Wealden District (Incorporating Part of the South Downs National Park)

Local Development Framework

Background Paper 3: The Economy and the Provision of Jobs

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1 Background

Purpose of this paper

1.1 A number of background papers have been produced on a range of topics that are important to the development of the Core Strategy (CS) of the Council’s Local Development Framework (LDF). These background papers provide an analysis of more technical or detailed information and link to the various published sources of evidence used to inform the spatial objectives and policies within the Core Strategy, and are listed in full in the Core Strategy.

The Background papers include the following:-

BP 1: Development of the Core Strategy
BP 2: Managing the delivery of housing
BP 3: The economy and the provision of jobs
BP 4: Provision for Gypsies and Travellers
BP 5: Biodiversity
BP 6: Green Infrastructure
BP 7: Summary of town masterplanning documents
BP 8: Summary of Core Strategy consultation and participation
BP 9: Assessment of the Core Strategy under the Habitat Regulations
BP 10: Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy
BP 11: Infrastructure Delivery Plan
BP 12: Equalities Impact Assessment
BP 13: Implementation and Monitoring Framework

1.2 This background paper on The economy and provision of jobs, forms part of this evidence base. It has been compiled following an examination of the local situation and needs of the District, provides an overview of the current and recent economic situation in Wealden, highlights the unique qualities and characteristics of the economy of the District and looks at the challenges and opportunities for the future to accord with National and Regional Policies, local strategies and aspirations.

1.3 This paper informs and identifies local economic objectives to guide the future growth and prosperity of Wealden, and draws from the evidence base and consultation to provide the justification for the economic policies proposed within the Core Strategy.
These objectives outlined in Part 3 of this paper, have been tested through the Sustainability Appraisal process.

1.4 This background paper helps to ensure that all of the final objectives and policies in the Core Strategy are integrated, founded on sound evidence, and are appropriate to Wealden.

Methodology

1.5 The South East Plan does not include any specific employment targets for Wealden, but provides a target for the wider Sussex Coast Sub Region (which covers the south of the District) and a target for ‘other rural areas’ (which covers the north of the District). In the absence of specific targets for the District therefore, we needed to understand the economy of Wealden and the opportunities that planned growth in the area may bring to the economy of the District and to existing and future residents.

1.6 The initial approach to the economy and provision of jobs therefore, was to analyse key economic issues for the District and review the current local situation. The local information has come from a variety of sources including town master plans and Parish templates, intelligence from the Wealden Economic Focus group, consultation responses from the Issues and Options Paper consultation of 2007(1) and the Spatial Development Options Consultation(2) in 2009. From this exercise, key issues and challenges peculiar to the local area that need to be addressed through the Core Strategy and LDF, have been identified (outlined in Section 3).

1.7 The identification of key issues and challenges has enabled ‘high level’ objectives to be developed that support and grow the economy of Wealden which have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (outlined in Section 3).

1.8 This work has been used to identify economic priorities for different areas of the District to support sustainable development and enable more self sufficient economic growth in the future that address local requirements for the economy of Wealden in line with National Policies and strategies and local aspirations (outlined in Section 2).

1.9 The Employment Land Review(3) and Shopping Study(4) were based on the housing targets in the South East Plan. Through the process of testing different growth scenarios against infrastructure capacities, constraints and opportunities for future provision, our evidence supports the delivery of a lower housing target of 9,600 houses. The figures from the Employment Land review and Shopping Study were amended based upon new figures for housing provision and requirements to meet local economic growth, from which we were able to identify the likely requirements, deliverable supply, and shortfall in the supply of employment and retail land required for the District (outlined in Section 4).

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1 Issues and Options Consultation 2007 www.wealden.gov.uk
Finally, looking at all evidence and information obtained through this process, recommendations for policy areas for future employment growth were identified to meet the 'high level' economic objectives in towns and rural areas within Wealden (outlined in Section 5), to inform the policies in the Core Strategy and subsequent Development Plan Document's (DPD's).
1 Background
2 The Planning Context

National Planning Polices

2.1 The three key National Planning Policy Statements (PPS’s) that are important to consider in relation to the local economy, are PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, (5) PPS 12 - Local Spatial Planning (6) – Local Spatial Planning and PPS 4 - Planning for Sustainable Economic Development. (7)

2.2 All have a similar focus on enabling sustainable economic development. PPS 1 provides the basis for developing and delivering sustainable communities and underpins all planning work. It requires Local Authorities to ensure suitable locations are available for industrial, commercial, retail, public sector, tourism and leisure developments, so that the economy can prosper.

2.3 PPS 12 takes a similar approach to sustainable economic development with a more specific requirement that LDF’s create a framework for private investment and regeneration that promotes the economic, environmental and social well-being for the area through providing a flexible supply of land for business and identifying suitable locations.

2.4 PPS 4 is the most detailed of the policy statements and outlines the Government’s latest policies regarding the planning and management of urban and rural areas to provide sustainable economic growth. The primary focus is on creating sustainable communities, reducing carbon emissions and reducing the need to travel with strong links between new employment and housing growth and encouraging more local employment.

2.5 PPS 4 also focuses on concentrating a range of social, leisure and community facilities in town centres to provide a range of employment and support long term viability; on encouraging flexibility of ‘B’ Use Classes (8) in ‘traditional’ employment areas and on supporting rural economies and tourism.

2.6 These policy statements provide the structural principles to planning for economic growth through the LDF, and are appropriate to the situation in Wealden.

Local Strategies and Plans

2.7 It is firstly important to set a context and objectives for the local economy of Wealden detailing the principal issues to be addressed, agreed objectives, opportunities to be taken and recommendations for a policy direction to achieve agreed objectives.

2.8 Our key steer is from the local strategies and plans outlined below together with an examination of the local situation, issues and challenges as outlined in Section 3 and the local aspirations of the town and parish councils, as outlined in later in this section.

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5 PPS 1 http://www.communities.gov.uk/  
6 PPS 12 www.communities.gov.uk  
7 PPS 4 www.communities.gov.uk  
Wealden Sustainable Community Strategy

2.9 The Wealden Local Strategic Partnership brings the public, private, community and voluntary sectors together to work to help improve the life of the residents of Wealden. The Sustainable Community Strategy\(^9\) for Wealden contains 8 key vision objectives based on widespread consultation with local residents aimed at shaping a sustainable future for Wealden. These are cross cutting and interdependent and recognise the unique characteristics of Wealden's physical, social and economic landscape. These 8 vision objectives provide the basis of Wealden's LDF and Core Strategy.

- a healthy, rich and diverse environment based on sustainable principles for everybody in Wealden,
- reduce health inequalities, provide appropriate information and advice and access to health and social care services in order to maximise the potential for good health and well-being,
- enough decent, affordable homes to meet the needs of everyone who lives in or needs to live in the District,
- access to lifelong learning, education and skills training to allow Wealden residents to fulfil their potential,
- a broad range of opportunities to improve quality of life, health and well-being, including sport, leisure, recreation and the arts,
- a prosperous and sustainable local economy that is dynamic, flexible and maintains the environmental qualities of the area,
- residents and visitors to Wealden are confident of their safety and free from the fear of crime,
- improved accessibility for all and reduce the impact of traffic on people and places.

2.10 All of these vision objectives rely on or are related to supporting economic prosperity and growth within the District. Encouraging a strong economy within Wealden therefore is important in helping to meet these objectives.

The Wealden Local Plan and The Wealden Non-Statutory Plan

2.11 The Wealden Local Plan\(^10\) was adopted in December 1998 and contains policies for the development of the District. An updated local plan was being produced in 2005 when changes to the plan making system came into force. As the plan was never formally adopted it is known as the Non-Statutory Plan\(^11\), but was approved by the Council as an interim guide for Development Control, in line with Government policy. As such, it forms a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Both the Adopted Local Plan and the Non Statutory Plan include general policies, thematic policies, policies for each town, and policies for villages.

2.12 In 2005 when the Non Statutory Local Plan was being drafted, the development plan for the District comprised the 1998 Wealden Local Plan and the East Sussex, Brighton

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9 Pride of Place - A Sustainable Community Strategy for East Sussex - 2008 www.essp.org.uk
10 The Adopted Wealden Local Plan - 1998 www.wealden.gov.uk
and Hove Structure Plan 1991 - 2011, (which was adopted in 1999 and has since been abolished). Some policies therefore are 'top down' and reflect requirements imposed through the Structure Plan.

2.13 The 1998 Wealden Local Plan together with the Non Statutory Local Plan - 2005, are currently used to guide the consideration of planning applications.

2.14 In the Wealden Local Plan, Policy BS3 outlines the main town business areas, and Policy BS6, outlines the main village business areas, both of which are defined on the Wealden Local Plan proposals map. In addition, Policy BS10 provides for the creation of a new business park adjacent to the A22/A272 junction to the south west of Maresfield - now known as the Ashdown Business park.

2.15 In terms of employment generators in Wealden however, we also need to consider policies in relation to town centres and retail provision, farm diversification and the rural economy and tourism.

2.16 In line with Government Policy, a number of policies from the 1998 Wealden Local Plan have been 'saved', many of which relate to employment. All saved polices will need to be reviewed in relation to their relevance, sustainability and deliverability for the future, as part of the Core Strategy/Local Development Framework. This review needs to take particular account of the non delivery of employment sites, currently allocated within the 1998 Plan and those that have been lost to employment through the appeal process. Particularly critical to this review are the Ashdown Business Park at Maresfield, Hackhurst Lane at Lower Dicker and the Merrydown site at Horam.
2 The Planning Context
3 The Economy of Wealden

The National Economic Context

3.1 The Country is currently emerging from the biggest downturn in economic activity in 50 years. Nationally, the most visible impact of the recession has been the closure of businesses and the rise in unemployment. Wealden has been no exception to this trend. Although unemployment levels have remained lower than the national average and have dropped over the last year and business registration rates have slowed, the impact of the recession will undoubtedly remain for some time. In addition, initiatives that will be brought in by the coalition government to combat the effects of the recession, will influence what happens in the short and medium term.

3.2 Wealden also faces particular challenges as well as economic - pressures on protecting the quality of the environment which will increase with an increasing population; additional pressures to provide more affordable housing as housing need and the affordability gap is still quite considerable; pressures to provide jobs, increase the range of jobs available and increase average income levels; pressures to reduce commuting levels, carbon emissions and our carbon footprint generally and pressures to provide additional community and infrastructure facilities. This is against a backdrop of currently low public sector investment in the area, high land prices and development viability issues particularly in the south of the District.

3.3 There is a need therefore to optimise and intensify the use of existing facilities and available spaces throughout the District and to carefully plan new provision through the Core Strategy and Local Development Framework, to enable the delivery of a greater range of employment opportunities near to where people live. This will help to reduce commuting distances and carbon emissions, enable more sustainable patterns of development and together with the provision of affordable private housing, social rented housing and infrastructure, attract investment and encourage younger economically active people to stay within the District.

The Local Economic context of Wealden

The location of Wealden and Local Economic markets

3.4 Wealden is the largest of the 5 East Sussex authorities, covering approximately 83,502 hectares (206,337 acres) and comprises almost 49% of the total land of East Sussex. Stretching from just south of Tunbridge Wells in the north to the boundary with Eastbourne in the south - a distance of some 30 miles, Wealden shares it's boundaries with 6 neighbouring local authorities located within East Sussex, West Sussex, Surrey and Kent.

12 The five East Sussex authorities include Lewes DC, Eastbourne BC, Hastings BC, Rother DC and Wealden DC
13 East Sussex In Figures (ESIF) - Local Authority Area profiles - Wealden www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk
14 Wealden's six neighbouring authorities include Lewes DC, Rother DC and Eastbourne BC in East Sussex, Mid Sussex DC in West Sussex, Tandridge DC in Surrey and Sevenoaks DC and Tunbridge Wells BC in Kent.
3.5 Wealden has the largest population of all the East Sussex authorities with 145,185 people\textsuperscript{(15)} and almost 29% of the total population of East Sussex. However, spread over such a large rural District, it is not densely populated, and with only 1.7 persons per hectare (ppha), is considerably lower than the average for East Sussex (2.9 ppha) and the South East (4.2 ppha).\textsuperscript{(16)}

Figure 1 The Location of Wealden and neighbouring areas

Source: ESCC ESiF - Published Maps - 2010.

3.6 East Sussex is not a single self contained economy but comprises a number of economic markets which are interrelated in different ways and in relation to local, regional, national and international markets, depending on the connectivity between them.

3.7 The location and quality of employment areas, the location of essential services, the quality of infrastructure, particularly roads, public transport and broadband provision are important determinants in the place shaping and way in which the economy of Wealden functions and it's contribution to servicing the wider economy.

\textsuperscript{15} Population and Households - Population estimates 2001 - 2009, parishes  \url{www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk}
\textsuperscript{16} Population and Housing - population density - 2001 - parishes. \url{www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk}
3.8 However, the nature of the economy and location of Wealden is such that there will continue to be a 'pull' from larger centres for employment, retail, leisure and cultural activities, at least within the plan period.

A Profile of Wealden

3.9 Wealden is a largely rural District with a largely dispersed population and does not have any major centres within its boundaries. Wealden has five small market towns and a number of smaller villages and hamlets within its' 42 local parish council boundaries\(^{(17)}\), 37 of which are rural parishes.

3.10 Almost as many people in Wealden live in the rural areas, villages and settlements (48\%)\(^{(18)}\) as live in the five market towns (52\%). The heaviest populated areas of the District are in the north east and in the south around Hailsham and Polegate. The most sparsely populated areas are the rural areas to the south west of the District.

The five market towns

3.11 The five market towns within Wealden are Crowborough to the north west, Uckfield to the west, Heathfield in the east and Hailsham and Polegate in the south. Each of the market towns within Wealden performs a different role and function. The settlement hierarchy outlined in Background Paper 1\(^{(19)}\), shows that the 5 towns fall into two categories.

3.12 Crowborough, Uckfield and Hailsham serve as District Centres providing a range of services including a range of shops, employment opportunities and facilities including a secondary school. These centres provide for day to day needs, but require support from other secondary or primary centres outside of the District to meet the needs of residents.

3.13 Heathfield and Polegate are classed as Service Centres, providing a range of jobs, services and facilities, serving predominantly nearby communities and the wider rural area but with accessibility to larger centres. In addition, Forest Row, Wadhurst and Stone Cross also act as Service Centres. Each town serves and supports a wider rural area within the District.

3.14 Wealden's five small market towns also serve the wider rural area of the District. Each is unique in its character, size and in its' contribution to the local economy however, all suffer from strong competition from more major centres beyond the District boundary. Each town provides retail and employment opportunities for the residents of the town and rural hinterland and each has a slightly different function.

Crowborough

3.15 Crowborough is the northernmost of the five Wealden market towns and is situated some six miles south of Tunbridge Wells, and is impacted by the pull that the larger centre
3.16 Crowborough is seen as a fairly prosperous town with a number of well paid and well qualified people. However, it also has pockets of deprivation, particularly to the south and east of the town.

3.17 Crowborough has the highest proportion out of all the five towns of residents working as managers and Senior Officials, professional and associate professional and technical roles. Crowborough experiences a high level of out commuting with a high proportion of workers travelling to neighbouring centres, particularly Tunbridge Wells for work.

3.18 The main function of Crowborough is as a District Centre. The town centre area is dominated by two large supermarkets but also has a number of smaller shops and businesses providing local employment, including a small industrial estate (Park Road just to the east of the town centre). A smaller retail centre exists to the south of the town in Jarvis Brook, near to the railway station and near to one large and one small supermarket.

3.19 Crowborough has a railway station but this is some 2 miles to the south east of the town centre and so does not directly assist the town centre in making it more sustainable.

3.20 The major employment centres in Crowborough are located at Farningham Road and Millbrook, to the south of the town near to the railway station. A further smaller business area at is located nearby at Lexden Lodge. Crowborough has two further small employment locations at Connors Yard, to the south of the town centre on Crowborough Hill.

Uckfield

3.21 In terms of population Uckfield is the third largest of Wealden’s towns with a population of 14,316. A high percentage of the population are economically active. Uckfield is a significant employment location offering employment in a wide range of sectors, both within the town centre and within its two industrial areas. However, there is still significant out-commuting from Uckfield residents for employment to other locations including Crawley, Gatwick, Tunbridge Wells, Brighton and Lewes. Similarly, Uckfield also attracts a reasonable number of workers from elsewhere in the District and beyond including Crowborough, Heathfield and Brighton and Hove. It also has a younger population profile than Wealdens’ other towns.

3.22 Uckfield serves as a District centre to its’ residents and neighbouring settlements and is the most popular centre within Wealden, attracting residents for employment and its’ services and facilities, from a large catchment area of its’ surrounding settlements.
3.23 In addition to the retail and businesses in the town centre which provide employment opportunities, Uckfield has two further employment areas at Bellbrook, to the west of the town centre and Ridgewood, to the southeast of the town. The Bellbrook Industrial Estate is well located adjacent to the town centre, railway station and bus station. In addition, despite local traffic issues in the town centre, the Bellbrook Estate is accessed off the A26. As such it is in a highly accessible and sustainable location.

Heathfield

3.24 Heathfield is the second smallest town in Wealden with a population of 11,465 and functions as a service centre to residents from Heathfield and its' surrounding settlements including Mayfield to the west and Burwash and Etchingham to the east. Given the size and function of the town, there are very limited comparison goods on offer. However, there is a high service on offer for a town of its' size.

3.25 Heathfield has a busy and vibrant High Street but is somewhat dominated by small shops, take aways and service outlets. Heathfield has two main employment areas at Ghyll Road, to the south west of the town and the smaller Station Road Industrial Estate, just off the main town centre area. A smaller employment area is also situated to the east on the Burwash Road, just outside the town around the weekly market site.

3.26 Although it is not served by a railway station and accessibility by public transport could be improved, Heathfield has a fairly high proportion of people commuting elsewhere to work.

Hailsham

3.27 Hailsham is the largest settlement in the southern half of the District with a population of around 20,501. It is located about six miles north of Eastbourne and experiences the pull of this centre and Brighton for employment, retail, leisure and cultural facilities.

3.28 Hailsham has been an established market town since 1252 and still retains its' historic core around Market Square and St Mary's Church. Hailsham serves as a District Centre providing a range of jobs in manufacturing and services and also provides local retail provision, with three supermarkets within the town centre area. Hailsham is not directly served by a railway station, but has a good range of bus services serving the town.

3.29 Hailsham town centre provides a range of employment opportunities through retail, leisure and service outlets and small business enterprises. Hailsham also has the largest industrial estate in the District (Diplock Industrial Estate to the south west of the town), which has good access off the A22. A further large industrial estate is located to the south of the town at Station Road, near to a smaller business estate at Swann Barn. Small business units are also available to the north of the town at the Leap Cross Business Park, all of which provide local employment opportunities.
3.30 Hailsham experiences high levels of in-commuting with workers coming into the town from neighbouring areas such Eastbourne.
Figure 2 The main centers in Wealden

3.31 Polegate is the smallest of the Wealden market towns with a population of around 8,719 people. Polegate’s town centre offers a smaller range of retail and business employment opportunities than the other market towns, but with a railway station nearby is well located in relation to sustainable transport opportunities. It also has good bus links between Hailsham and Eastbourne and experiences a limited commuting to Eastbourne, Hailsham, Brighton and Lewes.

3.32 Polegate’s role is that of a small local service centre meeting the day-to-day needs of its local population. The majority of Polegate’s residents look to nearby Eastbourne for both food and non-food shopping and employment opportunities.

3.33 Polegate is currently dominated by Eastbourne in terms of its’ function. It has a limited catchment area, less services compared to other Wealden towns and relies highly on Eastbourne for the provision of services, facilities and employment.

3.34 Polegate has two business areas at the Chaucer Industrial Estate and the Dittons Road Business Park, offering employment to the east of the town centre with good accessibility adjacent to Golden Jubilee Way and the A27 trunk road.

The Rural Economy

Agriculture and the economy of Wealden

3.35 Employment in agriculture and associated areas declined nationally in the South East and in East Sussex between 1998 and 2008. However in Wealden there was a decline of jobs in agriculture, fishing, energy and water from 3.9% in 1998 to 3.1% in 2008, a decline of 0.8% over the decade.

3.36 Although this may not seem a significant decline farmers in Wealden, as in other areas of the country, have had to look to farm diversification as a means of maintaining and supporting agricultural enterprises. Nationally, this has led to a trend of farm conversions for residential use which have had an impact on the rural landscape with often increased traffic, increased house prices, lack of available and affordable housing and impacts on infrastructure capacity. Latterly the planning system has attempted to restrict this trend and seek farm diversification with employment use, to maintain the rural economy and increase employment opportunities.

3.37 Three Quarters of all small businesses within Wealden are farm based and by definition within the rural area. The diversified agricultural sector makes a significant impact on Wealden and on the rural areas both in terms of economy and in shaping the landscape. (21)

3.38 Research undertaken by Wealden District Council shows in 2009 there were 552 VAT registered businesses operating from farms, representing 25% of all registered businesses within Wealden.
businesses in the District. In the three years from 2006 - 2009, 43 full planning applications for farm based businesses were approved, comprising roughly 36% of all applications for commercial development over this period and around 18,268 sq m net additional floor space.

3.39 What is noticeable from the information gathered is that there is a concentration of farm diversification projects/enterprises in the central and south western rural areas of the District.

Tourism and the economy of Wealden

3.40 Tourism is an extremely important aspect of Wealdens’ economy, supporting a wide range of businesses, particularly in rural areas and villages. The Strategic Framework for Tourism in Wealden (22) states that in 2008 there were 5.8 million visitors to Wealden, who spent an estimated £261 million and supported 4,600 jobs - 10% of the jobs in Wealden.

3.41 Tourism nationally suffered generally in the recession. However, in 2009 UK trips rose nationally, as domestic holiday makers chose UK destinations. In the South East the main impact of this rise in domestic trip taking was through increases in day visits to attractions and in an increase in caravan and campsite occupancy.

3.42 The Tourism strategy shows that Wealden has a large number of small tourism accommodation businesses within the District including:

- 116 serviced establishments providing 910 bedrooms with average annual room occupancies of 45% for hotels, up to 60% for pubs and around 50% for Bed and Breakfast establishments, 139 self catering units, mostly single units with occupancy between 30% and 50%.
- 23 touring caravan and camp sites providing 993 pitches with high weekend but very seasonal occupancy.
- 9 holiday parks, most at their licensed capacity.

3.43 Other areas nearby particularly Eastbourne, Brighton and Tunbridge Wells, also offer tourist accommodation, which would provide partly for the needs of visitors to Wealden but also a competing offer.

3.44 However, in terms of market trends visitor markets are changing and more visits in the UK involve:

- Short breaks
- Staying with friends and relatives
- Overseas visitors
- Day visits - in health-related / outdoor activity, and
- Business tourism
3.45 In Wealden the majority of visits are day visits or from those visiting friends and relatives. However, it is still a significant aspect of the economy which could grow, particularly with the new South Down's National Park, improved tourism marketing and facilities and taking into account the town aspirations to support and benefit from the tourism economy. With the wealth of attractions on offer in Wealden, there is scope to increase the offer for tourists and to support particularly the economy of the rural areas and villages, as well as the towns.

3.46 The importance of tourism to the economy of Wealden and wider benefits in supporting services and the viability of the towns and rural areas of the District as well as providing business and a supporting a range of employment opportunities therefore, is significant.

The Workforce of Wealden

Travel to work and commuting patterns

3.47 There are five travel to work areas (TTWA) that are relevant to East Sussex, all associated with a major centre and economic market - Brighton TTWA, Crawley TTWA, Tunbridge Wells TTWA, Hastings TTWA and Eastbourne TTWA. All five travel to work areas bisect Wealden demonstrating the ‘pull’ that other areas have on residents of the District.
3.48 In Wealden, only 54% of residents work in the District. This is lower than the average for all other East Sussex authorities where around 60% of people work within the District/Borough they live. Out commuting levels in Wealden at 46% are the highest of all East Sussex authorities with around 31% of commuters travelling over 20km. The level of out commuting has, in East Sussex, increased by nearly 70% since 1981. For residents of Wealden, this is in part a factor of greater mobility and higher earning possibilities outside of the District.

3.49 The travel to work movements in Figure 4 shows considerable out commuting from all of the key towns in the District to major centres within neighbouring Travel to Work areas, particularly Eastbourne, Tunbridge Wells and Brighton, reflecting the pull of larger centres and the choice available for Wealden residents outside of the District.

3.50 The Wealden District Council Housing Needs Assessment provides information of location of workplace for the head of households. This shows that there is a high level

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23 From ESiF - Publications - Focus on East Sussex 2010 annual monitor www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk
24 From ESiF - Publications - Focus on East Sussex 2010 annual monitor www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk
of movement both within Wealden and to places outside of Wealden for work, which is evident from travel to work statistics.

3.51 Towns to the north with railway stations (Crowbrough and Uckfield) or within a 20 minute drive of a railway station (Heathfield which is within 20 minutes drive of Buxted or Stonegate stations) have a higher percentage of people working in London or elsewhere.

**Figure 4 All Travel to Work movements - 2007**


3.52 Crowborough, Uckfield and Hailsham - on the outer edges of the District, have a higher proportion of people working in neighbouring local authority areas, presumably because of relative proximity to other larger centres such as Tunbridge Wells, Eastbourne, Hastings and Brighton and Lewes, where a greater range of employment may be found.

3.53 Polegate and Heathfield tend to have a higher proportion of residents working elsewhere in the District, although Heathfield also has a high proportion of people working in London/elsewhere, presumably because of the relatively easy access to the railway at Stonegate and Buxted and the relatively acceptable journey times into London from these stations.
3.54 Hailsham has the highest percentage of people working from home, followed closely by Heathfield.

3.55 Of the five towns all have levels above 10% of those who live and work within the town, whilst three of the towns (Crowborough, Hailsham and Uckfield), have levels above 20%. In the rural parishes, only 11 parishes have levels of those working within the parish above 10%, with 4 of these parishes having levels above 20%, with the highest level of 34.0% recorded in the Cuckmere Valley.

3.56 However, the Housing Needs Assessment shows that the majority of people in both town and rural parish areas travel to other parts of Wealden or to adjacent Local Authority areas for work.

3.57 Only three rural parishes have levels below 20% for those travelling to adjoining Local Authority areas, with 12 rural parishes having levels over 40%. The highest level recorded is at Hoee, which is on the boundary with Rother District and not far from Eastbourne Borough, where 76.1% of people work in neighbouring authorities.

3.58 Interestingly the percentages of those who work in London or elsewhere is greater amongst the rural parishes than the towns, with 17 parishes having levels of 20% or more, with 7 of these parishes having levels above 30%. The highest level of 54.1% is recorded at Little Horsted.

3.59 More than two thirds of the residents of Wealden travel to work by private vehicle, with the number of residents travelling by public transport or other modes below average compared to other East Sussex authorities. However, poor levels of public transport accessibility into/out of and within the District generally however, are a significant factor in the low levels of public transport usage in the District.

**Carbon emissions, Waste and Energy**

3.60 The high level of out commuting and use of private vehicles in Wealden contributes negatively to the carbon footprint of the District. Addressing these two issues will be important elements of our sustainable planning for the future and in reducing carbon reduction across the District. However, over two thirds of businesses in East Sussex have yet to take any action on green transport initiatives, a situation which needs to change through proactive engagement in order to reduce carbon emissions and enable employees 'green' choices re their modes of transport.

3.61 In addition, there are other ways in which the Carbon emissions can be reduced through the employment sector. In the 2010 ESCC Business Survey, energy efficiency is quoted as being equal with cheaper accommodation as the top criteria when seeking new accommodation. However, less than one third of East Sussex businesses have ever accessed advice on energy cost reduction, but in over one quarter of those

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26 ESIF - Transport - Mode of travel to work in 2001 - Parishes [www.eastsussexfigures.org.uk](http://www.eastsussexfigures.org.uk)
29 And subsequent figures from ESIF - Publications - ESCC Business Survey - 2010 - Environment theme paper. [www.eastsussexfigures.org.uk](http://www.eastsussexfigures.org.uk)
instances where energy advice is taken up, businesses reduce their energy consumption by over 20%. Planning for future employment provision needs to address energy efficiency more pro-actively through the planning and building control processes and through greater education and awareness.

3.62 In addition to energy and road usage, greater consideration of waste management by industries and employers within the District will help to further reduce carbon emissions. According to the 2010 Business survey, almost two thirds of businesses in East Sussex have yet to take any action on reducing the amount of solid waste they produce and almost half of businesses recycle or compost less than 20% of their waste. Proactive engagement and partnership working with businesses and waste operators is needed to change this culture within businesses in Wealden.

The people of Wealden and the strength of the workforce

The profile of the population and migration

3.63 The population of East Sussex as a whole increased by 3.8% between 2001 and 2009. The increase in population in Wealden over the same period was however considerably lower at only 2.07%, the lowest in the County.

3.64 In terms of population, Hailsham is the largest of the five towns with 13.8% of the total population, followed by Crowborough (13.6%) Uckfield (9.7%) Heathfield (8.1%) and Polegate (5.9%). However, almost 13.9% of people live in the rural parishes in the north-west of the District, with 9.8% of the population living in the north-east rural parishes. Almost 7.9% of the population live in the rural parishes to the south-west whilst slightly more people - 10.8% of the population, live in the south-east rural parishes. Those living in rural parishes in the centre of the District account for around 6.5% of the population of Wealden.

3.65 Nationally there has been an overall increase in the population of people over the age of 65 over the last decade as the 'baby boomer's of the post war years reach retirement age. However, figures in Wealden are much higher than average with 11.5% over the age of 65 and 11.1% over the age of 75 in 2009. Although there is predicted to be an increase in the population within the plan period, the trend for a high percentage of elderly persons is set to continue. Figures for those over 65 and over the age of 75 are forecast to rise in Wealden to 13.9% and 17.1% respectively by 2026, when those over the age of 65 will comprise nearly one third of the population of Wealden.
3.66 However numbers have reduced in all other age groups, with the largest reduction of 3.5% over this period to being in the 30 to 44 age group - the main economically active group - comprising 17.2% of the population in East Sussex in 2009 (17.0% in Wealden).

3.67 By the end of the plan period in 2030 therefore, it is likely that the number of younger people coming into the employment 'pool' will be exceeded by those coming out of it and into full or partial retirement. In addition, figures indicate that in Wealden, there are high levels of people taking ‘early retirement’ and stopping work before the statutory retirement age.

3.68 Re-balancing the population profile in East Sussex has been helped recently through increases in population largely due to net in-migration, with more people moving into the area than those moving out. Two fifths of all moves (around 1,640 people) were from/to Wealden. Migration generally occurs within the working age population with the under 44 age comprising over half of the moves into and out of the county. In Wealden however, the greatest moves out of the District are within the under 25 age group - the young economically active people that we need to retain and attract to the District. Future employment opportunities need to be attractive to this age group.
One of the key issues for Wealden, as for other East Sussex authorities, is the general natural decline in the numbers of younger economically active people coming into the labour pool and the increasingly ageing population. In addition to the increasing elderly population, the percentage of people who are economically inactive or retired is likely to increase over the plan period. Reducing the percentage of economically inactive/unemployed people further and encouraging younger economically active people to stay within the District, will be important to the local and wider East Sussex economy in the longer term.

Increasing the number of economically active people will help to support local services and facilities for the whole population. However, achieving this will require interventions on a number of levels such as providing more family sized affordable market and rented housing, increasing the range of employment opportunities, improving income levels and services and facilities generally within the area.
Economic Activity and Employment

3.71 Wealden has a population of around 145,568 people and of those around 64,800 people are in work\(^{(33)}\). Despite the recent recession, economic activity and employment rates\(^{(34)}\) in Wealden (at 84.8% and 81.4% respectively),\(^{(35)}\) remain above average and are the highest of the East Sussex authorities.

Figure 7 Economic activity and inactivity across East Sussex - 2009

Source: ESIF - Economy, jobs and prosperity - Economic Activity and Inactivity - 2009.

3.72 Economic activity rates vary across the District, with high levels of economic activity being displayed in both urban and rural areas. Higher than average levels of economic activity are shown in most Crowborough, Uckfield and in Heathfield wards, with the highest level of economic activity in Uckfield Ridgewood ward (75.4%). However, levels over 70% are also evident in rural parishes in the centre and the west of the District, notably in Alciston, Arlington, East Hoathly, Framfield, Isfield and Laughton. Economic activity in most of the rest of the District are within the 60% - 70% range, including Hailsham.

3.73 Lower levels of economic activity (below 60%) are found in the south-west and southern parishes of Alfriston, East Dean and Friston and Polegate. In Pevensey, economic activity is...
activity levels are more than 10% below the average but the lowest level of economic activity, (at 38.7%) occurs in Chalvington with Ripe where the figure is almost twice the Wealden average and comprises almost two thirds of the population of the Parish. These parishes are also the areas where there are higher proportions of retirees.

**Economic inactivity and unemployment**

**3.74** Economic inactivity\(^{36}\) rates i.e. the number of those of working age who are not in employment are consistently lower in Wealden (at 15.2%), than in other East Sussex authorities and considerably lower than the National and South East average.\(^ {37}\) The highest levels of economic inactivity of the Wealden towns are experienced in Hailsham and Polegate, 33.5% and 40.1% respectively.

**3.75** Elsewhere, but particularly in the rural Parishes, where economic activity rates are low, , economic inactivity rates correspondingly tend to be high, and equate to either high levels of retirees or higher levels of unemployment.

**3.76** Unemployment rates across East Sussex have risen during the recession, with the number of people claiming job seekers allowance rising to 3.6% in December 2009, slightly more than the South East average of 3% but less than the national average of 4.1%.\(^ {38}\) Wealden however, has experienced a slight rise in unemployment levels during the recession, but is consistently lower at 4.8% (2009) than other East Sussex authorities and considerably lower than the National and South East average (7.9% and 6.3% respectively).

**3.77** Unemployment rates are generally lower than 2% in all but seven wards in Wealden. Hailsham East has the highest claimant rate in the District at 4.8% in August 2010\(^ {39}\). However, this is a significant drop from 6.9% in January 2010 and is the only ward in Wealden to be above the South East average. Additionally, claimant rates between 2.1 - 3.8% are experienced in Crowborough Jarvis Brook, Uckfield North, Hailsham South and West, Polegate North, and Ninfield and Hooe with Wartling ward.

**3.78** Claimant rates in Wealden are generally higher for those under the age of 25, indicating a problem for younger people in finding employment or possibly apprenticeships in the local area, and may underline an issue regarding suitable skills and experience within those residents coming into the employment 'pool'. However, Wealden compares well against the other East Sussex authorities that have a greater proportion of wards with job seeker claimant rates higher than the East Sussex average.

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\(^{36}\) Economic inactivity refers to the number of people of working age who are not in work and includes carers, those unable to work and those who choose not to work. Unemployment generally refers to the number of people who are economically inactive but looking for a job and claiming job seekers allowance.

\(^{37}\) And subsequent figures from - ESIF - Economy, jobs and prosperity - Economically active and inactive population - 2004 - 2009 - Districts www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk

\(^{38}\) And subsequent figures from - ESIF - Economy, jobs and prosperity - Economically active and inactive population - 2004 - 2009 - Districts www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk

\(^{39}\) Figure and subsequent figures from ESIF - Economy, jobs and prosperity- unemployment - JSA claimant count, 2008-2010 - wards www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk
3.79 Although levels of unemployment are low in Wealden, increasing the number of economically active people in employment, particularly within the younger economically active age group, would be beneficial to the local economy.

**Part time working**

3.80 In 2001 four times as many women (48%) in East Sussex worked part time than men (12%), considerably above the National and South East averages for part time working. In Wealden the percentage of women working part time was higher at 49.1% and for men, slightly lower at 11.3%. In comparison with other East Sussex authorities, however, the number of women working part time is amongst the highest in the county and the number of men working part time, the lowest of all East Sussex authorities. Part time working is particularly important to women in Wealden, and should be reflected in the range and choice of employment provision in the future.

**Occupations**

3.81 Nearly 27% percent of people in East Sussex have jobs in managerial and professional roles, which compares to 29% nationally and 32% average for the South East. The proportion in Wealden is slightly higher at 28%. However, Wealden has a higher percentage of people working in lower skilled jobs at 14%, the highest rate of all the East Sussex authorities and higher than the regional and national averages.
Crowborough has the highest proportion of all towns of residents working in higher occupational managerial, professional and technical roles. Uckfield Central and Ridgewood wards and Heathfield East wards also have above average numbers of residents working in these roles. In addition, these occupations are well represented in all rural parishes except those to the south-east of the District. These wards/parishes also equate to those with the higher income and qualification/skill levels.

Uckfield central has the highest proportion of people working in administration, although all towns have wards with above average representation of residents working in these roles.

There is a high proportion of residents working in skilled trades, personal services, sales and customer service, plant and machinery operatives and elementary roles in all of the five towns. However, this is more marked with higher than average proportions represented in the Hailsham and Polegate and also in Jarvis Brook Ward in Crowborough.
and Uckfield North and Central wards. This corresponds with the pattern of low earnings and qualifications and skills.

3.85 Skilled trades are strongly represented in all parishes in the centre of the District, with above Wealden averages in all cases but particularly in Little Horsted and Laughton Parishes.

3.86 Skilled trades, personal services, plant and machinery operatives and elementary occupations are well represented in the rural parishes to the south-east of the District, with above average representation in most parishes.

3.87 However, there are some notable exceptions, particularly in the rural areas - the Cuckmere Valley has significantly higher than average levels of Managers/Senior Managers. Selmeston has more than twice the Wealden average of Professionals, whilst Skilled trades occupations are well represented in Chalvington with Ripe, Alciston and Berwick, where all have above the average Wealden representation. Maresfield has a higher than average percentage of those providing personal services.

Skill Levels

3.88 Skill levels in East Sussex are broadly comparable to the national average, however the County still lags behind the South East on Level 3 and 4 qualifications. Just under a third of working age residents in Wealden (30%) have Level 4 qualifications, which is above the regional and national averages.

Table 1 Qualifications (Jan 2008 – Dec 2008)

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<td>73%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rother</td>
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<td>67%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<td><strong>Wealden</strong></td>
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<td><strong>73%</strong></td>
<td><strong>50%</strong></td>
<td><strong>30%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.89 However, Wealden also has above average numbers of residents with qualifications up to level 1 and level 2. People with qualifications at this level are likely to find it difficult to compete in an increasingly competitive labour market.

3.90 Although having an above average percentage of well qualified Wealden also has a high proportion of those with lower skill levels. This is reflected in the findings of the East Sussex Business surveys over the years, which have indicated issues for businesses regarding low skill levels in Wealden.

3.91 Each of the five towns have wards where qualifications and skill levels are below the Wealden average;

- Crowborough - Jarvis Brook,
- Uckfield - in New Town and North,
- Heathfield - these characteristics are more prevalent in North and Central ward,
- Hailsham - these elements are most pronounced in Hailsham east ward, which has the highest proportion of people with no qualifications of all the towns
- Polegate - qualification and skill levels are generally low across the range in both wards.

3.92 Hailsham East ward has the lowest levels of qualifications and skill levels generally. Qualification and skill levels in Hailsham south and west and in both Polegate wards are significantly lower than in the other three towns, with significantly more people with no level 1 or 2 qualifications and significantly less people with qualifications of level 3 and above.

3.93 Improving skill levels of residents in this lower category will help to improve job prospects, enable residents to access higher wages/salaries, help to reduce socio-economic deprivation, prove more attractive to inward investors and help the local economy to survive, thrive and remain competitive.

Pay and income

3.94 Wages in East Sussex are on average 14% below the South East average and 10% below the National Average, and with the exception of the Isle of Wight, people employed in East Sussex (work place earnings) receive the lowest average weekly pay of any County or Unitary Authority in the south east.

3.95 However, although residence based earnings, (which reflect commuting outside of the County to better paid jobs) are higher, they are still 11% lower than the average for the South East, and just below the National Average. This is perhaps different from the perception that many have of the 'affluent' South East and may in turn 'mask' some of the issues affecting the economy of the area.

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42 and subsequent skills figures from Labour Market profile for Wealden - 2008 - nomis
44 From ESIF - Publications - Focus on East Sussex - Annual Monitor - 2010 - ESCC www.eastsussexinfofigures.org.uk
Figure 9 Average weekly earnings for all full time employees - workplace and residence based - Districts - 2009


3.96 Wealden has a high proportion of high earners, with higher than average resident based weekly earnings, at £431 between 2006 and 2009.\(^{45}\) Wealden has the highest level of resident based earnings of the five East Sussex authorities. However, the average workplace weekly earnings in Wealden over the same period, (£328 per week) was lower than resident based earnings and lower than the National (£399), South East (£416) and East Sussex averages (£341).\(^{46}\)

3.97 This indicates a real problem between the wages to be earned by commuting outside of the District, compared to wages of those working within the District. It is however, also linked to occupations and qualification levels, where those in higher end/higher paid professions are more likely to find appropriate employment in larger centres outside of the District.

3.98 Wealden has not attracted the organisations and sectors that can provide employment to these higher end/higher paid residents within the District. It is unlikely that the relevant markets will be attracted to Wealden within the plan period. However, improving skill levels, infrastructure, and making the area more attractive to investors will help in closing the gap between resident and workplace earnings.

3.99 The difference in wages between those working in Wealden and those working outside the District at £103 per week, is quite significant. There are also significant differences in both the resident and workplace wages of men and women, with men who

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45 ESIF - workplace and resident based median earnings - 2006 - 2009 [www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk](http://www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk)
46 ESIF - workplace and resident based median earnings - 2006 - 2009 [www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk](http://www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk)
work in Wealden earning on average £206 more per week than women. For those commuting out of the District, men earn on average £287 more per week, which is almost double the average earned by women. In both cases the difference in earnings between men and women in Wealden is lower than in all other East Sussex authorities except Rother but much greater than that experienced nationally.

3.100 This may indicate that there are less opportunities for women to earn comparable pay in Wealden, than elsewhere and may also reflect other aspects such as the types of sectors available, the location of employment, accessibility, skills and the availability of flexible working arrangements.

Figure 10 Average Annual Household incomes - 2007 - 2009


3.101 Income levels, which includes not only pay but also savings, investments and benefits, are rising gradually across the County. This is particularly significant where there is a high percentage of retired residents, who may be dependant on other sources of income.

3.102 The high proportion of higher earners in Wealden is reflected in the average median household income which in 2009 was £32,591, the highest of the East Sussex authorities, above the National and East Sussex averages (£29,363 and £29,153 respectively) but still slightly below the South East average of £33,291.\(^{(47)}\)

3.103 Within Wealden however, incomes levels range between an average of £44,700 in Uckfield Ridgewood ward (the highest in East Sussex) and an average of £21,700 in

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\(^{(47)}\) ESiF - Economy, jobs and prosperity - Earnings - Average Household Income 2004 - 2010 - parishes

[www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk](http://www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk)
Hailsham East (the lowest in East Sussex and quite below the South East average) - a difference of £23,000. This disparity in income levels across the District is quite significant and a particular factor in relation to socio-economic issues and housing affordability.

3.104 In the rural parts of the District, incomes vary considerably, with incomes in parishes to the north west and north-east generally above the Wealden average, in the case of Buxted, up to £9,000 above the Wealden average. However, in the rural parishes to the centre, south-west and south-east of the District, incomes are generally below the Wealden average, with the lowest levels being in Pevensey where incomes are more than £9,000 below the Wealden average. Variations between average income levels in neighbouring rural parishes can be quite considerable, with extremes of £26,000 difference between incomes in Wartling and Pevensey, and £17,000 difference between East Dean and Friston and Chalvington with Ripe.

3.105 This vast range and disparity between wages and incomes across the District, illustrates some of the complexities of the economy of Wealden, and highlights some of the particular economic issues to the south of the District.

Socio-economic issues

3.106 Pay and income, unemployment, skill levels and the cost of living, all impact on levels of socio-economic deprivation. East Sussex experiences the highest levels of deprivation of all counties in the south east. Although this is most significant in the coastal towns, particularly Hastings and parts of Brighton, Hailsham East Ward in Wealden is ranked within the 20% most deprived in England. (48)

3.107 Although deprivation is most significant in Hailsham, some wards within Uckfield, Crowborough and Polegate also experience relatively high levels of deprivation.

Child poverty

3.108 Child poverty relates to the proportion of children aged 0 - 15 who are living in income-deprived households. Although in relative terms child poverty in East Sussex is improving, the numbers of children in poverty is increasing with nearly 1 in 5 children in East Sussex living in low income households. (49)

3.109 Wealden has the lowest rates of child poverty of the East Sussex authorities at 10.7%. Whereas most areas in Wealden fall well below this average, high levels of child poverty are experienced in a third of all wards within the District and are highest in areas where incomes in the District are at their lowest. In Hailsham East, the level of child poverty is more than twice the East Sussex average at 39.3%, with high levels also in Polegate South (22.5%) and Hailsham South and West (21.7%).

48 Wealden Sustainable Community Strategy www.wealdencommunitystrategy.co.uk
49 ESIF - Publications -Focus on East Sussex - 2010 annual monitor www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk
Figure 11 Index of Multiple Deprivation - Wealden District 2007

Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2007 – Wealden super output areas

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Source: ESCC - ESiF - Published Maps 2007.
3.110 Recent budget changes to Child credit arrangements and the requirement to go back to work after the first child starts school, may have a negative impact on this situation.

Older people living in poverty

3.111 Issues of rural deprivation and deprivation amongst the elderly are often masked with some 14% of older people (aged 60+)(50) living in low income households across the County. In Wealden, the average percentage of older people living in poverty is less at around 9.5%. However this varies across the District with nearly half of all wards experiencing more than 10% of elderly people in poverty. The highest rates of poverty amongst older people are experienced in the towns with high levels in Hailsham East (21.2%), Uckfield New Town (17.9%) Crowborough East (15.4%) Uckfield North (15.2%) and Hailsham South and West (14.5%).

3.112 Poverty amongst older people is also high in rural parishes to the south east of the District, particularly Ninfield and Hooe (12.6%) Pevensey and Westham (12.4%), Herstmonceaux (11.4%) and Hellingly (11.1%). Levels are also quite high in Horam (12.2%) and in Cross in Hand/Five Ashes (12.1%).

3.113 With an ageing population that is forecast to grow, improving income levels for those approaching retirement, through improving employment opportunities and increasing opportunities for part time working, will be important aspects in addressing this issue across the District.

House prices and affordability

3.114 Wealden is a largely rural district, with an attractive and varied countryside with approximately 61% of Wealden within the designated High Weald AONB or newly established South Downs National Park. The quality of the countryside contributes to Wealden’s appeal as a desirable place to live.

3.115 Wealden had the highest house prices of the five East Sussex Authorities with an average of £233,092, higher than the National and East Sussex average but slightly lower than the South East average.

3.116 The impact of this trend, which has created a severe shortage of affordable housing, together with high house prices and low local wages, has created an affordability gap which is highest in Wealden.

Table 2 House price affordability - 2002 - 09

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50 and subsequent figures from ESiF - Deprivation - Indices of Deprivation 2007 www.eastsussexinffigures.org.uk
3.117 This means that in Wealden average house prices are 8 times higher than average wages. With most mortgage lenders providing mortgages at the rate of 2.5 times salaries, people would need to have considerable savings available, to be able to buy a house in Wealden.

3.118 Reducing the affordability gap across the District, through improving pay and income, together with other interventions to make housing more accessible and affordable to the residents of Wealden is critical. This is particularly important in retaining and attracting younger economically active people to support the economy in the future, to reducing out commuting and associated carbon emissions.

### Jobs, occupations, skills and employment sectors

#### Job numbers and Job density

3.119 The number of jobs in East Sussex increased by 15% over the decade up to 2008, more than the South East average of 10%. The increase in job numbers in Wealden averages 820 new jobs per year. Job density (the number of filled jobs divided by the number of people of working age) in East Sussex is low overall at an average of 0.76, below National and South East averages (0.83 and 0.86 respectively) with job density in Wealden is even lower at 0.73 and lowest of the five East Sussex Authorities.

3.120 This indicates that in Wealden, there are less jobs available within the District than the number of people of working age. In Wealden in 2008 there were 78,700 people of working age, 68,600 in employment and 58,000 jobs available within the District, giving a job density of 0.73. If all people living in the District were to work in the

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</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** CLG (2009) From ESCC - Local Economic Assessment - Topic Paper 4 - Place - by Experian - August 2010.
District, this would require the provision of an additional 20,700 jobs (27%) to meet current needs.

3.121 It is recognised however that the level of out commuting is currently high and also that a number of people come into the District to work, particularly to the industrial estates in Hailsham. Some of the current jobs available in the District therefore, will be taken by those coming into the District from neighbouring areas to work.

3.122 Additional jobs need to be created therefore to cater for the increase in population that will arise with housing growth. However, the number of jobs created should also seek to increase the number of jobs available per person (i.e. the job density) and should also provide more choice for residents; help to reduce out commuting; help to address issues of unemployment, worklessness and deprivation and help to reduce carbon emissions.

**Employment Sectors within Wealden**

3.123 East Sussex is dominated by service industries and public sector employers. In 2008 - 85% of jobs were in the service sector.\(^{(57)}\) One third of all people employed in East Sussex were employed in public administration, education or health.

3.124 The service sector dominance is also a feature of Wealden. Around 45,200 people work in the District, almost three quarters working within the Service sector. The Public administration, education and Health represents the largest sector in Wealden (23.6%)\(^{(58)}\) but has the least number of employees in this sector of all the East Sussex Authorities, and below the Regional and National averages.

3.125 The other the top sectors for Employment in Wealden are Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (17.9%), Construction (10.1%), Accommodation and Food services (9.1%), manufacturing (8.9%) and Professional, Scientific and technical activities (6.9%).

3.126 For all other sectors, although the numbers of employees in each is less than 2,500, sector representation is good. In several sectors, (such as Arts Entertainment and recreation (4.0%) and agriculture, fishing, mining and utilities (3.3%) nearly half of those employed in this sector are living in Wealden), Wealden comes top of the East Sussex authorities and has levels of representation above the Regional and National averages.

3.127 The Construction industry is particularly well represented in Wealden at 9.5%, above all other East Sussex authorities and almost double the National (4.8%) South East (4.5%) and East Sussex averages (5.7%).

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\(^{(57)}\) and subsequent figures from ESCC - Publications - Focus on East Sussex - 2010 annual monitor [www.eastsussexfigures.org.uk](http://www.eastsussexfigures.org.uk)

3.128 Wealden is less well represented however in the Transport and Communications sector (2.9%) and the Financial Insurance and real Estate sector (2.7%) where representation is below average.

3.129 Within Wealden, Hailsham has the best representation of people working in all sectors. This could be a factor of location and proximity to Eastbourne, the A27 and the A22, providing good north/south and east/west connections. The presence of the largest industrial estate (Diplocks) in the District would also have a factor in this level of representation also, with the highest representation of people working in Manufacturing living in Hailsham East ward.

3.130 Uckfield and Heathfield have a fairly good representation of people working across the sectors, with the exception of Public Administration, with above average representation in the Manufacturing and Banking sectors.

3.131 Heathfield East ward has the highest percentage of people working in Agriculture etc of the five towns, which probably reflects it’s location as the main town within the AONB. However, it may also reflect a shortage of affordable housing in surrounding rural parishes and/or a need/desire to live in Heathfield and the proximity to local services for families, particularly schools and doctors surgeries.

3.132 Crowborough has a high proportion of people working in the Banking sector, with good representation of those working in the Hotels/Distribution and Transport sectors. Jarvis Brook, has above average nos of people working in Manufacturing.

3.133 Polegate is above the Wealden average and top of the five towns for those working in Construction and Public Administration, possibly due to the location of the train station in Polegate, with access to public sector opportunities in Eastbourne, Lewes, Brighton and beyond and proximity to main north/south and east/west routes providing easier access to larger centres.
Banking, Finance and Insurance and Public administration are the predominant sectors for those living in rural areas to the north-west, north-east and centre of the District.

In the rural areas to the south-west and south-east, Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants, Public Administration, Education and Health, Banking, Finance and Insurance are the predominant sectors.

Although seen to be a declining area, the Agriculture, Fishing Energy and Water sector, is well represented in a number of the rural parishes, with particularly strong representation in Selmeston (where is it four times the Wealden average), in Chiddingly, Fletchling, Hellingly, Wartling, Hooe, Little Horsted and parishes to the south-west, (where it is three times the Wealden average), and in Laughton, Isfield and Warbleton, Buxted and Hadlow Down (where it is twice the Wealden average). This sector is still important therefore to many of the Parishes and to the rural economy in Wealden.

**Wealden’s growth sectors and contribution to the Economy**

Just over 4% of the South East’s Gross Value Added (GVA)\(^{(59)}\) was generated by East Sussex in 2007,\(^{(60)}\) with only the Isle of Wight and Medway falling below that figure. GVA per person in East Sussex, at £14,678, was only 74% of the average for the UK and only 69% of the average for the South East.

Wealden contributes the greatest share of GVA to the East Sussex economy. More than a quarter (29.1%) of East Sussex’s GVA in 2008 was generated by Wealden\(^{(61)}\) and this is forecast to grow within the plan period.

**Table 3 East Sussex’s GVA Contribution by District - 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GVA by district (£million), CVM, ref year 2003</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastbourne</td>
<td>1496.5</td>
<td>22.56%</td>
<td>1739.9</td>
<td>23.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hastings</td>
<td>1081.1</td>
<td>16.30%</td>
<td>1240.5</td>
<td>16.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewes</td>
<td>1303.4</td>
<td>19.80%</td>
<td>1463.3</td>
<td>19.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rother</td>
<td>991.7</td>
<td>14.95%</td>
<td>1099.2</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealden</td>
<td>1759.3</td>
<td>26.52%</td>
<td>1931.3</td>
<td>25.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Sussex</td>
<td>6632.0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>7474.2</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

59 Gross Value Added (GVA) refers to the overall value of goods and services produced
60 From ESCC - Publications - Focus on East Sussex - 2010 annual monitor [www.eastsussexfigures.org.uk](http://www.eastsussexfigures.org.uk)

3.139 In 2008, approximately 19%\(^{62}\) of people in East Sussex worked in 'growth' and 'high value added' sectors, such as the Finance, Information and Technology sectors. These are sectors that have the highest rates of increase in gross added value i.e. overall value of goods and services produced. Wealden experienced approximately 32% growth in these sectors between 1997 and 2007 and has around 34% of the employees in these sectors,\(^{63}\) the highest of all of the East Sussex authorities.

3.140 Wealden residents therefore play a major role in supporting the wider economy of East Sussex and beyond. This situation is likely to continue throughout the plan period, even though the LDF will aim to create more sustainable patterns of living for the future.

3.141 The sectors within Wealden that have made the largest contribution to Gross Value Added since 2002 are the Distribution, Hotels and Restaurant, Public Administration, Education and Health, Construction, Banking, Finance and Insurance sectors. These sectors have the potential to grow in the future. Ensuring that the conditions are right to encourage and support these sectors will improve Wealden's GVA contribution and economic competitiveness.

62 From ESiF - Publications - Focus on East Sussex - 2010 annual monitor www.eastsussexfigures.org.uk
### Table 4 GVA contribution by Sector - Wealden - 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GVA by sector (£million)</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>Share</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>Share</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>Share</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Share</th>
<th>Change 02-05</th>
<th>Change 05-08</th>
<th>Change 08-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing</td>
<td>35.86</td>
<td>2.96%</td>
<td>33.44</td>
<td>2.44%</td>
<td>33.12</td>
<td>2.22%</td>
<td>32.53</td>
<td>1.98%</td>
<td>-6.75%</td>
<td>-0.94%</td>
<td>-1.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy and Water</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>0.33%</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>-9.31%</td>
<td>13.01%</td>
<td>-1.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>60.46</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>40.67</td>
<td>2.97%</td>
<td>42.34</td>
<td>2.84%</td>
<td>44.77</td>
<td>2.73%</td>
<td>-32.74%</td>
<td>4.10%</td>
<td>5.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Manufacturing</td>
<td>131.08</td>
<td>10.83%</td>
<td>169.11</td>
<td>12.33%</td>
<td>177.50</td>
<td>11.91%</td>
<td>187.83</td>
<td>11.46%</td>
<td>29.02%</td>
<td>4.96%</td>
<td>5.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>197.56</td>
<td>16.32%</td>
<td>212.79</td>
<td>15.52%</td>
<td>225.03</td>
<td>15.10%</td>
<td>252.26</td>
<td>15.39%</td>
<td>7.71%</td>
<td>5.75%</td>
<td>12.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution, Hotels and restaurants</td>
<td>248.49</td>
<td>20.53%</td>
<td>263.27</td>
<td>19.20%</td>
<td>284.00</td>
<td>19.06%</td>
<td>305.38</td>
<td>18.63%</td>
<td>5.95%</td>
<td>7.87%</td>
<td>7.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and Communications</td>
<td>44.86</td>
<td>3.71%</td>
<td>63.12</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
<td>75.11</td>
<td>5.04%</td>
<td>88.57</td>
<td>5.40%</td>
<td>40.70%</td>
<td>18.99%</td>
<td>17.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking, Finance and Insurance etc.</td>
<td>196.71</td>
<td>16.25%</td>
<td>236.60</td>
<td>17.26%</td>
<td>265.22</td>
<td>17.80%</td>
<td>301.66</td>
<td>18.40%</td>
<td>20.28%</td>
<td>12.09%</td>
<td>13.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration, Education and Health</td>
<td>204.61</td>
<td>16.90%</td>
<td>209.18</td>
<td>15.26%</td>
<td>223.34</td>
<td>14.99%</td>
<td>238.41</td>
<td>14.54%</td>
<td>2.23%</td>
<td>6.77%</td>
<td>6.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>86.05</td>
<td>7.11%</td>
<td>138.67</td>
<td>10.11%</td>
<td>159.82</td>
<td>10.72%</td>
<td>183.23</td>
<td>11.18%</td>
<td>61.16%</td>
<td>15.25%</td>
<td>14.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,210.47</strong></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td><strong>1,371.19</strong></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td><strong>1,490.37</strong></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td><strong>1,639.48</strong></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td><strong>13.28%</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.69%</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The small business economy in Wealden

3.142 The economy of East Sussex is characterised by a high proportion of small businesses. Three quarters of businesses employ less than 5 people and 88% employ less than 10 people. Only 27% of people work for large businesses employing 100 or more people compared to 43% Nationally and 40% Regionally.

3.143 Small and micro businesses also form a fundamental part of the Wealden economy with almost double the number of businesses in this category than any other District in East Sussex, with around 90% of firms employing fewer than 10 people. Wealden also has the highest proportion of home workers in East Sussex at 14.2% of the working population.

Figure 13 East Sussex % of Business by turnover, 2009

Source: ESCC - ESiF Business enterprises by turnover, 2004 - 2010 - Districts.

65 ESIF - Transport - Mode of travel to work in 2001 - Parishes www.eastsussexfigures.org.uk
3.144 The figure above shows that in 2009, a greater number of businesses in Wealden generated turnover of between £50k and £249k, followed by those generating between with far fewer businesses generating more than £249k. These businesses are most likely to be small and medium enterprises in Wealden.

3.145 The large number of small businesses reflects the high number of consumer services activities such as shops, cleaning, pubs and leisure activities in the local economy, and also the high level of entrepreneurs within the District.

3.146 As a large rural District with a declining agricultural economy, it is hardly surprising that three quarters of small businesses in Wealden are farm based. The diversified Agricultural sector makes a significant impact on the area both in terms of economy and in shaping the landscape. Supporting the small business economy will be important to the future economy of the District.

**Working from home**

3.147 Over the 10 years to 2001, there has been a significant increase in East Sussex in the number of people working mainly at or from home, with the figure almost doubling in that time. In 2001, 11.6% of residents in East Sussex worked at home, in Wealden this figure was higher at 13.8%. (66)

3.148 Within Wealden the pattern of home working is most predominant in Rural Parishes, with all but four parishes (Berwick, Willingdon and Jevington, Pevensey and Westham) having above the Wealden average levels of home workers. The highest percentage is found in Hooe at 25.5%, and a further 6 parishes have levels almost or more than 10% above the Wealden average. (Fletching - 23.2%, Warbleton - 23.8%, Alciston - 24.1%, Chiddingly - 25.2%, Wartling - 25.1% and Cuckmere Valley - 25.3%). Heathfield is the only town in Wealden where home working at 15.3% is above the average for Wealden.

3.149 Working from or at home is a strong component of the Wealden small business economy particularly in rural areas and much more prominent than in other East Sussex authorities. The availability of good internet connections and fast broadband speeds is becoming increasingly important in enabling small home based enterprises and in relation to e-commerce, and the way we live our lives today. Flexible working practices also require good broadband connectivity and enabling and improving the network will be critically important to the future economy of Wealden and in reducing our carbon footprint and commuting.

**Broadband and e-commerce**

3.150 According to the Sussex Annual Business Survey (2007) approximately 77% of East Sussex businesses had internet access, with Wealden the highest at 85%, reflecting the high proportion of businesses and financial services establishments in the District.
3.151 Around 14% of micro-businesses in East Sussex, generate over half of their business online, which is a much higher proportion than small businesses (8%) and medium/ large businesses (12%). Micro-businesses are more likely to be start-up businesses and may have taken advantage of newer technology to set up their business online.\(^{(67)}\) This is particularly significant in relation to businesses in Wealden where a high proportion are SME’s and micro-businesses, and people working from home.

3.152 Just under a quarter (24%) of businesses in East Sussex, that have been trading for less than 2 years, generate over 50% of their business online, compared with only 10% of those which have been trading for 3 - 10 years and 11% of those trading for more than 10 years. Around a quarter of establishments that have been trading for 3 - 10 years\(^{(68)}\) and for more than 10 years (26%) generate up to a tenth of their business online.

Table 5 Proportion of business generated online in each district (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of business generated online</th>
<th>Eastbourne</th>
<th>Hastings</th>
<th>Lewes</th>
<th>Rother</th>
<th>Wealden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-10%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-49%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-75%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 75%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3.153 However, the 2007 Survey also reported that 31% of businesses had no means of connecting to the internet. This accords with local information and market intelligence relating to the speed and coverage of the internet in Wealden, which varies considerably across the District, and the statistical information regarding access to the internet. In all wards within the District, at least 50% of adults have internet access, with a total of 10 out of 42 Parishes (24%) being below the Wealden average of 72.1%.\(^{(69)}\)

3.154 The percentage of adults with internet access tends to be higher in the rural parishes with the highest levels of 82.2% in the rural parish of Laughton. This compares to the highest level recorded in the towns, which is 79.6% in Uckfield.\(^{(70)}\) Crowborough is the only town where all wards have above average number of adults with internet access. Heathfield and Uckfield both have one ward below the Wealden average, and in both Polegate and Hailsham all wards are below the Wealden Average. Rural areas where the percentage of adults with internet connections is below the Wealden average include
Isfield, Horam, Ninfield, Pevensey, Willingdon and Jevington and Chalvington with Ripe with the lowest percentage of adults with internet connections at 50.8%, nearly 22% below the Wealden average. Chalvington with Ripe is however, one of the areas with higher percentage of elderly people.

3.155 These statistics are particularly important in relation to Wealden's high level of micro businesses and home workers, and in encouraging this entrepreneurial activity in the future.

3.156 Of critical importance however, particularly to the future competitiveness of businesses in the District, is the possibility of third generation (3G) and fibre-optic connectivity, which will improve internet speeds and capacity. In largely rural areas such as Wealden, the cost of infrastructure for this roll out is considerable. The Government however, has recently announced initiatives to increase broadband coverage to all rural areas. This should help to improve the situation however, further partnership working is required to ensure that the infrastructure to enable better internet connectivity and speeds is provided to enable the local economy to grow and prosper.

**Entrepreneurial Activity, Business Start Up rates and survival rates**

3.157 Businesses in East Sussex but particularly in Wealden, have been more resilient to changes in the economic market. Wealden has higher than the average business survival rates, with 52% of businesses surviving more than 5 years and has consistently above average levels of new business registration rates.

**Figure 14 Business start-ups in East Sussex, 2004-2008**


**Source:** ESCC - Local Economic Assessment - Topic Paper 2: Business and Enterprise - by Experian - August 2010.
3.158 High levels of business registration and business survival will continue if supported by the provision of adequate accommodation, including 'move on' space and business support to ensure that new businesses and a high level of entrepreneurial activity continue to be a feature of the Wealden economy.

3.159 In addition, the rateable value of commercial stock in Wealden contributed to 77% of the East Sussex total. Wealden’s contribution to the economy of East Sussex was therefore, over this period, considerable.

3.160 Looking at the increase in the various commercial stock components over this time however, shows where the majority of change has occurred and reveals some interesting trends.

3.161 Between 2005 and 2008, there was a general reduction (by 44) in the number of retail units across East Sussex, whilst at the same time there was an overall increase in floor space of around 4,000 sq m. This indicates that perhaps smaller shops were being replaced with larger stores. Wealden was the only local authority where there was an increase by 9, in the number of retail units and an increase in 6,000 sq m of floor space.

**Employment space**

3.162 The amount of commercial and leisure development space created in East Sussex in 2008/09 increased by over 43% from the previous year, however business floor space created was much less than in the previous year. Overall, the total area of land available for business development across the county has fallen from 165 hectares in 2005 to 124 hectares in 2009.

3.163 In the three years from 2005 - 2008, there was an increase in the number of units, by 473 and available floor space by 46,000 sq m for all commercial stock in East Sussex. There was an increase in the number of units in all of the East Sussex authorities, but this was most significant in Wealden which contributed to nearly half of the total increase in commercial stock in East Sussex (with an increase in 233 units) and around 58% of the total increase in floor space (with 27,000 sq m of floor space).

**Table 6 Commercial property stock by area and rateable value - Districts 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commercial Class</th>
<th>Offices</th>
<th>Factories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variable Geography</td>
<td>Number of units</td>
<td>Floorspace - sq.m (000's)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastbourne</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hastings</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

72 and subsequent figures from ESIF - Economy, jobs and prosperity - Industry, Commercial and Retail - Commercial property stock by area and rateable value, 2005 - 2008. [www.eastsussexfigures.org.uk](http://www.eastsussexfigures.org.uk)
### Commercial property stock by area and rateable value - Districts 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commercial Class</th>
<th>Offices</th>
<th>Factories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lewes</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rother</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealden</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Variable Geography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warehouses</th>
<th>Number of units</th>
<th>Floorspace - sq.m (000's)</th>
<th>Rateable value - £'s (000's)</th>
<th>Rateable value - £'s per sq.m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastbourne</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>6,174</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hastings</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>3,884</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewes</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>7,576</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rother</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3,061</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealden</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>11,475</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other bulk premises</th>
<th>Number of units</th>
<th>Floorspace - sq.m (000's)</th>
<th>Rateable value - £'s (000's)</th>
<th>Rateable value - £'s per sq.m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>132</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>141</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>874</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>194</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1,393</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** ESCC - ESiF - Commercial property stock by area and rateable value - Districts 2008.

#### 3.164

With regards to office stock, there was an overall increase in the number of units across East Sussex by 211 units and an increase in floor space of 16,000 sq m overall. All authorities benefited from an increase in the number of units and increased office floor space, with unit numbers increasing the most in Lewes (by 64 units, but with only an increase in 1,000 sq m floor space). Wealden was just behind Lewes with an increase in 49 office units and an increase in 4,000 sq m of office floor space. Hastings had a similar increase in unit numbers, but a greater increase in the floor space created. Commercial intelligence indicates that new office units in Wealden generate a smaller floor space, as most are located in older properties.

#### 3.165

The number of factories across East Sussex increased by 64, in the period between 2005 and 2008, but with an overall decrease in floor space of 29,000 sq m. The largest increase in unit numbers was again in Wealden with an overall increase in 35 units - more than 54% of the East Sussex total - but with an overall decrease in floor space of 12,000 sq m. This would indicate that in general factories are reducing in size, possibly as a result of the type of product that is now being produced, modern logistics and just-in-time technology.

#### 3.166

The increase in warehouse stock and floor space is by far the most significant issue regarding change in the commercial stock in East Sussex, with all authorities except...
Hastings seeing an increase in numbers and floor space. The number of units increased by 317 with an increase in floor space of 58,000 sq m.

3.167 Again, the most significant change in numbers and floor space occurred in Wealden, where there was an increase of 138 warehousing units and an increase in 31,000 sq m of floor space. If all of this new floor space is attributable to new units however, this indicates a high proportion of smaller warehousing units, being on average about 225 sq m each.

3.168 The biggest change for Wealden in all commercial sectors occurred in 2006/2007 for all sectors except retail, with an overall increase in numbers of 140 commercial units and an increase in 23,000 sq m of floor space.

3.169 With regards to retail provision there was an increase of 7 units between 2005 and 2006, but a decrease in floor space provision, of 2,000 sq m, followed in 2006/2007 with a decrease in numbers of units by 5 but an increase in floor space of 6,000 sq m. Between 2007 and 2008 there was another increase in the number of units by 7 and a further increase in floor space of 2,000 sq m. This could relate to the building of a number of supermarkets in the area.

3.170 The level of activity in 2006/2007 in Wealden, just before the recession, was significant, and although the quantum was greatest for the most part in Wealden, a higher level of activity across the commercial sector was experienced in all East Sussex authorities during 2006/2007, with a drop off in activity in 2008 in all authorities except Lewes.

3.171 This level of growth and the fact that Wealden has fared well from new development, indicates a level of latent demand for commercial space within the District. Although the onset of the recession has led to a slower pace of development, the past trends show that with appropriate land, space and conditions, there is a potentially growth market, which we should proactively plan for, for all commercial sectors in the future which will provide significant employment opportunities for the residents of Wealden.

**Wealden’s main employment centers**

3.172 Employment in Wealden is provided through a range of business ventures, Retail, Service, Leisure and Tourism related businesses and through Farming and Land Management related sectors.

3.173 Larger villages such as Wadhurst, Frant, Mayfield and Forest Row provide a range of services that provide employment opportunities for the residents of the village and surrounding areas. This includes retail and service faculties and in the case of Wadhurst and Forest Row, small business areas.
Figure 15 Main employment, retail and tourism destinations in Wealden

3.174 Smaller villages may have a more limited range of local services, particularly retail, providing local employment opportunities. Home working is also a significant characteristic of the local economy.

3.175 However the most significant employment opportunities in Wealden are to be found in the five market towns in the form of Retail, Leisure, Service outlets, Offices and Industrial units.

3.176 In relation to the 'traditional' employment estates, the largest of these are to be found in Hailsham (Diplocks Industrial Estate) and in Uckfield (Bellbrook Industrial estate), with smaller industrial estates/Business parks in the other three market towns. These are shown on the table below.

Table 7 Main industrial/business estates in Wealden - showing the number of units, number of firms, vacancy and occupancy rates in March 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial Estate</th>
<th>No of units</th>
<th>No of firms</th>
<th>Possibly Vacant?</th>
<th>Vacant units</th>
<th>Vacancy rate</th>
<th>Occupancy Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crowborough</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connors Yard</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexden Lodge</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farningham Road</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millbrook</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Road</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total C'boro</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uckfield</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellbrook</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridgewood</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Uckfield</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathfield</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghyll Road</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Economy of Wealden

#### Wealden District Council Local Development Framework

#### The Economy and the Provision of Jobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Retail</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Station Road</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Heathfield</strong></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Retail</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heathfield</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplocks</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leap Cross</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station Road</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan Barn</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Hailsham</strong></td>
<td>259</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Retail</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hailsham</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplocks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leap Cross</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station Road</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan Barn</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Wadhurst</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Retail</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wadhurst</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durgates</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wadhurst Business Estate</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Wadhurst</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Retail</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polegate</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lower Dicker</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Retail</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hackhurst Lane</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountney</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forest Row</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Economy of Wealden

**Easons Green**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estate</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>6%</th>
<th>94%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Squires Farm</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total other</strong></td>
<td>798</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>798</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3.177 The main industrial estates in Wealden as outlined in Figure 22, offer a range of types of accommodation, at various locations across the District. The most popular and largest estates are Diplocks in Hailsham and Bellbrook in Uckfield, and these two estates accommodate almost 39% of firms within the main industrial estates of the District. The Employment Land review\(^{(73)}\) demonstrates that demand in the District, is strongest for small units of less than 185 sq m net office floor space and 465 sq m net of industrial floor space, and this is borne out by the evidence regarding the high numbers of SME’s in the District and by recent information regarding market demand from the Economic Focus Group.

3.178 In addition, the Wealden Local Plan (1998) allocated a site for business development at the Ashdown Business Park near Maresfield, to the north west of Uckfield. Planning permission has been granted recently for 18,100 sq m net B1 floor space, and it is hoped that this will be implemented, given the current market.

3.179 Hackhurst Lane at Lower Dicker, to the north west of Hailsham has potential to expand to provide an additional 14,829 sq m net B1/B2 and B8 floor space, subject to the necessary road and access improvements being implemented. However, doubt has recently been cast on achieving these essential improvements given the current market, and viability tests are currently being undertaken. In the event that the site is found to be undeliverable within the plan period, contingency sites will be included within the urban extension of Hailsham.

3.180 Both of these sites are important in achieving sufficient space for future business growth in the District and to reducing commuting and carbon emission, particularly in relation to proposed growth in Uckfield and Hailsham.

**Consultation responses**

3.181 Despite it’s location within the South East, it’s attractiveness as a nice place to live and an outward appearance of affluence, Wealden faces a number of particular economic challenges which have been identified through the analysis of evidence regarding
aspects of the local economy, through the analysis of responses to consultation and intelligence from the Economic Focus Group.


3.182 The Issues and Options consultation document (74) asked a series of questions regarding the challenges and opportunities facing the future of Wealden in relation to:- Wealden’s landscape; working patterns; settlement patterns; places; communities; making it happen and developing the Spatial Vision for Wealden.

3.183 The Chapter on Wealden’s working patterns, outlined the shift away from Farming, travel to work patterns and the economic challenges facing Wealden and asked respondents to agree or disagree with 4 generic questions around the provision of employment land. In summary these related to:-

- Considering employment sites that had not been developed as mixed use development sites if there was no realistic prospect of the site coming forward for employment use.
- Protecting existing employment sites from redevelopment where there was evidence of market need.
- New business development should focus on SME space and general industrial in suitable locations, and
- New housing development should be balanced with an appropriate level of new business development.

3.184 The document then outlined some of the opportunities for employment space based on the South East Plan focus on the Sussex Coast Sub Region area of the District (Polegate and Hailsham) and the Hailsham/Eastbourne Triangle aspirations. Respondents were asked to state whether they agreed or disagreed with 5 specific spatial options for new employment/business developments: -

- To the north west of Polegate by the A27(T),
- To the north of Polegate around the A22 Cophall roundabout,
- To the north east of Polegate but south of the A27(T),
- The area around the A22 in Hailsham and
- Any other locations that should be considered.

3.185 The Key issues in response to these questions were generally favourable and supportive in relation to the generic issue questions, but more negative in relation to specific locations. Locations to the north-east of Hailsham and locations adjacent to the existing Chaucer and Dittons Road employment locations, were favoured alongside the existing provision in Hailsham. The adverse impact on the South Downs, the A27 and severance from Polegate/Hailsham were issues raised in relation to other locations.
3.186 A range of alternative sites were also proposed, including sites proposed as part of mixed use developments to the east and north of Hailsham and extensions of the Dittons Road and Chaucer industrial estates in Polegate.

3.187 Other issues raised through this consultation were the need to ensure a range of employment types, a range of size of sites and buildings and a need to ensure skills training.

3.188 Our strategy as outlined in Section 4, outlines an approach that addresses some of the issues and locations proposed raised through the 2007 consultation.


3.189 The purpose of the 2009 Spatial Development Options consultation was to elicit responses from the public and other interested parties as to the desired spatial allocation for housing and employment growth across the District until 2026. The Spatial consultation document included 6 options for housing allocation and 4 options for employment allocations. The four employment option locations were:-

- Dispersed employment developments - which located employment land in proportion to new housing development, taking into account existing and allocated employment land.
- Town and service centre employment focus - a more selective dispersed arrangement which distributed land primarily in or on the fringes of towns, where good basic facilities exist and takes into account the existing role and function of the towns.
- Intensification at existing employment locations - with an emphasis on areas with existing employment sites and on using opportunities to intensify and expand existing sites where appropriately located.
- Polegate and Hailsham focus with support from Uckfield and Crowborough - which provided a significant proportion of future employment space to the south of the district with more limited growth in the north of the District.

3.190 The document however did not provide any floor space allocations for the four options, as the South East Plan (although providing a rough jobs target in relation to the Sussex Sub Coast region as a whole) was not specific about floor space allocations within the District.

3.191 The most favoured option was to focus employment (including Retail provision) in the larger towns with existing provision, as there were concerns about critical mass and delivery issues with more dispersed options. However, despite this view it was also considered that proportionate development would prevent over development in one area and also assist the vitality and viability of villages and rural areas.

3.192 Other key issues raised were the importance of providing local work for local people; supporting local businesses, micro-businesses and home working, particularly in...
rural areas; support for farm diversification and support for local businesses; linking housing and employment growth and linking skills training and education.

3.193 Our strategy as outlined in Section 4, outlines an approach that addresses these issues raised through the 2009 consultation and effectively proposes a hybrid of the Spatial Options outlined in the consultation document.

Economic Focus Group and business Intelligence

3.194 An Economic Focus group, comprising key people from the commercial sector, local authority and agency sectors was established to provide market intelligence and advice, explore issues and challenges, test assumptions and help develop the strategy for the future economy of Wealden.

3.195 A number of key points were raised and discussed by the focus group. In summary, these include:

- There are ‘two’ Wealden economies, with north and south Wealden looking to different markets - these need to be assessed and addressed differently.
- The industrial estates in Crowborough and Polegate have been successfully attracting businesses from Tunbridge Wells because the market is less expensive in Wealden.
- Relatively low vacancy rates within Wealden which is good - however low turnover rates so there is a great need for additional space. Creation of new space favoured rather than an extension of existing space, if indeed this is possible. Preferable if new sites are able to provide a ‘mix’ of B Class uses.
- There is also a need within Wealden for small business growth ‘easy in - easy out’ space, such as currently available in Newhaven and Hastings - sites for those working at home for example, to move to bigger premises and have scope to grow - serviced sites would be ideal.
- Whereas there is a need for small business space there are incidences where established companies are leaving Wealden as they cannot find suitable move on space. Generally these companies want to buy freehold land but such land is not readily available - this needs to be recognised and supported by the local authority. However balanced against this is the question however regarding how many larger employers would be attracted to area if space were made available?
- There is an issue regarding the loss of office space in town centres, with considerable applications for change of use to residential being approved. Loss of small office space could be detrimental to the economy of town centres in Wealden.
- Considerable potential for regeneration of Hailsham town centre, but this requires a clear statement of intent and commitment from the Council and a need for engagement between major land owners and Wealden Council to get things moving and to achieve change.
- Need to be consistent regarding the commitment of partners to the ‘Triangle’ concept in the Hailsham/Polegate area.
- Uckfield has the potential to be a good hub for surrounding areas - good demand for offices in the town centre but this is being diminished by change of use to residential.
In Crowborough, Wealden District Council is a major employer in the Town Centre. There is a need to consider the impact that the office move to Hailsham will have on Crowborough (and indeed on Hailsham) and what might replace it.

Heathfield, is not an office location, and industrial estates currently full - limited opportunities for further expansion.

Business opportunities in villages should be kept relatively small scale as major expansion would introduce friction re traffic, hours of operation etc. Some very successful examples of farm diversification projects within Wealden, however in future, access to good broadband facilities will be a factor in driving their success.

No market for speculative building at present - need to build in conjunction with housing to enable cross subsidy of employment provision. However, ‘mixed use’ an issue where ‘bad neighbour’ perceptions/issues exist and this may impact upon marketing of sites. This needs to be carefully handled through site planning, conditions and Use Class designation. There is a need to focus on the appropriateness of uses for proposed sites.

The environment and lifestyle is good in Wealden, but house prices high and wages low. This encourages out commuting to higher pay areas/jobs, but also means that affordability gap for those living and working locally is widening. There is a need to raise wage levels - which is connected to improving the skills of the local workforce, attracting new employers and creating opportunities within Wealden.

Infrastructure a big issue to resolve, particularly the state of the roads - there are not many ‘A’ class roads within the District and a lot of congestion on some. The general standard of roads and congestion is proving to be a deterrent for business.

A Major issue is broadband capacity and speeds - to remain competitive and in a world where e-commerce markets are growing, need to have good broadband. The 'roll out' of 3G broadband and prospect of this in Wealden is not good at present and lack of provision would impact adversely on the economy.

These aspects will be taken forward in considering the locations and scope of new employment space, and policies within the ore Strategy. This information will also be extensively used in subsequent Strategic Sites and Site Allocations Development Plan Documents, in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and in partnership working with others on aspects of the Economy of Wealden.
4 Key issues and challenges facing the future economy

Key issues and challenges

4.1 From all of the information and intelligence gathered, the following key issues and challenges that we need to consider in planning for a sustainable economic future for Wealden, can be established as follows:-

- Wealden is a diverse District that covers towns and rural areas – each have different issues requiring different solutions and different interventions.
- Marked socio-economic disparities between the north and the south of the District with earnings and skills generally much lower to the south. However there are pockets of economic and social deprivation in both urban and rural areas - including child poverty and elderly persons in poverty.
- Higher unemployment levels and worklessness exist generally to the south of the District.
- There are high levels of commuting out of the District - particularly in the north, due to the pull of other areas outside our boundaries for different employment sectors, better wages/salaries and for workforce/skills. This has a major impact on carbon emissions.
- Links between environmental quality and high quality of life - high house prices and development constraints through environmental designation.
- Need to encourage younger economically active people and those with families to stay or move into the area to support the economy in the longer term, particularly as future trends show a high proportion of elderly people/economically inactive people in the future. High house prices and low incomes mean huge affordability issues for younger people particularly in rural areas with many living in towns and working in rural areas. This is a very important issue to address in attracting economically active people to the area.
- There has been a general decline over the years in rural services, loss of local shops, pubs and post offices in many places, and a need to support these rural services to avoid rural towns and villages becoming dormitory towns and also to provide local employment and reduce the need to travel, particularly for the elderly or those without access to a car.
- There are issues regarding the quality and capacity of infrastructure. Roads, sewers, public transport provision, availability of suitable business accommodation and land for new premises, accommodation - size, age, type, location, rental value etc, local workforce and skill levels, educational attainment, aspirations, opportunities; all influence the decisions of inward investors. However, further partnership intervention is required to be able to change this situation significantly.
- Broadband coverage and speeds are an issue at present and a major deterrent for new businesses and a major issue particularly in rural areas where there is a higher percentage of home workers.
- There is a need for a range of business accommodation. Wealden has a high percentage of small businesses and those working at home and an identified need
4 Key issues and challenges facing the future economy

for small 'move-on' and 'incubator' space. However, also need larger sites to enable existing businesses who want to expand and stay within the District.

- Inward investment and the branding/marketing of the whole area needs to be addressed. This is a wider issue than just making space available - it is also about place making, improving the image of the area as an employment location, increasing productivity and sector growth.

- There has been an increase in high value added growth sectors in recent years with the challenge for the future in creating the right conditions to allow these sectors to expand and develop.

- Farm diversification projects are a major contributor to employment in the rural areas of Wealden, where the challenge is in supporting these ventures without detriment to the quality of the environment.

- Supporting tourism as major and potentially bigger contributor to the economy in relation to the South Downs National Park, the Ashdown Forest, coastal and water areas, the challenge in the future is in increasing activity and supporting the economy of rural areas and town centres relative to more prosperous tourism economy in neighbouring areas.

- There is little market for speculative building so there is as a consequence, the issue of deliverability and viability of new provision. Wealden experiences lower land values in the south of the District where there is more 'need' for jobs. In these locations there may be an issue re viability and take-up of sites.

- There is a need to make better use of space within existing employment sites and allocated employment sites that have not yet been implemented.

- Creating beneficial links to and between sectors to education/skills training, to ensure and maintain high skill levels, is required.

- There are links between economic growth and town centre regeneration, and revitalising town centres as employment foci. This is not just about what is on offer to residents of the area and tourists, but also in relation to changing the image/marketing and attracting new businesses and workers to the area. Revitalisation of town centres also about managing our assets and continuous improvement of what is on offer - and healthy promotion and competition between centres.

- Improving accessibility and connectivity throughout the District and to centres outside of the District, particularly by public transport and other modes of transport, is very important.

- Improving Wealden's capacity to generate GVA is important. At present Wealden generates nearly 30% of East Sussex's Gross Value Added (GVA)\(^{(76)}\) per annum. This is forecast to grow if conditions (i.e. infrastructure and labour force skills) are right, but substantial external intervention required to achieve this.

- Growth sectors, e-commerce and home working may help us to be more self sustaining and may have positive impact on levels of out-commuting in the District.

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76 Gross Value Added (GVA) relates to the overall value of goods and services produced.
Keeping villages alive is very important – need to support the vitality and viability of villages and rural areas and maintain the treasured rural character and distinctiveness of the area.

Need to support and grow SME's and micro-businesses as a key element of the economy of Wealden.

4.2 These issues form the basis of the core objectives and approach to building a sustainable local economy for Wealden and the policies to support the economy in the future.

Economic Objectives for Wealden

4.3 The analysis of the economic issues of the District has enabled the development of a number of economic objectives for Wealden, aimed at addressing social and economic issues. Policy areas to achieve these objectives are contained in Section 5.

- Improve economic prosperity and reduce economic disparities in income across the District - through encouraging new job creation - increasing economic activity and reducing unemployment by working in partnership to create the conditions to enable businesses to grow.
- Provide land for new employment provision aligned with housing growth.
- Improve the skill levels of the local workforce in partnership with key agencies.
- Support the retention, intensification and appropriate redevelopment of existing employment sites to provide modern, improved, flexible and energy efficient employment space.
- Reduce levels of out commuting and carbon emissions caused by commuting across the District, and reduce travel distances within the District to achieve a more self sufficient and sustainable economy for the future.
- Improve the economic performance, employment offer and functions of town centres through appropriate redevelopment, improvements and regeneration initiatives.
- Support appropriate employment generating rural and farm diversification projects to support the rural economy.
- Support tourism initiatives and business ventures that support the local tourism economy.
- Support the provision of a range of accommodation and serviced units/sites - especially for SME's to support this large and growing sector in Wealden.
- Improve roads, public transport provision (bus, cycling and walking provision) and connectivity, broadband and 3G provision, between key residential and employment locations.
- Support home working and initiatives such as live work units.
- Seek affordable family homes in key growth areas to attract younger, economically active people to the District and to strengthen the economy.
- Create better connected places – locate development where we can take advantage of what's there already through adaptations and improvement.
Encourage mixed use development, including employment uses, associated with new housing areas in Uckfield, Hailsham and in Polegate/Willingdon.

Support services and facilities in rural villages that provide local employment, to enable villages to thrive and survive.

4.4 Addressing these objectives through the Core Strategy and subsequent DPD’s will, in conjunction with other initiatives help to ensure a more sustainable and prosperous future economy for Wealden.
5 Shaping the future Economy of Wealden

5.1 The objectives outlined in Section 3 to address the issues and challenges and encourage sustainable economic growth in Wealden, form the building blocks to shaping our strategy for the future.

5.2 Responding to local needs will largely determine how we plan for and shape the future economy of the District. However, National and local plans and strategies (as outlined in Section 2), sustainability appraisal, the findings of key studies and local aspirations expressed through consultation responses, business intelligence, parish templates and master planning exercises, all play a part in shaping the future economy of Wealden.

Key studies

Wealden District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council Employment Land review

5.3 The Employment Land Review (ELR)\(^{(77)}\) for Wealden and Eastbourne was produced as the Draft Regional Strategy - the South East Plan was going to Public Inquiry in 2008. The ELR was based therefore on the housing projections for Wealden and Eastbourne at that time and adopted the objectives of the South East plan and in particular the emphasis on the Sussex Coast Sub region as an area for regeneration, supporting an 'economic step' change and an increase in GVA per annum.

5.4 The South East Plan did not include any specific employment targets for Wealden, but provided a target for the wider Sussex Coast Sub Region (which covers the south of the District) and the wider 'other rural areas' target (which covers the north of the District). All housing and employment targets have been locally derived therefore, to ensure that the Local Development Framework for Wealden meets local needs.

5.5 The ELR was also based on the pre-submission South East Plan housing targets for Wealden of 8,000 homes and related to the additional requirements for 'B' Class space uses to meet the projected housing growth in the District. This target was upped to 9,600 on the Inspectors recommendation, with the emphasis being on increasing employment space in the southern part District to achieve an 'economic step change' to address socio-economic issues. Subsequent to the Inspectors report, the final approved South East Plan increased the housing figures in Wealden to 11,000 new homes to be provided within the plan period 2006 - 2026.

5.6 Much of the information contained in the ELR has been revised and updated,\(^{(78)}\) and methodologies used in the ELR followed to provide new base line information for revised employment space calculations.

5.7 However, as the ELR figures related to the position at the start of the plan period in 2006 and included Eastbourne Borough Council’s requirements, the opportunity was
taken to update the ELR viable land availability on the basis of completions and commitments since 2008 and excluding the requirements for Eastbourne, to allow locally derived figures for Wealden District to be calculated. On the basis of 9,600 homes, and a projected workforce population of around 64,300 by 2030, the additional requirement for Class 'B' Use floor spaces in Wealden between 2006 and 2030, is 38,190 sq m net floorspace. These revised figures, will form the basis for planning for the projected employment growth in the District over the plan period.

**Wealden District Council Interim Shopping Study - 2008**

5.8 The Wealden District Council Interim Shopping Study outlines trends in shopping habits, including growth in expenditure, increased mobility, increased non store retailing (including mail order and on-line retailing), the increased link between shopping activities and leisure as well as the trend towards larger stores and intensification of sales (i.e. supermarkets selling convenience and comparison goods), which have led to changes in the way we shop over the last 20 years. It also includes health checks for each of the 5 key centres in Wealden, and looks at what this would mean regarding requirements for the future. The baseline position for each town in 2008, is shown in Table 8.

**Table 8 Comparison of existing commercial floor space for the five towns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>Retail floorspace (sq.m.)</th>
<th>Number of units</th>
<th>Number of Multiples</th>
<th>Prime Zone A Rentals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uckfield</td>
<td>30,062</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>£50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailsham</td>
<td>19,305</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>£45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowborough</td>
<td>15,040</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>£35.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathfield</td>
<td>14,270</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>£27.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polegate</td>
<td>4,108</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Wealden District Council - Interim Shopping Study - Chase and Partners - 2008.

5.9 This study was also prepared on the basis of the South East Plan pre-submission housing target of 9,600 homes but without the benefit of broad allocations of housing growth to particular locations. The Addendum Shopping Study Report of April 2010 looked at retail requirements on the basis of 11,000 dwellings, in accordance with the South East Plan, on the basis of two growth scenarios for the housing allocation to the five towns. This showed a need for additional floor space for both convenience and comparison goods shopping in all five towns, over the plan period, but noted the limitations for new provision in Polegate and Heathfield.

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79 Wealden District Council Planning Policy Team - ELR calculations Update - August 2010 [www.wealden.gov.uk](http://www.wealden.gov.uk)
80 From workforce population projections on the basis of 9,600 new homes, carried out by ESCC for WDC - September 2010
81 Wealden District Council Interim Shopping Study - 2008 - Chase and Partners [www.wealden.gov.uk](http://www.wealden.gov.uk)
82 Wealden District Council Interim Shopping Study - Addendum Report on Quantitative Need - April 2010 - Chase and Partners [www.wealden.gov.uk](http://www.wealden.gov.uk)
5.10 Following extensive testing of growth options and reduction of housing numbers in the Core Strategy to 9,600, an update to the Addendum report, utilising the ranges for the options presented, was prepared in house. This reflected the revised housing projections, taking variants and combinations of Growth Options 1 and 2 considered as part of the addendum report, according to the best fit with the new Core Strategy housing projections. This exercise suggested that a total of 2,812 sq m net convenience floor space was required and 23,886 sq m net of comparison retail floor space within the five towns between 2006 and 2030 (26,698 sq m net total in the five towns for all retail).

5.11 However, the strategy for growth is focused largely on Uckfield in the north of the District and Hailsham in the south of the District. Tunbridge Wells and Eastbourne are major attractors for retail provision for residents of Crowborough and Polegate respectively. It is proposed therefore, that the retail focus and additional provision of retail floor space is focused on the main growth areas of Uckfield and Hailsham, in line with Core Strategy and the masterplanning and regeneration focus for both towns.

5.12 Environmental constraints in both Crowborough and Heathfield, restrict the land available and the growth that these towns can take. Additionally in both Crowborough and Heathfield, but also in Polegate, land for retail expansion is constrained and sites for additional development (which could be delivered within the plan period) cannot be identified at this time. No additional retail allocations therefore, have been put forward in the Core Strategy for these towns, although redevelopment within the retail areas to support the vitality of these centres, will still be encouraged. Re-allocating the projected retail space requirement for Crowborough, Heathfield and Polegate to Uckfield and Hailsham, is not considered appropriate nor viable given the competition and town centre regeneration proposals for neighbouring larger centres, particularly Eastbourne and Tunbridge Wells.

Table 9 New retail space allocations 2006 - 2030

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Gross</th>
<th>Net</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crowborough</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailsham</td>
<td>9,110 sq m</td>
<td>6,230 sq m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathfield</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polegate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uckfield</td>
<td>14,757 sq m</td>
<td>10,707 sq m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,867 sq m</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,937 sq m</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Wealden District Council - Shopping Study addendum report - 2010.
5.13  The allocations shown in Table 9 of 10,707 sq m net for Uckfield, and 6,230 sq m net for Hailsham, **16,937 sq m net total**, will be used to guide the allocation of retail provision and jobs within this sector within these towns over the plan period.

**The Strategic Framework for Tourism in Wealden**

5.14  The Tourism Framework\(^{(84)}\) outlines the importance of tourism to the continuing vitality of Wealden’s urban and rural economy, outlines the nature of the tourism economy in the District, the challenges, visitor motivation and future markets. In addition it provides a series of action planning areas aimed at improving the tourism offer in the District in conjunction with partner organisations. The findings of the strategy and the implications for the local economy will also help to shape the future economy and policies within the Core Strategy.

5.15  Briefly the recommendations from the Tourism Strategy include:-

- Retaining existing accommodation where possible, and supporting the development of appropriate new accommodation.
- Encouraging and supporting tourism businesses to adapt and respond to changing markets.
- Encouraging appropriate small scale tourism initiatives focused on using environmental recreational resources in a responsible manner and encouraging the re-use of suitable redundant rural buildings for tourism and visitor purposes.
- Supporting the improvement of the quality of existing attractions, where appropriate.
- Enhancing Wealden's town centres by promoting their role in supporting tourism in the District.
- Supporting measures that relieve visitor pressures on the most vulnerable parts of Wealden’s environment specifically the National Park and Ashdown Forest/Pevensey Levels and measures which help to protect and enhance vulnerable habitats and landscapes.
- Improving the quality of recreational opportunities and managed access to sites with tourism potential.

5.16  These recommendations will assist the development of the tourism industry, job creation and the economy of Wealden, particularly in rural areas.

**The Eastbourne Hailsham Triangle**

5.17  The aspirations for the “Triangle”\(^{(85)}\) set out an ambitious vision for major economic step change in the Eastbourne/Polegate/Hailsham triangle area - through creating synergies between housing provision and major employers and educational establishments and the creation of a number of centres of excellence in the area, including a medi-park, an advanced manufacturing centre, a business support centre/enterprise hub, fostering the Creative Industries Sector, developing a high quality diverse Tourism sector, improving

\(^{(84)}\) The Strategic Framework for Tourism in Wealden - Blue Sail for Wealden District Council - April 2010 [www.wealden.gov.uk](http://www.wealden.gov.uk)

the public realm and offer of Eastbourne and Hailsham and on the relocation of the County Council offices from Lewes to Polegate.

5.18 This economic step change is based on a multi-strand approach to creating a diverse, resilient and higher value economy based on these key sectors and linking to education and skills development.

5.19 The ‘Triangle’ document presents three scenarios for growth all based around a high growth sector catalyst (i.e. medi park, etc) to provide development impetus and generate employment. Briefly the three scenarios based on these high growth sector catalysts are:-

1. Focus on the Core (i.e. Polegate over to Stone Cross/Westham),
2. A linked development corridor (from Hailsham through Polegate to Eastbourne) and
3. Strengthening existing centres (of Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne).

5.20 However, the relocation of County Hall from Lewes to Polegate now appears to be highly unlikely within the plan period. In addition, the aspirations overall have never been subject to tests regarding viability and deliverability, which are now considered to be major issues in implementing this ambitious project as outlined.

5.21 The basic thrust of the Triangle vision however, (minus the various high status clusters, parks and centres of excellence) and a focus on an economic step change for the south of the District to address low incomes, low skills base, unemployment and elements of deprivation, makes good sense in addressing the disparity between the north and the south of the District.

5.22 A focus on sustainable housing and employment allocation in a ‘flatter triangle’ focusing on Polegate/Willingdon to Hailsham and Stone Cross/Friday Street/Langney (the latter two areas are in Eastbourne Borough Council's area) together with a focus on the regeneration of Hailsham town centre, would combine parts of all three ‘Triangle’ scenarios tailored to meet local needs. This would also create synergies and linkages with Eastbourne's regeneration focus on strengthening of the Local Centre at Langney, and with the currently strong employment focus to the north west of Eastbourne adjacent to Polegate and Willingdon.

Sustainability Appraisal

5.23 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the various elements of the Core Strategy was undertaken as part of the development of the LDF. This involved assessing a range of alternative broad scenarios for growth against a set of social, environmental and economic sustainability objectives, to focus on options which will help to achieve more sustainable development for the future.

5.24 The broad economic scenarios were derived from evidence from the ELR and subsequent reviews, and were applied separately to the north and the south of the District,
reflecting the South East Plan focus on regeneration in the Sussex Coast Sub Region encompassing the south of the District and the different housing growth levels proposed for the north and south of the District.

5.25 The five scenarios assessed included:

- Maintaining the current balance through broadly maintaining the current balance between the number of workers in the District and the number of jobs.
- Encouraging a moderate economic step change through reducing the employment growth rate gap in Wealden with that of the South East by half.
- Encouraging a more radical economic step change through closing the employment growth rate gap in Wealden with that of the South East completely.
- Reflecting latest job forecasts on the basis of the SEP housing allocations (11,000 homes).
- Reflecting a 'business as usual' base case, prior to inclusion of adopted SE Plan housing allocations, i.e. on the basis of housing figures prior in the north in the SE Plan submission document - of 3,400 units.

5.26 In addition, a further scenario was assessed for the north of the District, which reflected 'Promoting past higher growth trends in the North'.

5.27 Indicative Class 'B' Use floor space requirements were calculated to respond to the requirements of each of these scenarios, based on the projected housing provision for the north and south of the District.

5.28 The results of the Sustainability assessment showed that for both the north and the south of the District, the most sustainable of the five scenarios were:

- Maintaining the current balance through broadly maintaining the current balance between the number of workers in the District and the number of jobs, and
- Encouraging a moderate economic step change through reducing the employment growth rate gap in Wealden with that of the South East by half in the north of the District.

5.29 It was considered that both of these scenarios, 'offer a reasonable range of potential new floor space that is achievable to deliver, balanced with proposed new housing growth whilst offering some potential for encouraging entrepreneurial activity, local business expansion and attracting some inward investment.'

5.30 In the south of the District both of these scenarios were considered to provide 'broadly appropriate levels of employment floor space that could contribute to beneficial effects for the social and economic SA Objectives. The level of employment floor space associated with this option may not deliver the radical economic step change envisaged by the South East Plan, but the economic situation has changed somewhat since the Plan was written and higher levels of floor space may not be viable in today's market conditions and for the life span of Core Strategy.'
5.31 The moderate ‘step change’ scenario therefore, was considered to best meet the needs of the District. On the basis of 11,000 additional dwellings, the floor space calculation for the north and south under a moderate step change scenario was 44,116 sq m net.

5.32 The SA assessment directly influenced the economic growth strategy and the spatial distribution of employment space across the District.

5.33 The evidence base suggested that the scenario of moderate economic step change was the most appropriate, sustainable and achievable for Wealden. To align employment growth in relation to housing provision, this scenario has been applied to the whole of Wealden on the basis of our new housing figure of 9,600. Calculating the Class ‘B’ Use floor space required on the basis of this scenario is 38,190 sq m net. The allocation of floor space within the District however, reflects the greater need to focus on a ‘step change’ in the south, as evidence suggests.

5.34 In addition, a number of additional mitigation measures relating to the economic aspects of the plan, were proposed through the SA to achieve more sustainable growth.

- Remain flexible in the quantum of floor space proposed that should market conditions improve over the Plan period the higher level of delivery can be achieved.
- Focus on redevelopment of underused industrial and employment areas to maximise brownfield land use and minimise new Greenfield land requirements.
- Opportunities to deliver a wider range of floor space including retail, tourism, community and leisure uses could be used in place shaping to deliver benefits to communities.
- Create strong links by public transport and cycle and pedestrian ways between employment areas and nearby residential communities and town centres.
- Consider how the delivery of employment floor space can be achieved in town centres to help stimulate their regeneration.
- Consider ways to minimise waste from construction and operation of new employment floor space and ensure new development incorporates re-use, recycling and composting opportunities where possible.
- Encourage industries that have a strong environmental focus and seek to build sustainable buildings, maximising green energies.

5.35 These measures will be incorporated into the Core Strategy and subsequent DPD’s and will shape economic objectives and policies in the LDF.

Local Economic Aspirations

Local Aspirations for the Five towns

Wealden’s town centres

5.36 The five market towns provide the main centres for local retail and service provision, secondary education and employment for town residents and for the immediate rural parishes. However in relation to the town centres, the retail ‘offer’ in general is rather
modest, with dominant supermarkets and lacking a strong representation of national multiples.

5.37 Wealden towns are affected by the pull of larger centres outside of the area particularly Tunbridge Wells, Brighton, Lewes and Eastbourne, which can provide a greater range and choice of retail provision, as well as a greater range of food and drink outlets, leisure and cultural facilities and a more vibrant night time economy.

5.38 This situation is unlikely to change, and the pull of larger centres will remain. However, ensuring the vibrancy and improving the ‘offer’ of our town centres is important to the residents of Wealden, to the economy, particularly in relation to attracting new business and to supporting the tourism economy, to reducing our carbon footprint, creating sustainable communities and reinforcing local distinctiveness and a sense of place.

5.39 Each of the five Town and Parish Council's however have aspirations for supporting a more vibrant local economy and have outlined their ambitions reflecting the views of local residents, through their masterplanning and visioning exercises. The masterplans for the five towns are summarised in detail in Background Paper 7: Summary of town masterplanning documents. (87)

5.40 There are common elements in the aspirations of each Town Council and associated partnerships which are articulated through each of the town masterplans. In essence these can be summarised as:-

- A desire to see a thriving and dynamic economy within the town centre, with a variety of shopping and commercial opportunities that provide for local residents/users and visitors.
- A commitment to retaining a unique local distinctiveness and sense of place through new development and public realm improvements made to the town.
- A desire to see the provision of/improvements to provide a high quality integrated public transport network, and improved pedestrian links.
- A need to provide new housing, including affordable housing, to support the economy.
- A need to support businesses and promote/encourage inward investment.
- A desire to support and encourage the local tourism economy and local attractions.

5.41 In addition to these common aspirations, Crowborough Town Council aspires to have a focal point for community within the town centre and seeks the development of a business centre with advisory services.

5.42 Hailsham Town Council supports the regeneration and development of Hailsham as a 'niche' town for destination shopping and tourist/visitor experiences, supports the retention of the ancient market and the provision of a central bus station. The Town Council also recognise the importance that improving the town centre and economy can have on addressing socio-economic issues in the town.

87 See Background Paper 7 - Summary of Town Master planning www.wealden.gov.uk
5.43 **Uckfield Town Council** also focuses on the town as a contemporary market town, providing a focal point in the form of a public square and supporting a night time economy.

5.44 **Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council**’s aspirations for the future role and function of Heathfield is for it to remain as a viable and sustainable service hub to much smaller settlements in the surrounding AONB area and to strengthen its' role and identity as a market town.

5.45 **Polegate Town Council** want to take advantage of Polegate’s position at the junction of the A22 and A27 and at a rail junction, to provide for strategically important employment and civic facilities contributing to the aims of the Hailsham Eastbourne 'Triangle', and recognises synergies with the Eastbourne Borough Council area.

5.46 Fulfilling these aspirations will strengthen and support the local economy, providing a range of improved facilities and opportunities for residents and visitors, including a range of full time and part time employment at various skill levels. These aspirations will also help to shape our plans for the future economy of Wealden.

**Economic aspirations from rural Parish Templates**

5.47 The towns also support residents in the rural areas of Wealden through the provision of jobs, shopping, and social and community facilities. The rural parishes of Wealden have also outlined their particular aspirations for the local economy to inform the LDF process, through their Parish templates. These templates indicate the key issues impacting upon the local parish communities. As part of this exercise, parish and town council’s were asked to identify their top three priorities for the Economy/Prosperity of their area. The findings from this exercise revealed that the key recurring priorities/aspirations were:

- Encourage support of local shops and businesses, and commercial development that supports and sustains the local economy.
- Attracting more local business to provide local employment.
- Supporting diversification of farm buildings or new development on Brownfield sites.
- Encouraging home working where possible, to assist protection of environment.
- The provision of Affordable Housing.
- Simplifying and speeding up the process of applying for planning applications and licenses for proposed and existing local businesses.
- Keeping village shops and post offices.
- Promoting tourism and support for local attractions that encourage visitors to the area.
- Ensuring that broadband is available to all possible users allowing more working from home and local rural businesses.
- The availability of parking.
- Improvement of public transport linkages to the nearest existing employment/businesses areas.
- Better for support for rural businesses.
5.48 Underlying these aspirations is the importance of keeping local rural economies thriving and growing to ensure that they continue to support rural communities. These aspirations will also influence our approach to planning for the future rural economy in Wealden.

Our response to the local economy - our strategy to support employment and growth

5.49 In responding the issues raised, local needs and aspiration, and looking at the future growth of the economy in Wealden our focus and response is on addressing a number of aspects.

The North - South Socio-Economic Disparity

5.50 The disparity between socio-economic issues in the north and the south of the District is being addressed through a focus on housing and employment growth primarily in two locations 1) in Uckfield, and 2) in a 'broad based Triangle' around Hailsham, Polegate/Willingdon and Stone Cross, along key road and rail networks. A focus in the south will also enable synergies with neighbouring authorities, particularly Eastbourne and their proposed regeneration focus at Langney. This strategic focus will also assist the development and continuation of strong partnerships between businesses, Job Centre plus centres, learning and skills organisations to strengthen the economy and improve socio-economic deprivation issues in the south of the District.

Supporting existing businesses

5.51 Existing businesses will continue to be major employers in Wealden and need to be supported to develop further and grow. There is a need to make better use of existing employment areas and support a flexible approach to sites to encourage employment creation. There is also a need to ensure the provision of a range of accommodation and 'grow-on' space in both urban and appropriate rural areas, particularly for SMEs, (88) who are a predominant feature of the Wealden economy.

Supporting the Rural Economy

5.52 Rural business ventures and farm diversification project are vitally important to the rural economy and the economy of Wealden as a whole. Supporting appropriate rural, farm and village business ventures, is essential to the vibrancy and vitality of rural areas and to maintaining vital landscapes and villages.

Supporting and Developing Tourism as a major contributor to the Economy of Wealden

5.53 There is significant local potential to increase the sizable contribution that tourism makes to the economy of Wealden. Wealdens' varied town, rural and coastal/water related landscape, has significant value in creating year-round and seasonal employment.

88 SME’s = Small and Medium Enterprises
Supporting tourism through the LDF with clear and strong policies will support the economy of the District.

**Mixed Use Development in association with Housing Growth**

5.54 Providing the majority of housing growth in Uckfield, Hailsham and Polegate/Willingdon will assist the viability of providing affordable housing where need is greatest and in achieving sustainable mixed use developments which include employment, social and community facilities and essential infrastructure improvements. This will include substantial employment space allocation as part of a mixed use housing development to the north of Hailsham, to the west of Uckfield and in Polegate/Willingdon.

**Town Centre regeneration and revitalisation**

5.55 The Council will continue to work with partners on developing the town masterplans - especially for Uckfield and Hailsham town centres, which will help to define clear strategies to encourage growth and regeneration (these will be included in subsequent DPD’s). In the remaining market towns, the Council will continue to work in partnership on local visioning exercises that will assist the development of the Strategic Site and Site Allocation DPD’s and support revitalisation of High Streets and main town centre areas.

**Future labour supply from projected housing growth**

5.56 East Sussex County Council have projected the workforce population for Wealden on the basis of housing growth of 9,600 homes from 2006 - 2030. The workforce has been taken as those aged 15 - 74. The projections take into consideration a proportion of the housing stock being occupied by residents from within Wealden and also a proportion of the new residents coming into the District from elsewhere, and the expected economic activity rates of the new residents. Some of these new residents may already work in the area and be moving into the District, others may be moving into the District but commuting to existing jobs elsewhere.

5.57 The figures indicate that the workforce is projected to grow by 1774 people (3.0%) up until 2016 where the total workforce is projected to peak at about 70,100 people, and then starts to decline again to around 64,300 by 2030, representing a decrease in workforce number of 5,800 between 2016 and 2030 (8.3%).

5.58 The projections show that the percentage of males in employment will decrease gradually over the plan period with an overall decrease of 10% of the male workforce. In the case of the female workforce, the projections show an increase in the workforce of 3.0% between 2006 and 2016 and then a gradual decrease in the workforce from 2016 to 2030, with an overall decrease over the plan period of 1%.

5.59 On the basis of Class ‘B’ Use space job creation ratios and employment densities, catering for the increase in job requirements at the peak of the plan period, i.e. an increase in the workforce of 1174 people as projected for 2016, will require in the region an additional 13,000 sq m net floor space provision, at current rates of economic activity. However, our strategy for employment growth seeks an increase in economic activity to
close the gap with the economic activity rates for the South East. A need to encourage and support greater entrepreneurial activity and reduce out commuting within the District, have been factored in to the Employment Land provision requirements outlined below.

**Employment land provision to meet projected housing and socio-economic needs.**

5.60 It is considered that there is still a need for an 'economic step change' across the District to support economic growth, particularly in the south, and to reduce levels of economic deprivation, improve wages and provide a range of employment opportunities.

5.61 The two scenarios in the original ELR therefore were used as a basis for the calculation of future floor space provision on the basis of new projected housing growth figures of 9,600 homes. Scenario A, looked at achieving a more moderate 'step change' by reducing the 'gap' in employment activity rates, unemployment rates with the South East by half, whereas Scenario B involved a more ambitious step change, through closing the 'gap' with the South East completely. A Sustainability Appraisal assessing a range of economic growth options provided a clear steer regarding the growth scenarios that would be most sustainable and achievable. A 'moderate step change' scenario was selected as it was considered to provide more scope for economic growth and improvement.

5.62 The revised calculations took into account existing allocations, commitments and completions which were combined to give a total viable land supply (i.e. Employment provision currently in the pipeline) of **90,505 sq m net**. The results of the revised calculations based on the provision of 9,600 homes up until 2030, indicated that a minimum **38,190 sq m net** floor space is required in addition to the likely viable supply, giving a total of **128,695 sq m net** Class 'B' Use floor space provision to encourage a sustainable and moderate step change in the economy across the District over the plan period.

**Aligning Housing and Employment growth**

5.63 New housing provision to meet local needs in Wealden is concentrated on two key locations, Uckfield in the north and a broad location around Hailsham, Polegate, Willingdon and Stone Cross in the south, with smaller allocations to Crowborough, Heathfield and selected rural villages.

5.64 In aligning housing and employment growth in the District, it has to be recognised that both Crowborough and Heathfield have limited potential to provide new employment space due to environmental constraints. Accepting that the nature of the District means that there will always be a need to travel within Wealden, there is still also a need to increase local employment opportunities and reduce commuting. It is considered that the provision of new employment space associated with housing/urban extensions can be provided in a more sustainable and economically viable manner, in line with housing provision. New employment space therefore has been allocated predominantly as part of mixed use development sites within the main housing growth areas in the District, in broad proportion to the housing allocation.
5.65 This employment space relates only to traditional Class 'B' Use space. However, further employment opportunities will be delivered through town centre revitalisation and regeneration initiatives and through additional retail, social and community provision associated with growth, in all towns, with a total of 16,937 sq m net additional retail floorspace allocation divided between the towns of Uckfield and Hailsham, as shown on Table 10.

Table 10 Aligning housing, employment and retail growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town settlement</th>
<th>Housing allocation</th>
<th>Employment New allocations 2006-2030 (net floor space sq. metres)</th>
<th>Additional Retail allocations 2006-2030 (net floor space sq. metres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crowborough</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathfield</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uckfield</td>
<td>1,742</td>
<td>12,650</td>
<td>10,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailsham</td>
<td>2,945</td>
<td>8,650</td>
<td>6,230</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polegate/ Stone Cross</td>
<td>1,957</td>
<td>16,890</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural villages</td>
<td>1,546</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Wealden</td>
<td>9,574**</td>
<td>38,190</td>
<td>16,937</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** NB: total housing figures rounded to 9,600 in all documents

Source: Wealden District Council - 2010

5.66 Due to development constraints in Crowborough, Heathfield and Polegate, no further retail allocation is proposed for these towns. In addition, and the focus of around two thirds of the employment allocation to the south of the District will contribute to the overall objectives to reduce socio-economic issues and deprivation by promoting economic opportunities, which align to housing growth and Eastbourne Borough Council’s regeneration objectives for the Langney area.

Delivering the Strategy

5.67 Delivering the economic growth strategy over the plan period, will require collaboration and partnership working with a range of agencies to ensure that the various elements required to support a growing economy, such as skills development and infrastructure provision, are in place.
5.68 Economic policies to support broad growth areas for employment associated with housing growth and the Housing Delivery Schedule, as shown in Figure 16, will be included within the Core Strategy, with further specific land for traditional Class 'B' Use employment space allocated through policy in subsequent DPD’s.
### Figure 16 Proposed Housing delivery schedule to which Employment space provision will be aligned

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uckfield urban extension (SD1)</td>
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<td>East Hailsham urban extension (SD2)</td>
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<td>North Hailsham urban extension (SD3)</td>
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<td>Crowborough - urban area (SD8 - SD9)</td>
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<td>South East Crowborough urban extension (SD10)</td>
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<td>Land at South Polegate and East Willingdon (SD4)</td>
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<td>Stone Cross urban extensions (SD6 - SD7)</td>
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<td>Heathfield urban extension (SD11)</td>
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<td>Tunbridge Wells urban extension (within Frant Parish SD12)</td>
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<td>Villages</td>
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<td>455</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Wealden District Council - 2010.
Market intelligence has indicated that there is a limited market for speculative building raising an issue regarding deliverability and viability of new provision. There are lower land values in the south of the District where there is more ‘need’ for jobs which may be an issue regarding the future viability and take-up of sites.

For this reason, new employment growth has been included within larger mixed use urban extension sites in Uckfield, Hailsham and Polegate, where elements of cross funding and infrastructure provision can occur in line with new housing provision. This will mean that the development of employment space will be phased in line with housing provision with current commitments providing employment space in the early years of the plan period.

Delivery of retail space and associated town centre employment opportunities will require a continuation of the partnership working in all towns but particularly in Uckfield and Hailsham to translate masterplan aspirations into working proposals and implementation schemes.
6 Economic Policy areas

6.1 Policies in the Core Strategy and DPD's comprising the LDF need to give a strong emphasis to supporting the local economy as a key component of the future planning of Wealden. These policies need to include retention of existing viable commercial and industrial allocations, provision of new employment allocations, retail and town centre regeneration, tourism and the rural economy.

6.2 On the basis of the analysis of issues and challenges, the consideration of local aspirations and requirements and objectives, the following policy areas are recommended. Strategic Policies will be included within the Core Strategy with more detailed policies contained within the Strategic Sites and Site Allocation DPD's.

6.3 Improving Economic performance

- Support a ‘step change’ in the economy, particularly in the south of the District, through improving skills and making the area more attractive to inward investors and to reduce levels of socio-economic deprivation.
- Seek improvements in GVA by supporting higher growth activities.
- Provide employment opportunities in key areas sufficient to meet the needs of local residents – whilst reducing the need to travel through greater consideration of mixed use development opportunities.

6.4 Existing Employment

- Encourage the provision of a range of ‘flexible’ accommodation and ‘grow on space’ to support existing business growth, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises.
- Retain allocated sites as basis of employment provision.
- Retain existing employment land and premises outside of allocated employment areas where appropriate, as a basis for local employment provision.

6.5 New Employment creation

- Support a range of employment opportunities in growth locations to match anticipated increases in economic activity of resident workforce - providing 38,190 sq m net of land to accommodate new employment space appropriate to meet new housing and population growth and reduce worklessness, particularly in the south.
- Promote mixed use development on strategic sites/urban extensions which can provide a range of employment opportunities.

6.6 Town Centres

- Focus on town centres, promote their regeneration and enhance their function to provide a range of employment opportunities and facilities including 16,937 sq m net total new retail floorspace provision within the District, to assist the regeneration of Uckfield and Hailsham town centres.

6.7 Infrastructure
6.8 Skills

- Seek to improve through partnership working, the skill-base of the local workforce to improve job prospects and make Wealden more attractive to inward investors.

6.9 The Rural Economy

- Support appropriate small scale rural enterprises to help improve the vitality and viability of villages and rural areas.
- Support appropriate farm diversification projects to help maintain the vitality and viability of rural areas and smaller villages.

6.10 Tourism

- Support and encourage appropriate local tourism opportunities across the District and support opportunities in key locations such as adjacent to the South Down National Park, the AONB and the Ashdown Forest.

6.11 All of these areas will help to shape the Core Strategy and will be taken forward through the Local Development Process and subsequent Development Plan Documents.