How to Contact Us

Head of Planning and Environmental Policy
Wealden District Council
Council Offices, Pine Grove, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1DH
Telephone 01892 602007
Email ldf@wealden.gov.uk
Website www.wealden.gov.uk

Office hours Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm

Wealden District Council
Council Offices, Vicarage Lane, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 2AX
Telephone 01323 443322
Website www.wealden.gov.uk

Office hours Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm

Representations must be received by Wealden District Council by 5.30 p.m. Monday 13th August 2007
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. BACKGROUND</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. WEALDEN'S LANDSCAPE</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. WEALDEN'S WORKING PATTERNS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. WEALDEN'S SETTLEMENT PATTERN</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. WEALDEN'S PLACES</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. WEALDEN'S COMMUNITIES</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. MAKING IT HAPPEN: IMPLEMENTATION</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. DEVELOPING A SPATIAL VISION FOR WEALDEN</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. GET INVOLVED: MAKE YOUR VIEWS COUNT</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**List of Figures**

- Figure 1 - Wealden District and the Draft South East Plan Policy Areas  
  Page 4
- Figure 2 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Crowborough  
  Page 8
- Figure 3 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Heathfield  
  Page 9
- Figure 4 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Uckfield  
  Page 10
- Figure 5 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Hailsham  
  Page 11
- Figure 6 - Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Polegate, Willingdon and Stone Cross  
  Page 12
- Figure 7 - Main Option for Development on the Fringe of Tunbridge Wells  
  Page 13
- Figure 8 - New Settlement Option - Area of Search  
  Page 14
- Figure 9 - Suggested Settlement Strategy  
  Page 16
1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

1.1 This document is a short guide to the themes covered in the Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation paper, including possible choices for the location of future development within the District. The consultation on the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation paper runs from 2 July 2007 until 13 August 2007. All representations and comments must be received by Wealden District Council by 5.30pm on 13 August.

1.2 The full version of the Issues and Options consultation paper can be viewed on the Council’s website www.wealden.gov.uk. A CD or a printed copy is available by contacting the Planning Policy team on 01892 602007 or ldf@wealden.gov.uk. Please note, that in the interests of paper saving and in order to cover production costs, we must make a charge of £15 per copy for the full printed version. CDs are available free of charge.

1.3 We recommend that you read the full version of the Consultation Paper if you are intending to submit representations. It provides background and justification for some of the options identified. This short guide is presented under a series of main headings, which replicate wherever possible those used in the full version of the Consultation Paper. The reader should therefore refer to the relevant section in the full document if they require further information.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Wealden District Council has to make difficult decisions on the future development of the District over the next 20 years. The Council will do this through the production of a new type of plan called a Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF consists of a number of documents which will provide the framework for identifying where new development will take place, which areas should be protected and how we can address the development needs of local communities. The Core Strategy is the first Development Plan Document being produced. It will set out the overall vision and policy objectives for the District.

2.2 The first stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy is the publication of the Issues and Options consultation Paper. This consultation is an opportunity for the community, and all those with an interest in the District to share their views with the Council about the future of the places where we live and work. We also want to hear from developers and landowners about areas they may wish to see developed over the next 20 years. This will help to facilitate an open and meaningful public debate about the suitability of these areas at the earliest possible stage in the process and before any decisions are made.
2.3 The Issues and Options Consultation Paper identifies the key planning challenges for Wealden and puts forward a number of alternatives which can be used to shape future planning policy. No decisions have been made about these choices and as such, the consultation is intended to stimulate a wide ranging debate before the narrowing down of options takes place.

2.4 The results of this consultation will inform that narrowing down process and will culminate in the production of a Preferred Options Document which will itself be subject to further public consultation in Spring 2008. As part of the Local Development Framework, we will be producing, in due course, a separate document called a ‘Site Allocations Development Plan Document’. This document will set out the details of how specific sites should be formulated in line with the principles being developed through the production of the Core Strategy.

3 CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

3.1 One of the key challenges for the Wealden LDF and the Core Strategy in particular, is to put forward a plan defining where future housing and development will take place in the District. The South East Plan (prepared by the South East England Regional Assembly) requires Wealden District Council to find sufficient land to build 8,000 new homes over the next 20 years. Once finalised, most likely next year, the South East Plan will have statutory status and Wealden’s LDF must conform with its policies.

3.2 The Draft South East Plan identifies two main geographical policy areas relevant to the District; the Sussex Coast Sub-region and the Rest of Wealden (see Figure 1 ‘Wealden District and the Draft South East Plan Policy Areas’ which shows the boundary between these two policy areas). The Draft South East Plan requires 230 new homes to be built in the Sussex Coast Sub-region of Wealden each year; and a further 170 homes a year in the rest of Wealden between 2006 and 2026. It is for the Wealden Local Development Framework to define specifically where this development will take place within these two policy areas. Given the limited legacy of brownfield land within the District, it is likely that much of the new housing development will need to take place on greenfield sites.

3.3 Decisions on where development should take place need to be based on a thorough understanding of the needs of our communities, the existing character of the Wealden landscape, the nature of the environment, the way in which the people of the area live and work and the constraints on services and infrastructure. The Issues and Options consultation paper addresses these issues in detail.
Figure 1 Wealden District and the Draft South East Plan Policy Areas

© Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved (LA100018693) 2007
4 WEALDEN’S LANDSCAPE

4.1 Significant areas of Wealden are the subject of international, national and local designations seeking to protect and enhance the environment and character of the landscape. The Issues and Options Consultation Paper explains how the nature of Wealden’s environment is a significant factor in determining options for the future development of the District.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

4.2 Two thirds of Wealden is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This designation prioritises the protection of landscape character although small scale development may be acceptable.

4.3 A number of settlements within Wealden are surrounded by or lie wholly within designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and at present strict policies prohibit major development within these areas. The Issues and Options consultation paper seeks views on whether policies for the AONB need to be applied more flexibly to allow some development to meet housing needs and to address concerns expressed about overly constraining the natural growth of such settlements.

Renewable Energy

4.4 To help address the cause and effects of climate change, the Issues and Options Consultation Paper examines Wealden’s renewable energy potential. It seeks views on whether the Council should be requiring all new developments to generate a minimum of 10% or more of its energy using renewable sources. Wealden’s unique geography and topography makes it potentially well suited for renewable energy projects such as wind and water power generation or production of biomass/biofuels, although inevitably these can have impacts too.
5 WEALDEN’S WORKING PATTERNS

Wealden’s Economic Challenges

5.1 Wealden’s economy is dominated by small firms and many jobs are in the service sector rather than in traditional manufacturing industries and offices. About 45% of the working population commutes out of the District for work, possibly reflecting lower local salaries and the range of local employment opportunities. The area has not succeeded in attracting the major inward investment necessary to diversify the economic base and to improve local employment prospects. Business development to date has largely been driven by local needs, yet many existing businesses are experiencing difficulties in finding suitable premises into which they can expand.

Future Business Policies

5.2 The Core Strategy will need to respond to these economic challenges, including how much land should be reserved for future business development, and of what type and in what location. The Issues and Options Paper specifically seeks views on the priority which should be attached to protecting existing business premises and employment land. It also seeks views on the importance of boosting the supply of jobs in line with the levels of housing growth envisaged. The Issues Paper recognises the shift away from farming (in terms of employment) and the challenges associated with the re-use of rural buildings for business purposes.

Sussex Coast

5.3 A number of locations for a major business park type development around Polegate and Hailsham are identified in the Issues and Options Consultation Paper. Views are sought on which, if any of these would be the best location to help boost the economy of the southern part of the District, which has been lagging behind in many respects.

6 WEALDEN’S SETTLEMENT PATTERN

6.1 Wealden has a dispersed settlement pattern. Half of the population live in the District's five main towns and the remainder live in many scattered villages and hamlets. The Issues and Options Consultation Paper asks questions on the possible distribution of new housing and business development to determine the best strategy for the future.

Urban versus Rural

6.2 The Core Strategy will need to indicate what share of the total growth is allocated to towns and villages. The Council is seeking views on the balance of development between urban and rural locations. A series of options are put forward, which suggest focusing between 70 – 80% of all new development in and around the towns, with the remainder distributed to villages. Views are also sought on whether other proportional splits are appropriate having regard to Government policy and the need to promote more sustainable patterns of living.
7 WEALDEN’S PLACES

Urban Areas

7.1 Looking at Wealden’s towns specifically, the Issues and Options consultation paper seeks views on whether growth should be shared equally between the towns or concentrated in a few key locations. In the north of the District, the broad choices are between Crowborough and Uckfield, with relatively less potential at Heathfield. In the south, there are advantages and disadvantages associated with each of the options of focusing development either at Hailsham or Polegate or in distributing development between the towns more equally.

Existing Towns and Urban Areas - Potential Broad Locations for Development

7.2 For each of Wealden’s towns and urban areas, a number of broad locations where development could be considered to meet the overall growth strategy of the South East Plan are identified. The broad locations are shown on plans of the relevant towns which are reproduced in this Guide from the full Issues and Options Consultation Paper. The Issues and Options Consultation Paper also explores development possibilities on the edges of adjoining urban areas at Tunbridge Wells and at Eastbourne and the relevant plans are also reproduced in this Guide. Further information on the potential scale of development which might be possible at each of the areas and information about the potential impacts and other implications can be found in the full version of the Issues and Options Paper.

7.3 Views are sought on the suitability of the areas and alternatives identified on the following plans. However it is important to emphasise that not all of these areas will be feasible or appropriate and further detailed assessment work will be required before any decisions can be made. Early evidence gathering work undertaken by the Council and liaison with infrastructure providers is highlighting that there are no easy choices ahead. It should also be recognised that some of the areas were assessed but rejected as part of earlier work on the review of the Wealden Local Plan. However, as the LDF must now look ahead to 2026, it is appropriate for these areas to be reassessed. It is possible that some options previously rejected may now prove to represent the next best solution for accommodating longer term development requirements.

7.4 In 2003 and 2004, Wealden District Council consulted the public on a range of sites proposed for development in the period up to 2011. In December 2005, the District Council approved the Non-Statutory Wealden Local Plan as an Interim Guide for Development Control purposes. Accordingly, it is Council policy to allow appropriate development on the sites identified in the Non-Statutory Local Plan. However, any sites which are not built upon or where planning permission has not been obtained, will be incorporated into the LDF process at the next stage and will be subject to further assessment and public consultation. The Non-Statutory Wealden Local Plan can be viewed on the Council’s web site www.wealden.gov.uk or can be inspected at Council offices and local libraries.
Figure 2 Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Crowborough

Key
- Existing Development Boundary Adopted Plan
- Main Areas of Search for Development
  - 11a - Pine Grove and Town Centre Opportunity Area
  - 11b - Land North West of Crowborough and North of A26
  - 11c - Area North of Crowborough Cross
  - 11d - Areas to the South East of Crowborough between Alderbrook and Jarvis Brook
  - 11e - Area South of Whitehill and Alderbrook

© Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved LA100018692 2007
Figure 3 Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Heathfield

Key
- Existing Development Boundary Adopted Plan
- Main Areas of Search for Development
  - 12a - Heathfield Town Centre Opportunity Area
  - 12b - Central Heathfield Commercial Area and Employment Area Adjoining
  - 12c - Locations to the East of Heathfield along Burwash Road
  - 12d - Area North of Heathfield College and Leisure Centre
  - 12e - Area at Sandy Cross South East of Heathfield
  - 12f - South West of Heathfield - South of Tilsmore

High Weald AONB
- Conservation Area
- Historic Park/Garden

©Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved LA100018692 2007
Figure 4 Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Uckfield

Key
- Existing Development Boundary Adopted Plan
- Main Areas of Search for Development
  - 14a - Areas to the North West of Uckfield
  - 14b - Areas around Ringles Cross
  - 14c - Area to the East of Uckfield along Framfield Road
  - 14d - Area to the North and South of Eastbourne Road and West and East of Millennium Green
  - 14e - Area to the West of Ridgewood
  - 14f - West of New Town
  - 14g - Uckfield Town Centre Opportunity Area
  - 14h - Areas to the West of Uckfield (A22) Bypass
- High Weald AONB
- Conservation Area
- Historic Park/Garden
- Flood Risk Area

©Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved LA100018692 2007
Figure 5 Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Hailsham

Key
- Existing Development Boundary Adopted Plan
- Main Areas of Search for Development
  - 15a - Areas to the North of Upper Horsebridge
  - 15c - Hailsham Town Centre Opportunity Area
  - 15e - Area Along Hailsham’s Southern Flank
- Conservation Area
- Pevensey Levels Ramsar Site
- Historic Park/Garden
- Flood Risk Area

© Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved LA100001B092 2007
Figure 6 Main Options and Alternatives for Development in and Around Polegate, Willingdon and Stone Cross

Key
- Existing Development Boundary Adopted Plan
- Main Areas of Search for Development
  - 16a - Area to the North West of Polegate - between A22 and A377
  - 16b - Area to the North West of A22 Polegate Bypass and Cophall Roundabout
  - 16c - Area to the North East of Cophall
  - 16d - Area North East of Polegate/South of Polegate Bypass
  - 16e - Areas North of Dittons Road - Polegate
  - 16f - Area between Lower Willingdon and Polegate
  - 16g - Polegate Town Centre and Station Redevelopment Opportunity Area
  - 17a - Area North of Dittons Road
  - 17b - Area North of St Lukes Church
  - 17c - Area East of Friday Street/Langney
- Conservation Area
- Proposed South Downs National Park
- Historic Park/Garden
- Flood Risk Area

© Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved LA1000318692 2007
Figure 7 Main Option for Development on the Fringe of Tunbridge Wells

Key

- District Boundary
- Main Areas of Search for Development
  13a - South of Hawkenbury
- High Weald AONB

© Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved LA100018692 2007
New Settlements

7.5 Government policy requires local planning authorities to consider the case for building new settlements to meet the need for future homes and whether such an approach could offer a more sustainable solution instead of expanding existing towns. Whilst there is no requirement in the South East Plan for building a new settlement in Wealden, the District Council believes that it is appropriate to debate this issue publicly through the Core Strategy process.

7.6 The Issues and Options consultation paper therefore seeks views on the merits of a new settlement option in principle and on potential broad locations mostly in the south of the District and outside of any designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (see Figure 8 ‘New Settlement Option - Area of Search’). To achieve an appropriate ‘critical mass’ for securing new infrastructure, it is likely that any new settlement option would need to be in the order of 1,500 - 2,000 dwellings. This would account for a significant share of the total amount of new housing development required in Wealden.

Figure 8 New Settlement Option - Area of Search
Villages

Settlement Boundaries

7.7 All towns and many Wealden villages currently have defined policy boundaries, known as "development" or "settlement boundaries". These boundaries specifically seek to protect the countryside from progressive urbanisation. The Issues and Options Consultation Paper seeks views on the desirability of retaining these defined boundaries as a planning tool. It also asks whether there is scope for relaxing controls and adopting a criteria based approach for assessing the impact of development proposals outside of boundaries.

Development in Villages

7.8 Government planning policy requires development in rural areas to take place primarily in those villages which are the focal points for local services. The Issues and Options consultation paper proposes a methodology for classifying Wealden’s villages as "local service centres" and identifying which ones are suitable for growth. Views are sought on this classification and the resulting strategy for the potential growth villages. In particular, the Issues and Options Consultation Paper considers the scale of growth which might be appropriate for specific villages or categories of villages. It also asks whether growth should be directly proportionate to the size of existing village populations, to help better assimilate new development and to limit future impacts.

7.9 The Issues and Options Consultation Paper does not identify specific locations for development in and around villages. Broad locations and sites will be identified at the next stage of developing the Core Strategy and through the separate Site Allocations Development Plan Document. The current consultation is focusing on whether a particular village should accommodate development in principle and at what scale.

7.10 The villages with possible potential for growth are shown on Figure 9 ‘Suggested Settlement Strategy’. 
Figure 9 Suggested Settlement Strategy
8 WEALDEN’S COMMUNITIES

Affordable Housing

8.1 The cost of housing in the District is a key issue for local people. Local house prices are now well out of the reach of many people, particularly in the villages. Meeting the needs of the whole community, including those in need of affordable housing is therefore a key challenge for the Local Development Framework. The Issues and Options Paper seeks views on how the Council can best address this challenge. It puts forward proposals for increasing the proportion of affordable housing (typically housing for rent from a Registered Social Landlord, such as a housing association, but can include some shared ownership schemes). In larger settlements, the Issues and Options Consultation Paper seeks views on requiring 40% of all new housing on sites of 10 dwellings or more to be affordable, whilst in the smaller settlements it asks for views on a 50% requirement for all development on sites as small as two dwellings. Views are also sought on allocating areas specifically for affordable housing to meet the needs of rural communities.

Housing Types

8.2 Ensuring that there is sufficient choice in terms of the size and type of residential accommodation is also an issue for the Core Strategy to address. The Issues and Options Consultation Paper seeks views on whether there is a need for more "smaller" dwellings to be built in the future, reflecting trends for decreasing household size. The Council is also required to make provision for the needs of gypsies and travellers. The Issues and Options Consultation Paper poses questions on where, in broad terms, any necessary new sites for travellers should be provided.

Housing Density, Car Parking and Design

8.3 Increasing the density of new housing development is a particular priority of Government, primarily to make better use of development land. The Issues and Options Consultation Paper seeks views on three possible densities for new development, ranging from 30-35 dwellings per hectare (in line with current planning policy) to 50 dwellings per hectare and even higher in town centres and other locations well served by public transport. The Issues and Options Consultation Paper considers the implications of building at higher densities and the importance of achieving good design if higher densities are to be encouraged. A key aspect of that relates to the integration of car parking within new development and the provision of suitable good quality public open space and recreational facilities. The Issues and Options Consultation Paper seeks views on applying standards more flexibly in this regard to meet local needs and priorities.
Transport

8.4 Wealden District Council recognises that the transport system of the area is relatively poor. There are no motorways in the District and only limited stretches of dual carriageway. Public transport is also poor in some areas. The District is served by only three rail lines and connections tend to focus on routes towards London rather than between Wealden’s towns.

8.5 The Issues and Options Consultation Paper explores possible priorities for addressing these limitations. In particular, it asks for views on the merits of building a new “parkway” station in the Polegate area and on the priority which should be attached to seeking the reinstatement of the Lewes-Uckfield line. It is possible that both of these scenarios might only be possible in the very long term and even then, only if subsidised through major housing development alongside.
9 MAKING IT HAPPEN: IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 It is important that the development of new housing and business premises is integrated with the provision of necessary infrastructure. The Local Development Framework must address all aspects of planning for the necessary infrastructure, including the funding likely to be available such as from the house builders themselves.

9.2 Phasing will be an important aspect of ensuring that new development and infrastructure are planned for together. The District Council has been working closely with the Wealden Local Strategic Partnership and key service providers in the area to fully understand the limits of existing infrastructure and the requirement for additional investment. This important area of planning will continue to be addressed as work on the Core Strategy progresses. At this early stage of the process, the Issues and Options Consultation Paper identifies some of the key elements of infrastructure which could be necessary to support the levels of housing growth required by the South East Plan. Views are sought on these, including the need for:

- Improvements to the A27 trunk road in the Polegate area;
- New sewage treatment works in the Hailsham area to serve any future development taking place either at Hailsham or Polegate;
- New and/or expanded reservoirs at Bewl Water and at Clay Hill (in Lewes District);
- New primary schools and additional secondary school places/facilities;
- New/expanded doctors surgeries;
- Additional recreational facilities and public open space;
- Highway improvements and enhanced public transport.

10 DEVELOPING A SPATIAL VISION FOR WEALDEN

10.1 The Wealden Core Strategy must contain a series of "spatial" objectives, which should flow from an overall vision about what kind of place we want Wealden to be in the future. These objectives should build upon national and regional planning policy objectives as well as having regard to other relevant local strategies and plans (such as Wealden's Sustainable Community Strategy) which will also influence the future of the District.

Whilst it is important not to pre-judge ahead of this consultation what our vision for the District should be, the Issues and Options Consultation Paper draws out a number of key themes that could underpin a new vision for Wealden. The key themes are:

- Protecting Wealden's landscapes and environment;
- Improving economic prosperity;
- Focusing new development where it will be most sustainable and offer the greatest potential benefit for existing communities; and
- Improving health and well-being of our communities.
11 GET INVOLVED: MAKE YOUR VIEWS COUNT

11.1 The Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation opens on 2 July 2007 and will run for six weeks. All representations and comments must be received by Wealden District Council no later than 5.30pm on 13 August 2007. The Core Strategy will affect all of us in one way or another. By getting involved now, your views could really make a difference before key decisions are made.

11.2 We would encourage you to send us your views online, as this is the easiest and quickest way for you to comment. You can respond to any or all of the questions which are posed throughout the full version of the Issues and Options Consultation Paper, or you can simply send us your comments on the points raised in this Summary Guide.

11.3 If you wish to submit your comments to us online, you will need to register on our consultation system which will only take a few minutes of your time. You can register by visiting our website www.wealden.gov.uk and following the link to the Local Development Framework pages. You will need to provide an email address in order to receive a password which will enable you to use the system.

11.4 If you do not have access to the Internet at home, or cannot make use of internet points at your local library, please contact the Council's Planning Policy Team on 01892 602007 to discuss alternative ways of submitting your comments.

11.5 The full printed version of the Issues and Options Consultation Paper is available from Wealden District Council offices at both Hailsham and Crowborough. Please note, that in the interests of paper saving and in order to cover production costs, we must make a charge of £15 per copy for the printed version. A CD of the full document is available free of charge. The full text can be downloaded from our website www.wealden.gov.uk or can be inspected at local council offices and libraries.

11.6 If you require any further information, please telephone the Planning Policy team on 01892 602007.

11.7 We regret that because of legal requirements we cannot accept anonymous responses. We will not be able to respond to each individual representation. However, when the consultation has ended, a summary of all responses will be produced and published. Officers will analyse all responses and the Council will then make a decision on which options should be taken forward for further consideration. These options will ultimately form the basis of a vision for Wealden’s future. The Council intends to publish a "Preferred Options" Core Strategy document in April 2008, at which time there will be a further opportunity to comment.