MATTER 2 ‘VISION AND OBJECTIVES AND LOCAL PLAN GROWTH’

WEALDEN LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

STATEMENT PREPARED BY QUOD

(RESPONDENT REFERENCE: 1186776)

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Matter 2: Vision and Objectives and Local Plan Growth

**Issue 1:** Whether the Spatial Vision for Wealden is justified, effective, consistent with national policy and positively prepared?

**Question 32. Are the key local plan objectives which have been identified relevant; justified; and consistent with National Policy?**

1.1 Spatial Objective 1 – ‘Housing’, makes clear that the majority of the housing delivery will be focused around the built-up areas of South Wealden, within the area known as the ‘South Wealden Growth Area’.

1.2 We broadly support the identification of the South Wealden Growth Area as a sustainable location for growth, given the constraints elsewhere in the District, including the South Downs National Park, High Weald AONB and Ashdown Forest. Such an approach is justified and consistent with national policy.

1.3 However, we do have some concerns with regard to the current spatial strategy which does not positively reflect all the opportunities that currently exist in the area, and it is therefore necessary for Wealden District Council (WDC) to explore again all opportunities against a revised housing requirement, that includes the unmet needs of neighbouring authorities.

1.4 As currently prepared, we consider that WDC could support a greater quantum of development in the South Wealden Growth area.

1.5 Polegate is identified in the Wealden Local Plan (WLP) as an ‘urban settlement’ within the settlement hierarchy (Table 1 of the WLP), sitting below Tunbridge Wells, which is predominantly located outside WDC, and the towns of Hailsham, Uckfield, Crowborough and Heathfeld.

1.6 The WLP also identifies that Polegate benefits from very good accessibility (with a railway station) and there being good local facilities. Accordingly, Polegate provides an entirely appropriate and sustainable location for substantial development forming part of the South Wealden Growth Area. Furthermore, substantial development in Polegate will also assist in achieving one of the Council’s objectives of realising its regeneration.

1.7 Against this background, whilst the local plan objective to housing of focusing growth into the South Wealden Growth Area is supported, further opportunities need to be more fully analysed and additional sites safeguarded, in order to ensure that the WLP is effective and positively prepared.

1.8 The fact that the housing requirement figure also needs to increase places further emphasis on the need for WDC to explicitly support and quantify future strategic growth opportunities as part of the overall spatial vision for the District.