Wealden District Council
Local Development Framework

Core Strategy
Spatial Development Options

Consultation Document

July 2009

Published by
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Representations on the Core Strategy - Spatial Development
Options document must be received by Wealden District Council by 5.00 p.m. Friday 28th August 2009

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

£10

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Foreword

Planning shapes the environment in which we live and work. This consultation document is about that environment up to the year 2026. Because of this time frame, it is important we make the right decisions for ourselves and future generations.

After this consultation, we will be finalising our local Core Strategy which determines our planning policies for the next 15 years.

This document sets out our vision and long term aims for the Wealden district. It also identifies a number of options for where new housing may be built and where new workplaces may be developed. Please consider these options carefully and feed your views back to us.

The future scale of housing development which the Council has to accommodate is causing the Council considerable concern. This is because we had originally agreed to a proposal to find land for an additional 8,000 houses in the period from 2006 to 2026 but only on the proviso that the infrastructure (roads, water, sewerage, schools and medical facilities for example) to support this growth was in place before development took place. However in finalising the South East Plan, the Secretary of State has decided that Wealden must accommodate 11,000 new homes up to 2026 without any guarantees that the necessary infrastructure will be built first.

Much as we would very much like to consult you on how many new homes should be built in Wealden, Government policy does not allow this. Until the law is changed, we must abide all by Government diktat. If we do not, a Government Inspector will impose changes when the Core Strategy is examined in public.

We believe local communities through their local representatives should be making these decisions.

We are also very concerned about what we see as a flaw in government policy which says our local Core Strategy must both meet the South East Plan target of 11,000 homes, and be deliverable. Since the government will not guarantee the investment, 11,000 homes will be very difficult to deliver.

However the settlement pattern for a smaller number of houses such as 8,000 may not be dissimilar to the pattern for 11,000 on which this consultation is based.

We would like your own ideas about how our District should develop as well as comments on these options. We will then assess your views along with other evidence such as recent appeal decisions, including those in Uckfield.

The document explains how and when to pass your views to us. Your views matter very much to the Council and will influence the decisions we make on your behalf. I look forward to hearing from you.

Councillor Roy Galley - Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning & Housing Delivery
This consultation is undertaken pursuant to Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, as amended.
Wealden District Council Local Development Framework

Core Strategy - Spatial Development Options

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Part 1 Setting the Scene

Introduction - What is this consultation about?

1.1 Making choices about where land should be found for new homes, jobs, and facilities for our communities is one of the most challenging decisions facing Wealden District Council. This consultation paper aims to give everyone a chance to have a say in the important decisions that lie ahead.

1.2 As part of the planning process laid down by Government, Wealden is preparing a series of plans, known as the Local Development Framework. These will guide future development and change, and help the District achieve a more sustainable way of living. At the heart of these plans is the Core Strategy – a document which will make some of the most important decisions affecting Wealden residents and businesses over the next twenty years.

1.3 We consulted widely on the key issues and spatial choices facing Wealden’s Core Strategy in the summer of 2007 and received an overwhelming response from individuals and organisations with an interest in the future of the district. Since then we have been analysing the responses we received and carrying out many technical and other studies to explore ways forward.

1.4 As our first plan under the new system, the Core Strategy will have the key role of identifying the broad locations of future growth in Wealden. It will set out areas where new homes will be built, as well as other essential infrastructure including jobs and services, schools, open space and transport improvements.

1.5 This consultation paper offers a key opportunity to think about how local places should be shaped in the future. Wealden is an extensive district with a broad range of issues to be addressed and opportunities to be grasped. The new planning system provides a real opportunity to address those issues and to help meet existing and future local needs. The size and extent of the district also mean that the range of choice is very large. This consultation will help narrow down that range of choice and find the best strategy to take us through the next twenty years.

1.6 Much of our work in the two years since the last consultation has focused on finding out more about the communities in Wealden. We need to understand how they function and what their needs are. We have, therefore, commissioned numerous specialist studies to provide detailed evidence of current issues. We have worked closely with partners in the Local Strategic Partnership, Parish and Town Councils, East Sussex County Council and neighbouring authorities, developers, environmental bodies and infrastructure providers to gain a deeper understanding of their issues and perspectives.

1.7 Although national economic circumstances have changed over the last 12 months, and there are currently problems in the housing and property markets, it is vital that we take a long-term view about growth so that we have our plans ready for...
when the market picks up. Building flexibility into our strategy and policies will help ensure their effectiveness in accommodating future uncertainty.

What will this consultation cover?

1.8 This paper builds on the work we have done previously and on what we have learnt from responses to our previous Issues and Options consultation. All the comments received in 2007 have been considered and taken into account. The 2007 consultation was very comprehensive, suggesting a wide range of detailed development options, and describing the sorts of objectives and policies the Core Strategy might eventually contain.

1.9 In this consultation document, we draw the elements together and define a range of alternative district-wide approaches to accommodate future development.

1.10 By taking a strategic view of the whole of Wealden district and looking at the various ways in which future development can be planned, we aim to narrow down the very wide range of possibilities suggested at the previous consultation stage. We aim to answer the questions - how much development is to be located where, and over what time period? It is important to be very clear that this consultation is about strategic development choices – not the detail of individual sites or locations.

1.11 We have refined the vision for the future of Wealden and have developed spatial development options for housing and employment which we believe could best meet it.

1.12 Part 2 explains our vision for the sort of place Wealden will be in twenty years’ time; Part 3 covers six alternative housing development options; and Part 4 offers four approaches to distributing employment development.

What have we taken into account in developing the spatial options?

1.13 Our work has highlighted some major issues, challenges and opportunities as key concerns our Core Strategy must address. In Part 5 of this consultation paper we summarise the factors which have helped shape the different spatial options presented.

1.14 As well as listening to what you told us previously, we are required to take into account Government policy guidance, the adopted South East Plan and the adopted Wealden Sustainable Community Strategy. We have considered other Council plans and strategies and those of other agencies and major service providers. We have also considered the results of various evidence studies and technical reports. These cover topics such as strategic flood risk, housing market assessment, viability testing, retail capacity and open space and recreation needs.

1.15 However preparing the Core Strategy is not simply a technical exercise. The planning system provides the opportunity to plan for the needs of the next generation. In doing this we need to be clear what those needs and our ambitions are, and how we can achieve them. It is important that local communities feel a sense of ownership of the local policy decisions we shall be making. We have therefore consulted widely with our local communities and the information they have provided has fed directly into developing the options we present in this paper.

1.16 We have worked closely with Parish Councils to understand their priorities through Parish Plans and through a recent
“Parish Template” exercise. We have secured the contribution of the vast majority of Wealden’s Parish Councils in this way. Their responses have identified their three highest priorities under each of the eight key themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy. This work will continue as we build our knowledge and understanding of local needs and aspirations. We are also working with Wealden’s Town Councils on their town visioning and master planning exercises for their own local communities. These plans will be closely integrated with our own work as we develop and finalise our Core Strategy over the next 12 months.

1.17 In order to stimulate debate between Members of the Council and our partners about the results of our technical work and the outcomes of our appraisals, we recently held a series of informal Wealden District Council Member and Local Strategic Partnership workshops. In these sessions we explored views on the vision for Wealden’s future, and encouraged open discussion about the choices involved in creating a robust planning strategy.

How has Sustainability Appraisal been used?

1.18 Sustainability is a key issue for the Council and is a core principle underpinning our planning decisions. Our objective is to achieve more sustainable development and more sustainable communities in Wealden, and the Core Strategy will be a vital tool in enabling this to happen.

1.19 We must therefore assess the sustainability of the proposals in the Core Strategy, evaluating the social, environmental and economic impacts of the options considered, as well as the objectives of the plan. The Sustainability Appraisal provides information on the relative merits of our proposals, however it does not automatically follow that the most sustainable option is necessarily the most appropriate. There may be ways of mitigating or eliminating the negative effects of a particular option and this will need to be considered as part of the eventual strategy.

1.20 Each spatial development option in this consultation paper is followed by a brief summary of the relevant part of the Sustainability Appraisal. The full Sustainability Appraisal Report and a non-technical Summary are published separately (2). We will systematically undertake sustainability appraisals at pertinent stages as we continue to develop the Core Strategy.

Where can I find out more information?

1.21 If you would like more information than is covered in this paper, we have published a series of background papers (3).

1.22 These provide more detailed information and explanation about how we have arrived at the options presented, and about the key evidence we have gathered to help us construct them. These also provide links to the various studies that have been completed and to the results of the workshops we have held.

What if I commented at the last Issues and Options stage in 2007?

1.23 If you commented last time we would like you to take a fresh look at the new options we are presenting in this paper. Things have moved on and we would like you to consider all the evidence and ideas.

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2 The Consultation Sustainability Appraisal Report and its non-technical Summary can be found at http://www.wealden.gov.uk/planning_and_building_control/Local_Plan/CoreStrategy.aspx
3 http://www.wealden.gov.uk/planning_and_building_control/Local_Plan/CoreStrategy.aspx
we are presenting here. In particular, we have narrowed down the choices of option and have based these on up to date evidence. We have also considered Wealden District as a whole, rather than as a series of individual communities. This may mean that your comments are different from last time, or that you wish to make additional points.

What will we do with the results of the consultation?

1.24 We are presenting a range of possible development options for consideration and comment. The Council is not committed to any particular choice and so no preference is expressed. Change is inevitable and future growth is necessary for the vitality of our communities. What is important to us is that people in Wealden appreciate the challenges and opportunities that the Core Strategy presents and understand the options that are now being proposed.

1.25 If you have other ideas, please put them forward. It may be that there are other options that should be considered, or that there are other ways of delivering the growth that we are required to provide. We shall use the comments we receive – together with further technical work – to refine the options further and help us decide which one we will develop as the preferred way forward in the final Core Strategy.

1.26 The results of this consultation will help us refine our vision for Wealden, confirm the strategic planning objectives, and develop the detailed policies which we will need to include in the final Core Strategy. More detailed technical studies are still going on, including site availability assessments and landscape appraisals, infrastructure capacity reviews and work on renewable energy.

1.27 We will continue to engage with our local communities, particularly through Parish and Town Councils, and to work with our partners to ensure that their interests are taken into account. All of this work will contribute to the development of our final Core Strategy document.

1.28 Table 1 below provides a summary of the key stages in preparing the Core Strategy, and identifies where we are in the process and the timetable we are following.
### Table 1 Stages in preparing the Wealden Core Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Strategy Stage</th>
<th>Brief description of each stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical studies, consultations and the development of the evidence base</td>
<td>Continues throughout preparation of the Core Strategy and involves establishing an up to date and relevant information base covering social, economic and environmental factors, and developing and maintaining a dialogue with key partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues and Options - public consultation.</td>
<td>Explained the background to the spatial planning system and highlighted the issues and opportunities. It raised a large number of questions in relation to detailed site alternatives and different strategic choices for growth. Over 21,000 individual responses from well over 1,000 respondents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Strategy Spatial Development Options</strong></td>
<td>This consultation covers various alternative spatial development options. The Council will continue to carry out a range of consultations with key agencies and organisations in preparing the final Core Strategy document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication of the Core Strategy.</td>
<td>The Core Strategy is published to provide the opportunity for representations in relation to its soundness to be made. At the same time the Council will seek confirmation that the plan is in general conformity with the South East Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of the Core Strategy to Government.</td>
<td>The representations made on the Core Strategy under the previous stage are submitted to the Secretary of State, together with a Sustainability Appraisal and supporting documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination</td>
<td>An Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State will carry out an independent examination in public into the soundness of the Core Strategy. Those who propose changes to the Core Strategy may be invited to attend a public hearing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of Inspector’s report and adoption of the Core Strategy.</td>
<td>The Inspector writes a summary report of the examination and decides what binding changes are necessary to the Core Strategy. The Council must accept the Inspector’s changes before adopting and publishing the final version of the plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the planning context for the Core Strategy?

1.29 Whilst the Wealden Core Strategy forms the spatial expression of Wealden’s Sustainable Community Strategy and reflects a community vision for the local area, it must also conform to national, regional and strategic planning guidance. It also has to take account of the plans and policies in neighbouring Authorities.

1.30 National planning guidance is set out in Planning Policy Guidance notes and Planning Policy Statements (4).

1.31 Regional planning guidance for the South East is set out in the recently adopted Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) called the South East Plan (5).

1.32 In the South East Plan the Government requires Wealden to provide 11,000 new homes between 2006 and 2026. The emerging Core Strategy must provide a framework for delivering this number of dwellings. Later plans will identify sites where these will be provided. Around 4,000 homes have either been built or have received planning permission since 2006 in Wealden, and so we will have around 7,000 homes left to allocate through the Core Strategy and subsequent plans.

What does the South East Plan say about Wealden District?

1.33 The South East Plan includes strategies which address key issues facing Wealden, and set out the broad scale and pattern of development from 2006 - 2026. Our Core Strategy must be in general conformity with this regional plan and meet the various targets and requirements it sets out. It has therefore inevitably had a strong influence on the way the options presented in this consultation paper have been developed. This is not to say that the South East Plan makes final decisions for us but in preparing the Core Strategy our role is to try to ensure that its overall requirements are met in a way that best meets local circumstances and addresses local needs.

1.34 One of the distinctions the South East Plan introduces is that it divides Wealden District into two parts for planning purposes. The southern parishes in Wealden fall within the much larger “Sussex Coast Sub Region” which covers the length of the coast from Chichester in the west to Rye in the east. The strategic focus here is on promoting sustainable economic growth and regeneration. The rest of Wealden falls within an area where it is expected that the character of the rural environment will be maintained and local communities supported through the sensitive development of market and rural housing, the diversification of local economies and improvements in accessibility to services and employment.

1.35 In this paper we shall describe the area of Wealden District in the Sussex Coast Sub Region as south Wealden, and the rest of Wealden as north Wealden. Figure 1 shows the division of the district referred to in this consultation paper.

1.36 Further details of what the South East Plan says about Wealden are contained in Part 5.

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4 Planning Policy Guidance notes and Planning Policy Statements can be found on the DCLG website at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/
5 http://www.gos.gov.uk/gose/planning/regionalPlanning/815640/
What does the South East Plan say about future house building?

1.37 The South East Plan assigns two housing provision levels for Wealden – one for south Wealden, and one for north Wealden. Some limited flexibility exists to vary the housing provision between the two policy areas if this can be demonstrated to be more appropriate locally – and provided the overall total for Wealden is met. This is an important factor in planning for house building in Wealden because we need to ensure that the Core Strategy is sufficiently flexible at the overall district level so as to be able to accommodate changes in circumstances or unforeseen constraints that may emerge.

1.38 Much of our work over recent months has been directed towards testing the deliverability of the levels of provision proposed in the South East Plan and considering whether the overall distribution should be changed between the two policy areas. Some of our housing spatial options therefore take the South East Plan allocation (to north and south Wealden) as their starting point; others take the 11,000 new homes target for the district as a whole.
Figure 1 South East Plan - Sub Division of Wealden
Part 2 Our vision and aims for the next twenty years

Introduction

2.1 We strongly believe that a good plan is not just one that is technically sound, but one which reflects as far as possible the needs, aspirations and wishes of the community. As a starting point for our plans, this involves developing a locally distinctive vision which sets out how Wealden and the places within it should develop. This section explains how we are doing this and what we believe the vision should cover.

Working with the Local Strategic Partnership

2.2 The Wealden Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is a non statutory, multi-agency partnership. It brings together different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors at district level and has encouraged greater integration and closer joint working on common issues. Working with key organisations and stakeholders through this partnership has been influential in preparing our spatial development options, and LSP partners were involved in our recent workshops focusing on strategic spatial choices.

2.3 The LSP developed the original Sustainable Community Strategy for the District, the latest update of which was formally adopted by the Council in May 2008 as part of the integrated East Sussex Sustainable Community Strategy – “Pride of Place”\(^1\). The Wealden chapter contains eight key themes for the District identified through extensive research and consultation with residents and partner organisations\(^2\). The integrated strategy sets out a shared vision for the county developed in consultation with many people and organisations. Its ‘integrated’ nature encourages recognition of the similarities and distinct local differences between communities across the area.

2.4 The priorities under each of the eight themes from the Wealden Community Strategy have helped us develop the vision and the spatial options presented in this consultation paper, and the partnership has been closely involved in this process. This alignment is designed to help us ensure a more coherent and responsive approach to developing the spatial strategy for the future of Wealden.

Working with other partners

2.5 We have supplemented this work with discussions and dialogue with other agencies and service providers to help ensure effective integration with the spatial aspects of their strategies and programmes. These will continue as we refine and develop the Core Strategy. We have worked particularly closely with infrastructure providers as their programmes and strategies will have a strong bearing on which option we decide to develop. Our final strategy must be demonstrably feasible and deliverable.

What you told us previously

2.6 In the 2007 Issues and Options consultation, we outlined the challenges that Wealden faced and invited comments on issues that these raised. We sought guidance on priorities and what our spatial vision should be. We recognise that the aspirations and needs of local communities may differ, and that a vision for one part of Wealden may not meet the aspirations of

\[^1\] http://www.essp.org.uk/essp/strategy.htm
\[^2\] http://www.wealdencommunitystrategy.co.uk/Strategic_Partnership/re-done%20referenced%20final%20chpt.pdf
another. As far as possible our plans need to reflect this. Our Core Strategy vision should paint a clear picture of what the area will be known for in 20 years’ time.

2.7 The key message from our previous consultation is that people want Wealden to remain predominantly a rural district. There was not a significant desire to change or to expand, or for any one settlement to assume greater prominence in the hierarchy of places. Conversely there was recognition of the need to improve and regenerate towns and to tackle the problems of heavy car dependence. One conclusion that might be drawn from the consultation was a preference for a balanced and equitable distribution of development between the towns and between other rural communities.

2.8 Another key finding was the strong consensus that most future development should be focused on the towns to help protect and maintain the district’s rural character. However, we have also acknowledged that because of the AONB constraints on the expansion of Crowborough and Heathfield, and the pattern of settlements, the final approach may need to differ between the north and south of the district. This approach also provides scope for meeting the economic and social needs of our rural communities, including those in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

2.9 Responses generally supported the concept of town regeneration and recognised that major growth should be contingent upon the ability to find creative solutions for dealing with town centre issues. Since 2007 we have continued to encourage each town to develop its own vision for its community and to consider how best our Core Strategy, and the plans that follow, can support ways of meeting them. We shall continue to promote joint working with Town and Parish Councils, building on their joint visioning/masterplanning work and on their responses to the Parish Template exercise.

Blending it all together - developing a common vision

2.10 We believe that Wealden could be a different and better sort of place in twenty years’ time. Our plans should help guide the changes that are on the way and help ensure that they make a positive contribution to our quality of life.

2.11 The process of preparing a balanced vision of the future of a place is most straightforward in areas in which there is a single dominant place, like a city or large town. Although the characteristics of
Wealden mean that it is quite different from that example, it is still important to be clear about how the area, and places within it, should develop. Although recent national economic trends underline that the future is likely to be less predictable than ever before, the short term situation must not prevent us from looking towards a better and more sustainable future. Any vision should be an inspiring blend of aspiration and realism. Our vision should be realistic in terms of the main characteristics of Wealden and the issues facing us – that is what ultimately will provide its distinctiveness.

2.12 The look and feel of a place provides important clues to its future. Perhaps the clearest message that we have received throughout our consultations and discussions is that the amenity value of the countryside is a key to understanding Wealden people and places. It represents a coalescence of what a place looks like and what it feels like to live there. This has to be a key element of our future place shaping.

The six key elements of our vision

2.13 From what you have told us we believe that Wealden's Core Strategy vision should cover six key elements:

2.14 One – accommodating required development and change in a way that protects Wealden's attractive rural character and maintains the function of the countryside as a recreational and economic resource – not only for local residents but also for visitors from elsewhere.

2.15 Two – reducing inequalities and imbalance in the District's population by addressing problems and creating opportunities for a better quality of life, for example through improved education, health, leisure and recreation and by seeking to address the need for affordable housing and the desire for a decent home for all, including minority groups.

2.16 Three – increasing economic momentum so that Wealden is an even better place for small businesses to start and grow, and so that it can draw in investment, reduce out-commuting and be a prime location that contributes to the economic regeneration of the Sussex Coast area.

2.17 Four – fostering a pattern of towns and villages which work together to support one another's needs, and focusing growth where it is most accessible and sustainable, is supported by infrastructure, and can bring most benefit to the objectives for that place.

2.18 Five – improving accessibility for all and ensuring better integrated public transport connections between Wealden and neighbouring areas so that we reduce the impact of the car, improve the District's attractions for visitors, and enable residents to take advantage of the jobs and facilities on offer.

2.19 Six – recognising the scale and extent of the potential impacts of climate change, and the need to adapt behaviours in a way which helps nurture our landscape, protect and enhance biodiversity, reduce carbon footprints and the emission of greenhouse gases, and encourage the use of renewable energy and other natural resources.

2.20 We have separated these six key vision elements down into a series of more spatially-specific aims and grouped these for clarity. Some may appear to overlap, but we believe that these are the aims which could be met within the next 20 years and which impact most on the range of spatial development options presented in the next sections of this consultation paper. We
recognise that meeting these aims will continue to depend on close and integrated working by the Council with our key stakeholders, LSP partners, and with all local communities.

2.21 After this consultation, we will review and refine these aims and prepare a clear strategic vision to underpin our Core Strategy. It will need to be more spatially specific than the following version in order to form a firm basis for the strategic objectives and policies that will follow as we finalise the Local Development Framework.

Our planning aims - what we want to have achieved by 2026

2.22 Vision Element One - Protecting our environment while accommodating change. By 2026...

- Wealden will have accommodated new development required by the South East Plan in a way that has enabled the district overall to have retained its attractive landscape character and maintained a sense of rural tranquillity. Local landscapes will continue significantly to contribute to people's sense of place and of local distinctiveness.
- New development will have been built in a way which has successfully integrated into the local scene by creating attractive places to live and work in, whilst maintaining a clear distinction between settlements.
- Development that takes place in the countryside, for example as part of rural diversification or as support for the agricultural economy, will have been integrated in a harmonious and responsible way so that the countryside’s landscape and biodiversity value is maintained or enhanced and so that it can be flexibly managed as an environmental, recreational and economic resource.
- A more comprehensive and accessible network of high quality open spaces and other facilities will have been provided which enhances biodiversity and allows improved opportunities for sport, leisure, recreation and culture.

2.23 Vision Element Two - Increasing opportunities and improving our quality of life. By 2026...

- By providing new and affordable homes, a wider range of local jobs, and improved community and transport facilities, development will have helped to improve the quality of life for Wealden residents and have assisted economic and social regeneration, particularly in south Wealden.
- The provision of more job opportunities and more affordable homes will have helped create a more balanced and diverse local population, encouraging young people to stay in or move to Wealden, whilst catering for the needs of the growing proportion of elderly people.
- We shall have achieved a healthy variety and mix of sizes, type and tenure of housing in locations and sufficient quantities to meet community needs, including those for affordable housing, accommodation for the elderly and for other specialist requirements.
- New development will have been designed to be adaptable so that it appeals to people at different stages in their lives, provides high quality facilities for home working, and meets sustainable design principles.
- Wealden will have achieved improvements in the condition of housing and the provision of other
services, so that residents enjoy higher standards of health and well being, and fewer people experience deprivation.

2.24 **Vision Element Three - Increasing economic momentum.** By 2026…

- Wealden will have a more prosperous business economy, allowing more residents to choose to work locally as more and better quality employment opportunities, covering a wider choice of activity, will have been provided. This improved economy will be supported by a better trained and more skilled local workforce.
- Wealden will have a lively and self-sufficient rural economy with many people living and working locally, and serving customers, businesses and employers in other regions and other countries. There is a vibrant network of small and micro businesses which support each other and contribute to a strong and resilient sense of local community and pride.
- Tourism will be a more important source of local income generation, and Wealden will support a better quality, year-round visitor economy.
- There will have been a more significant increase in economic performance in the southern part of the district based upon the Hailsham/Polegate area. This will have depended upon the provision of substantially improved transport links and other essential infrastructure, and will make a major contribution to the regeneration of the Sussex Coast Sub Region.
- Each of the five towns will have become a thriving commercial centre serving its respective local area, maintaining the role of the market town as an essential feature of Wealden's rural character. More substantial investment in Uckfield, Crowborough and Hailsham will have enhanced their commercial and environmental attractions which will have allowed sensitively planned and managed development of their town centres, and have created pedestrian-friendly retail opportunities, with improved business and community infrastructure.

2.25 **Vision Element Four - Creating the pattern of towns and villages, supported by adequate infrastructure.** By 2026…

- The majority of housing development will have occurred within and as extensions to Wealden's market towns which will continue to act as hubs for those key services which are underpinned by larger populations, such as transport, health, shopping, secondary education and social care.
• Additional appropriate and affordable housing will have been provided in villages, in a form and of a type which meets the community’s needs and reflects the evidence from our Housing Needs Surveys.

• The network of villages will continue to support the day to day needs of existing local communities, accommodating development where household growth can stimulate and help support the retention of local facilities and can contribute to more vital and sustainable communities.

• All new development has been supported by appropriate infrastructure in the broadest sense. Where possible development will have been focused where service capacity already exists or where the infrastructure provides wider benefit to the local community.

• A flexible but realistic approach has achieved the best possible fit between new development and the timing of new infrastructure provision. Development has been phased in order to take this into account.

• A key factor which has contributed to Wealden’s economic development will have been 100% coverage of the new high speed broadband, which has been achieved along the lines of successful innovative approaches in other rural regions.

2.26 Vision Element Five - Improving transport opportunities and accessibility. By 2026 …

• Those who live or work in Wealden will have better access to shops, health, education, jobs, services and community and leisure facilities, thereby reducing the need to travel and reliance on the private car; there will be greater equality of access for everyone.

• There will have been improvements in the quality of the local public transport infrastructure, including community run services, and in local road safety records, and improvements in journey quality, particularly for those on foot or bicycle moving in and around our towns. The five towns will have developed their role as transport interchanges serving the rural area.

• We shall have developed the local economy in such a way as to reduce the need for out-commuting to employment opportunities beyond the district.

• A new railway link between Lewes and Uckfield will have become demonstrably closer and the potential route will have been protected for this purpose, and there will have been improvements to the A27 trunk road in south Wealden.

2.27 Vision Element Six - Protecting the landscape and meeting the challenges of climate change. By 2026…

• Development in Wealden will have helped mitigate and adapt to climate change by respecting its landscape or townscape setting, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and its carbon footprint; and encouraging the use of renewable energy and other
resources wherever possible. This will apply both in new developments and by upgrading existing housing stock and commercial property.

How do we meet these aims and deliver the vision?

2.28 The Core Strategy will provide a delivery strategy, directing where development takes place over the next twenty years in order to meet our vision and our strategic aims.

2.29 Because of the large size of the district and its extensive geographical coverage, there are many alternative ways in which to accommodate future growth in Wealden. In order to narrow down the choices between different possible options, we have separated the process of strategy generation into two distinct stages:

- The first stage is the consideration of the strategic distribution of housing and employment growth around Wealden as a whole. This is the focus of this consultation paper. In the sections that follow we consider, on an area-specific basis, where, when and how much future development may take place. We are not covering site-specific choices at this stage.

- The second stage will follow later this year, after we have considered the results of this consultation and continuing technical studies. That stage will involve identifying the broad locations for development in and around towns and some villages. It is our intention that the Core Strategy we submit to Government in 2010 will identify broad locations of growth.

2.30 In selecting the final strategy, we are required to assess alternatives. In order to be found sound at examination in public, our chosen strategy must be the most appropriate option when considered against reasonable alternatives for delivering future development. For this reason, each option presented in Parts 3 and 4 of this paper includes a summary of our assessment of its advantages and disadvantages. Your views and suggestions will contribute to refining and refocusing the options and help us achieve the most appropriate way forward.
Part 2 Our vision and aims for the next twenty years
Part 3 Strategic Spatial Housing Options

Introduction

3.1 The Issues and Options consultation in 2007 demonstrated that there are many different places where housing development might take place within Wealden. That paper identified a very broad range of alternative locations in and adjacent to existing towns and villages, and also suggested no fewer than ten alternative locations for a new settlement.

3.2 Through the work described in Parts 1 and 2 of this document, we have refined the options realistically available. We have taken into account the priorities in the evolving vision for Wealden, the aspirations of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the policies in the South East Plan. We have also taken particular account of the scope within existing or planned infrastructure to accommodate development. This has long been recognised as a potential constraint on future housing and business growth in Wealden, and we have carried out a great deal of background work to find out what is needed.

How do we present each housing option?

3.3 Each of the six possible housing distribution options presented is accompanied by a brief description of what it covers, a diagrammatic map showing the resulting strategic pattern of growth, and summary tables setting out indicative numbers of additional homes that would be provided in each town or parish. Each option also includes a brief analysis of the possible outcomes. This is in the form of a comment on the outcome of the Sustainability Appraisal of Spatial Development Options assessment and a summary of what we see currently as the “advantages” and “disadvantages” of the particular option.

3.4 Please consider the broad strategic patterns presented by each option. Avoid focusing solely on the locality that is close to you, or the indicative numbers of new units that option might suggest. Ultimately it will be up to the Council to balance the results of your response to this consultation with all the other views expressed and the technical and other evidence we are collecting. We recognise that the final option that emerges may be a different one entirely - or may contain a mix of features of those currently presented. As you consider your response, please remember that we are seeking to find the spatial distribution of development which provides the best opportunity for delivering the vision and aims we described earlier, in order to meet the needs and aspirations of all our communities.

3.5 Part of the distribution pattern for housing growth over the next twenty years is already in place, through planning permissions granted over the last few years in accordance with the non-statutory Wealden Local Plan. In formulating the options we have taken these planning permissions and housing completions (that is homes built from 2006 onwards) into account. The diagrammatic maps representing each option display symbols for each town and parish. The overall size of the circular symbol reflects the total number of houses to be provided under each option between 2006 and 2026. The portion coloured grey reflects the number of homes already committed (i.e. those already permitted or completed).
3.6 The housing distribution represented in each option does not express the housing type or tenure as all new homes count towards meeting the requirements of the South East Plan.

3.7 It is possible that in some of the options, some Parishes do not appear to be allocated any housing growth. This reflects the overall strategic ambitions of the option and the scale at which we have to present them. However in reality this is not saying “no growth”. It would not for example prevent market housing being provided within existing or future development boundaries, or affordable housing being built under the rural exceptions policy, subject to the normal planning criteria – assuming that these policies are reflected in the final Core Strategy.

3.8 In presenting options we use Town and Parish administrative boundaries. Base data is held on this basis and it is a convenient means of developing options. However, we recognise that some Parishes may contain several settlements. This may mean that when housing is allocated to a Parish, development could be spread between villages (though not necessarily evenly). In the case of towns, some have developed up to an administrative boundary and expansion may mean development in an adjacent Parish. For this reason, when presenting options, we have joined Hailsham and Hellingly and Polegate and Willingdon. At the next stage of the Core Strategy we will be assessing more specific locations available for development in each area and we will refine this approach and focus on individual settlements.

3.9 Please note that throughout this consultation paper figures are indicative and have been rounded, so they may not total exactly.

3.10 A more detailed description of the process we followed to develop the housing options is contained within a background paper.

Option One: Proportionate growth in existing settlement hierarchy

3.11 Some responses received from our previous Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation Paper supported the retention of the overall settlement hierarchy of the District, with no one settlement expanding proportionately more than another.

3.12 Option One distributes housing growth in proportion to the number of households currently in each parish/town. In order to retain the hierarchy across the District the South East Plan split between north and south Wealden has not been used. This option takes into account development already permitted in relation to the Non Statutory Wealden Local Plan and therefore retains the settlement hierarchy established before 2006.
Figure 2 Housing Option One: Proportionate growth in existing settlement hierarchy
### Table 2 Option One: Summary table for towns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crowborough</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>1470</td>
<td>8228</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailsham and Hellingly</td>
<td>1420</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>1645</td>
<td>9275</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathfield and Waldron</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>5041</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polegate and Willingdon</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>1265</td>
<td>7288</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uckfield</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>1040</td>
<td>6002</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures in Tables 2 and 3 are rounded.

1 Includes dwellings with permission at October 2008 and those built between 2006-2008

### Table 3 Option One: Summary table for rural Parishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of additional dwellings required 2008 - 2026</th>
<th>Parish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10 dwellings</td>
<td>Alciston, Isfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 25 dwellings</td>
<td>Berwick, Cuckmere Valley, East Hoathly with Halland, Little Horsted, Selmeston, Wartling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 50 dwellings</td>
<td>Arlington, Frant, Hadlow Down, Hooe, Laughton, Long Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 100 dwellings</td>
<td>Alfriston, Buxted, Chiddingly, Fletching, Warbleton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 - 150 dwellings</td>
<td>Chalvington with Ripe, Danehill, East Dean &amp; Friston, Framfield, Maresfield, Ninfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151 - 200 dwellings</td>
<td>Hartfield, Herstmonceux, Horam, Mayfield and Five Ashes, Withyham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201 - 250 dwellings</td>
<td>Rotherfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251 - 300 dwellings</td>
<td>Forest Row, Pevensey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301 - 350 dwellings</td>
<td>Wadhurst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>351 - 415 dwellings</td>
<td>Westham</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Option One: Summary of Sustainability Appraisal

3.13 This option does not seek to address any particular aspect of the 22 Sustainability Objectives and distributes growth based on historic settlement patterns. However, the dispersal strategy provides benefits of increasing the provision of affordable housing across the District and some opportunities to improve health services and/or services in rural areas. The town focus with a rural dispersal pattern may be able to assist in the enhancement of the rural economy whilst maintaining the economic balance of the towns. However, the level of growth in the south of the District and particularly in the urban areas may not be able to generate the regeneration required to meet social and economic objectives. The impacts upon flood risk, biodiversity and internationally important sites require consideration and mitigation.

Table 4 Option One: Advantages and Disadvantages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• May assist in meeting the Sustainable Community Strategy priority of encouraging affordable housing provision in all settlements</td>
<td>• The dispersed pattern of additional housing development may not meet the Sustainable Community Strategy priority to ensure that adequate employment opportunities are in place to support development where more houses are built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All areas will potentially receive benefits from development</td>
<td>• A dispersed settlement pattern may not assist in the provision of an integrated public transport system and allow improved opportunities for interchange between types of sustainable transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Results in a large proportion of growth to rural parishes, therefore providing opportunities for supporting rural services and facilities</td>
<td>• More likely to be issues with the delivery of housing in Crowborough, due to the sensitivity of recreational pressure on the Ashdown Forest Special Protected Area and Special Area of Conservation (SPA/SAC) and High Weald AONB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Should assist areas in terms of reducing deprivation as described in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation concerning barriers to housing and services</td>
<td>• May be issues of delivery of housing in Heathfield and Waldron due to the impact on the High Weald AONB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• May assist in town regeneration, particularly in Crowborough and Heathfield</td>
<td>• Does not reflect the South East Plan provision of 7000 dwellings in south Wealden and 4000 in north Wealden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lower levels of growth in Willingdon &amp; Jevington and Hellingly is more consistent with the Parish Councils’ responses to the bridging template</td>
<td>• Issues of flood risk and conflict with protection of the Ashdown Forest SPA with additional homes in Forest Row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Issues of flood risk in Pevensey create conflict with restraint policies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Option Two: Growth focused at Uckfield and Hailsham

3.14 This option achieves close conformity with the South East Plan, given that the overall housing distribution proposed in the Plan between north and south Wealden has already taken into account general environmental and accessibility considerations.

3.15 The South East Plan proposes different strategies for the distribution of housing and employment land in south Wealden as part of the Sussex Coast Sub Region, and in north Wealden. It refers specifically to Uckfield as the place to meet wider housing needs in north Wealden through the provision of new dwellings, given its accessibility by rail and the potential to address constraints. The overall strategy for north Wealden is, however, "balanced dispersal" which suggests a more even spread of growth over settlements. The strategy for south Wealden focuses upon urban extensions along the A22 corridor, namely around Polegate and Hailsham.

3.16 Based on the division of 4000 homes to north Wealden and 7000 to south Wealden, this option focuses on Uckfield and Hailsham/Hellingly. The distribution takes into account the Uckfield emphasis in the South East Plan and provides a 25% increase in current number of households in Hailsham, the amount we suggest may be necessary to create a clear Hailsham/Hellingly focus. Affordable housing need is used as the basis for the proportionate distribution of the residual housing growth in the remaining parishes. This accounts for the significant proportion of growth also allocated to Polegate/Willingdon.
Figure 3 Housing Option Two: Growth focused at Uckfield and Hailsham
### Table 5 Option Two: Summary table for towns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crowborough</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>8228</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailsham and Hellingly</td>
<td>1420</td>
<td>2145</td>
<td>3565</td>
<td>9275</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathfield and Waldron</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>5041</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polegate and Willingdon</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>1635</td>
<td>2225</td>
<td>7288</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uckfield</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>1345</td>
<td>6002</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The figures in Tables 5 and 6 are rounded*

### Table 6 Option Two: Summary table for rural Parishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of additional dwellings required 2008 - 2026</th>
<th>Parish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10 dwellings</td>
<td>Alciston, Arlington, Buxted, Cuckmere Valley, East Hoathly with Halland, Fletching, Forest Row, Hadlow Down, Isfield, Laughton, Little Horsted, Pevensey, Selmeston, Warbleton, Wartling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 25 dwellings</td>
<td>Chiddingly, Danehill, Hooe, Maresfield, Rotherfield, Withyham, Berwick, Chalvington with Ripe, Long Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 50 dwellings</td>
<td>Frant, Hartfield, Framfield, Mayfield and Five Ashes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 100 dwellings</td>
<td>Horam, Alfriston, East Dean &amp; Friston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 - 150 dwellings</td>
<td>Ninfield, Wadhurst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151 - 300 dwellings</td>
<td>Herstmonceux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301 - 500 dwellings</td>
<td>Westham</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Includes dwellings with permission at October 2008 and those built between 2006-2008
Option Two: Summary of Sustainability Appraisal

3.17 The primary focus of this option is development in the Hailsham/Hellingly area and at Uckfield, with a significant proportion of housing allocated in the Polegate/Willingdon and Jevington area. Therefore, a substantial proportion of development is proposed in areas where there is better access to health, social and leisure facilities as well as sustainable transport. The residual growth is distributed across the District taking into account affordable housing needs, with the exception of Forest Row and Pevensey where development is restricted for flood risk and other environmental impact reasons. However it is unknown whether this would in itself stimulate rural regeneration. The significant growth in the towns may be able to stimulate regeneration there and provide opportunities for improved access to learning resources and for increasing the skills base.

Table 7 Option Two: Advantages and Disadvantages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moves toward meeting the Sustainable Community Strategy priority of encouraging affordable provision in all settlements</td>
<td>Additional housing is not allocated to Pevensey, Wartling and Forest Row and therefore does not meet the Sustainable Community Strategy affordable housing priorities in these locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The provision of a majority of development in towns, where there are existing and future opportunities for provision of sustainable/public transport facilities, could help in the management of carbon emissions as prioritised by the Sustainable Community Strategy</td>
<td>Substantial growth in Hellingly and Willingdon/Jevington Parishes conflicts with responses from the Parish Councils’ to the bridging templates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The focus on the towns may also assist in the concentration of skills training and ensuring the attractiveness of the service centres, as prioritised by the Sustainable Community Strategy</td>
<td>Low levels of housing allocation may not meet Parish Council needs and aspirations, especially for affordable housing (e.g. Forest Row, Buxted and Hadlow Down)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development does not take place in Pevensey and Forest Row, taking into account flood risk and the Ashdown Forest SPA</td>
<td>The distribution is less likely to meet the Sustainable Community Strategy vision of providing enough affordable homes to meet the needs of everyone who lives or needs to live in the District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general conformity with the distribution of housing in the South East Plan</td>
<td>May not meet Corporate Plan desire to provide more affordable housing options for local people in the places where they are most needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows focus on regeneration in the A22 corridor, where current employment opportunities exist and transport improvements are planned</td>
<td>Some issues remain with the provision of a relatively large quantity of housing in Crowborough, in close proximity to Ashdown Forest SPA/SAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflects existing employment opportunities across the district,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing opportunities to create more sustainable communities and meet the needs of people who do not have access to a private car</td>
<td>With the exception of Herstmonceux, accessibility to railway stations is not taken into account in rural parishes, perpetuating private car reliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced growth in the AONB increases the probability of protecting landscape interests</td>
<td>Hailsham is not readily accessible by rail and there is less compatibility with recommendations of the consultants’ recent Triangle report which focused on Polegate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailsham and Uckfield have opportunities for town centre investment and planned change, including growth in the retail sector, thus servicing the new housing and making the settlements more self-sufficient</td>
<td>Relatively limited opportunities in Polegate/Willingdon with regards to retail-offer requiring residents to access retail facilities in either Hailsham or Eastbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant development in Hailsham and Uckfield may stimulate the provision of services for the rural hinterland that a strategy with a more rural emphasis would not provide</td>
<td>The settlement hierarchy will be significantly altered with possible impacts on the aspirations and vision of communities in Crowborough and Heathfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development in Polegate helps meet aspiration of the community for new leisure and community facilities</td>
<td>Existing education and health infrastructure capacities in Crowborough not utilised to the full, creating need for new facilities elsewhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only limited impact generally upon the affordable housing needs of north Wealden</td>
<td>The distribution is similar to Option Two in taking account of the South East Plan’s Uckfield focus. As Polegate/Willingdon parishes have had relatively limited growth in the recent past, this option provides growth to Polegate/Willingdon at a rate similar to the increase in the number of households over the last twenty years in Hailsham/Hellingly, its nearest neighbouring settlements. Affordable housing need is met as far as possible through the distribution of housing to the remaining parishes in proportion to local requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Option Three: Growth focused at Uckfield and Polegate**

3.18 Option three seeks to meet the aspirations of the South East Plan, through the provision of urban extensions along the A22 corridor in south Wealden, and a balanced dispersal strategy in north Wealden, with some focus on Uckfield to meet wider housing requirements. Unlike Option Two, however, the 11,000 dwellings are distributed across Wealden as a whole rather than in the allocation suggested by the South East Plan. This more closely reflects infrastructure delivery issues, particularly waste water treatment but potentially also road capacity.
Figure 4 Housing Option Three: Growth focused at Uckfield and Polegate
### Table 8 Option Three: Summary table for towns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crowborough</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>1310</td>
<td>8228</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailsham and Hellingly</td>
<td>1420</td>
<td>1215</td>
<td>2635</td>
<td>9275</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathfield and Waldron</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>5041</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polegate and Willingdon</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>1420</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>7288</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uckfield</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>1310</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>6002</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 9 Option Three: Summary table for rural Parishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of additional dwellings required 2008 - 2026</th>
<th>Parish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10 dwellings</td>
<td>Alciston, Arlington, Berwick, Chalvington with Ripe, Cuckmere Valley, Forest Row, Pevensey, Selmeston, Little Horsted, Long Man, Warbleton, Wartling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 25 dwellings</td>
<td>Fletching, Hadlow Down, Laughton, Hooe, Isfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 50 dwellings</td>
<td>Chiddingly, Danehill, Isfield, Rotherfield, Withyham, Alfriston, East Dean &amp; Friston, East Hoathly with Halland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 100 dwellings</td>
<td>Buxted, Framfield, Hartfield, Maresfield, Mayfield and Five Ashes, Ninfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 - 200 dwellings</td>
<td>Herstmonceux, Horam, Frant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201 - 300 dwellings</td>
<td>Wadhurst, Westham</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

3 Includes dwellings with permission at October 2008 and those built between 2006-2008
Option Three: Summary of Sustainability Appraisal

3.20 The focus of growth at Polegate/Willingdon and Jevington, and at Uckfield also provides a significant opportunity for growth at Hailsham and Hellingly. The resulting distribution provides a focus on the towns with some growth proposed in rural areas, providing better access to services and facilities including public transport. Although the level of growth in the rural areas may assist in meeting some needs, the economic and infrastructure requirements may not be met, especially in south Wealden. Additional development is not proposed in Pevensey or Forest Row meeting some of the environmental objectives.

Table 10 Option Three: Advantages and Disadvantages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Moves toward meeting the Sustainable Community Strategy priority of encouraging affordable provision in all settlements</td>
<td>• Housing allocation is very limited in Pevensey, Wartling and Forest Row and therefore does not meet the Sustainable Community Strategy affordable housing priorities in these locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The distribution is more likely to meet the Sustainable Community Strategy vision of providing enough affordable homes to meet the needs of everyone who lives or needs to live in the District, particularly in the rural areas</td>
<td>• May be issues with the provision of a relatively large quantity of housing in Crowborough, in close proximity to the Ashdown Forest SPA/SAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development does not take place in Pevensey and Forest Row, taking into account Flood Risk and the Ashdown Forest SPA</td>
<td>• Some parishes, not considered to be particularly accessible by public/sustainable transport, are allocated a relatively large proportion of future growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Partially meets the distribution of housing proposed in the South East Plan.</td>
<td>• Other Parishes may consider that the low levels of future house building will restrict their ability to meet local needs as identified in their bridging template responses (e.g. Forest Row, Arlington and Berwick)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides some focus on regeneration in the A22 corridor, where current employment opportunities exist</td>
<td>• Hailsham receives a significant proportion of growth but is not readily accessible by rail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hailsham and Uckfield have opportunities to meet planning objectives for town centre investment and planned change, including growth in the retail sector, thus servicing the new housing and making the settlements more self sufficient</td>
<td>• Relatively limited opportunities in Polegate/Willingdon with regards to retail-offer, requiring residents to access retail facilities in either Hailsham or Eastbourne</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • Significant development in Hailsham and Uckfield may stimulate the provision of services for the rural hinterland that a strategy with a more rural emphasis could not provide | • Any intention to create a self sufficient retail centre could not be met within the
 Existing town centre of Polegate because of limited site opportunities
• May not capitalise on existing infrastructure capacity elsewhere in the district
• Does not reflect the more limited levels of growth in north Wealden in the South East Plan, which was intended to reflect overarching environmental considerations

Option Four: Housing distribution reflecting the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, affordable housing needs and accessibility criteria

3.21 Option Four takes account of several spatial distribution factors which are important to people in Wealden. Development is distributed to north and south Wealden as proposed in the South East Plan, and the rural settlements have been considered on their own merits in relation to the criteria selected.

3.22 This option takes account of both opportunities and constraints within the district. For example: the focus of limited development within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on meeting known affordable housing need; limiting development in flood risk areas and within proximity to the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area; and the provision of development in rural settlements which are accessible by public/sustainable transport to railway stations. Towns unconstrained by AONB designation have not been restricted in terms of accommodating growth to meet wider housing needs.
Figure 5 Housing Option Four: Housing distribution reflecting the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, affordable housing needs and accessibility criteria
Table 11 Option Four: Summary table for towns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crowborough</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>1185</td>
<td>8228</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailsham and Hellingly</td>
<td>1420</td>
<td>2660</td>
<td>4080</td>
<td>9275</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathfield and Waldron</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>5041</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polegate and Willingdon</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>1355</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>7288</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uckfield</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>6002</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures in Tables 11 and 12 are rounded.

Table 12 Option Four: Summary table for rural Parishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of additional dwellings required 2008 - 2026</th>
<th>Parish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10 dwellings</td>
<td>Alciston, Arlington, Chalvington with Ripe, Chiddingly, Cuckmere Valley, Fletching, Forest Row, Hadlow Down, Hooe, Laughton, Little Horsted, Long Man, Pevensey, Selmeston, Warbleton, Wartling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 25 dwellings</td>
<td>East Dean &amp; Friston, Isfield, Mayfield and Five Ashes, Rotherfield, Withyham, Alfriston, Berwick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 50 dwellings</td>
<td>Buxted, Danehill, East Hoathly with Halland, Framfield, Hartfield, Horam, Maresfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 100 dwellings</td>
<td>Frant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 - 200 dwellings</td>
<td>Ninfield, Wadhurst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201 - 500 dwellings</td>
<td>Herstmonceux, Westham</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Includes dwellings with permission at October 2008 and those built between 2006-2008
Option Four: Summary of Sustainability Appraisal

3.23 This option seeks to address the somewhat conflicting elements of the provision of affordable housing, landscape designation and accessibility in the rural area. The emerging pattern of growth does not particularly foster regeneration in rural areas where this may be required, nor does the option maximise the potential for public transport use or urban regeneration in Uckfield. The distribution supports the regeneration of south Wealden and considers environmental objectives in respect of strategic flood risk and biodiversity.

Table 13 Option Four: Advantages and Disadvantages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Moves towards meeting the Sustainable Community Strategy priority of encouraging affordable provision in all settlements</td>
<td>- Housing allocation is very limited in Pevensey, Wartling and Forest Row and therefore will not meet the Sustainable Community Strategy aspirations for affordable housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The provision of a majority of development in towns, where there are existing and future opportunities for provision of sustainable/public transport facilities, could help in the management of carbon emissions as prioritised by the Sustainable Community Strategy</td>
<td>- The Parish bridging template responses suggest some local councils will feel restricted by the low levels of future house building proposed (e.g. Forest Row, Chiddingly and Hadlow Down)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Development does not take place in Pevensey and Forest Row, taking into account Flood Risk and the Ashdown Forest SPA</td>
<td>- The distribution is unlikely to meet the Sustainable Community Strategy vision of providing enough affordable homes to meet the needs of everyone who lives, or needs to live, in the District, particularly in the rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Conforms with the South East Plan in terms of the broad distribution of housing between the north and south of Wealden, which in turn reflects policy constraints</td>
<td>- The distribution may not meet the Corporate Plan intention to provide more affordable housing options for local people in the places where they are most needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provides focus on regeneration in the A22 corridor, where current employment opportunities exist</td>
<td>- May be issues with the provision of a relatively large quantity of housing in Crowborough, in close proximity to the Ashdown Forest SPA/SAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hailsham has opportunities for town centre investment and planned change, including growth in the retail sector, thus servicing the new housing and making the settlement more self sufficient</td>
<td>- Hailsham receives a significant proportion of growth but is not readily accessible by rail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Significant development in Hailsham may stimulate the provision of services for the rural hinterland that a strategy</td>
<td>- Substantial growth may conflict with Hellingly Parish Council’s response to the bridging template</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with a more rural emphasis could not provide
- Development in Polegate may meet the aspiration of the community for new leisure and community facilities
- More balanced growth between Uckfield and Crowborough with AONB capacities not being used elsewhere in the district

Relatively limited opportunities in Polegate/Willingdon with regards to retail-offer requiring residents to access retail facilities in either Hailsham or Eastbourne
- New infrastructure may still be needed despite existing infrastructure capacities not being used elsewhere in the district
- Provides limited support for the Uckfield master planning initiative and the ability of the town to provide service and infrastructure improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option Five: Growth based on existing rural services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.24 Under this option 30% of the overall District requirement for 11,000 homes (3,300 homes) are initially distributed to rural parishes based on the classification of their settlements as either:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A local service centre accessible by public/sustainable transport to a train station and a secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A local service centre with key facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- An accessible settlement with few or no facilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.25 A settlement classification was originally developed in parallel with our previous Issues and Options consultation. This has since been revised and updated using more recent information and survey results, and incorporating the work we have done with Parish Councils. The remaining 7,700 homes are distributed between the five towns in proportion to identified affordable housing requirements. As Heathfield and Waldron Parish contains a number of settlements, the provisions for Heathfield Town and for the surrounding villages are presented together.

3.26 This option reflects Government guidance on the development of rural communities and policies within the South East Plan. These seek to meet local needs on the basis of existing facilities and accessibility. It reflects a belief that focusing new development on the larger and better connected villages can help to support facilities serving a wider local area.
Figure 6 Housing Option Five: Growth based on existing rural services
### Table 14 Option Five: Summary table for towns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crowborough</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>1040</td>
<td>8228</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailsham and Hellingly</td>
<td>1420</td>
<td>1433</td>
<td>2855</td>
<td>9275</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathfield and Waldron</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>5041</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polegate and Willingdon</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>1625</td>
<td>2215</td>
<td>7288</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uckfield</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1070</td>
<td>6002</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures in Tables 14 and 15 are rounded.

### Table 15 Option Five: Summary table for rural Parishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of additional dwellings required 2008 - 2026</th>
<th>Parish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 - 50 dwellings</td>
<td>Little Horsted, Mayfield and Five Ashes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 100 dwellings</td>
<td>Buxted, Maresfield, Berwick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 - 150 dwellings</td>
<td>Danehill, Rotherfield, Alfriston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151 - 200 dwellings</td>
<td>Hartfield, Frant, Framfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201 - 250 dwellings</td>
<td>East Hoathly with Halland, Wadhurst, Herstmonceux, Westham</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Includes dwellings with permission at October 2008 and those built between 2006-2008
Option Five: Summary of Sustainability Appraisal

3.27 Option Five distributes development to the five main towns, taking account of the need for regeneration and optimising accessibility to existing services and facilities. Growth is also distributed across a number of rural parishes in proportion to the range of services provided or relative accessibility. However, significant additional growth has not been allocated to several parishes, which will be unlikely to assist in the overall regeneration of the rural area. Wider environmental objectives have been taken into account through the strategic consideration of flood risk and the Ashdown Forest SPA.

Table 16 Option Five: Advantages and Disadvantages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The provision of a majority of development in accessible locations, where there are existing and future opportunities for provision of sustainable/public transport facilities, could help in the management of carbon emissions as prioritised by the Sustainable Community Strategy.</td>
<td>Housing allocation is very limited in a number of rural parishes and therefore does not meet the Sustainable Community Strategy objective of encouraging affordable housing in all settlements and the Corporate Plan aim of providing more affordable housing options for local people in the places where they are most needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development does not take place in Pevensey and Forest Row, taking into account flood risk and the Ashdown Forest SPA.</td>
<td>Relatively large increases in housing in Alfriston, East Hoathly with Halland, Framfield and Rotherfield may conflict with bridging template priorities that generally oppose significant expansion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides focus on regeneration in the A22 corridor, where current employment opportunities exist.</td>
<td>May be issues with the provision of a relatively large quantity of housing in Crowborough, in close proximity to the Ashdown Forest SPA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development in Polegate may meet the aspiration of the community for new leisure and community facilities.</td>
<td>Hailsham receives a significant proportion of growth but is not readily accessible by rail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More balanced growth between Uckfield, Crowborough and Heathfield and Waldron, meeting the “balanced dispersal” strategy contained in the South East Plan.</td>
<td>Relatively limited opportunities in Polegate/Willingdon with regards to retail-offer requiring residents to access retail facilities in either Hailsham or Eastbourne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps meet affordable housing needs throughout the district and especially in the north Wealden towns and the larger villages.</td>
<td>The historically facility-rich settlements are inclined to develop further, perhaps missing the opportunity to develop and sustain services and facilities in other Parishes where they are lacking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most suitable settlements, in terms of existing provision of facilities and accessibility, develop to meet the needs of the new population and provide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| “hubs” for surrounding rural communities | - Dilutes the potential impact of support for facilities and services from new household growth as a smaller amount of overall housing is spread only to a few settlements
- Does not account for the aspirations of some communities to grow further and potentially reap the benefits in terms of additional services and facilities especially in rural parishes. For example Forest Row and Wadhurst Parish Councils’ bridging templates seek affordable housing for local needs as a high priority. Other Parishes which prioritised affordable housing but would have very limited provision include Alciston, Chiddingly and Withyham
- Substantial growth in Willingdon & Jevington Parish conflicts with responses from the Parish Council to the bridging template |

### Option Six: Growth in Lewes / Uckfield Railway Line Catchment

3.28 Local Councils recently commissioned Network Rail to undertake a project seeking to establish the feasibility of reinstating the Lewes to Uckfield railway line. The report concluded that whilst it was technically possible to reinstate the track, and that there were no insurmountable physical or technical obstacles, the business case to carry out the works and provide a service could not be justified against current development criteria. The main reason for the poor business case was the low level of predicted demand for a re-opened route.

3.29 However, the Network Rail study concluded "Additional residential development above that already planned along the route of the former line, or at established settlements such as Uckfield or Crowborough, would undoubtedly increase demand for a re-instated rail service. If such development was within 15 minutes walk of a station (existing or new) and came with constraints on car ownership within the development, then the likelihood of increased demand strengthens further". Option Six seeks to assist in the case for the re-instatement of the Lewes to Uckfield railway line by providing additional development in appropriate catchment areas.

3.30 Option Six distributes a significant proportion of new house building to those communities which have a station on the existing Uckfield / Crowborough line and more limited growth to those settlements within 30 minutes by public/sustainable transport to these stations. It is considered that there may be potential to re-open a station at Isfield and, taking into account flooding constraints, a significant amount of development has also been proposed in this area. The remainder of growth is
distributed elsewhere in Wealden based on the existing settlement hierarchy, with the exception of Forest Row and Pevensey where development is limited by flooding and other environment constraints.

3.31 It is acknowledged that additional growth in the catchment of the existing stations may not be of sufficient scale in itself to improve the business case sufficiently to justify re-opening the Lewes/Uckfield line. We are carrying out studies to investigate this issue further.
Figure 7 Housing Option Six: Growth in Lewes/Uckfield Railway Line Catchment
Table 17 Option Six: Summary table for towns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crowborough</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>1490</td>
<td>8228</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailsham and Hellingly</td>
<td>1420</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1420</td>
<td>9275</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathfield and Waldron</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>5041</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polegate and Willingdon</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>7288</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uckfield</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>1520</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>6002</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18 Option Six: Summary table for rural Parishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of additional dwellings required 2008 - 2026</th>
<th>Parish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10 dwellings</td>
<td>Forest Row, Frant, Little Horsted, Alciston, Berwick, Cuckmere Valley, Hooe, Long Man, Pevensey, Wartling, Arlington, Selmeston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 25 dwellings</td>
<td>Laughton, Hadlow Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 50 dwellings</td>
<td>Chiddingly, Fletching, Warbleton, Alfriston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 100 dwellings</td>
<td>Danehill, Horam, Mayfield and Five Ashes, Chalvington with Ripe, East Dean &amp; Friston, Herstmonceux, Ninfield, Hartfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 - 200 dwellings</td>
<td>East Hoathly with Halland, Maresfield, Rotherfield, Wadhurst, Withyham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201 - 500 dwellings</td>
<td>Buxted, Framfield, Westham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501 - 1,500 dwellings</td>
<td>Isfield</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 Includes dwellings with permission at October 2008 and those built between 2006-2008
Option Six: Summary of Sustainability Appraisal

3.32 This option addresses the Sustainability Objectives associated with increasing accessibility and reducing carbon emissions in the north west of the District. However, commitment to provide and enhance public transport should be provided to ensure accessibility to health and leisure facilities and to reduce carbon emissions in the remainder of the District. The town focus with a rural dispersal pattern to the north west may be able to assist in the enhancement of the rural economy whilst regenerating Crowborough and Uckfield. However the social and economic objectives in the south of the District and the rural areas to the north not influenced by growth in the western sector, will not be met. The impacts upon flood risk, biodiversity, landscape and internationally important sites require consideration and mitigation.

Table 19 Option Six - Advantages and Disadvantages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May assist in the provision of a more sustainable transport system to businesses and residents in the west of the District account promoting more sustainable forms of transport and accessibility to locations outside Wealden</td>
<td>The focus of development in the west of the District will not assist in the provision of an integrated public transport system which would allow improved opportunities for interchange between types of sustainable transport across the whole of Wealden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports meeting a long standing objective of the Council to see the re-opening of the Lewes-Uckfield railway, also embodied in a proposed strategic aim in this consultation document</td>
<td>More likely to be issues with the delivery of housing in Crowborough, due to the sensitivity of recreational pressure on the Ashdown Forest SPA and High Weald AONB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant housing growth can assist in the regeneration of Crowborough and Uckfield, including their town centres</td>
<td>Does not meet the South East Plan Provision of 7000 dwellings in south Wealden and 4000 in north Wealden, nor does it promote sustainable economic growth and regeneration of the Sussex Coast sub region where housing development would be severely limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significantly lower levels of housing in Hailsham/Hellingly and Polegate/Willingdon &amp; Jevington may be more consistent with Hellingly and Willingdon &amp; Jevington Parish Councils’ opposition to further large scale growth</td>
<td>Would prejudice the intention of the South East Plan to achieve a “balanced dispersal” of development in north Wealden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Growth does not take into account the current infrastructure needs and aspirations of the individual communities across the District as reflected in the bridging template responses from Parish Councils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions about the strategic housing options

Question 1
Please tell us which of the housing options is the most appropriate for Wealden.

Question 2
If you do not agree with any of the suggested housing options, please tell us how you would like to see housing growth distributed.
Part 4 Strategic Spatial Employment Options

Introduction

4.1 Unlike proposed house building, information about jobs and employment floor space required to be provided in Wealden over the next twenty years is not specified in the South East Plan. That Plan does however provide two different economic strategies for north and south Wealden, reflecting their different economies. We completed an Employment Land Review in 2008 which draws local issues together and provides a number of possible scenarios for future job provision in Wealden.

What is the Economic Strategy?

4.2 The South East Plan stipulates that the Sussex Coast Sub Region should be a particular focus for sustainable economic growth and regeneration. This is to tackle issues such as:

- higher levels of multiple deprivation;
- lower levels of Gross Value Added;
- lower earnings;
- higher levels of unemployment;
- lower rates of business formation;
- a less qualified workforce and an ageing population.

4.3 The aim of sustainable economic growth and regeneration is to reduce intra-regional disparities by bringing up the performance of the sub-regional economy to the average for the South East as a whole. In particular, the South East Plan proposes priority should be given in south Wealden to allocating employment land in strategically accessible locations, particularly by rail, and within sustainable urban extensions to our towns. It also encourages the preparation of a long term vision and joint, multi-agency plans as a focus for delivering economic and social regeneration in the Eastbourne-Hailsham area, which covers south Wealden.

4.4 North Wealden is subject to more general sustainable economic development policies. These have regard to both strategic and local business needs, and aim to facilitate a flexible supply of land. The Plan suggests that Wealden should provide a range of sites in locations that are accessible to the existing and proposed labour supply, but with a focus on urban areas.

4.5 Throughout Wealden it is recognised that employment growth will also take place away from traditional business parks and industrial estates – for example through the diversification of the rural economy, and the growth of tourism and home working.

What part can we play in the promotion of economic growth and regeneration in the Sussex Coast Sub Region?

4.6 The Sussex Coast Sub Region extends along the coast from Chichester to Rye, and includes Hailsham/Hellingly and Polegate/Willingdon and their surrounding rural areas. South Wealden is located between the two regional “hubs” of Brighton and Hastings. These are to be the main regional focus of growth and investment co-ordination which is aimed at achieving
more sustainable forms of development. The South East Plan anticipates that the creation of hubs such as these will reduce the overall need to travel by more closely aligning local labour supply and demand, and by focusing investment in public transport within and between them.

4.7 Because of Wealden’s location it has a role to play in supporting those hubs and ensuring "connectivity" through appropriate sustainable transport infrastructure. However, the South East Plan also aims to optimise the area's potential to provide employment space in strategically accessible locations, and has particularly focused on the A22 corridor.

4.8 As part of our planning work we can assist regeneration by:
- Reducing areas of social and economic deprivation
- Providing an appropriate mix of available employment sites, at least to match the anticipated rises in the resident workforce
- Increasing the economic activity rate and skills base of local people
- Reducing unemployment rates and increasing employment growth, and
- Supporting and improving the required infrastructure.

Employment Land Options for the Sussex Coast Sub Region

4.9 Our Employment Land study was undertaken jointly with Eastbourne Borough Council and provides projections of how much floor space may be required for certain types of businesses over the next twenty years. We will be updating that work before finalising our strategy because we want to take into account the impacts of the current economic climate, the effects of the increased house building levels and the loss of a business park allocation at Dittons Road, Polegate, in south Wealden, following a recent appeal decision.

Where does the "Eastbourne-Hailsham Triangle" work fit in?

4.10 In 2008 a consultants' report on the area known as the Eastbourne-Hailsham Triangle was commissioned jointly by Weaden District Council, East Sussex County Council, Eastbourne Borough Council and the South East Economic Development Agency (SEEDA). This followed previous visioning work which had culminated in a Triangle "Blueprint" which was published in 2007. It covers the area of south Wealden.

4.11 The consultants were engaged to assist in determining how best to achieve a “step change” in economic performance – as envisaged in the South East Plan(1). Their report was then published in 2008 and identified those economic sectors they considered most likely to deliver real, local change and suggested three spatial development scenarios they felt most likely to support such change.

4.12 We took into account the consultants’ findings in preparing the housing options considered earlier in this paper. Option Three most closely reflects the consultants’ preferred spatial scenario.

4.13 We also took the findings into account in preparing the four employment spatial options that follow. Option Ten most closely reflects the approach favoured in the consultants’ report.

4.14 The long term economic strategy for Eastbourne and south Wealden suggested in the consultants’ Triangle report includes:

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1 http://www.wealden.gov.uk/planning_and_building_control/Local_Plan/EvidenceBase.aspx
• Providing a business park to build on the success of a current cluster of advanced manufacturing businesses
• Emphasising the strong link between current educational facilities, skills development and research and development
• Providing a medi-park for public and private health providers, higher education providers and private research and development companies
• Creating a regional cluster for the finance and business service centre with the development of a business support centre
• Creating employment opportunities for creative industries with cultural amenities in support
• Promoting year round and high quality tourism based on the environmental assets of the area, and
• Supporting a high quality and diverse retail offer which complements leisure, business and tourism activities.

4.15 The Triangle report has not been adopted as planning policy by Wealden District Council but its findings do form part of the evidence base for our Core Strategy. The status of the Triangle area is also supported in the Sustainable Community Strategy which seeks to ensure that south Wealden is not just considered as a growth area for residential development but that it also contributes to the economic growth of the region.

4.16 While the amount of employment land we should be making provision for will be considered as part of our continuing technical work, we would like your views on the different ways that we might distribute that development. We have therefore presented our ideas in the form of spatial development options.

4.17 In the next section we present four spatial development options for future employment land. These are shown diagrammatically in Figure 8. They are accompanied by a brief description of the resulting strategic pattern of growth and an assessment of possible outcomes in the form of a summary of the Sustainability Appraisal and what we see as the “advantages” and “disadvantages” of the option.

4.18 Please consider these options alongside those presented earlier for housing development. In our final strategy we shall combine an option for housing with one for employment land. As you consider your response, remember that we are seeking to find the spatial distribution of development which provides the best opportunity to achieve the vision we described in Part Two of this consultation.
Option Seven: Dispersed employment developments

4.19 This option distributes employment land at locations in proportion to the distribution of new housing in Wealden. This dispersed development option takes into account the existing and proposed working age population in an area, together with the existing and allocated employment sites in that locality. The type of employment site to be provided will be determined by the particular location and the needs or demands that are perceived to exist.

Option Seven: Summary of Sustainability Appraisal

4.20 Option Seven addresses accessibility in terms of providing employment where the need may arise, thus helping to meet the social objectives and reduce carbon emissions. This option will also assist in regenerating areas where housing is proposed, although mitigation may be required in areas where housing is not considered appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Supports a sustainability case by ensuring that job opportunities are created in proportion, and at the same general location, as housing</td>
<td>• May not provide the “critical mass” of employment development needed for the provision of key infrastructure, which may depend on more concentrated employment floor space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assists in the delivery of Sustainable Community Strategy’s priority of encouraging mixed site development comprising housing and employment uses</td>
<td>• May not help achieve economies of scale or build on existing successful business clusters elsewhere in Wealden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Addresses issues of undersupply/oversupply of employment land in relation to future population change in the area</td>
<td>• The type of business catered for may be more limited due to the size and location of available sites and the more limited potential accessibility to the strategic road network at each location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meets the Sustainable Community Strategy’s objective of achieving a strong link between additional housing and employment provision</td>
<td>• The Hailsham/Hellingly Town Masterplan considers that there is already sufficient employment land within the town (the most sustainable employment location for Hailsham/Hellingly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• May assist in meeting the aspirations of Parish and Town Councils to increase employment provision, depending on the size of the housing option</td>
<td>• Potential issue of the capacities of roads in some towns and rural areas if businesses generate heavy vehicular traffic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • May assist in improving the availability of public/sustainable transport when linked to housing growth | • May help in the management of carbon emissions, as prioritised by the Wealden District Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy - Spatial Development Options Part 4 Strategic Spatial Employment Options
Option Eight: Town and service centre employment focus

4.21 This option distributes employment land primarily within, or on the fringes of, towns and local service centres, where good basic facilities exist, which are close to the strategic road network, and which are readily accessible by means of sustainable/public transport.

4.22 It takes into account the existing role and function of each settlement and its proximity to the road/public transport network. This is important for road freight movement and for general accessibility for employees. It is a more selective “dispersed development” option than Option Seven and is based on the existing hierarchy of towns and villages in Wealden as described in Housing Option Five.

Option Eight: Summary of Sustainability Appraisal

4.23 Option Eight may assist in meeting social objectives by matching employment with the existing distribution of housing and the promotion of more sustainable forms of transport. However this does not take into account any specific environmental issues in the form of flood risk, impact on landscape and biodiversity. The economic consequences of providing employment in towns and specific rural areas may assist in the regeneration of both the urban and rural areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Acknowledges that the working population may not necessarily choose to live near to where they work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provides a more evident urban focus which could help foster greater self sufficiency in urban areas, and be combined with other town centre and regeneration aspirations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Considers the impact of the road network for businesses whilst seeking to increase accessibility for the resident population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Helps maintain the essentially rural character of significant parts of the district</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- May assist in reducing carbon emissions by reducing the need to travel by car by providing employment in more accessible locations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Does not take directly into account the location of existing and planned future residents and the Sustainable Community Strategy’s desire to achieve a balance between additional housing and employment provision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provides less support for rural diversification and the potential for providing jobs in a predominantly rural area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is not so sensitive to the potential market demand created by workforce growth based upon a different pattern of residential development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Does not take into account the location of the most desirable transport routes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
May assist in ensuring that all five towns remain attractive as local service centres as prioritised by the Sustainable Community Strategy, and may support development of skills training in the larger towns. Takes into account that larger populations are located in towns and local service centres, and therefore have a greater workforce potential, especially if linked to skills training.

**Option Nine: Intensification at existing employment locations**

4.24 This option locates development in areas with existing employment sites and includes the opportunity to intensify and expand industrial estates if appropriately located. It therefore meets recommendations in both the Employment Land Review and the South East Plan. Market demand and potential economies of scale are also taken into account by providing new employment opportunities in proportion to the size and extent of existing business locations.

**Option Nine: Summary of Sustainability Appraisal**

4.25 The distribution of development at existing employment locations does not seek to address any social objectives or any particular environmental issues in the area. The consolidation of existing employment sites and using the market to decide location may assist in the delivery of sites and provide regeneration of urban, and some rural areas.

### Advantages

- Businesses are more likely to relocate to an already established and successful business area
- Reflects both the current market and projected demands
- Intensification of development at these locations maximises the re-use of brownfield sites, rather than the development of greenfield opportunities
- Provides the opportunity for rural sites to come forward which have arisen due to market demand

### Disadvantages

- Does not take directly into account the location of existing and planned future residents
- May not reflect the most accessible/sustainable locations as new development is focused on established employment centres rather than the best located ones
- Increased provision in association with established rural sites may conflict with policies of countryside protection.
- May create an imbalance in a community, in terms of the provision of housing relative to employment land
May help achieve economies of scale and make better use of existing established business clusters
May assist in creating a critical mass for certain types of infrastructure

The lack of association between skills training and location of businesses may create difficulties in increasing the skills level of the resident workforce and therefore prevent delivery of local and regional targets
May reduce the opportunity to support the creation of more vibrant mixed-use town centres
May reduce prospect of mixed use housing and business sites, which is an aim of the Sustainable Community Strategy

Option Ten: Poleygate/Hailsham focus, with support from Uckfield and Crowborough

4.26 This option provides a significant proportion of future employment floorspace at Poleygate/ Willingdon and Hailsham/ Hellingly, with additional provision at Uckfield and Crowborough.

4.27 By providing a catalyst for regeneration, the emphasis on Poleygate and Hailsham reflects the strategic policy approach of the South East Plan and the aspirations of the Eastbourne - Hailsham Triangle report. In north Wealden, the Employment Land Review identifies Uckfield and Crowborough as locations for further employment growth. Unlike previous options, this option focuses growth in a limited number of locations.

Option Ten: Summary of Sustainability Appraisal

4.28 Option Ten has a particular focus upon town regeneration and therefore may not address the need to regenerate rural settlements. The town focus may however help address social issues by providing services within accessible settlements, and may decrease carbon emissions by reducing the need to travel by car. However, particular environmental issues are not addressed by this option and may require mitigation.
Figure 8 Employment Spatial Development Options

Part 4 Strategic Spatial Employment Options
### Wealden District Council Local Development Framework

**Core Strategy - Spatial Development Options**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Focused development in south Wealden meets the aspirations of the Eastbourne-Hailsham Triangle study and the South East Plan.</td>
<td>• South Wealden has not been an area of substantial growth and suffers from a relatively limited economic base. A step change in the economy will require significant co-ordination of joint multi-agency plans as a focus for delivering change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The development of mixed-use urban extensions with employment and housing land may assist in the delivery of employment land where demand is low and help meet the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy.</td>
<td>• It will need a &quot;step change&quot; in the quality of &quot;place&quot; too. If these actions are not successful, large quantities of employment floor space may be surplus to demand without inward investment or other incentives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development in Polegate and Hailsham provides access on to the main road network of the A22/A27, with access to rail services at Polegate.</td>
<td>• There may be conflict with developers/landowners promoting the alternative housing use of land, which may impact on delivery, as employment land historically generates less development value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potentially reduces social deprivation locally by providing a focused opportunity to access jobs and raise earnings.</td>
<td>• Creation of mixed use developments in the form of urban extensions focuses on greenfield land and not the re-use of brownfield land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The economic promotion of the Sussex Coast Sub Region will benefit local retail outlets, tourism and other service providers, and help foster entrepreneurial skills.</td>
<td>• The necessary infrastructure required to facilitate development on such a scale may only be available towards the end of the plan period causing delays to delivery in the short/medium term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Locating development in areas of known demand will build on established assets and will assist the prospect of delivery.</td>
<td>• The infrastructure capacity issues may also prevent the delivery of the supporting scale of housing supply within south Wealden within the plan period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A focus on Uckfield and Crowborough provides town centre regeneration prospects, helps meet businesses needs for good public transport accessibility and proximity to the road network, and supports town master planning initiatives.</td>
<td>• The focus on the four towns does not meet the needs of other service centres or the more rural areas, and may not support extensions of successful farm diversification schemes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meets the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy by ensuring south Wealden is not dominated by housing growth, but also contributes to the economic growth of the region.</td>
<td>• A balanced approach between residential use and new business sites is not achieved especially in north Wealden. This does not therefore meet...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 4 Strategic Spatial Employment Options

Wealden District Council Local Development Framework
Core Strategy - Spatial Development Options

A principal aim of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Questions about the strategic employment options

**Question 3**
Please tell us which of the employment options is the most appropriate for Wealden.

**Question 4**
If you do not agree with the suggested employment options, please tell us how you would like to see employment growth distributed.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about our vision or suggested options?

**Question 5**
Is there anything else you wish to tell us about our vision and strategic aims (Part 2) or the suggested spatial options (Parts 3 and 4)?
Part 5 What helped shape our Spatial Development Options?

Introduction

5.1 The options presented in this consultation paper share a number of common issues which will affect the distribution and delivery of development. We have taken these into account in formulating the six spatial development alternatives for housing, and four for the associated provision of employment land.

5.2 The common issues which affect the strategic options are summarised below. More detailed information can be found in the Background Papers that have been published separately (1).

Regional context: Key themes from the South East Plan

5.3 The South East Plan contains a wide range of policies affecting Wealden. Many elements will be common to all new development. The key challenges identified and which have helped shape our spatial development options have been:

- Improving economic performance in south Wealden and focusing on regeneration; this involves seeking a better balance between homes and jobs and minimising the need for out-commuting, and focusing growth on sustainable urban extensions;
- Encouraging joint, multi-agency plans which focus economic and social regeneration for the Eastbourne-Hailsham area, which optimise the area’s potential to provide employment and housing in sustainable and strategically accessible locations along the A22 corridor;
- In north Wealden, Uckfield is expected to play an important role as a small market town supporting its wider hinterland and to be a focus for new housebuilding. Elsewhere a “balanced dispersal” strategy should be used to ensure new development takes account of the role and accessibility of each rural settlement;
- Delivering sufficient decent homes in a well integrated mix to meet the needs of the area while taking account of environmental and infrastructure issues; the phasing of development will be closely linked to infrastructure provision;
- Delivering a flexible supply of land to meet the varying needs of the economic sectors and which is accessible to the existing and proposed labour supply and well located in relation to existing rail services;
- Reducing deprivation and social exclusion by spreading the benefits of sustainable new development as widely as possible across local communities;
- Improving transport links and accessibility, and encouraging development in locations which help reduce average journey lengths and help re-balance the transport system in favour of sustainable modes of travel;
- Continuing to focus new housing growth primarily within or adjacent to urban areas, while supporting the vitality and character of the rural areas of the District, for example by providing a sufficient quantity and mix of housing to promote the long term sustainability of these areas and support the continued viability of local services;
- In Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty the emphasis should be on smaller scale proposals which support the

1  http://www.wealden.gov.uk/Planning_and_Building_Control/Local_Plan/CoreStrategy.aspx
Wealden District Council Local Development Framework
Core Strategy - Spatial Development Options

Part 5 What helped shape our Spatial Development Options?

5.4 Wealden is a large and diverse rural district, encompassing a range of settlements and communities. It contains five relatively small market towns and a large number of villages – some of which are picturesque and are particularly popular with visitors. Each town is different and its role varies according to its location. The proximity of larger towns outside the district has a major impact on the area as many people travel outside Wealden to work, shop or use other facilities.

5.5 Half of the District’s population of around 146,000 live in the rural areas (2), often remote from services. This dispersed settlement pattern creates particular challenges for local service provision, but helps to give the District its spatial character. The scattered settlement pattern makes an efficient and viable public transport system more difficult to provide. The need to improve accessibility, integrate public transport and provide alternatives to car use in this rural community is a key challenge for policy development. Existing networks of main roads and railways tend to focus on routes to London and large towns outside the District – rather than between the towns themselves. This has restricted investment in the local economy, and impacted on access to employment and leisure opportunities for residents within the district.

5.6 One of Wealden’s prized assets is the quality of its environment. This is reflected in the high proportion the District which is designated and protected for its landscape and biodiversity importance. But it is also clear that people place great store on its countryside generally, and that they enjoy it for its own sake and because it can offer a peaceful and tranquil environment. Many parts of the District offer a complete contrast to urban life and pressures. In this way Wealden makes a unique contribution to the quality of life of those who live in more built up areas of the region. There is a high coverage of internationally important areas of conservation including Ashdown Forest and the Pevensey Levels. The South Downs will become a National Park in 2010. Figure 9 shows the extent of the area in Wealden to be designated. The location of any future development will be restricted by its potential impact on these designated areas.

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2 source: Audit Commission Area Profile
http://www.areaprofiles.audit-commission.gov.uk/(xpt3utz3gixf41n1uysaug55)/SingleAreaSearch.aspx
5.7 Overall the countryside environment is the key to understanding Wealden. The richness and diversity of its landscape and heritage are significant factors in making the District such a desirable place in which to live. However in selecting spatial options a particular challenge will be that because there is a limited legacy of brownfield land, a significant amount of new development will have to occur on greenfield sites. This will inevitably make it more difficult to balance future growth with the concept of protecting the countryside and what is most valued.

5.8 The District’s economy is heavily dependent on the service sector. Whilst this has helped generate high levels of employment, salaries in the District are relatively low. This in turn contributes to the high levels of out-commuting. Additionally the economy is dominated by small businesses, with only a few larger employers. Some 90% of Wealden’s businesses employ less than 10 people. Three quarters of small businesses in the District are farm based, often in former agricultural buildings converted to business space. Increasing numbers of people work from home. The diversified agricultural sector makes a significant impact on the area both in terms of its economy and by shaping the landscape.

5.9 Wealden’s high quality of life, and its proximity to London and the Crawley/Gatwick area, creates a high demand for housing, especially in the north of the District. Our studies of the housing market have confirmed the existence of quite distinct market areas. This has in the past exerted considerable upward pressure on house prices, and has caused a widening gulf between local incomes and market prices, and led to severe shortages of affordable housing.

5.10 However there are also significant inequalities within the District, with areas of relative affluence masking pockets of deprivation and health inequality. There is a sharp contrast between high and low incomes and there are strong geographical disparities, with higher mean incomes in the north contrasting with lower incomes around Hailsham and Polegate in the south. Individual experiences of hardship are no less important, and often more difficult to target in such an extensive rural area.

5.11 Wealden’s population constitutes approximately 62,000 households (3). The district has a comparatively small ethnic minority population. The balance comprises small numbers of people of Asian, Caribbean and Black African backgrounds. The age structure has a much smaller proportion of the population in the 15-39 age range than the national average, with a significantly above average number of people of pensionable age. Demographic projections show that despite modest overall
Part 5 What helped shape our Spatial Development Options?

5.12 Car ownership is high, population density and crime rates relatively low. These figures however may act to disguise the social and economic issues faced by people in the more isolated communities, including access to services for those without their own transport.

Other factors shaping the Spatial Development Options

Waste Water Treatment Capacity

5.13 The Council has been working with Southern Water, East Sussex County Council and the Environment Agency to explore waste water treatment work capacity issues in the district. The main concern arising is the capability of the two waste water treatment works serving Hailsham, Hellingly, Polegate and outlying settlements in south Wealden to discharge treated waste water into the receiving environment, the Pevensey Levels. The Environment Agency has granted restricted-discharge consents to both works.

We understand that substantial investment is required to increase the current treatment capacity of the works serving the north of Hailsham and Hellingly, and also to provide a new waste water treatment works and discharge point, necessary to meet overall housing requirements.

5.14 In order to service future housing and employment land, Southern Water needs to obtain funding to upgrade the waste water treatment works serving the north of Hailsham, to carry out a feasibility study, and undertake the capital works needed, to provide a new waste water treatment works and discharge point. We anticipate that the capacity required to meet the total South East Plan housing and employment requirements may not be provided until later in the plan period, from around 2018 onwards. However there are risks involved as funding has not yet been approved for any of the projects, and it is uncertain whether a new waste water treatment works and/or additional discharge point would be environmentally acceptable. This factor alone may necessitate Core Strategy phasing policies which seek to bring sites forward in the north of the district in the earlier part of the plan period to ensure continuity of housing land supply.

Habitat Regulations (Appropriate Assessment)

5.15 Under European and national legislation we must consider and seek to rectify any adverse impact the Core Strategy may have on the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the Pevensey Levels “Ramsar” site and the Lewes Downs SAC. A report that identifies the reasons for considering these particular internationally important sites as part of the Habitat Assessment Regulations is available[4].

5.16 We have commissioned specialist technical work, in partnership with neighbouring authorities, to ascertain the possible impacts of development on these designated areas. The studies will be completed within the next few months. Future mitigation or avoidance may be necessary to ensure that development does not have a negative impact on these sites. These mitigation measures will be essential

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to ensure the timely delivery of the Core Strategy. This provides a degree of risk in terms of our current limited understanding of the mitigation required, and of the uncertainty in the delivery mechanisms.

5.17 For example, other authorities have been required to place a restriction on house building within a zone around Special Protection Areas to reduce the probability of cats attacking the birds that are protected by the SPA designation. We have taken this possibility into account in developing and testing the development options around the Ashdown Forest SPA. In addition to a possible exclusion zone the Core Strategy will need to consider mitigation measures to ease recreational pressure on Ashdown Forest posed by an increase in population resulting from house building. We will be working with neighbouring authorities and the Conservators of Ashdown Forest to agree any necessary mitigation measures and the delivery mechanisms required.

Transport Infrastructure

5.18 Considerable concern was raised at the Issues and Options consultation in 2007 regarding the provision of transport infrastructure. We are aware through work on the previous Wealden non-statutory Local Plan and subsequent meetings with the Highway Authority and other stakeholders, that a number of our roads are at or nearing capacity. The South East Plan makes it clear that if sufficient capacity is not available then we need to consider methods to reduce demand, provide more efficient management of infrastructure, or provide new infrastructure. We should look towards delivering sustainable transport solutions before seeking funding for new roads. We are working with East Sussex County Council and other partners on a transport study to test what can be achieved by demand management and to explore what further transport investment is required. This work will be used to test final spatial options, determine our overall transport strategy and provide a clear basis for determining the scale and extent of developer contributions.

Climate change, flood risk, and water supply

5.19 Government policy seeks to ensure that, wherever possible, development takes place outside of any location subject to a high probability of flood risk. In Wealden, although we do have known flood risk issues, it is our overall intention to locate development away from flood risk areas if at all possible, taking into account the effects of climate change. If it is found that we do not have enough land available outside the high risk flood areas, only then will we look at locating development on land within those areas – and then on sites with the lowest probability of flooding.

5.20 At a strategic level we are aware that certain settlements such as Uckfield and Hailsham are subject to a high probability of flood risk, although this does not relate to all available land in those towns. Other settlements, such as Isfield, are also constrained by flood risk which may restrict development opportunities and we have taken this into account proposing the Options set out in Parts Three and Four of this document.

5.21 Each possible suggested strategic housing option, except one, excludes significant development in Pevensey and Forest Row Parishes due to the high probability of flood risk at Pevensey, if it were undefended, and the combination of flood risk and the possible Ashdown Forest SPA exclusion zone, in the case of Forest Row. We consider it necessary to highlight and test the conflict between these...
environmental constraints and the potential benefits that can be provided by development.

5.22 The potential impacts of climate change will need to be taken into account in planning for all new development, both in terms of location and design. As well locating development away from areas of high flood risk, increased targets for energy and water efficiency will be considered in our final Core Strategy along with water storage measures, sustainable drainage systems and the provision of renewable energy generation in major schemes.

5.23 Our previous 2007 Issues and Options consultation raised concerns about the amount of water available to existing and future residents. The Environment Agency has confirmed that the District is classified as an area of “water stress” owing to the comparatively low rainfall and the high level of population. As this risk factor affects the whole of the District we have not developed spatial options specifically around this constraint. However it may be necessary, once evidence is gathered, to impose tighter water efficiency standards on new dwellings, and assist in conserving water supply regionally for example by safeguarding any proposed enlargement of Bewl reservoir.

Green Networks

5.24 We are aware that the Habitat Regulations Assessment will result in the need to provide alternative green space to reduce recreational pressure in the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC. In addition, we also wish to plan for the conservation and improvement of biodiversity and the provision of suitable recreational space, which would support an accessible inter-connected network of green space within Wealden. We have considered whether it would be appropriate at this strategic level to develop housing options around a predetermined green network or to provide for a green network after the strategic approach has been defined. In reality we feel it requires development of a green network strategy both at a strategic and at a local level. Figure 9 shows the key biodiversity areas of the district and provides the starting point for a future green network strategy. At this stage in the process of developing spatial options, we have sought to avoid development:

- In the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area/Special Area of Conservation
- In the Pevensey Levels Ramsar site
- Along the Cuckoo Trail and at its margins
- At Bewl Water and its margins
- In Ancient Woodland or Sites of Special Scientific Interest

5.25 We would propose that any provision to offset the adverse impacts of development by the creation of additional alternative open space links these areas of high biodiversity interest so as to provide an overall “network” of green corridors. This would enhance the overall permeability of development and should be planned from the design stage.
Town centres and regeneration

5.26 A key theme from the South East Plan and Regional Economic Strategy is the promotion of sustainable economic growth and regeneration within the Sussex Coast Sub Region. These plans look to us, and to other local authorities and key partners in this sub region, to help bring the local economy up to the standards of the South East as a whole. This means providing more skills and jobs for the current population, in order to increase economic activity and reduce unemployment, and increase employment. Meeting these objectives will require additional housing and employment space. Most of the options seek to provide enough development, particularly within south Wealden, to support sustainable economic growth and regeneration.

5.27 If well located and planned, housing development can provide wider community benefits, both by supporting existing services and facilities, and by helping to fund new or expanded facilities or improving access to them. In our town centres opportunities exist to help bring new vitality to the local communities by bringing forward key development sites which promote a mix of activities – including shopping, employment, recreation and housing. There are opportunities to link new housing development and town centre regeneration to initiatives which widen local employment opportunities and improve residents' accessibility to local services and facilities.

Affordable Housing

5.28 The Wealden Housing Strategy (October 2008) reports that there are approximately 4,600 affordable homes in Wealden. In 2001 Local Authority and Registered Social Landlord homes for rent comprised some 7.8% of all housing stock in Wealden which is a significantly lower proportion than the average in in England and Wales of 19.1%. There is a significant and rising need for affordable homes within Wealden with 2,200 households registered on the Council's waiting list at the beginning of April 2009, a 2% increase over the numbers as from 1st April 2008.
Part 6 What happens next?

6.1 This consultation document marks an important stage in preparing the Core Strategy to shape the future of Wealden over the next twenty years. It has presented the factors which will influence the final choice of strategy and outlined the key elements of a vision we have for the future. It has then set out six different possible spatial development options for housing growth, and four possible options for providing new employment land.

6.2 We would now like your views and comments to help us decide which options should form the final spatial development strategy for Wealden. Your comments will be considered alongside the additional evidence we are collecting. This is your chance to let us know what you think.

6.3 Once we have analysed your responses we will produce a final Core Strategy which will identify the option for growth we think best meets the needs of the district, together with a strategy and policies for delivering it. We expect this version of the Core Strategy to be published in June 2010. After a period for public representations, the Council will submit the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State, who will appoint an independent Inspector to examine the plan at an Examination in Public.

6.4 The final Core Strategy will contain a delivery strategy setting out what is intended to happen, where and when, and by what means it will be delivered. It will contain a more detailed spatial development strategy which will focus on housing and business development, and the infrastructure it requires, and indicate how this will be distributed between the five towns and the villages. It will also include core thematic policies for managing change in Wealden over the next twenty years. These are expected to cover issues such as the protection of the environment, the type and mix of housing and employment development, and how we will meet special needs such as for affordable housing, the elderly or for Gypsies and Travellers' accommodation. The environmental policies will cover issues such as open space and green networks, renewable energy and water efficiency.

6.5 Following the Inspector’s report, we expect to adopt the Wealden Core Strategy in 2011.

6.6 Up to date information on the Core Strategy process and timetable, and progress with other planning documents we are preparing, can be found on our website (1).

Do you consider there are other matters we should include in the Plan?

Question 6

Are there any other matters we should be addressing as part of the Wealden Core Strategy?

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1 http://www.wealden.gov.uk/Planning_and_Building_Control/Local_Plan/LDF.aspx
Part 7 How do I make my comments?

7.1 We would encourage you to send us your views online, as this is the easiest and quickest way for you to comment. In order to do this you will need to register on our consultation system, but this should only take a few minutes of your time.

7.2 You can register by going to our website www.wealden.gov.uk and following the link to the Local Development Framework pages. If you do not have access to the Internet at home, you can visit your local library where you can log on to our website at the Internet points.

7.3 Alternatively you can fill in the questionnaire which is found within the summary version of this Consultation document. It can be posted or faxed back to us using the contact information on the questionnaire.

7.4 Please ensure that you submit your comments to us by 5pm on Friday 28th August 2009.

7.5 If you have any questions relating to this document or wish to discuss how to make your comments, please contact the Planning Policy Team on 01892 602007 or email us at ldf@wealden.gov.uk.


Representations cannot be treated in confidence. The Council will list names and representations on its website but will not publish personal information such as telephone numbers, e-mails or private addresses on its website. By submitting representations on the Core Strategy - Spatial Development Options consultation, you confirm that you agree to this and accept responsibility for your comments.
Part 7 How do I make my comments?
Glossary

Adoption - The date upon which a document becomes finalised and fully operational in law.

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

- Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.
- Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Social rented housing is:

'Rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also include rented housing owned or managed by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Housing Corporation as a condition of grant.'

Intermediate affordable housing is:

'Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents, and which meet the criteria set out above. These can include shared equity products (e.g. HomeBuy), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.'

The definition does not exclude homes provided by private sector bodies or provided without grant funding. Where such homes meet the definition above, they may be considered, for planning purposes, as affordable housing. Whereas, those homes that do not meet the definition, for example, 'low cost market' housing, may not be considered, for planning purposes, as affordable housing.

(Source: Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing)

Allocations - One of the key functions of a development plan is to 'allocate' land. An allocation is land shown on a proposals map as being acceptable for a certain type and possibly a certain amount of development.

Appropriate Assessment - Under European Communities (1991) Council Directive 92/43/EEC any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of an SAC or SPA but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The South East Plan also requires Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken with regards to Ramsar sites.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is an area of countryside considered to have significant landscape value, that has been specially designated by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) on behalf of the Government. The primary purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.
Glossary

**Biodiversity** - The variety of life forms, the different plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems they form.

**Brownfield Land** - Land that has been previously developed, or land that contains or contained a permanent structure and associated infrastructure.

**Core Strategy** - A visionary Development Plan Document that sets out the key elements of the planning framework for Wealden. It will contain a spatial vision and strategic objectives, a spatial strategy, core policies and a monitoring and implementation framework. The Core Strategy will be Wealden’s principal Development Plan Document.

**Development or Developer Contributions** - Financial and physical contributions towards infrastructure and community facilities received from developers as part of a planning consent.

**Development Plan** - As set out in section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, an area’s development plan consists of the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy and the Development Plan Documents contained within the Local Development Framework. The documents set out policies for the use and development of land and are used to determine planning applications and other spatial policies relating to development not reliant on the grant or refusal of planning permission for implementation. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless there are good reasons not to.

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

**Economically Active** - People aged 16 years and over who are either in employment or who are registered unemployed.

**Environment Agency (EA)** - A national organisation set up in April 1996, assuming the responsibilities for environmental matters previously held by the National Rivers Authority, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Pollution, and the Waste Regulation Authorities.

**Evidence Base** - The information and data gathered to justify the “soundness” of the policy approach set out in Local Development Documents, including physical, economic and social characteristics of an area. Evidence includes the results of public participation and research and fact finding.

**Government Office for the South East (GOSE)** - The governmental body responsible for implementing national policy at the regional level, and making sure local planning authorities policies and plans accord with national guidance.

**Greenfield Land** - Land or sites which have not previously been developed.

**Highways Agency** - Established in 1994, the Highways Agency maintains, operates and improves the network of trunk roads and motorways in England on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport.
Independent Examination - The process by which a Planning Inspector may publicly examine a Development Plan Document (DPD) or a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), taking into account any representations received, before issuing a binding report. The findings set out in the report are binding upon the local authority that produced the DPD.

Infrastructure - Basic services necessary for development to take place, for example, roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.


Key Stakeholders - A generic term used for bodies and organisations with a significant interest in the Wealden District, and which are key to the plan’s delivery; the term includes representatives from health, infrastructure and education and includes landowners, house builders and other developers.

Landscape Character - The identification of landscape types including their variation. This comprises a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape. It reflects combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.

Local Area Agreement - A voluntary three year agreement, based on the Sustainable Community Strategy, that sets out the priorities for the area agreed between Central Government, the local authority and its key partners through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs).

Local Community - A generic term which includes all individuals (including the general public) and organisations external to the District Council. It includes both statutory and other consultees within the plan making process.

Local Development Framework - The collective term used for the portfolio of Local Development Documents, which includes the Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents, Statement of Community Involvement, the Local Development Scheme and Annual Monitoring Reports. Together these documents will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the local authority area.

Local Development Scheme - The time-scaled programme for the preparation of Local Development Documents relating to the Local Development Framework.

Local Strategic Partnership - A group of key local stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sectors with an instrumental role in Wealden’s Sustainable Community Strategy. Through a co-operative approach to joint working at a local level they are able to address multi-faceted problems by providing a range of responses.

Natural England - The Government’s statutory adviser on landscape in England, with responsibility for landscape designations such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coasts. It works to enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas; promoting access, recreation and public well-being, and contributing to the way natural resources are managed so that they can be enjoyed now and in the future. Natural England is also concerned with England’s
future landscapes, with involvement in planning policy and a range of environmental land management projects.

**Non-Statutory Wealden Local Plan** - This Plan was approved in December 2005. It does not have statutory status, but is a material consideration in determining planning applications until replaced by the new plan.

**Planning Inspectorate (PINS)** - The body responsible to the Secretary of State for England which supplies independent inspectors whose role includes the processing of planning and enforcement appeals, reporting on planning applications called in for decision by the Secretary of State and holding examinations into local development plans and Local Development Frameworks.

**Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG)** - A series of guidance notes setting out the government's land use policies for England on different planning issues. These are gradually being replaced by Planning Policy Statements.

**Planning Policy Statements (PPS)** - A series of policy statements issued by central government to replace the existing Planning Policy Guidance Notes. The notes set out the Government's national planning policy.

**Pre-submission** - The stage at which the plan is published and at which anyone can make representations as to whether the plan meets the tests of soundness.

**Ramsar Site** - The Convention on Wetlands, signed at Ramsar, Iran in 1971 is an intergovernmental treaty which provides a framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Pevensey Levels is a Ramsar site.

**Renewable Energy** - Energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment which are generated without the use of fossil fuels from sources that will not be depleted, for example from the wind, water flow, tides or the sun.

**Soundness** - A Development Plan Document will be considered sound if it has been prepared in accordance with the criteria set out in Government Guidance PPS12: Local Spatial Planning.

**South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA)** - A body which was composed of representatives from County, District and Unitary Authorities and other organisations in the South East. It was charged with the preparation of future regional planning guidance, amongst other functions. The South East England Regional Assembly was dissolved on 31 March 2009. The regional planning body is now the South East England Partnership Board.

**South East Plan** - The South East Plan is the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England and is part of the statutory development plan for Wealden. It sets the strategic context for the Local Development Framework. It was adopted in May 2009 and covers the period up to 2026.

**Special Area of Conservation (SAC)** - European network of important high-quality conservation sites that will make a contribution to conserving specified habitat and species identified in the EC Habitats Directive. Ashdown Forest is an SAC.

**Special Protection Area (SPA)** - Sites identified as an important habitat for rare and vulnerable birds under the European Community Directive on Wild Birds. Its purpose is to protect internationally important bird species. Ashdown Forest is a SPA.
Spatial Strategy - A document which sets out the strategy for the distribution of land uses and development objectives for an area, also bringing together other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function.

Spatial Vision - A brief description of how the area will be changed at the end of a plan period.

Statement of Community Involvement - The Council’s statutory policy statement setting out the processes to be used in involving the community in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all Local Development Documents and in the determination of planning applications. The document is an essential part of the Local Development Framework.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) - A process for evaluating the environmental consequences of proposals and to ensure that environmental considerations and the decision making process are fully integrated and in compliance with the EU Directive 2001/42/EC. It may be integrated with Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) - A technical study to assess the potential flood risk from all sources within the District. A component is to assist in the application of the ‘sequential test’ as outlined in Planning Policy Statement 25 'Development and Flood Risk' (PPS25, December 2006) when considering potential development sites.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) - An evidence base study that examines how the local housing market operates and, in particular, the need and demand for housing and the opportunities that exist to meet it. In accordance with Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, it is primarily intended to assist local authorities and their stakeholders to plan for housing in sub-regional housing markets.

Submission - The stage at which the plan is submitted for independent external examination.

Supplementary Planning Documents - A document providing supplementary information in respect of policies or proposals in a Development Plan Document. They are not subject to independent examination and do not form part of the Development Plan, but do form part of the Local Development Framework.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) - A process by which sustainable development is promoted through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations in the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies, Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.

Sustainable Community Strategy - The Sustainable Community Strategy is intended to help bring about significant improvements in the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. This is in accordance with the Sustainable Communities Act (2007). A Sustainable Community Strategy for East Sussex, titled 'Pride of Place' was published in July 2008 and the Wealden Chapter sets out the current Sustainable Community Strategy for Wealden. The overall strategy has been drawn up in conjunction with the six Local Strategic Partnerships across the county, as well as the relevant Local Authorities, and has involved consultation with local residents and organisations.

Sustainable Development - The four aims of sustainable development as set out in PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' are: social progress which recognises the
needs of everyone; effective protection of the environment; the prudent use of natural resources; and the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.
**Abbreviations**

AONB - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
DCLG - Department of Communities and Local Government
DPD - Development Plan Document
EA - Environment Agency
GOSE - Government Office for the South East
LDD - Local Development Document
LDF - Local Development Framework
LDS - Local Development Scheme
LPA - Local Planning Authority
LSP - Local Strategic Partnership
OFTWAT - The Water Services Regulation Authority
PINS - Planning Inspectorate
PPG - Planning Policy Guidance
PPS - Planning Policy Statement
RPG - Regional Planning Guidance
RSS - Regional Spatial Strategy
SA - Sustainability Appraisal
SAC - Special Area of Conservation
SCI - Statement of Community Involvement
SEA - Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEEDA - South East England Development Agency
SEERA - South East England Regional Assembly
SFRA - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SHMA - Strategic Housing Market Assessment
SPA - Special Protection Area
SPD - Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI - Site of Special Scientific Interest