

Westham

(Inset Map No.59)

Introduction

19.38.1 Westham is situated on a low ridge above the Coastal Levels, three miles north of Eastbourne. The village has a dual function, serving as both an established residential settlement and a local service and employment centre. It is one of the larger villages in the District with a population in excess of 1800 persons, a high proportion of whom are over retirement age.

19.38.2 The Council aims to maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the residential and employment functions of the village whilst protecting the character of its historic core and its sensitive countryside setting.

Environment

19.38.3 Westham's elevated position offers extensive views across the surrounding flat, open countryside. To the north of the village, the wetlands of the Pevensey Levels Site of Special Scientific Interest form an area of great landscape and wildlife value. Immediately to the east, Pevensey Castle is a scheduled Ancient Monument, described more fully in the Pevensey section, while to the south there are views across the Mountney Levels towards the sea.

19.38.4 Westham itself has grown considerably in post-War years from a ribbon of development along the former A27, where shops and services are located, to a fairly substantial suburban settlement. Estate development now extends to the north of Rattle Road and, to a more limited degree, to the south.

19.38.5 Whilst the character of Westham has inevitably been altered by the new housing estates, it retains its historic core beside the West Gate of Pevensey Castle. A number of attractive listed buildings front the High Street between the Castle and Peelings Lane, and the special architectural and historic character of this part of the village has been recognised by its inclusion within the Pevensey and Westham Conservation Area. Further reference to proposed Conservation Area improvements is made in the Pevensey village section.

19.38.6 The overall environment in the centre of the village has been considerably improved by the removal of heavy through traffic following the recent completion of the A27 Pevensey Bypass. However, there remain local concerns over traffic levels. The situation is to be monitored by the County Council following construction of the A27 Polegate Bypass and A22 New Route and the possibility of a weight and/or width restriction investigated.

Development Boundary

19.38.7 In order to protect the sensitive landscape setting of Westham and to preserve the rural character of its historic core, it is important to resist further outward encroachment of development into the surrounding open countryside or intensification of development in the more rural fringe areas. Accordingly, the development boundary is tightly drawn around the main confines of the village.

19.38.8 At the northern edge of Westham, the scatter of dwellings north of Peelings Lane have been excluded in view of their more rural character and sensitive rural fringe location. To the west, the land beyond housing on Ash Grove and Oaklands Park is an important and integral part of the open countryside gap separating Westham and Stone Cross, where any development would be contrary to Policy EN17 which seeks to prevent the coalescence of the two settlements.

19.38.9 Along the south side of Rattle Road, west of the B2191 Eastbourne Road, the development boundary is defined so as to prevent backland development extending beyond the established road frontage and impinging upon the adjacent open countryside. South of the railway, the development boundary follows the rear curtilages of residential properties off Eastbourne Road, extending to incorporate the commercial land and premises towards the 'Mountney Bridge' on the southern edge of the built-up area.

19.38.10 The Mountney Bridge Business Area, located either side of the Eastbourne Road, was originally a loose collection of agricultural and market garden buildings. Following a gradual intensification of industrial and commercial activities over the years, the Council considered it was appropriate to allocate the site for industrial purposes. However, in view of the highly exposed nature of the site within the low-lying countryside of the Mountney Levels, it is considered important to restrict the outward expansion of the industrial area.

19.38.11 The business area is contained on its southern and western edges by the Mountney Sewer while a bund, which could be extended and suitably landscaped within the existing allocation, provides a physical limit to the east. The field to the north of the industrial estate on the western side of the Eastbourne Road provides a valuable gap in development and an important amenity buffer. It has therefore been excluded from the development boundary.

19.38.12 At its eastern extremity, the village retains much of its medieval setting intact, with the historic High Street aligned to the Roman West Gate of Pevensey Castle and flanked by open countryside to the north and south. The development boundary includes dwellings off Church Avenue and Church Bailey, but excludes open land further west in recognition of its contribution to the historic setting of the Castle and the Conservation Area, as well as to the countryside gap separating Westham from Pevensey. The majority of listed buildings and adjacent properties fronting the south side of the High Street are also excluded since it is considered that further intensification of development in this location would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

19.38.13 Some additional housebuilding within the development boundary for Westham may be appropriate, subject to satisfying normal planning requirements. However, the compact nature of the existing development within the village provides few opportunities for new housing. Limited potential exists for infilling, the redevelopment of existing sites and the conversion of buildings to residential use.

Employment

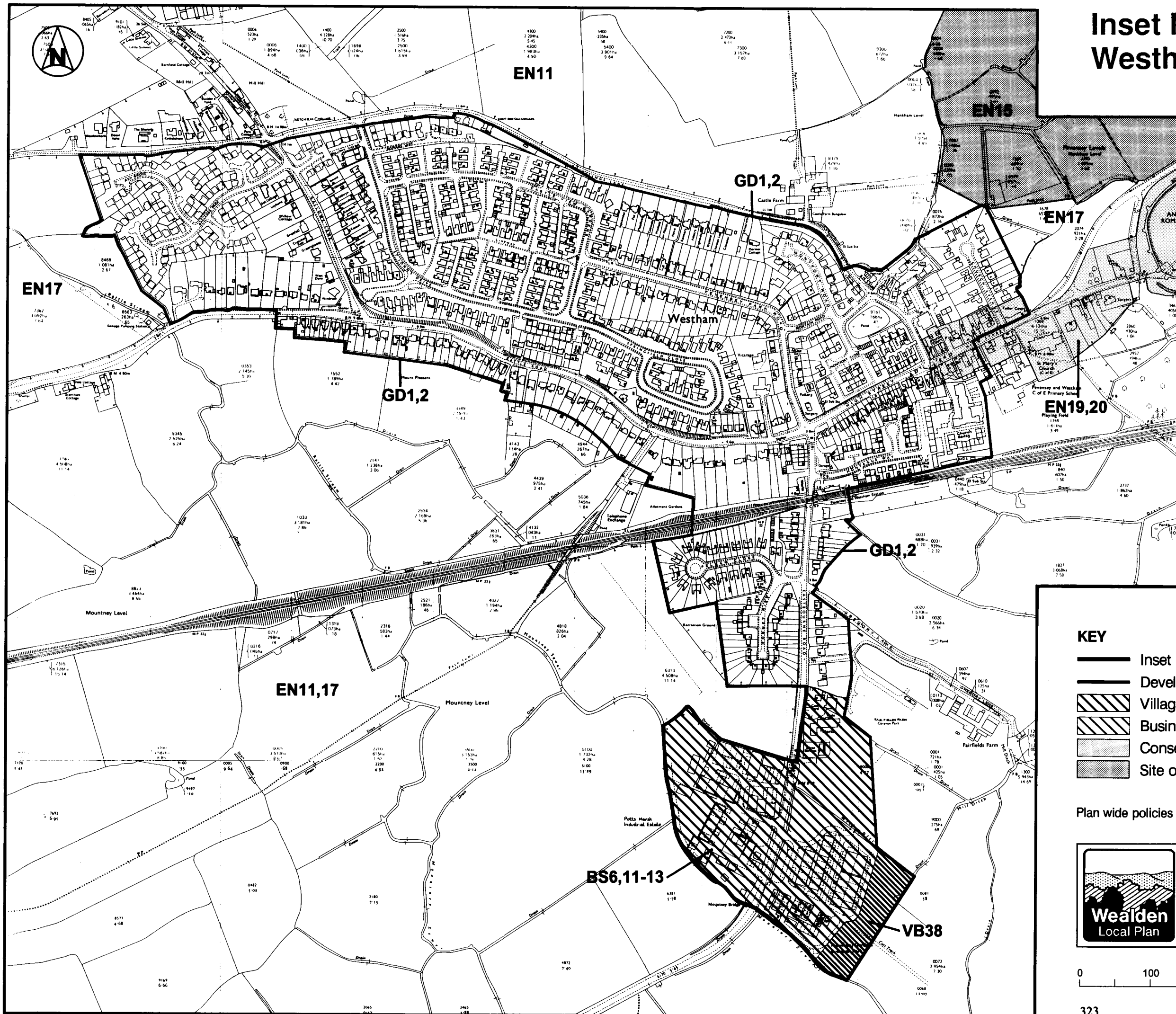
19.38.14 The majority of local employment opportunities in Westham are provided by a range of business concerns on the Mountney Bridge Business Area, which serves not only the village but a wider area. The Council seeks to maintain and enhance Westham's role as a local employment centre and there is scope for further business development within the development boundary.

19.38.15 The policies for the main business areas, including the Mountney Bridge Business Area, are contained in Chapter 7. At Mountney Bridge, uses falling within Use Classes B1 or B8 will normally be acceptable in principle. B2 uses may also be acceptable, subject to the examination of any manufacturing process and the impact on other properties, in accordance with Policy BS12. Non-employment generating uses and retail uses will be resisted.

19.38.16 The Mountney Bridge Business Area includes a vacant site to the south east which is allocated for business purposes in view of the opportunity to screen the business area by landscaping the existing earth bund along its eastern boundary. Proposals for the development of this site will be required to include a landscaped buffer to a depth of 10 metres along the boundaries abutting open countryside. This buffer should incorporate the existing bund, extended where necessary and planted with species appropriate to its location within the Coastal Levels. Details should be prepared and a scheme implemented prior to any development.

VB38 Land to the south east of Mountney Bridge Business Area, as defined on the Proposals Map, is allocated for business purposes. This will incorporate a landscape buffer incorporating planting and bunding to a depth of 10 metres along the northern, eastern and southern boundaries.

Inset Map No. 59 Westham



KEY

- Inset Map boundary
- Development boundary
- Village business area
- Business allocation
- Conservation Area
- Site of Special Scientific Interest

Plan wide policies are listed on the main Proposals Map.



Proposals Map

0 100 200 metres

1:5000