no longer viable. The criteria would need to state in what circumstances redevelopment or conversion would be allowed. Option 1 would protect all existing infrastructure.

21.67 Option 2 would target specific existing infrastructure to protect and as such provide more flexibility to diversify which could help stimulate the local and rural economy whilst helping to regenerate town centres. Again the criteria would need to be appropriately drawn up so as to ensure appropriate conversions and redevelopment are allowed and under what circumstances.

**Preferred Option for Testing 74**

21.68 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to the protecting existing infrastructure provision is contained within Chapter 26 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.
21.69 The Preferred Option for Testing is:
‘Provide a criteria based policy to enable the protection of the following facilities (unless criteria are met) to include:-
- Education facilities including playing fields
- Health facilities
- Bus and train services
- Post offices
- Churches
- Church and community halls
- Pubs; and
- Sports and leisure facilities

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 74 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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**General Assessment**

21.70 Clearly the SA Assessment of Option 2 above is applicable to the Preferred Option for Testing. The approach would protect key existing infrastructure which would help support the growth proposed in the Local Plan together with new infrastructure provision. Health facilities, education, sport; leisure and community facilities would be protected. However, the policy approach may have impacts for the economy as it could restrict flexibility in some cases if the criteria are too narrowly drawn. This will need careful consideration in tandem with the IDP.

**Social and Community Infrastructure Provision**

21.71 The provision of social and community infrastructure is important in providing for the health and wellbeing of the local community. Social and community infrastructure can include a range of facilities such as affordable housing, local play facilities, pubs, churches and community halls that will enable the provision of opportunities for the local community.

21.72 The reasonable Option put forward to address social and community infrastructure provision are:

- Option 1 - Provide a Generic Policy to support the provision of Social and Community Infrastructure provision included within the IDP, subject to further work to assess needs and requirements.
• Option 2 - Provide a policy which specifies the social and community provision required in relation to specific growth areas within the plan.

SA Assessment

Predicting the effects of the Social and Community Infrastructure Provision Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)

21.73 Both of the Options have a neutral effect on these SA Objectives

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

21.74 Option 1 is likely to have positive effects on the SA Objective as it would result in the provision of social and community infrastructure which can be classed as essential infrastructure. The Option would also be positive, as even though the policy would be generic, it would be based on the requirements within the IDP and as subject of further work to assess needs and requirements. This could be beneficial as it could focus on what specific communities require as this is likely to vary within the District. This approach would be District wide and so the benefits would be District wide.

21.75 Option 2 would also provide positive effects on this SA Objective through the provision of specific social and community infrastructure however they would be limited to those areas identified growth within the Local Plan, which whilst extensive, do not cover every settlement or community in the District. This could result in some loss of community or social infrastructure in those areas not afforded growth. Furthermore, the Option does not make reference to working in combination with the IDP and so it may not identify all the requirements needed. Option 2 would not support social and community infrastructure provision on a generic level.

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health

21.76 Option 1 would have a likely positive effect on this SA Objective as effective social and community infrastructure provision can help improve a communities and individuals sense of wellbeing which in turn can have benefits for their health.
21.77 Again Option 2 would also have benefits for this SA Objective as it would provide social and community infrastructure however this would only be to those areas afforded growth within the Local Plan and so some communities and settlements may be neglected. Option 2 would not support social and community infrastructure provision on a generic level.

**SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community**

21.78 Adequate social and community infrastructure can help to create vibrant and inclusive communities and help address issues of isolation that may be felt by certain sectors of the community such as the elderly, newcomers to an area and those with disabilities.

21.79 Option 1 would provide positive effects across the District and this would be linked to the provision requirement as identified in the IDP and through further assessments of needs and requirements. This could also allow some flexibility in the type of infrastructure provided as needs can change over time.

21.80 Option 2 would still have positive effects however they may not be District wide and furthermore they may not allow for changes over time as they would be specifying the requirements at a specific point, albeit in relation to the growth proposed in the Local Plan. There may be variations that arise throughout the Plan period which this policy may not allow the flexibility for.

**Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)**

**SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism**

21.81 Whilst not necessarily having a direct relationship with this SA Objective, having adequate and appropriate social and community infrastructure underpins vibrant communities and as such can help increase the vitality of towns and villages. In this respect both Options offer positive effects however Option 1 is likely to be more significant as it would be District wide and would be in line with requirements identified as part of the IDP and further needs assessment work.

**Preferred Option for Testing 75**

21.82 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to the social and community infrastructure provision is contained within Chapter 26 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.
21.83 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘Provide a generic policy to support the provision of Social and Community Infrastructure provision included within the IDP, subject to further work to assess needs and requirements’.

**Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 75 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**General Assessment**

21.84 The Preferred Option for Testing carries forward Option 1 and as such the SA Assessment for that Option is relevant. The policy approach would enable the provision of new social and community infrastructure together with improvements to existing, to come forward to support the growth contained in the Local Plan. It would ensure that people have access to essential facilities that underpin social wellbeing; help reduce issues of isolation and promote vibrant and inclusive communities.

**Green Infrastructure**

21.85 Green Infrastructure (GI) is a term used to describe a network of green spaces that can provide a wide range of leisure spaces including SANGS, multifunctional greenspaces, play spaces, footpaths, bridleways, allotments and burial grounds.

21.86 Green Infrastructure also relates to a range of services, or ‘ecosystem services’, that the spaces can provide such as managing flood risk, providing wildlife corridors to enable migration and general landscape benefits.

21.87 Policy WCS13 of the Core Strategy provides the policy for Green Infrastructure provision including a Green Infrastructure Strategy.

21.88 The reasonable Options considered to address the provision of Green Infrastructure are:

- **Option 1** - Replicate Policy WCS13 from the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan, which seeks the development of a comprehensive green infrastructure across the District and wider area

- **Option 2** - Provide a policy that specifies the green infrastructure requirements for different areas of the District.
- **Option 3** - Provide a policy that specifies the green infrastructure requirements for various growth areas

**SA Assessment**

**Predicting the effects of the Green Infrastructure Provision Options (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary**

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**Environmental SA Objectives (SA1-SA11)**

**SA1** To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the District

21.89 Option 1 would have likely positive effects as it would follow policy WCS13 of the Core Strategy. A Green Infrastructure network will contribute towards biodiversity preservation and enhancement, in particular through the provision of wildlife corridors to enable species to migrate and to move between one area and another safely.

21.90 Option 2 is also likely to have positive effects as it too would provide Green Infrastructure. However, it may result in a disjointed Green Infrastructure network as different Green Infrastructure is provided in different areas of the District and this could result in a loss of connectivity which could have adverse impacts on species in terms of their movement between different green areas. A positive would be that the Green Infrastructure could be tailored for the different areas of the District to meet their specific needs but this would be on a much localised level and may not help in the creation of a wider Green Infrastructure network.

21.91 Option 3 would have likely positive effects however again they may be limited due to the fact that the provision of Green Infrastructure would be limited to the growth areas proposed within the Local Plan. Whilst these are relatively large, they do not cover the whole District and as such connectivity for species may be lost together with other biodiversity assets. A positive would be that the Green Infrastructure could be tailored for the specific growth area to meet its needs but this would be on a much localised level and may not help in the creation of a wider Green Infrastructure network.
SA2 Conserve and enhance the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets

21.92 Option 1 is likely to have positive effects on this SA Objective as the provision of Green Infrastructure would help protect the landscape and countryside of the District and may even enhance it. This would also be on a District wide scale.

21.93 Option 2 has potential positive effects as it too would help protect the landscape and countryside and could be tailored to suit the specific area it is located within.

21.94 Option 3 is assessed as having uncertain effects as Green Infrastructure would only be provided for within those growth areas identified within the Local Plan and as such its protective ability for the landscape and countryside would be limited to this areas which could have adverse impacts on a more District wide level.

SA3 Where appropriate enhance and provide access to the District’s countryside, landscape, historic environments and cultural assets for residents and visitors.

21.95 Option 1 would have positive effects on this SA Objective as a Green Infrastructure network should improve access to the countryside and wider landscape of the District.

21.96 Option 2 would also have positive effects for the same reason however there may be a loss in connectivity due to the fact that Green Infrastructure would be provided differently in different areas of the District.

21.97 Option 3 may provide positive effects in terms of improving access to the countryside and landscape for those within the growth areas however this may not link up with the wider District and so some access may be adversely affected as it is not joined up with the new Green Infrastructure provided. The positive effects would also be limited to those within the growth areas.

SA5 To maintain and improve the water quality of the District’s rivers and groundwater, and to achieve sustainable water resources management

21.98 All of the Options would have likely positive effects on this SA Objective as they all would provide Green Infrastructure within the District to some degree and Green Infrastructure can include waterways, waterbodies and surface water. Green Infrastructure and its component parts can help filter pollutants out of water bodies and surface water and help contribute to improving and maintaining water quality in the District. This process is more efficient if Green Infrastructure is connected in a Green Infrastructure network and on that basis Option 1 would have more potential for positive effects.
SA7 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting damage to public wellbeing, the economy and the environment

21.99 Again all of the Options have the potential for positive effects on this SA Objective as Green Infrastructure is an important contributor to flood defence, in the form of bunding, and flood storage, as well as managing surface water and reducing the pressure on drainage and other traditional hard flood defence measures. Again Option 1 is likely to have the most potential for positive effects as it would be on a District wide scale.

SA8 Reduce air pollution and ensure local air quality continues to improve; promote energy efficiency measures and encourage the use of renewable energy

21.100 All of the Options would have positive effects on this SA Objective as Green Infrastructure and its component parts help to reduce air pollution through the filtering of pollutants such as CO₂ from the air.

SA10 Achieve a pattern of development which minimises journey lengths and encourages the use of more sustainable transports modes (walking, cycling and public transport)

21.101 Option 1 is likely to have a significant positive effect on this SA Objective as the creation of a District wide Green Infrastructure network should enhance routes for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians and therefore promote alternative modes of transport to the car.

21.102 Option 2 could also have positive effects in this regard however it would lack the connectivity of Option 1 and so the degree of magnitude of any positive effect is likely to be less.

21.103 Option 3 has much the same effect as Option 2 however it could be more beneficial as it provides Green Infrastructure within the growth areas which could help encourage people out of their cars and on the footpaths and cycle routes that Green Infrastructure could provide. However again it lack to connectivity to the wider area, particularly in the north of the District where much less development is proposed.

SA11 Mitigate the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and promoting appropriate design measures in development

21.104 All, of the Options have potential positive effects on this SA Objective as Green Infrastructure provides climate adaptation and mitigation benefits, for example the storage of excess water as a result of more intense rainfall events; cooling effect of trees and green areas within urban and new developments and the reduction of emissions and hence improvements in air quality. Option 1 is likely to have more positive effects as it would create a District wide Green Infrastructure network that would also allow for species
migration in order for them to also adapt to the effects of climate change. The other Options lack this level of connectivity.

Social SA Objectives (SA12-SA16)

SA12 Improve access to services; facilities; the countryside and open spaces

21.105 All of the Options have potential positive effects on this SA Objective due to the fact that they would all provide accessible, low cost, high quality leisure and recreation opportunities. Option 1 is likely to have the most positive effects as it would be District wide and provides for a cohesive Green Infrastructure network. The other two Options would provide these opportunities as well however they are likely to be on a more localise scale and be appropriate to the area or the growth area they are located within. Connectivity may also not be as good to the wider District.

SA15 Facilitate improved health and wellbeing of the population including enabling people to stay independent and reducing inequalities in health

21.106 All of the Options have the potential for positive effects on people’s health and wellbeing. The provision of high quality, low cost recreation and leisure opportunities can help people lead healthier lifestyles and improve overall sense of wellbeing. Option 1 again offers the most potential for positive effects as it would provide a District wide Green Infrastructure network providing connectivity between different parts of the District and different green areas. Options 2 and 3 would also provide positive effects in this regard however they may be more localised in nature and only benefit those living within those areas.

SA16 Create vibrant, active, inclusive and open minded communities and reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community

21.107 All of the Options have the potential for positive effects on this SA Objective. Green Infrastructure is beneficial for promoting vibrant communities through improving the ability to undertake low cost leisure and recreation as well as enhancing the general environment.

Economic SA Objectives (SA17 and SA18)

SA18 Diversify and strengthen the local economy through stimulating the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the Districts rural economy, increasing the vitality of the Districts villages and promoting sustainable tourism

21.108 All of the Options have the potential for positive effects on this SA Objective. Resources such as the countryside, urban parks, street trees, wetlands and the coast, together with the ecosystem services they provide, are considered critical for supporting and encouraging sustainable economic growth as well as social goals and not just a means of supporting wildlife and the environment. The provision of Green Infrastructure can help support jobs
in rural tourism, agriculture and managing the land as such the Options would enhance the Districts rural economy. Maintaining an attractive and connected environment can encourage sustainable rural tourism as well as sustainable transport such as walking and cycling. An attractive environment can also help attract businesses to an area.

Preferred Option for Testing 76

21.109 The Preferred Option for Testing in regards to Green Infrastructure provision is contained within Chapter 26 of the Wealden Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations Consultation paper.

21.110 The Preferred Option for Testing is:

‘The preferred policy is to replicate Policy WCS13 Green Infrastructure from the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan, within this plan, to ensure the provision and development of Green Infrastructure’.

Predicting the effects of Preferred Option for Testing 76 (SA Tasks B3/B4): General Summary

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General Assessment

21.111 The Preferred Option for Testing takes forward Option 1 and as such the SA Assessment for Option 1 above is relevant. The policy approach will ensure that a comprehensive Green Infrastructure network is created within the District and that the growth areas as well as large developments contribute towards this provision. The approach would also ensure the ongoing maintenance and improvements of existing open and green spaces as a part of the Green Infrastructure network.

21.112 The policy approach would ensure that biodiversity is protected through the provision of interconnected green spaces and green space provision; landscape and the countryside is conserved and enhanced; access to high quality, low cost leisure and recreation is created; contributions towards flood risk management and climate change adaptation is provided as well as improving people’s health and wellbeing within a high quality environment. This will also help attract new businesses to the District who want to locate in high quality environments.