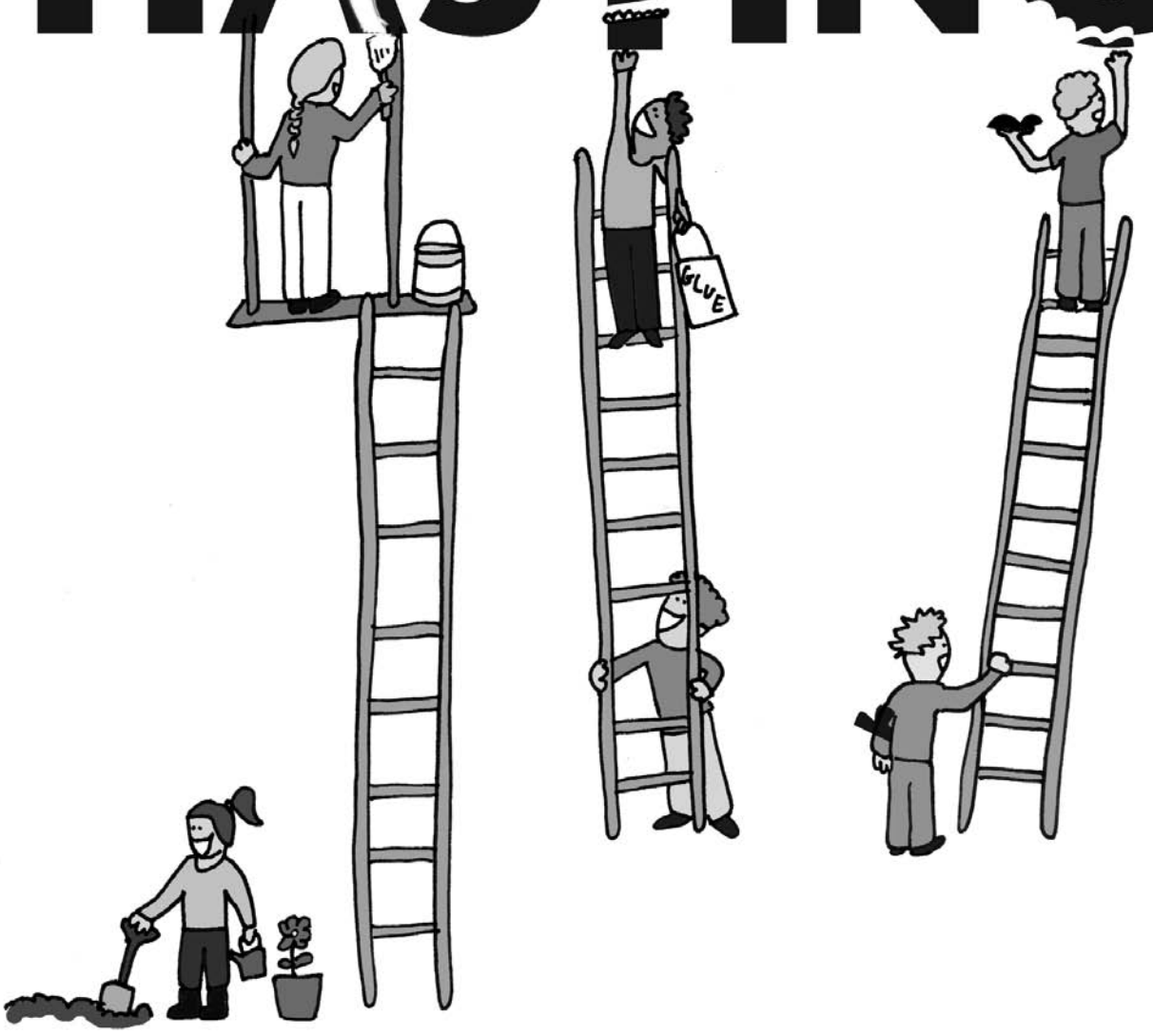
Hastings BOROUGH COUNCIL

SHAPING HASTINGS



HASTINGS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Core Strategy - Issues and Options

SHAPING HASTINGS

HASTINGS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Core Strategy - Issues and Options

Consultation period runs from Monday 30 October to Friday 8 December 2006

This document is available in Large Print, Audio Cassette, Braille and in languages other than English. Please contact the Forward Planning Team on 0845 274 1098 to request a copy.

Tell Us What You Think

Please give us your comments on this document by:

downloading the response form in pdf format at **www.hastings.gov.uk/ldf/resources**

OR

completing the response form enclosed in this pack.

Further copies can be requested by contacting us at:

Local Development Framework: Core Strategy
Century House, 100 Menzies Road
St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN38 9BB

Telephone: 0845 2741098
Email: fplanning@hastings.gov.uk
or by downloading it from **www.hastings.gov.uk/ldf/resources**

Comments must be received no later than **Friday 8 December 2006**. Comments received after the deadline will not be considered.

What Will Happen To Your Comments

We'll send acknowledgements for all relevant written comments received by the end of the consultation period. Comments on matters not related to this document will not be accepted as part of this consultation. We will not accept verbal comments.

All comments will be made publicly available for anyone to see upon request.

At the end of the consultation period we'll analyse all responses and prepare a summary report that will be sent to all those organisations and individuals who made comments. A copy of the report will also be made available at our Hastings Information Centre, Queens Square, Priory Meadow, Hastings and at our Planning Offices at the addres above and on www.hastings.gov.uk.

All relevant comments will be considered and used to prepare a "Preferred Options" document in 2007, which you will also have an opportunity to comment on.

Want to know more about the LDF?

Go to **www.hastings.gov.uk/ldf**

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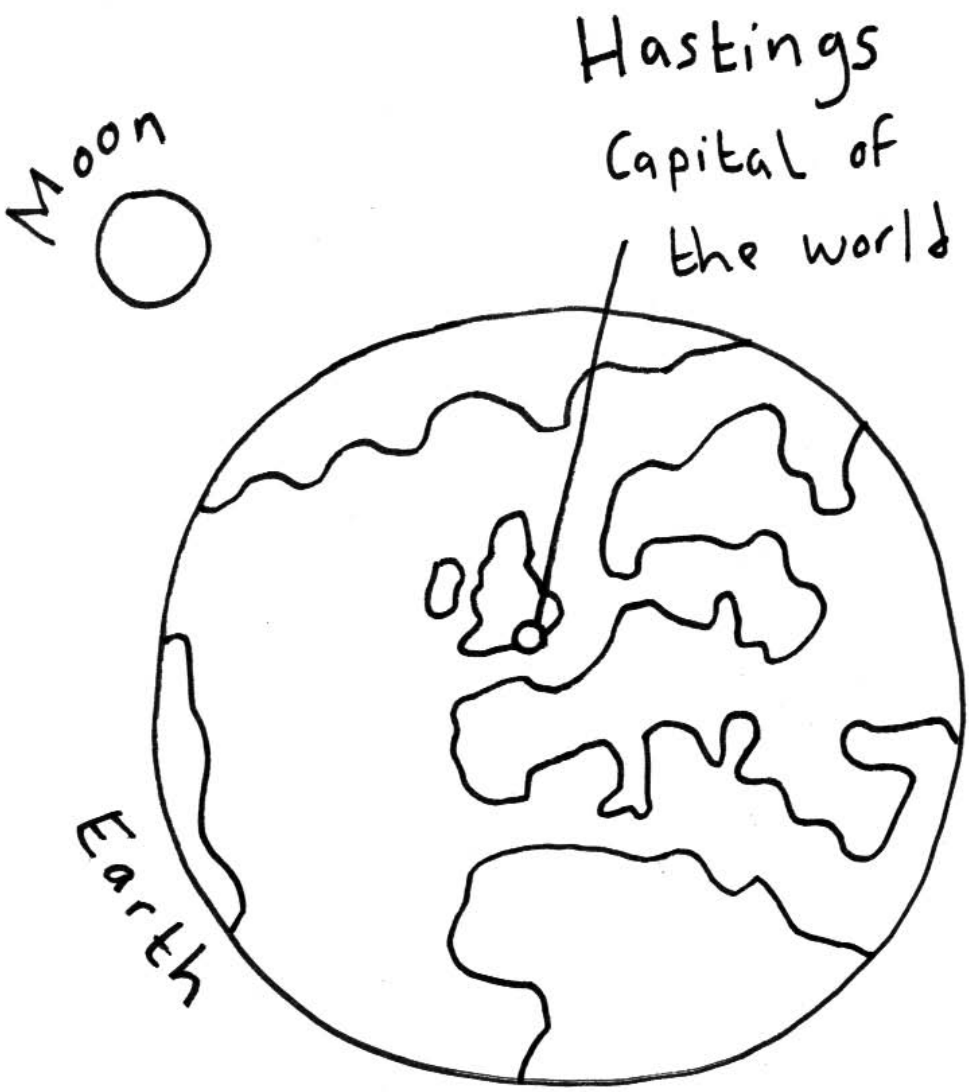
INTRODUCTION



Chapter 1

What is it About?

1.1 We need your opinion on key issues for planning in Hastings & St Leonards.

1.2 Planning affects many aspects of our lives – from where we live, work and shop to where and how we can spend leisure time. The planning system can improve everybody's quality of life by, for example, protecting the best of our natural and built heritage and making sure developments are accessible, well designed and served by adequate infrastructure like roads, sewers, new schools, play space and parking spaces. It's about managing change, rather than letting it happen in an unplanned way.

1.3 The Government introduced a new planning system in September 2004 which will replace the 'County Structure Plan' with a regional strategy called 'The South East Plan', and over time, will replace the 2004 Hastings Local Plan with a Hastings Local Development Framework (LDF).

1.4 The new planning system addresses the use and development of land, the movement of people and access to opportunities. It unites traditional planning techniques with other policies and strategies such as the Hastings & St Leonards Community Strategy. The term given to this is "spatial planning". It doesn't deal with things such as the length of hospital waiting lists as this is "non-spatial".

1.5 Read more about the new planning system at the Department of Communities and Local Government website: www.communities.gov.uk/planning

1.6 The Hastings Local Development Framework will be a portfolio of different documents, maps and written policies to show where, in what form and in what quantities development can take place.

1.7 The documents that will make up the Hastings LDF are described here:

To view copies, contact us or go to **www.hastings.gov.uk/ldf/resources.aspx**

- **Local Development Scheme** – this is the timetable for the new planning documents to be produced. We adopted it in June 2006.

- **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** - this sets out how you can get involved in the preparation of Local Development Framework documents. It also addresses public consultation relating to significant planning applications. We adopted this in June 2006.

- **Core Strategy** - this is what you're now reading and will help to inform the other LDF documents as they're written over the next few years.

- **Site Specific Allocations** - this will identify proposed development sites to meet the vision identified in the Core Strategy. It will set out some clear rules and standards for the sites and include a Proposals Map showing their locations. It will also show areas to be conserved or protected. Work will begin on this document in 2007 with adoption due in 2010.

- **Area Action Plans** - different areas of Hastings & St Leonards have different development requirements. Some areas are in need of major change and regeneration, while others may need protection from excessive change. Areas with specific needs will have Area Action Plans written especially for them. Hastings Town Centre is one area that will have an action plan to show how

we can make the most of its assets, creating a sustainable heart for our town. We plan to start work on the Town Centre Area Action Plan documents in the Spring of 2007 with adoption due in 2010.

- **Proposals Map** - We'll produce a map to show how the Local Development Framework will affect Hastings & St Leonards. This will be updated at the same time as the various LDF documents are prepared.

The Core Strategy

1.8 The Core Strategy will provide a long-term strategy to deliver regeneration and sustainable growth in the town over the next 20 years. It will not be concerned with individual development sites or specific details – its purpose is to set an overall framework for the future and this is why we're developing it as the first major planning document in the new system.

1.9 The Core Strategy will be a spatial planning framework for the town, and will:

- set out the vision for the future sustainable development and regeneration of the town up to 2026
- identify the key issues to be addressed through the planning system
- set out how we intend to deliver new housing, jobs and infrastructure and contain policies for protecting our most important green spaces and historic townscapes
- set out how we'll accommodate future levels of housing growth proposed through the South East Plan (the spatial plan for the South East region)
- set guidelines for the pattern of land uses around the town
- form the context for other LDF documents that will be prepared in the future
- clearly show how planning policies and the use of land will support the key targets set out in the Hastings and St Leonards Community Strategy. For more information on the Community Strategy go to www.hastings.gov.uk
- join up planning and land issues with plans and proposals affecting health, equalities, community safety, housing, regeneration, community development, employment, education, transport and the environment.

This Consultation

1.10 This document is an early stage in the Core Strategy's development. The 'Issues and Options' contained in it have been developed through engagement over the past 18 months with a selection of local organisations, groups and individuals. They're an interpretation of community feelings and aspirations, Government policies and guidance and our research.

1.11 The purpose of this document is to get your views on:

- Whether the right issues have been identified – the issues represent the problems, difficulties, challenges and opportunities that exist in Hastings.
- Whether the options (possible solutions to the issues) selected are the most appropriate.

1.12 The list of issues is not comprehensive, but represents initial thoughts as to the key things which the new strategy should address. Therefore it's important that this consultation identifies any missing strategic issues or options now, in the early stages of the LDF process.

1.13 Following consultation on this document, a further document called "Core Strategy – Preferred Options" will be prepared. This will be consulted on in Summer 2007.

1.14 Following this, a submission version of the Core Strategy has to be prepared and submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination. You'll have the opportunity to make formal comments on this version too.

1.15 Following this, the Core Strategy will become a final published document.

Format of this Document

1.16 This draft Core Strategy begins by explaining the planning context, or rules that the Government, the South East England Regional Assembly and East Sussex County Council have set for the town. These rules have to be followed. However there are still a great many choices that the Borough Council, with your help, can make.

1.17 Chapter 3 provides a snapshot of the town with some relevant facts and figures.

1.18 In Chapter 4, we set out Core Strategy Vision and Objectives, and ask for your comments.

1.19 Chapters 5 to 12 set out the issues under key themes. This is followed by a range of options for dealing with the issues identified. At this early drafting stage the options are very general. They will become more detailed and focussed as the Core Strategy goes through its different stages, and you'll have further opportunities to comment. As the options are explored, a series of questions are asked. These are grouped together in a response form which accompanies this document.

1.20 It's inevitable that there will be "jargon" throughout a document like this. As much as possible, where a technical term is used for the first time in the document, a short explanation has been included first. Further explanation of jargon can be found in the Glossary.

Sustainability appraisals

1.21 We have to produce these for all our Local Development Framework documents. These appraisals assess the various options (see 1.19) against sustainable development objectives. The initial part of this work will be on-going in parallel with the Issues and Options consultation on the Core Strategy. The Sustainability Report will be available at the next stage of consultation (the Preferred Options stage). It will include an analysis of the options considered in this report and will help inform our choice of preferred options.

1.22 The sustainability appraisal process will incorporate the requirements of the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, which aims to assess the likely significant environmental effects of plans and programmes.

1.23 The purpose of sustainability appraisal is to help integrate social, economic and environmental considerations into plans and the process is now integral to plan-making.

1.24 We've produced a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.
To view a copy, contact us or look at:
www.hastings.gov.uk/ldf/resources.aspx

1.25 We'll appraise all the issues and options to help inform our decisions on which options to take forward. The full Sustainability Appraisal Report will be available for consultation when we produce the 'Preferred Options' document in Summer 2007.

Core Strategy – **How We Wrote This Draft**

1.26 The LDF process is all about giving local people plenty of opportunities to contribute to its development. To prepare this Core Strategy we've carried out the following consultation:

between July and August 2005:

4 open workshops aimed at general and specific consultation bodies

3 business workshops

1 housing workshop

1 workshop with staff and elected members

1 workshop with Local Strategic Partnership

1 session with Ore Valley Forum Planning SIG

1 session with Hastings Youth Council

Questionnaire

between January 2006 and September 2006:

4 Neighbourhood Renewal roadshows

2 Café Consultations (impromptu conversations)

1 workshop for new elected members

3 workshops for new Hastings Borough Council staff members

1 workshop with Hastings Youth Council

1 workshop with Ore Valley Forum Planning Special Interest Group

1 workshop with Celebrating Cultural Diversity Network

1 workshop with Hastings Environmental Network

1 workshop with representatives from the Black and Minority Ethnic communities

1 workshop with Town Centre Management Board

1 workshop with Local Strategic Partnership

1.27 In total we estimate that over 200 people from Hastings have contributed to the development of this draft Core Strategy. We'd like to thank them for their time and input to this draft document.

THE RULES

Chapter 2

2.1 It's important to realise that we do not have an entirely free hand to decide what is and what is not included in the Core Strategy.

2.2 It's also important to recognise that the planning process at a national level is in a period of great change. Therefore the Hastings LDF is informed by a number of documents, some of which are still in draft format.

2.3 The Hastings LDF must give "spatial expression" to the Hastings Community Strategy (see paragraph 1.4). It must also conform to national, regional and strategic planning guidance. If conflict were to arise, these requirements would take precedence over the Hastings LDF.

2.4 Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) currently set out the planning policies of central Government, and are gradually being replaced by Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). These guidance documents cover a wide range of topics including housing and employment, town centres, biodiversity, renewable energy, waste, open space and recreation. A full set can be viewed on the Department of Communities and Local Government website www.communities.gov.uk.

The South East Plan

2.5 Regional Planning Guidance is currently set out in Regional Planning Guidance Note 9, but this is being replaced by a Regional Spatial Strategy, known as 'The South East Plan'.

2.6 The South East Plan will contain a policy explaining how many houses will need to be built in Hastings from 2006 to 2026, and is not a matter of choice for us. Therefore the role of the Core Strategy will be to decide, in strategic terms, where best to locate the number of new homes that the South East Plan lays down.

2.7 The South East Plan is scheduled for approval in early 2008. Until then, the Hastings LDF Core Strategy needs to be to flexible enough to accommodate the plan's final housing provision figure (which could be higher than that proposed currently). You can get further information about the South East Plan at: www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeast plan.

The County Plan

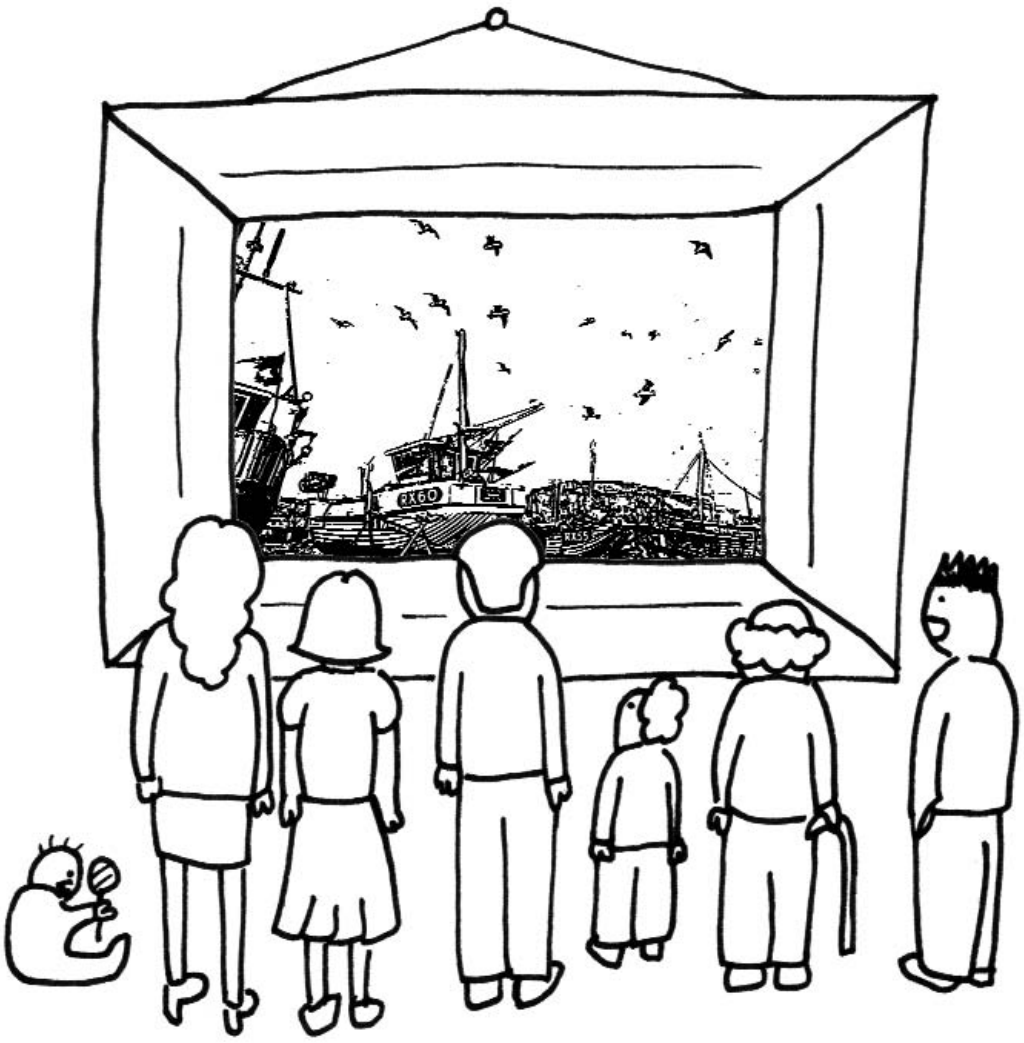
2.8 At the county level, The East Sussex, Brighton and Hove Structure Plan provides strategic planning guidance for East Sussex up to 2011. Under the new planning system, the policies within it will be 'saved' for three years, up to September 2007.

A Joined-Up Approach

2.9 Each of the issues that are set out in this Core Strategy take on board the requirements of national and regional planning guidance. Government guidance states that LDFs should deliver the spatial aspects of community strategies and other relevant documents, and that local planning authorities should work with key stakeholders, such as the environmental agencies and health providers to ensure effective integration with their strategies and programmes.

2.10 Under each key theme, we have set out how this Core Strategy supports and integrates with the Hastings & St Leonard's Community Strategy, as well as other strategies and plans that need to be taken into consideration.

PORTRAIT OF THE TOWN



Chapter 3

Hastings Today **- The Starting Point**

3.1 Hastings & St Leonards is a very special place with an 85,000 strong community that's creative and fiercely loyal to the town.

3.2 The town is 100 kilometres from London, with 13 kilometres of coastline. Predominately urban, it is surrounded by the mainly rural district of Rother, bordered by the High Weald in the north, Pevensey Marshes to the west and the Romney Marshes to the east. Nearby are the historic towns of Rye and Battle and the resort of Bexhill.

3.3 The town has a rich history and has constantly re-invented itself. Famously associated with the Battle of Hastings and the Norman Conquest, its history is bound up with the sea. It prospered as a Norman port in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and formed part of the Cinque Ports, an alliance of Kent and Sussex ports to defend the area against the French. It regenerated itself in the sixteenth century as a major ship builder supplying ships to fight the Armada, re-invented itself again in the early nineteenth century as a Victorian seaside resort and today retains Europe's largest beach-based fishing fleet.

3.4 Today we face a challenge in terms of how best to achieve the growth and regeneration aims of the town in the light of potential environmental constraints including:

- The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers most of the northern edge of the town
- The AONB also encompasses the 245 hectares of Hastings Country Park to the east of the town
- To the west is the green wedge of Combe Haven Valley (partly a Site of Special Scientific Interest - SSSI) which separates Hastings from Bexhill;
- On the north western edge of the town is the Marline Valley, much of which is an SSSI

3.5 The urban area is characterised by a hilly landscape of valleys and ridges. Hastings & St Leonards has a rich heritage of historic buildings - the medieval Old Town, the Victorian town centre in Hastings and the Regency splendour of parts of St Leonards. The town contains 17 conservation areas.

3.6 The urban area also has a valuable network of greenspaces important for wildlife conservation and informal recreation. Over 30 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance have been identified.

3.7 The town has a service - based economy with public services, education and health and also distribution, hotels and restaurants sectors providing the main sources of employment. The town also has a significant level of employment within the manufacturing sector.

3.8 The town has an estimated 2,800 businesses. However, the majority of businesses employ less than 10 people. In recent years, there have been high rates of business start-ups, although this has been coupled with high levels of business de-registrations. Approximately 70% of residents live and work within the town.

3.9 A major issue for the town is the level of economic participation – we have relatively low employment and economic activity rates.

Employment Rates: April 2004-March 2005

Geography	Employment Rate
GB	74.5 %
South East	79.1 %
East Sussex	77.5 %
East Sussex without Hastings	80.4 %
Hastings	70.6 %

Source: www.nomisweb.co.uk: Annual Population Survey

3.10 The above table shows that Hastings has a lower employment rate than the national average. It also shows how the low employment rate in Hastings has a major impact on the rate for East Sussex as a whole. (If the Hastings figures are excluded the average employment rate in East Sussex is above the South East average, if the Hastings figure is included then the county figure falls below the South East average).

3.11 Similarly, economic activity rates (those people of working age either in employment or seeking work), show that Hastings falls below the GB rate while East Sussex as a whole is above the GB rate. Again, without Hastings, the East Sussex performance is excellent and exceeds the regional figure.

Economic Activity Rates: April 2004-March 2005

Geography	Economic Activity Rate
GB	78.3 %
South East	82.1 %
East Sussex	80.8 %
East Sussex without Hastings	83.5 %
Hastings	75.0 %

Source: www.nomisweb.co.uk Annual Population Survey

3.12 The town has higher numbers of people engaged in part-time work relative to regional and national rates. There are also clear differences in earnings relative to neighbouring areas and the regional average. 2005 data shows Hastings to have the lowest average wage (at £399) of all the East Sussex districts. In 2004 14% of the population had no qualifications at all. Indeed the skills 'gap' is seen as a major concern in getting local people into work.

There are also a high number of residents who are economically inactive in part due to long-term illnesses or acting as full time carers compared to regional and national figures.

3.13 Within the urban area there is a hierarchy of town, district and local centres. Hastings town centre is the main town centre and the area's largest shopping quarter. The range and scale of facilities, which includes not just shopping facilities but other activi ties such as office, entertainment and civic uses, means the role of the Town Centre extends beyond the Borough boundary to make it a "sub-regional centre". The town's district and local centres provide an important focus for communities, with an essential mix of shopping and other services at a more local level.

3.14 The area is remote from the national road network, the primary access being the A21 from London and the A259 Honiton to Folkestone Trunk Road. The town is served by regional passenger rail services, and services are available to Ashford International and hence the Channel Tunnel. Poor road and rail links have made it more difficult to tackle the town's economic problems. Hastings consistently has the highest unemployment rates in East Sussex.

3.15 Hastings has had mixed economic fortunes over the past 50 years. Historically the town was a popular destination for seaside holidays, but with the decline of the traditional tourism market it looked to develop in other ways. In the 1970's and 80's large areas of greenfield land in the north–west of the Borough were developed to provide homes and employment for people moving out of London as part of the Greater London Council's population overspill scheme (The Town Development area). This largely achieved its objectives of providing a more balanced population structure and a significant manufacturing job base for Hastings.

3.16 We now face a large number of social and economic problems. Hastings & St Leonards, whilst having enormous potential for change, is the thirty-ninth most deprived area nationally (Rank of Ward Ranks, Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004). Five of our wards fall within the most deprived 10 per cent of all communities in England and eleven wards are in the worst 20%. Areas in particular need include: Central St Leonards, Castle, Gensing, Hollington and Broomgrove.

3.17 Hastings is now getting close to its limits in terms of further outward growth and development. There is limited scope for further large scale housing and employment development within the Borough itself. In the longer term, some of the town's needs may be met through new development proposed in Rother District, particularly on land at north Bexhill where a new community and business park are proposed.

Key Statistics about Hastings

Area

3082 Ha (almost 31 Sq Km)

Current Population

Total Population: 85,029

Source: Census, 2001

Policy based Population Projections

By 2026 the population is predicted to have grown to 87, 695 (a 3.1% increase from 2001).

Source: Policy based Population Projections, East Sussex County Council, 2006

Policy based population projections are based on future changes anticipated given the current expectations of future levels of housing development across the Borough. They are consistent with the housing provision figures included in SEERA's draft South East Plan March 2006.

Trend based Population Projections

By 2026 the population is predicted to have grown to 96,600 (a 13.6% increase from 2001).

Source: Trend based Population Projections, East Sussex County Council, 2005

Trend based population projections are based on key trends, in births, deaths and internal migration figures for the Borough from the Office of National Statistics.

Age Structure & Gender

47.2% Male, 52.8% Female

Average Age for a Hastings resident is 39.6.

Source: Census, 2001

Higher than average proportion of the population is aged 16 or under at 21.1% (17,957).

By 2026 it is forecast that there will be a large growth in the proportion of older people (over 65 age group) living in Hastings.

Policy based forecasts predict a 45.6% rise between 2001 and 2026.

Trend based forecasts predict a 39.1% rise between 2001 and 2026.

Source: East Sussex County Council

Housing

Average House Prices (April-June 2006):

Detached:

Hastings	£247,523
East Sussex	£327,418
South East	£382,696

Semi-Detached:

Hastings	£180,530
East Sussex	£204,247
South East	£222,085

Terraced:

Hastings	£152,530
East Sussex	£175,436
South East	£184,071

Flat/Maisonette:

Hastings	£99,408
East Sussex	£129,300
South East	£155,727

Overall Average:

Hastings	£155,224
East Sussex	£213,093
South East	£236,915

Source: Land Registry

Tenure

Owner occupied: 65%
Social Rented: 16%

Private & Other Rented: 19%

Source: Census 2001

Household Size

Average Household Size: 2.2 persons per household.

Source: Census, 2001

Ethnicity

Low Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population - 5.9%

Source: Census, 2001

Qualifications

In 2004, 14% of the Hastings population had no qualifications at all.

Source: Local area labour force survey (Mar 2003-Feb 2004)

Car Ownership

33.8% of Households have no car.

33.2% of Households have at least one car.

Source: Census, 2001

Health

Male Life Expectancy – 75.2 years

Female Life Expectancy – 79.7 years

Source: NCHOD – Nov 2005, 2002-2004 3 rolling average

Deprivation

Hastings is in the top 11% of the most deprived Local Authorities areas in England (39th most deprived out of 354).

Deprivation is widespread, of the 53 Super Output Areas* within Hastings, 12 fall within the worst 10% in England and a further 8 in the worst 20%.

Source: Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2004, ODPM

****Super Output Areas (SOAs) are geographical areas of a consistent size comprising of on average 1500 people. There are 53 Super Output Areas within the Borough of Hastings.***

Employment

Weekly Median Average Earnings for Residents: £355

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2005

Unemployment Rate of Resident Age Working Population: 3.8%

Source: Claimant Count, Nomis, July 2006

A VISION FOR HASTINGS

Chapter 4

4.1 To prepare the Core Strategy it is necessary to have regard to the wide range of strategies that are already in place across the town. Paragraphs 4.2 to 4.15 outline some of the existing strategies that we have referred to.

Community Strategy 2006

4.2 The Hastings and St Leonards Local Strategic Partnership unites the town's public, private, voluntary and business sectors. It has adopted a 10 year Community Strategy (2003 – 2013) which sets out a clear vision (with 21 key targets) for improving the town.

4.3 The Community Strategy vision is:

'The renaissance of Hastings through economic, social, cultural and environmental regeneration'

This is supported by the following objectives:

- A Safer Town – we want to reduce crime and the fear of crime throughout the town.
- An Economically Successful Town – we want good transport links, thriving businesses, more jobs and a skilled workforce. We want everyone to share in the town's future prosperity.
- A Learning Town – we want to improve school performance and give people more opportunities to continue learning throughout their lives. This will encourage them to participate in the regeneration of the town.
- An Inclusive Town – We want everyone to have an equal opportunity to take part in the regeneration of our town and for our communities and service providers to work together to achieve our shared vision of the future.
- A Healthier Town – We want to improve health, prevent and treat disease, and reduce inequalities in health faced by people in the town.
- A Town With A Decent Home For Everyone - we want everyone to have access to a decent home, whether they rent or own, and no matter where they live in the town
- A Town That's Good To Live In – We want to build stable and strong communities where individuals can realise their aspirations for work, learning, health and leisure within an environment that's inspiring to live in and a pleasure to visit.

4.4 To get a joined-up approach we have to make clear links between the Community Strategy and the LDF Core Strategy. We can translate the Community Strategy vision into a more spatial vision for the Core Strategy by taking into account the increasingly strong links and interdependencies between Hastings and neighbouring Bexhill in Rother District.

4.5 You can obtain a copy of the Community Strategy at www.hastings.gov.uk

Regenerating The Town **- The Five Point Plan**

4.6 Regeneration is the key theme in practically all the current strategies and plans for the town's future. The Government has invested more than £66.5 million into a variety of regeneration projects targeted at Hastings and Bexhill.

4.7 The Hastings and Bexhill Task Force is a major driver for regeneration in the Hastings/Bexhill area. It was convened by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) to develop a partner-led regeneration strategy for the area, which could be turned into a decisive plan of action. The Task Force Partners include the local MPs, Hastings, Rother and East Sussex Councils, SEEDA, English Partnerships and the Government Office For The South East.

4.8 The Task Force has worked closely with partners to develop the Hastings and Bexhill Five Point Plan, and the Core Strategy needs to support this plan. The five themes of the Five Point Plan are:

- Urban renaissance – improving the look and feel of the towns with good quality public spaces and new and refurbished buildings. This involves creating 1,000,000 ft^2 of education and commercial space, together with up to 1,400 homes through the Millennium Communities programme.
- Excellence in Education – a new university centre in Hastings and more opportunities for lifelong learning. The vision for higher education involves joint working with the Local Education Authority (East Sussex County Council), the Learning and Skills Council and Higher Education Funding Council for England & Wales.
- Business and Enterprise Development – support for local businesses and new 'high tech' small businesses involving a focus on innovation, business growth, sectoral initiatives and inward investment.
- Broadband and ICT – fast Internet access to all homes, businesses and schools. Developing awareness, training and investment as an essential part of the skills training and education agenda.
- Transport Improvements – faster and more frequent trains and buses, improved roads and more cycling and walking opportunities.

4.9 The intention is that this is complemented by initiatives to ensure that regeneration benefits are realised in deprived wards; barriers to unemployment, career progression and social inclusion are addressed, and that business entrepreneurship, innovation and investment is fostered, attracted and retained within the area.

4.10 Any vision for the future must also take full account of the closer links which are developing between Hastings and Bexhill, as it is recognised that the futures of the two towns are closely interconnected – particularly in terms of economy, housing and transport issues. The sections below set out some of the strategies and classifications which support this view.

4.11 You can obtain a copy of the Five Point Plan from www.hastings.gov.uk/business/fivepointplan.aspx

A 30 Year Vision **– Towards A Masterplan For Hastings and Bexhill**

4.12 In 2002 an ambitious 30-year vision for integration and regeneration of Hastings and Bexhill was published. This was commissioned from international architects MBM by SEEDA on behalf of the Hastings and Bexhill Taskforce.

4.13 It identified key opportunities and principles centred around:

- making the most of the towns' assets– their relationship with the sea and the surrounding countryside
- creating an environment to attract new business and tourism
- co-ordinating urban and transport infrastructure
- emphasising the role of good public spaces in overcoming community isolation
- using the highest possible standards of contemporary international design and architecture as inspiration

4.14 Key ideas flowing from this were:

- Millennium Community and Metro Services – new vibrant sustainable neighbourhoods on under-used land around existing and new stations, with more frequent train services

- Country Avenue – a pattern of tree lined streets to contain the urban areas, provide development opportunities and protect the countryside beyond
- Sea Avenue – making more of the sea by transforming the seafront into a lively, sociable and inviting place, and making more of development opportunities
- University Centre – a centre for further and higher education established in Hastings, integrating learning, economic and social activity in the centre of the town
- Arts Quarter – St Leonards boosted as a centre of arts and design with a landmark art or design facility
- Beach Community – new neighbourhood at Bulverhythe focussed on a beach lifestyle and with accommodation enjoying sea views
- Countryside Park – a new green space at Pebsham
- Hill Community – new living and working community, based around a new station at Upper Wilting

4.15 The Masterplan is a long term 'spatial' vision – we're already realising some of the ideas set out above – and it's important that the LDF Core Strategy is influenced by the contents of the Masterplan.

Hastings/Bexhill Primary Urban Area

4.16 The economic and urban link-up between Hastings and Bexhill has been recognised in the March 2006 'State Of English Cities' report. This independent report to government identified 56 Primary Urban Areas in England. The Hastings/Bexhill Primary Urban Area has a population of around 125,000.

Hastings Regional Hub

4.17 The draft South East Plan identifies Hastings as a regional hub located within the Sussex Coast sub-region (stretching from Chichester to Rye). This emphasises its role as a centre of economic activity and transport services. The planned Hastings/Bexhill Link Road will support the regional hub.

Identifying a suitable vision

4.18 To prepare this draft Core Strategy we asked local residents and groups to consider what they would like Hastings to be like in 20 years time. Here is a summary of what was said, grouped by theme:

Image:

- Hastings is an eclectic place, and should be positive about its diversity, encouraging its artistic edge
- encourage an up market clientele, and European tourists
- we don't use our history in a creative way – we should build on our proud history of 1066, Logie Baird etc
- let's "big up" hastings, promoting its good news
- improve the sea front: have a pier to be proud of, light up the promenade
- do we want to be candy floss and chips or antique and arts?
- our architecture is an asset – lets keep it well maintained
- we need to teach people to appreciate our visitors – they add value to our town
- have attractive and well signed entrances to the town
- preserve the best of the present and embrace the new
- we should be proud of everything that we do in Hastings
- everything we do should have a feel of good quality about it

- regeneration should not just be economic, but it should be social as well

Culture, Creativity and Arts

- use the arts to encourage creativity in the town
- promote and publicise our hidden artistic community
- incorporate art into new building developments

Health

- encourage a choice of healthy shops to encourage healthy eating

Housing

- Don't just build new - improve the existing housing stock as well
- Be creative with new developments: encourage commercial and residential mixes
- Houses built to a standard that means they will last 200 years

Environment & Sustainability

- Let the town be celebrated as a flagship for recycling
- Encourage the everyday use of recycling, water butts, and composting
- Build houses using recycled bricks and with facilities for wind power, and solar panels
- Extend the successful Grotbuster scheme – many high-profile buildings are neglected: use legislation to make the owners and the landlords do something about it
- Consider policies that make take-away restaurants take responsibility for the rubbish generated by their customers
- Empower local communities to make decisions and take responsibility

Transport and Accessibility

- Make good use of innovative alternatives to the car such as cycles, rickshaws, electric cars, park and ride schemes, trams and ferries
- "We want bus services that take us to where want to go when we want to get there"
- Encourage small local retail centres – so people can access them on foot or by public transport
- It is essential to make the A21 dual carriageway
- Develop safe routes for walking and cycling, and make sure that new developments link to these routes

Tourism

- Tourism is our strength – let's build on it and the rich history of Hastings
- Make better use of the sea and the sea front
- Make the most of high profile areas that visitors judge the town by: "other than Priory Meadow, the town is scruffy – especially first impressions of Queens Road"
- We want people to stay longer and to do this we need attractions such as the Old Town, a good quality pier, an attractive promenade, and a well-lit sea front, and "things to do on rainy days!"

A Spatial Vision For 2026

4.19 The Core Strategy vision statement is intended to provide a clear picture of the type of place we want Hastings to be by 2026. It should present the LDF's essential ideas for the future and be based upon sustainable development and the qualities that separate our town from all others. The vision is a key part of the LDF as it will set the direction for objectives and policies and proposals. This is where we need to be clear whether the town is ready to embrace change and where we outline our future aspirations for its image. As the Core Strategy develops it's likely that we'll refine the vision to reflect, in more detail, the agreed way forward.

At this stage we have two suggested alternative visions.

Vision 1

'By 2026 Hastings will be part of a thriving Hastings/Bexhill conurbation at the leading edge of sustainability, design, equality and diversity.'

It will be:

- A centre of education excellence with a skilled local workforce
- An employment and housing growth area of sub-regional significance where growth and regeneration are complementary
- Proud of its image, culture, diversity and heritage
- At the heart of its sub-region
- A place where everybody has access to a wide choice of jobs and housing in a high quality built, green and healthy environment
- World renowned for the quality of its customer service
- A destination with a fabulous environment and that is unique and accessible as a place to live, work, study and play
- A place which supports and nurtures the health, well-being and quality of life of its diverse communities

Have your say

Do you agree with vision 1?

Are there any other aspects we have missed?

Do you have any comments on particular parts of vision 1?

To have your say on this vision complete sections 4.1 to 4.3 of the response form.

4.20 Following consultation with the Hastings Local Strategic Partnership, the following alternative vision is also suggested:

Vision 2

'By 2026 Hastings and Bexhill will be a thriving conurbation enjoying a high quality of life, born out of sustainable change and regeneration, and built upon our unique cultural and environmental heritage.'

Have your say

Do you agree with vision 2?

Are there any other aspects we have missed?

Do you have any comments on particular parts of vision 2?

To have your say on this vision complete sections 4.4 to 4.6 of the response form.

Core Strategy **– Strategic objectives**

4.21 To underpin the vision we need a set of "strategic objectives". These show the type of things we need to achieve to realise the vision. They are presented under 7 general themes.

Regeneration

Objective 1: Deliver education-led regeneration, wealth creation and growth in jobs, housing and employment space across the town – supported by the necessary physical and social infrastructure

Objective 2: Support the delivery of education provision to raise aspirations and attainment levels and to create a workforce with skills appropriate to make best use of new job opportunities. Secure the future of the town as a centre of educational excellence

Objective 3: Secure a joined-up approach to the regeneration of the Hastings/Bexhill area which recognises and builds on the interdependencies of the two towns and the surrounding area

Image

Objective 4: Improve the perception, and reality, of Hastings as a desirable place to live, work, study, invest, shop and visit

Housing and Employment

Objective 5: Create and maintain a balance between employment and housing growth in the future

Objective 6: Provide 4200 net additional dwellings in the period 2006 – 2026 within Hastings

Objective 7: Target future dwelling provision to
a) meet the needs of local people, including the provision of affordable housing; and
b) attract skilled workers to the town

Objective 8: Secure a thriving, attractive town centre and network of district and local centres

Transport and Accessibility

Objective 9: make sure the town performs its function as a regional transport hub and actively campaign at national and regional level to secure improvements in strategic transport infrastructure and work with East Sussex County Council and transport providers to secure improvements in local passenger transport services

Quality of Life

Objective 10: Help local resident and business communities play an active part in planning the future of the town and their local neighbourhoods

Objective 11: Secure the sustainable use of the seafront as an asset for residents, visitors and local businesses

Objective 12: Promote leisure and cultural developments which contribute to everyone's quality of life and support the regeneration of the town

Objective 13: Secure the social and physical infrastructure related to improving the health, education, lifelong learning and well being of all sectors of the community

Objective 14: Work with our partners to narrow the gap and reduce deprivation

Environment and Sustainability

Objective 15: Achieve sustainable development through delivery of high quality, urban and natural environments based on the principles of urban renaissance, design excellence and prudent use of natural resources

Objective 16: Protect, optimise and enhance through effective management, the best of the town's historic and natural environment and assets

Objective 17: Contribute to the enhancement and protection of accessible multi-functional green space

Objective 18: Deliver beneficial use of previously developed and contaminated land

Delivery

Objective 19: Secure delivery of strategic objectives through all relevant delivery bodies and their strategies and investment plans.

4.22 These are very much first thoughts and it is likely that we will need to undertake further work to refine these draft objectives, and make them more geared to the developing spatial strategy.

Have your say

Do you agree with the general direction and range of the objectives?

Are there any objectives we have missed?

To have your say on these strategic objectives complete sections 4.7 to 4.9 of the response form.

IMAGE OF THE TOWN

Chapter 5

The Issues

5.1 In the past Hastings has had the image of being a run-down "candy-floss and chips" seaside resort town, with poor transport links, high levels of poverty and crime and low paid seasonal employment. This poor image has made it more difficult to attract private sector investment into the town.

5.2 In recent years a lot of hard work has been put in to changing peoples' ideas about what our town is like. Real progress has been made in:

- Further and Higher Education – the opening of the University Centre in Hastings town centre
- Housing renewal – the successful Southwater Road Renewal Area where a real difference has been made to the appearance and amenities of previously run down properties
- Business development – new opportunities for local companies at the Innovation Centre, Church fields Industrial Estate and the Creative Media Centre in Hastings Town Centre
- upgrading the appearance of properties, particularly along the seafront;
- using European and national funds to regenerate the town centre;
- improving key open spaces such as Alexandra Park and Hastings Country Park
- making local services more responsive to the needs of local communities in areas such as Central St Leonards, Broomgrove and Hollington.
- encouraging the development of art and culture
- first impressions – a brand new railway station building in Hastings town centre now welcomes visitors and residents and gives a positive first impression of the town

5.3 The town has a real sense of place emphasised by many unique features – our seaside location and links to 1066, the attractive architecture and character of the Old Town, Regency St Leonards and the Victorian terraces spread along hilly contours. The fishing fleet operating from the Stade, the open spaces and wooded valleys of Hastings Country Park, the lively cultural life, and many festivals throughout the year.

5.4 There is an increasing feeling that the town is now on a much more positive path for change. The Local Development Framework gives us an opportunity to open up the discussion about the direction future change should take.

What sort of image do we want for our town by 2026?

5.5 In our consultations prior to producing this draft document, the image of Hastings was a theme that many commented on, feeling very strongly that Hastings should look good.

Some of the wide-ranging ideas included:

- Recognising our historical architecture as an asset, and maintaining it to a high quality, particularly the highly-visible buildings on the sea front
- Capitalising on Hastings' rich history such as the Battle of Hastings and the invention of television.
- Encouraging up-market tourism – particularly from Europe, and making that sure that we appreciate, value and look after visitors to our town
- Taking pride in Hastings
- Seeking to develop a town that people can call home; making sure it has "spiritual centres" that people can focus on
- Utilising the sea front – light up the sea front, and encourage water sports and other

sea-based tourism

- Improving the street environment
- Being positive about the diversity in the town, appreciating that Hastings is an eclectic place, encouraging "the edge" and the "sense of adventure"
- Using the arts to encourage creativity, and promoting the often hidden arts community
- Considering the identity of the town and then building on that strength, without trying to copy other towns

Scenarios For The Future

5.6 To put Hastings on the map it must have a unique image or 'brand' to set it apart from other towns. Please take a look at these ideas and use them to give us your own vision of what the town's brand should be.

Scenario 1: A Centre of Excellence for Education and Learning

Should we aim to become a centre known for excellent IT, media and communication links, with the University and Further Education Colleges providing good quality courses to train a local skilled workforce to support local business needs?

Scenario 2: A High-Tech Business Location

Should we aim to become a centre for high-tech business, with excellent IT, media and communication links, and a local skilled workforce to support this? Small businesses and the service sector would be encouraged under this scenario.

Scenario 3: Culture and Tourism

Should we concentrate on regenerating the town through developing the arts and cultural sectors along with developing year-round tourism linked to 1066, the history of television, the fishing industry, fish restaurants, sea based leisure, sport and tourist activities, and good quality hotels?

Scenario 4: A Show-case for Sustainable Living

Should we embrace sustainable development and seek to become the leading town in the South East for show-casing sustainable living with innovative approaches to transport, housing, design, business practices etc? We could specifically encourage industries associated with the production of renewable energy technologies to come to Hastings. This could be linked to promotion of the environmental quality of green areas such as Alexandra Park, the Pebsham Countryside Park, Hastings Country Park and St Helen's Woods

Scenario 5: Specialist Shopping

Should we aim to have our town known as an area of specialist shopping. For example we could aim to be world renowned for the quality of our customer service or identify a particular retail theme for Hastings (in the same way that Hay-on-Wye has successfully done this with books).

Have your say

Which of these scenarios do you support?

Do you have any alternative ideas/scenarios you would like to suggest?

To have your say on these scenarios complete sections 5.1 to 5.6 of the response form.

Links To The Community Strategy

Community Strategy Objective

'We want everyone to have an equal opportunity to take part in the regeneration of our town and for our communities and service providers to work together to achieve our shared vision of the future.'

Community Strategy Target 4: Increase the proportion of young people who think the town is a good place for them to live in.

What the Local Development Framework could contribute to the Community Strategy

Ways of working: Encourage young people to get involved in planning the future of their town – more imaginative and accessible consultation with young people.

The opportunity for the Local Strategic Partnership to influence and help implement the spatial plan for the town up to 2026, based on an agreed spatial vision.

Providing choices and opportunities: Support the growth of the education and cultural sectors in the town. Encourage the creative and media based industries. Ensure the provision of affordable housing locally. Make Hastings an upbeat place to be.

HOUSING AND SCENARIOS FOR GROWTH

Chapter 6

Opportunities for Growth - **The Issues**

6.1 Growth and regeneration are central to the town's future prosperity. We have to reconcile this with the fact that we have a tightly contained urban centre that is mostly surrounded by areas of environmental and landscape importance such as the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

6.2 Whilst we need to maximise the town's potential to accommodate further sustainable development, we also need to recognise that the future of Hastings will be increasingly related to what happens in neighbouring Bexhill and its environs.

6.3 We need to continue cross-boundary working with Rother District Council to take advantage of its mutual benefits e.g. Hastings and Bexhill can share the value of being part of a larger community with more opportunities and a greater range of facilities/attractions. To be acknowledged as a "sub regional population centre" will also help justify bids for new infrastructure investment. The construction of the Hastings/Bexhill Link Road will be a key step in this process.

6.4 When the draft South East Plan is adopted, it will supersede the existing County Plan, and in comparison to the County Plan, may set out a reduced housing requirement for Hastings of 4,200 net additional dwellings for the period 2006 to 2026 (210 per year). However we need to build in some flexibility for the future, as there is a possibility that the housing requirement figure may be increased after the draft South East Plan has been subject to examination in November/ December 2006.

Some Hard Choices

6.5 We need to support the town's regeneration and provide a good quality of life for the people who live and work here – this involves providing a choice of housing types in different locations and a range of job opportunities. The population is forecast to grow and we already have many young people in our town who cannot afford to get onto the housing market, we also have high rates of unemployment. We need to consider the options for sustainable growth in the town. Government guidance is encouraging the sustainable use of land through promotion of higher density and mixed-use developments that are designed to a high standard.

6.6 We're committed to making best use of brownfield land in the urban areas. Examples of this are supporting the Millennium Communities developments at Ore Valley/Broomgrove and Hastings Station area, the new University Centre and education/ Broadband/ media facilities in the town centre. However in the longer term we must now also look beyond the Borough boundary to major housing and employment development opportunities in Rother District, to the north of Bexhill.

6.7 Given the limited amount of land within the Borough, we'd like your views on the scenarios set out below (see paragraph 6.15). No growth at all is not an option as we have to show how we'll meet the draft South East Plan targets for housing growth up to 2026.

Meeting the Housing Requirement

6.8 The LDF Core Strategy must be sufficiently flexible to cope with changing circumstances during the period to 2026. The draft South East Plan requires the

provision of 210 new dwellings per annum in Hastings over the period 2006-2026. This equates to 4,200 dwellings over the twenty-year period.

6.9 However, the South East Plan is currently only at a draft stage. It will be subject to a formal examination by an independent Panel (beginning in December 2006) and subsequent consideration and approval by the Secretary of State. This process may result in an increase in our housing allocation.

6.10 Work on the Housing Potential Study so far shows there's sufficient land in the built-up area of Hastings to meet the draft South East Plan's current requirements to 2026. Of the 4,200 dwellings proposed for Hastings, 3,600 are already provided for in housing land allocations in the existing Local Plan, planning permissions, and windfall allowances - leaving a requirement to provide approximately 600 additional dwellings on brownfield sites in the urban area. The study is ongoing but initial results have been used to inform the district level distribution of housing for the Sussex Coast Sub-Region contained in the draft South East Plan.

6.11 Meeting this level of provision is dependent on increasing the density of development on both existing and new brownfield sites (a brownfield site is generally land which has been built on previously)

6.12 The potential benefits of pursuing the above approach to meeting the current draft South East Plan housing figure is that it:

- Maximises the efficient use of land, and
- Will allow for the preservation of undeveloped, greenfield land

6.13 However the potential drawbacks are:

- Brownfield sites can be expensive to develop – they are more likely to involve reclamation/demolition or de-contamination work
- Higher housing densities may result in over-development
- It may not result in sufficient new housing to meet local needs
- If brownfield sites are not developed at the rates and densities anticipated, it will be insufficiently flexible to allow the current South East Plan housing figure to be met
- It could result in a housing shortfall if the South East Plan housing targets are increased.

6.14 To demonstrate that the above represents a realistic and achievable approach, we need to keep working on the Housing Potential Study so it can inform the development of the LDF Core Strategy. Equally important is the need to address the uncertainty surrounding the draft South East Plan. Looking at the implications of a 20% increase above the present draft plan figure is sensible.

Scenarios for Housing Growth

6.15 The following scenarios address both the need to provide for flexibility and uncertainty in planning ahead to 2026, and show how we might plan for higher levels of housing growth which might be required by the final version of the South East Plan, or which may be required to support employment growth and the continuing regeneration of the Town. The scenarios are by no means fixed and at this stage only serve to illustrate the type of approach we may need.

SCENARIO 1

Increasing the density of development on existing and new brownfield sites along with identifying

development opportunities on some new greenfield sites of limited size which together could accommodate within the region of 250 dwellings.

Potential Benefits:

- A range of sites available for developers
- Likely to meet current draft housing targets in the South East Plan
- Could help to balance housing supply if brownfield sites do not get developed at the rates and densities anticipated
- Has potential to meet a slight increase in the South East Plan housing targets

Potential Drawback:

- Environmental/nature conservation/ landscape impact of developing greenfield sites

SCENARIO 2

Scenario 1 (see above) but also working with Rother District to identify a major greenfield development opportunity capable of accommodating at least an additional 800 dwellings on the town's western outskirts which might also include land within Rother district at Wilting Farm. Rother District Council are also consulting on this as a strategic option in their document "Rother District Council LDF Core Strategy - Issues and Options - A Discussion Document"

Potential Benefits:

- Allows a more strategic approach and links to major housing and employment growth a already planned to the north of Bexhill
- Likely to meet a 20% increase in South East Plan housing targets
- Would support the economic regeneration agendas of both towns
- Has potential for mixed employment/ housing use

Potential Drawbacks:

- Environmental/nature conservation/ landscape impact of developing greenfield sites
- Could encourage more commuting between the two towns

Have your say

Given that we need to provide new homes, and that we need to build in flexibility, do you support the general approach outlined in the above scenarios – where scenario 1 allows for both flexibility and some increase in the South East Plan housing target, and scenario 2 could accommodate up to 20% more?

Do you have any alternative ideas?

To have your say on these scenarios complete sections 6.1 to 6.2 of the response form.

Housing Issues **– What you said**

6.16 In our consultations prior to producing this draft document, we received many comments and opinions about housing such as:

- When building new housing developments, make sure that there is a choice in housing size and type; then when people want to move to a bigger or smaller house they stay in the community
- "We need new building, but we also need to improve the existing housing stock, including the empty housing"
- Be creative in the commercial and housing mix on new developments
- Find innovative ways of helping young people onto the housing ladder – perhaps using old, run-down properties
- Make sure housing is of affordable but most importantly good quality and appropriate to Hastings
- Encourage responsibility and community by giving people their own space in shared housing areas
- Building new housing generates an excitement and interest in the local housing market
- Provide suitable housing for the existing

population rather than encouraging new people to come in and regenerate the town

- Develop and encourage affordable renting and 50 year mortgages
- Consideration needs to be given to the quality of the houses and their durability. As one consultee commented "build houses to a 200-year standard, with quality construction that withstands the weather and land movement"

Planning for New Homes – The Issues

6.17 As well as needing to make decisions about the broad locations for new housing development, we also need to plan for a range of new homes to meet differing needs.

6.18 Government guidance specifies that the planning system should ensure sufficient, good quality new homes (including an appropriate mix of housing and adequate levels of affordable housing) in suitable locations. The aim is that everyone has the opportunity of a decent home, in locations that reduce the need to travel.

6.19 Housing completions in Hastings have not been meeting the targets set out in the East Sussex County Council Structure Plan. In the period 2001 to 2006, 1211 new dwellings were completed compared to the target of 1500.

6.20 The housing market in Hastings is not as buoyant as that of surrounding areas, and there are few appropriate green field sites and a greater proportion of more difficult brownfield sites.

6.21 The forecast increase in numbers of older people in the population means we must consider issues such as location and demand for supported housing, extra care housing and lifetime homes.

6.22 Government guidance specifies that we should plan for 'sustainable mixed communities' – aiming for a balance of housing types, tenures and sizes in an area rather than providing for large areas of identical housing.

6.23 We have a duty to make sure that the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller Community is fully recognised by the planning system. We'll need to revisit our existing criteria-based policy to make sure it's fair and non-discriminatory, and also thoroughly investigate the need for specific sites as part of the site allocations development plan document starting in March 2007.

The Current Housing Market – The Issues

6.24 The "Housing Market Assessment", a study commissioned by Hastings and Rother Councils in 2006, shows that Hastings and Rother acts as a sub-regional housing market.

6.25 The study maintained that there is selective migration, with research indicating that a high proportion of younger people moving into Hastings are not necessarily attracted by opportunities for work but by the cheap accommodation in the private rented sector and life by the sea. This fuels the growth of the private rented accommodation market.

6.26 Similarly 'down shifters' (typically people in the 45+ age group reducing their work commitments) are moving to Hastings, attracted by the seaside environment. Again such movement does not add to the skilled workforce needed to support economic regeneration.

6.27 The Housing Market Assessment study made links between economic regeneration and housing supply - indicating that we need to provide innovative and good quality family housing to attract skilled people to move into the area and take up jobs.

Location of Housing Development – The Issues

6.28 Under government guidance, the LDF will need to identify housing sites on a 'sequential' basis, with previously developed sites within the existing urban area identified before greenfield sites. The precise amount and location of new housing that could be provided in the town will be identified in a Housing Potential Study, which is currently underway. This will inform the Site Allocations development plan document which will follow on from this Core Strategy document (starting in March 2007, see paragraph 1.7) and will give everyone the opportunity to have their say about specific sites proposed for development.

6.29 It's important to make best use of land, which is a scarce resource. The Government sets a target for 60% of housing development to be on previously developed land each year. Due to the urban nature of Hastings, we regularly exceed this target achieving 81% in 2004/05.

6.30 Millennium Communities housing developments at Ore Valley/Broomgrove and in Hastings town centre are making good use of brownfield land in the urban area. There are few opportunities in the town for greenfield housing development.

6.31 To accommodate future growth we need to work closely with Rother Council to look at the feasibility of sites on the Hastings urban fringe and to consider the role of higher density, well designed developments close to town and district centres.

6.32 In early consultations people expressed concern about the thought of higher density building – saying that the town is already high density; they were worried about the threat to existing greenspace. Additionally it was strongly felt that we should be improving the existing housing stock – 'making best use of what we have"- rather than simply building new housing.

Current Housing Stock – The Issues

6.33 The town has a large stock of Victorian housing, which adds much to its character, but is not always easily adapted to meet modern needs.

6.34 There is a large and often low quality private rented sector, mainly concentrated in the town centres of Hastings and St Leonards. In many cases these are Victorian houses converted into flats.

6.35 In some areas of the town there are concentrations of Houses In Multiple Occupation (HMOs) where people living as separate households share facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms. A survey in 2001 identified 2354 such properties containing a total of 9887 dwellings. Some 86% of these homes are unfit, mainly due to inadequate fire precautions and amenities which is why we have an active programme of improving conditions in HMOs.

6.36 Housing issues are not limited to the town's central areas. There are large areas of housing at Hollington towards the outskirts, where communities face problems of isolation due to poor transport links, insufficient local facilities and a lack of local employment opportunities.

6.37 In September 2006 there were 910 second homes in the town.

6.38 Levels of homelessness are high and significantly above average levels for East Sussex and the South East as a whole.

Current Housing Stock – **Options**

6.39 We have identified the following possible options for improving the housing stock:

a) continue to concentrate resources on improving housing conditions in the area with the worst quality housing stock/living conditions e.g. Central St Leonards

b) create more mixed communities in Central St Leonards and Hastings town centre by refusing permission for conversions resulting in one-bedroomed dwellings and promoting larger family sized dwellings where possible (this could run counter to improvement grant policies which encourage landlords to convert HMO's into one bed and two bed flats in the Housing renewal area in St Leonards - although the new Housing Renewal Financial Assistance Policy will be tailored towards producing larger family sized accommodation, where applicable.)

c) Support the central St Leonards Masterplan (contains ideas for planned environmental improvements and development proposals to help regenerate the area) and Housing Renewal Area in St Leonards by tailoring specific planning policies to help support the physical improvement and renewal aims, and the social and economic regeneration work in this area; and identify it as an area of change in the LDF Core Strategy. Central St Leonards has a predominance of private rented property, with a large proportion of smaller flat accommodation and 80% of the residential buildings being converted into flats. There are high crime rates, poor social and economic status and significant deprivation associated with the area.

Have your say

We would appreciate your views on the above options for improving the housing stock.

To have your say on these options complete sections 6.3 to 6.10 of the response form.

Affordable Housing – **The Issues**

6.40 Property values in Hastings remain below the regional average, despite rapid growth in recent years. The following table of Land Registry statistics for April to June 2006 shows how average house prices compare in Hastings, countywide, regionally and nationally. In spite of lower property values, affordability remains a key issue. Higher prices elsewhere means that owner-occupiers who move into the area will in general, be able to outbid local residents for property since they will have greater equity from the sale of property in higher price locations. This helps to explain the trend in recent years of rising house prices and declining affordability.

Location: Hastings

Average house price in April – June 2006: £155,224

% increase over the past year: 7.8%

Location: East Sussex

Average house price in April – June 2006: £213,094

% increase over the past year: 4.4%

Location: South East

Average house price in April – June 2006: £236,915

% increase over the past year: 6.1%

Location: United Kingdom

Average house price in April – June 2006: £199,184

% increase over the past year: 7.7%

6.41 Many local people cannot afford to rent or buy a home in the town. In 2005 there was a shortfall of 600 affordable homes, which is 14 times more than the current level at which "affordable" homes are being constructed. This is an indicator of the scale of the problem rather than a policy target. This is leading to suppressed demand and the 2005 Housing Needs Survey showed that many young people in the town have to stay in the parental home because they cannot afford to own a home.

6.42 In our consultations people expressed fears that young people will not be able to 'get on the property ladder'

6.43 The draft South East Plan sets an overall target that 40% of new housing development should be affordable – local authorities can seek a higher or lower proportion where local circumstances clearly justify it.

6.44 The current Hastings Local Plan requires provision of 25% affordable housing on brownfield sites of 15 units or more and 30% on greenfield sites of 15 units or more. We are currently undertaking a study to determine if we should change the percentage or the site size threshold in order to maximise the amount of affordable housing provided.

6.45 Affordable housing can take many forms including social rented, shared equity and key worker housing. Most of the need in Hastings is for social rented housing, with relatively few of those identified as being in housing need having sufficient income to purchase other forms of housing. Nevertheless, we could look at having a more flexible policy to provide a greater choice and mix of affordable housing types – reflecting the marginal economics of developing some sites in Hastings.

6.46 Many of the major urban housing development areas are adjacent to existing areas of social rented housing e.g. Ore Valley – this means that asking for affordable housing in the form of social rented housing in these areas will not help create mixed communities.

6.47 Affordable housing need in Hastings is primarily for social rented housing. Most people who can afford shared ownership or low-cost home ownership can probably afford to buy without subsidy in the Hastings market currently. We try to obtain as high a level of social rented housing as possible from developments which meet the contribution criteria set out in the existing Local Plan. However we are reaching a situation where many of the remaining housing sites are those which may be more difficult to develop, or have relatively higher development costs due to ground conditions, access issues, the need for remediation works etc. We need to balance the sometimes competing requirements of meeting our housing delivery targets by permitting development of sites, and securing affordable housing in line with policy (which may make some sites less economic to develop).

6.48 A viability study on the provision of affordable housing locally is currently being carried out and this will help inform what percentage of affordable housing might be realistic for different types of housing site, and also whether we can set the threshold site size at a level of less than the current 15 units. The study is due for completion in November 2006

6.49 In the meantime we need to make some choices about how flexible we can be in the policy in terms of the type of affordable housing required, where it can clearly be demonstrated that it would be financially unviable to provide it as part of a development at the level or in the tenure sought.

6.50 Affordable housing is defined as that provided with a subsidy to enable the asking price or rent to be substantially lower than the prevailing market prices or rents in the locality and which is subject to mechanisms that will ensure that the housing remains affordable for those who cannot afford market housing. This definition covers housing for social rent, shared ownership, low cost home ownership, sub-market rent and for key workers e.g. nurses or teachers.

6.51 However it is not always appropriate to require social rented housing as part of a development scheme – particularly where the site is located in an area dominated by social rented housing already, as this concentrates single tenure communities and does nothing to help the creation of sustainable mixed communities. Conversely there is a need to maximise social rented housing in areas where there are higher than average concentrations of owner occupied of privately rented homes.

6.52 It should be noted that the location of the existing social rented housing stock and the housing allocations policies of Registered Social Landlords is a major influence on the balance of housing types in particular areas.

Affordable Housing **– The Options**

6.53 We have identified the following options to help deliver affordable housing:

a) require the developer to provide the affordable housing on a suitably located site in his/her ownership elsewhere in the town

b) require the developer to pay a commuted sum to the Council so the affordable homes could be built on a site elsewhere in the town – if such sites are available.

c) require the developer to scatter the affordable homes throughout the development so there is no concentration in one particular area. This option is not always popular with registered social landlords managing the affordable housing units.

d) require the developer to provide different forms of affordable housing e.g. shared ownership or key worker housing – if the developer can prove there is a market for such housing in the locality.

Have your say

We would appreciate your views on the affordable housing options.

To have your say on these options complete sections 6.11 to 6.20 of the response form.

Housing Types, Sizes and Tenures **– The Options**

6.54 We need to plan for mixed communities with a range of housing types, sizes and tenures, and have identified the following options for achieving this:

- Create a specific policy on the provision of lifetime homes, (a lifetime home includes design features that allow for flexible living over the lifetime of the occupants and the property) extra care and sheltered housing to cater for an ageing population
- Introduce a greater proportion of social rented housing in Hastings town centre and a greater mix of owner/occupation and social rented housing within Central St Leonards, where there is a predominance of

private rented accommodation

- Secure a mix of housing sizes and tenures on the Millennium Community sites at Ore Valley, Station Yard and Seaside Road.
- Encourage the provision of innovative and attractive larger family housing, i.e. a more balanced mix with 3 or more bed housing, to attract skilled workers to support the economic regeneration of the town. This is specifically relevant to the Central St Leonards area, where there is low economic growth.

Have you say

We would like to hear your views on these options.

Please indicate if you agree/disagree/ have no opinion or wish to comment on the options by completing sections 6.21 to 6.30 of the response form.

Housing Densities – **The Issues**

6.55 The draft South East Plan sets an overall regional target for housing density of 40 dwellings per hectare. Recent government draft housing guidance (PPS3) specifies a range of housing densities to be sought in different locations.

- 70 or more dwellings per hectare in city centres
- 40-75 dwellings per hectare in urban locations
- 35-55 dwellings per hectare in suburban locations
- 30-40 dwellings per hectare in rural locations

6.56 The nature of much of the housing in Hastings – mainly Victorian terraces and flat conversions – means we already have high densities in some parts of the town. Research into the town's existing housing densities reveals medium to high densities in various locations ranging from 39 to 88 dwellings per hectare.

6.57 Building at higher densities means that:

- More dwellings are built on sites
- Less Greenfield land is needed for housing
- The character of some existing areas could change

6.58 We propose that we should specify a range of density targets for housing development in the town along the following lines:

- Hastings and St Leonards Town Centres and the district centres of Hastings at Old Town, Ore and Silverhill – 40-75 dwellings per hectare
- The rest of the town – 35-55 dwellings per hectare

6.59 We also propose that all high-density schemes (including conversions) be subject to a design assessment process to ensure they provide quality accommodation in terms of living space and amenity.

Have your say

We would like to hear your views on the above proposals to address housing densities.

To have your say on the above proposals complete sections 6.31 to 6.34 of the response form.

Links To The Community Strategy

Community Strategy Target 16a:
Build 3300 new homes by 2013.

Community Strategy Target 16b:
Ensure 60% of all new homes are built on previously developed (brownfield) land.

Community Strategy Target 16c:
Ensure 25% of new homes are built as affordable homes for young people and others in need.

Community Strategy Target 17:
Improve housing standards within the most deprived wards to reflect the decent homes standard.

Community Strategy Target 18a:
Achieve a 50% reduction in numbers accepted as homeless per 1000 households by 2010.

Community Strategy Target 18b:
Achieve a 50% reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010.

What the Local Development Framework could contribute to the Community Strategy

Land for Housing: We can help to meet this target by allocating sufficient land in our spatial plan to meet housing requirements set at the regional level.

Using previously developed land: We can help to meet this target by allocating the majority of new housing sites in the spatial plan on previously developed land.

Affordable Housing Policy: We can help to meet this target by specifying that all new housing developments above a threshold size should include a proportion of affordable housing.

Supporting Housing Renewal: We need to ensure our spatial planning policies support area based housing renewal schemes such as that in Central St Leonards, and that policies on buildings conservation and heritage work in harmony with the housing renewal policies.

Homelessness: We can help to meet this target by specifying that all new housing developments above a threshold size should include a proportion of affordable housing and by reducing the number of vacant dwellings. Also we need to make best use of the existing housing stock – by reducing the number of vacant dwellings and encouraging renovations and conversions of existing stock to provide a mix of housing types.

Links To other Key Strategies

Housing Strategy 2004-2009

It is important that the Local Development Framework Core Strategy supports the council's key housing aims, which are:

- To develop strong, stable communities with a decent home for everyone
- To match housing need and housing supply to maximise the available housing in the town
- The prevent and reduce homelessness
- To improve resident's quality of life and the condition of the town's housing, with particular emphasis on privately rented homes, empty homes and concentrations of unfit properties

Empty Homes Strategy 2004-2007

This identifies the Central St Leonards Renewal Area as a priority area for bringing empty homes back into use. Central St Leonards, Gensing and Castle wards are identified as being priority areas for empty homes grant.

LOCATIONS FOR CHANGE

Chapter 7

7.1 As part of the strategy for the town we need to identify areas where a substantial amount of change is planned for the future. These are likely to include:

Hastings Town Centre

7.2 It's important to maintain and improve the role of the town centre as a pleasant, lively and safe place for shopping, recreation, education, employment and as a place to live.

7.3 The town centre needs to:

- be competitive in terms of the range and type of shops operating in the area.
- be attractive to visitors
- be accessible by local public transport
- be accessible by people with disabilities
- develop a family-based evening economy
- respond to the diverse needs and tastes of the population
- be able to cater for the increasing numbers of students studying in the area

7.4 The Hastings & Bexhill Taskforce developments in the town centre are already making the place more vibrant, and we now need to think carefully about how we can take this forward in the longer term.

7.5 This will require detailed planning and we will work with residents, businesses and developers to create a more detailed Area Action Plan for the town centre, starting in March 2007.

Central St Leonards

7.6 We're developing a Masterplan for the Central St Leonards area, with the objectives of changing people's perception of Central St Leonards, achieving long term economic growth, inward investment and a better quality of life for the local community.

7.7 Central St Leonards has been designated a Housing Renewal Area, and the Masterplan should complement this status, and help to bring about positive change in the area. The Local Development Framework will aim to support and enable relevant parts of these plans.

The Millennium Communities Sites

7.8 There are three Millennium Communities sites: Station Plaza, Ore Valley and the Seaside Road in West St Leonards.

7.9 The Station Plaza and Ore Valley Millennium Community projects will be develped over the next few years, resulting in new housing, business and education facilities in these areas.

7.10 Development in the Seaside Road area on the seafront in West St Leonards is likely to take the form of new housing and leisure facilities.

7.11 In the longer term we need to look at the feasibility of development of land in the area near the railway line at Bulverhythe. This could potentially be for housing and/or employment uses.

The Seafront

7.12 The Seafront Strategy, has been prepared under the direction of Sea Space, Tourism South East, Hastings Borough Council and Rother District Council. It identifies a number of zones of change along the Hastings and Bexhill seafront. You can view the strategy at www.seaspace.org.uk by selecting 'regeneration plan' and then 'urban renaissance').

7.13 It's an economic development strategy to regenerate Hastings and Bexhill by using the

seafront as the area's best asset. Its aim is to develop a co-ordinated plan for the coastline that runs from Rock-a-Nore in Hastings to Herbrands Walk in Bexhill.

7.14 The seafront is very much the 'public face' of the town and we need to plan change in the area to make more of economic and leisure opportunities associated with a seafront location. At the same time, we also need to make the beach and promenade accessible to all sectors of the community and continue to encourage owners of seafront properties to invest in the upkeep and repair of their buildings, achieving a better image of the town.

Pebsham Countryside Park

7.15 Hastings Borough Council, Rother District Council and East Sussex County Council have formed a partnership to create a new countryside park at Pebsham, between St Leonards and Bexhill. This will take in the Pebsham landfill site, the fields at Glyne Gap and the Combe Haven Valley. It will be gradually developed over the next 15 years and will provide an important accessible greenspace between the two towns.

Wilting Farm

7.16 This area is on the Hastings western urban fringe, and involves land largely in Rother District. A document commissioned in 2002 by the South East England Development Agency suggested a long-term proposal for a new mixed-use development – including a new station – on the hill at Wilting, looking over the Pebsham Countryside Park and through Glyne Gap to the sea. This would be at the point where the Hastings/Bexhill link Road would cross the railway and join Queensway.

7.17 The area surrounding the station could be the focus for housing, hi-tech industry, research facilities and university centre expansion. The development would need to fund the rail and road infrastructure and will be subject to consultation in the Rother District Council LDF Core Strategy document "Issues and Options - A Discussion Document". The railway station will be key to the sustainability of such a proposal and further work is required to assess its feasibility. At this stage we are seeking your views on the concept, rather than the detail of development in this location. This development would have the potential to provide quality housing and jobs for residents of both Hastings and Bexhill.

Have your say

Do you think we have identified the most suitable locations for change?

To have your say on these proposals complete section 7.1 of the response form.

Rother District Council's Core Strategy

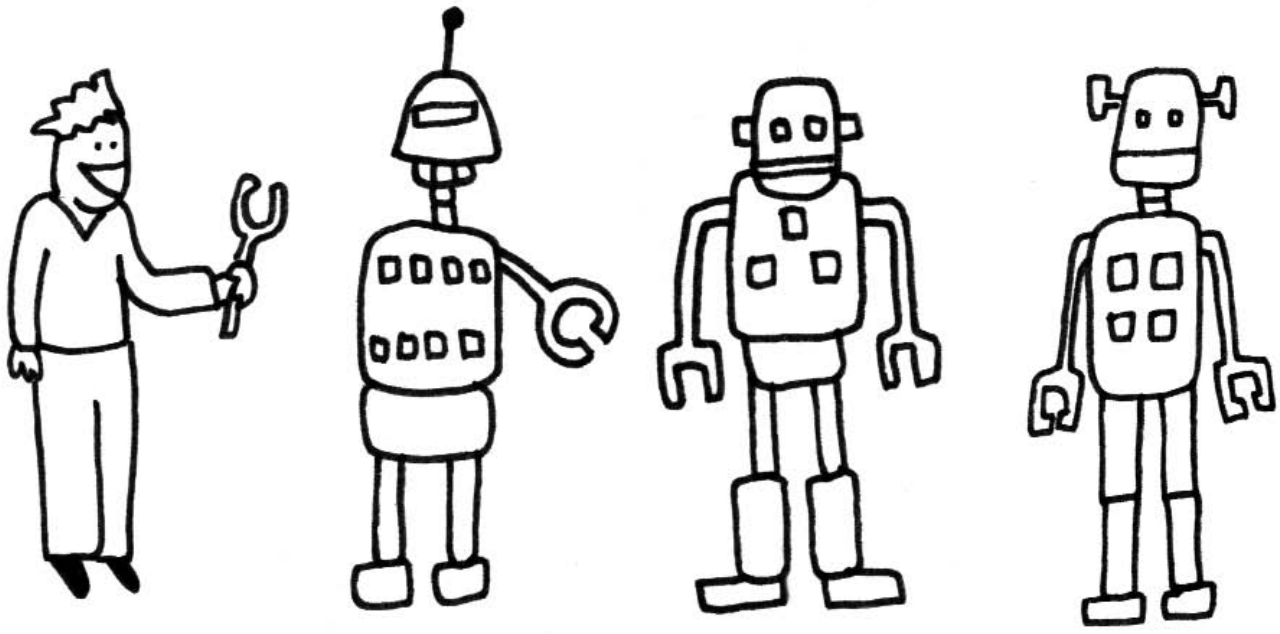
Rother District Council is also currently asking for views on the first stage of its Core Strategy, called **'Issues & Options - A Discussion Document'**.

The consultation period runs from Monday 30 October to Friday 8 December.

You can see a copy of the Issues & Options Document by:

- Viewing/downloading it from Rother District Council's website at www.rother.gov.uk/corestrategy
- Viewing/obtaining a copy from one of Rother District Council's Community Help Points at Amherst Road, Bexhill; or 6 Market Square, Battle; or 25 Cinque Ports Street, Rye
- Requesting a copy by calling the Planning Strategy & Environment team at Rother District Council on (01424) 787634
- Requesting a copy by emailing planningstrategy@rother.gov.uk

THE LOCAL ECONOMY



Chapter 8

Regenerating the Town

8.1 Please see Chapter 4 for background information on the various regeneration initiatives and plans for the town.

8.2 Education and office development will be the main drivers for change in Hastings Town Centre over the next few years – with the development of Hastings Station Plaza and Priory Quarter in particular. The Priory Quarter area is a strategic employment location with the potential to generate significant numbers of new jobs in the town.

8.3 The future of retailing in the town is considered in the final part of this chapter, in paragraphs 8.21 to 8.30.

The Regional Context

8.4 The draft South East Plan identifies Hastings as a regional hub located within the Sussex Coast Sub-Region (stretching from Chichester to Rye). This emphasises its role as a centre of economic activity and transport services. The planned Hastings/Bexhill Link Road will support the regional hub.

8.5 A key objective of the draft South East Plan is to reduce intra-regional disparities and help bring the performance of the sub-regional economy up to the South-East average. This means that in Hastings we must aim to provide for a full range of economic development requirements to ensure that an appropriate mix of business sites and premises is readily available for existing and new firms to prosper and grow.

8.6 The skills, knowledge and aspirations of residents are central to the sub-region's economic success. There is a need for better education and training to improve workforce skills at all levels if the local economy is to prosper and regional disparities in performance be narrowed.

8.7 The draft South East Plan does not set targets for employment land and floorspace growth but states that employment growth should at least match the anticipated increase in the resident workforce.

8.8 Government guidance specifies that the planning system should ensure the provision of sufficient land for different types of industrial and commercial development. Planning policy needs to make sure employment sites are in locations that allow more sustainable patterns of activity, where access to jobs is not dependent upon long journeys and unsustainable forms of transport.

Local Context

8.9 The town currently has some 420,000 sq.metres of floorpsace in employment use (factory, warehousing and office space). Industrial and warehousing uses are mainly, located within the five main industrial estates within the town, though there area a number of large independent sites located elsewhere within the town. There is also a scattering of small sites throughout the built-up area.

8.10 Office space is located in a wide range of building types; suites above shops, converted buildings and in significant individual purpose-built office buildings.

8.11 Initial consultation has revealed concerns around a need to provide for 'move-on' space, improving the skills of the workforce and issues around transport, both in terms of improving links to and movement within Hastings.

8.12 Figures from 2003 show that most jobs are in health (5300), public services (4900), retail (4200) and education (3300), with 46% of all employees are engaged in public sector work.

8.13 It is forecast that the service sector will account for 88% of all jobs in Hastings and Bexhill by 2016 ***(Source: WM Enterprise Consultants Jan 2005).***

8.14 85% of firms employ 10 or fewer people.

8.15 The skills gap is seen as a major barrier to getting local people into work.

8.16 The proportion of students leaving education with NVQ Level 4 qualifications dropped in Hastings from 21.3% on 2000 to 15.9% in 2004. This goes against the South East results which increased from 18.5% to 28.5% over the same period.

8.17 The gap between average earnings nationally and local rates increased by 72% between 2000 and 2005.

8.18 Wage rates are around 19% lower than the regional average weekly wage of £451.10p

8.19 Our consultations have shown that Black and Minority Ethnic Groups feel there is untapped potential within their communities for entrepreneurship and establishing and developing new markets for goods and services.

Have your say

To ensure we have identified all the issues relating to employment land please consider the following:

a) Do we have employment land of the right quality and in the right locations to allow growth to 2026?

b) How should the LDF support the Town's main employment sectors, but also be sufficiently flexible to meet new and changing needs?

c) Will we have the right skills base to retain existing employers and attract new ones? How can the LDF help support improving the skills base and educational attainment of the workforce – a key factor to the town's regeneration.

To have your say please complete sections 8.1 to 8.5 of the response form.

Employment Sites **– The Options**

8.20 We are carrying out an employment land study to investigate the role of existing employment space and inform future requirements for employment land within the town. We have identified the following options for developing employment in the town.

- Identify new sites for employment use - but with constraints on land availability this could be difficult
- Strengthen the existing Local Plan policy to protect all employment sites/premises
- Protect the traditional use of each site for industrial or office type uses or take a more flexible approach and encourage a mix of employment generating uses
- Intensification of existing employment areas
- Encourage and develop an entrepreneurial base by ensuring the provision of incubator and grow-on space as well as catering for expanding indigenous firms and inward movers
- Require major developers to provide training opportunities
- Actively support the provision of childcare services
- Explore the potential for live/work units (where properties are designed to accommodate home working or a mix of

business/domestic accommodation in the same property)

Have your say

We would like to hear your views on the above options about employment sites and their protection.

To have your say on these options complete sections 8.6 to 8.21 of the response form.

Retailing **- Summary of the Issues**

8.21 We need to make sure that Hastings retains its role as a Sub-Regional Shopping Centre – especially in the face of significant developments planned for competing centres at Eastbourne and Ashford.

8.22 A retail capacity study has shown the following:

- No significant requirement for additional convenience goods floorspace in the period 2011 – 2021 (everyday essential items including food, drink, newspapers, confectionery) is forecast
- the bulky goods sector (electricals, DIY, furniture etc) could require an additional 8200sq m floorspace spread fairly evenly over time up to 2021 (this would be roughly the equivalent of two stores the same size as Wickes at Ravenside)
- the non-bulky goods sector (clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods) has a forecast requirement of around 15,500 sq m additional floorspace up to 2021 (for comparison this is the equivalent of around 58% of the floorspace of Priory Meadow shopping centre).
- there could be up to 1300 jobs from the growth of retailing up to 2021, if all the retail capacity identified in the study is met.

8.23 It's very difficult to determine the future impact of internet shopping – if it continues to grow there may be a reduced requirement for retail floorspace generally, or more retail floorspace could be geared to recreational shopping.

8.24 The central objective of government planning guidance is the promotion of viable and vital town centres – 'development should be focused on existing centres thus strengthening them, and if necessary regenerating them.' For Hastings this would locate the majority of development in Hastings Town Centre and the district and local centres of St Leonards, Silverhill, Bohemia, Ore and the Old Town.

8.25 The town faces retail identity issues. The wealth of specialist small retail businesses in the town creates an environment and economy which makes Hastings & St Leonards different from many similar sized towns which have a greater proportion of the high street multiples and brand names. To be competitive we need to create an identity which builds on this difference – one idea is to develop a brand reputation of outstanding customer care.

8.26 The 2006 Retail Capacity Study identified the retail hierarchy in the town as follows:

- Town centre (the principal centre in the Borough) – Hastings Town Centre
- District centre (usually comprise groups of shops often containing at least one supermarket and a range of non-retail services such as banks, building societies, restaurants, as well as local public facilities such as a library) – St Leonards Town Centre and Ore Village
- Local centre (a range of small shops of a local nature, serving a small catchment – could include a small supermarket, a newsagent, a sub-post office, launderette etc) - the Old town, Silverhill, Bohemia

- These definitions are set by central government and do not include small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance.

8.27 Government planning guidance requires the clear identification of a retail hierarchy of town centres, district centres and local centres.

8.28 The development of Hastings Town Centre for education and office uses should support its vitality and viability, but we still need to find space and opportunities for further retail development to meet forecast needs. We also need to support mixed uses in the town centre by promoting it as a suitable location for quality leisure facilities.

8.29 The detailed planning of Hastings Town Centre will be undertaken through the preparation of an Area Action Plan starting in March 2007. This will consider, in detail, a wide range of issues affecting the future of the town centre. We are already receiving ideas about how there needs to be much improved connections between it and the seafront and the Old Town.

8.30 The role of local shopping centres in providing a community focal point and accessible services is very important. In partnership with other agencies we need to protect and enhance those centres that are vital to local quality of life, and at the same time recognise that some local centres may cease to function, and in these cases may require rationalisation or promotion of other uses.

Retailing General Principles and Options

8.31 The following general principles could form the basis of a strategic policy on retail centres in the town.

- Where possible growth will be accommodated by more efficient use of land and buildings within existing centres
- With regard to the location of new development, a sequential approach to site selection will be followed – looking first at sites within the centre, then at edge-of-centre locations and finally out-of-centre sites with good accessibility
- Town centres should provide an attractive, accessible and safe environment for businesses, shoppers and residents
- Promotion of the evening economy – especially in Hastings Town Centre
- Integration of town centre management into the delivery plans of agencies whose work impacts on the Hastings and St Leonards town centres
- Promotion of a mix of uses to include retail, leisure and entertainment, sport and recreation, offices and other employment uses, education, arts, culture, tourism and housing
- Management of traffic and parking to support regeneration
- The protection and strengthening of local centres which provide for people's day-to-day needs – especially in the more deprived areas of the town
- Where existing centres are in decline – first assess the scope for consolidation and strengthening, if this is not possible allow retail units to change to other uses, but strive to retain opportunities for vital local services such as post offices and pharmacies

Have your say

Do you support the overall approach laid out at 8.31?

To have your say on the above approach complete sections 8.22 to 8.24 of the response form.

Location of New Retail Development

Have your say

Should we accommodate as much of the forecast future needs for retail floorspace in Hastings Town Centre as possible?

If you disagree, can you indicate any broad locations in the town where you think new retail development might be appropriate? (bearing in mind that we need to follow the sequential approach to site identification set out by the government see paragraph 8.31)

To have your say on this issue complete sections 8.25 to 8.27 of the response form.

Links to the Community Strategy

Community Strategy Target 1:
Narrow the gap – take our five most deprived wards out of the worst 10% nationally by 2013.

Community Strategy Target 2:
Increase the % of local people satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live by 85% by 2013.

Community Strategy Target 4:
Increase the proportion of young people who think the town is a good place for them to live in.

Community Strategy Target 7:
Reduce average unemployment in the town to East Sussex level by 2013.

Community Strategy Target 8:
Increase average weekly earnings to national levels by 2013.

What the Local Development Framework could contribute to the Community Strategy

Narrowing The Gap: The Local Development Framework could contribute to the mix of uses and land provision necessary for the achievement of economically successful town centres in Hastings and St Leonards – which are town centre locations within some of the most deprived wards in the town.

Satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live: By seeking to protect and strengthen local centres where realistic/possible, the Local Development Framework can help ensure the continued provision of key services in local areas which contribute so much to the quality of life of many people.

Young People: By allocating land for employment, education, shopping and leisure uses the Local Development Framework can contribute to meeting the needs of young people and making the town a better place for them to live in.

Land for Employment and Education: We can help to meet the Community Strategy targets by allocating sufficient land in our spatial plan to meet employment and education requirements. We can also introduce policies to protect employment land from other uses and to assist skills and training initiatives by planning for their providers' future requirements for land and buildings.

Links To Other Key Strategies

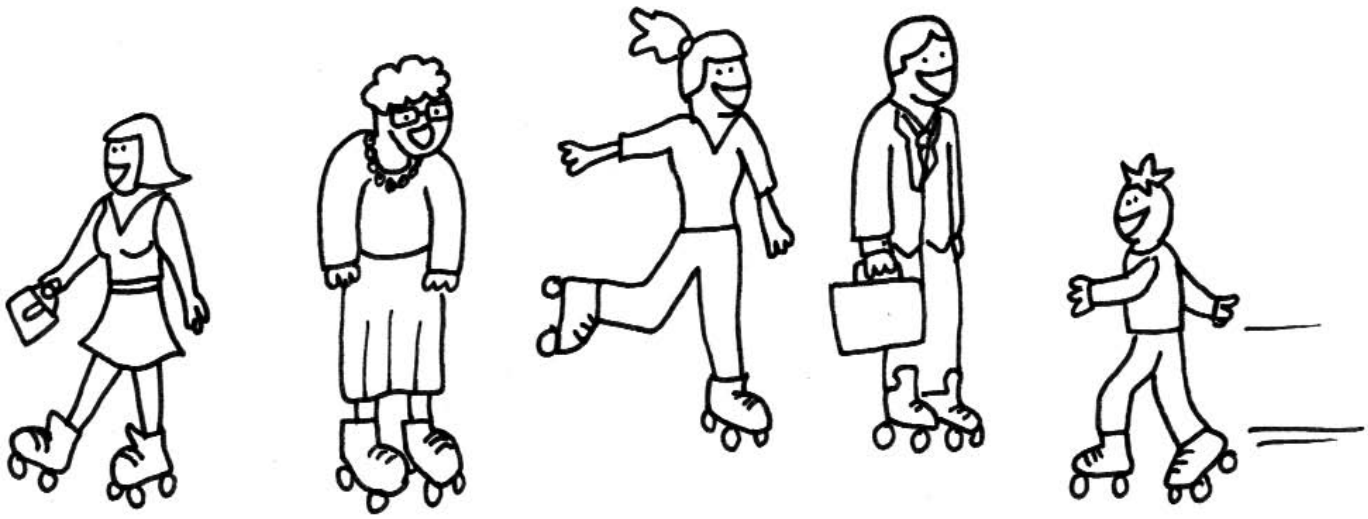
Making Waves – A Regeneration Strategy For Hastings and St Leonards:

This knits together other regeneration strategies to enable a co-ordinated approach to the comprehensive regeneration of Hastings & St Leonards. It covers areas such as community safety, creating a healthy community, supporting local enterprise and improving ICT infrastructure.

Draft Regional Ecnomic Strategy:

Prepared by The South East England Development Agency this recognises Hastings role as a regional hub (centre of economic activity). The Strategy as a whole will shape the future economic development of the South East and can be viewed at www.seeda.co.uk/RES

TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY



Chapter 9

The Issues

9.1 Improvements to all the town's transportation networks, including infrastructure and facilities, are of paramount importance to its successful regeneration. Many people raised the point that the A21 should be expanded to dual carriageway.

9.2 Our consultations showed that local businesses thought the poor transport links were a key factor affecting their movement of goods in and out of Hastings, and their staff commuting to work.

9.3 Hastings is identified as a regional hub in the draft South East Plan – this means it should be the focus for development and investment in the transport system that leads to an increase in the overall level of accessibility.

9.4 Our consultations have shown that public transport in the town is thought to be poor, expensive, infrequent and inconvenient.

9.5 The cost of public transport is seen as a major issue particularly amongst young people.

9.6 Bus routes need to be what people want and when they want them; the mark of success will be that people are using the routes.

9.7 Developing Park and Ride schemes was a common suggestion, though it must be remembered that car drivers will be the main beneficiaries of such schemes.

9.8 The A259 road between Hastings and Bexhill is frequently congested, particularly in the Bexhill Road to Glyne Gap area. The Government has given "in principle" support for the construction and funding of a new Hastings/Bexhill Link Road. This would improve connections between the two towns and release land for housing and development north of Bexhill. It is key to the future regeneration of both towns.

9.9 There is currently a lower than average rate of car ownership in the town, but if the economy improves this could rise and create additional parking problems

9.10 Cyclists are poorly provided for in terms of dedicated cycle ways and safe routes. Our consultations have shown that people would like more priority to be given to cycling.

9.11 Communities can be strengthened and the local economy boosted if we encourage local commercial centres and local produce outlets that people can walk to.

9.12 Our consultations showed that people remain concerned about parking and this is reflected in comments on residential planning applications.

9.13 There is excellent potential for the town. "Hastings to Ashford to France rail link works well; we want to repeat this experience for travelling to London".

9.14 It needs to be remembered that not everybody drives or chooses to drive, so we must consider alternative methods of transport. Our consultations showed that accessibility on foot is popular so it's important for pedestrian footways and pavements to be maintained to a high level - "it is always the roads that get resurfaced. If the pavements are upgraded it is only on the tourist bits".

The Options and Strategic Approach

9.15 We need an integrated package of measures to improve transport and accessibility to and within the town.

9.16 We suggest the following objectives could form the basis of the future approach:

- Secure major improvements to the sub-regional road and rail transport network, to achieve improved accessibility to Hastings and quality linkages with the regional and national networks, through active participation in the development of regional transport strategies, studies and other transportation partnerships
- Implement in full the provisions of the Local Transport Plan, and its subsequent reviews, to improve accessibility to the town, reduce congestion and improve traffic flows, achieve improved and sustainable transport facilities, improved road safety and quality of life, and equality of access for all travellers
- Improve accessibility to key development opportunity sites to realise their full development potential and opportunities for job creation and their contribution to the regeneration of Hastings

9.17 Measures to achieve these objectives could include:

- Reduced sole reliance on the car for accessibility to and from new developments and priority to measures that increase accessibility levels by public transport, walking or cycling. One measure could be to expand the use of 20mph traffic zones.
- Develop quality transport interchanges and links for the integration of all transport modes
- Safeguard key transport corridors to provide for an integrated public transport system
- Provide for 'state of the art' communications, signing and traffic management systems
- Work in partnership with bus, train, rail and freight operators and related agencies to secure improvements to passenger transport and freight services through the development of Quality Partnerships
- Work with local businesses, residents and transport operators to promote sustainable travel patterns and secure improved facilities and road safety through initiatives such as 'Safer Journeys to School', 'Green Travel Plans' and subsidised bus routes to bring potential customers into retail areas
- Direct high density development to those areas well served by a choice of transport modes and to areas close to transport interchanges, and ensure that developments which would generate large amounts of traffic or which are of sub-regional importance are located in areas accessible by a range of transport services
- Specify the provision of cycle and pedestrian routes and facilities such as cycle racks and lockers in major new developments. Consideration also needs to be given to the places people will travel to from these developments such as stations, offices and retail areas
- Work with partners to complete the National Cycle Network route through Hastings and encourage the use of green ways
- Implement traffic management measures in accordance with the Local Transport Plan, to provide for more efficient movement of traffic, the prioritisation of highway and footpath maintenance and environmental enhancements
- Ensure car parking is provided to meet the operational needs of users
- Upgrading the A21 – making journey times more reliable
- Improved bus routes running well into the evening hours, perhaps considering use of

mini bus services that visit all of the town not just priority areas. Accurate information about bus timetables is essential to a successful service

- Identify innovative approaches to alternative transport such as bi-fuel cars, electric cars, LPG fuel, bike powered rickshaws and ferries
- Develop our transport and business links with France; as one resident said, "France is closer than Chichester!"

Have your say

Do you support this overall approach?

To have your say on the above approach complete sections 9.1 to 9.3 of the response form.

Links To The Community Strategy

Community Strategy Objective:

We want good transport links, thriving businesses, more jobs and a skilled workforce. We want everyone to share in the town's prosperity.

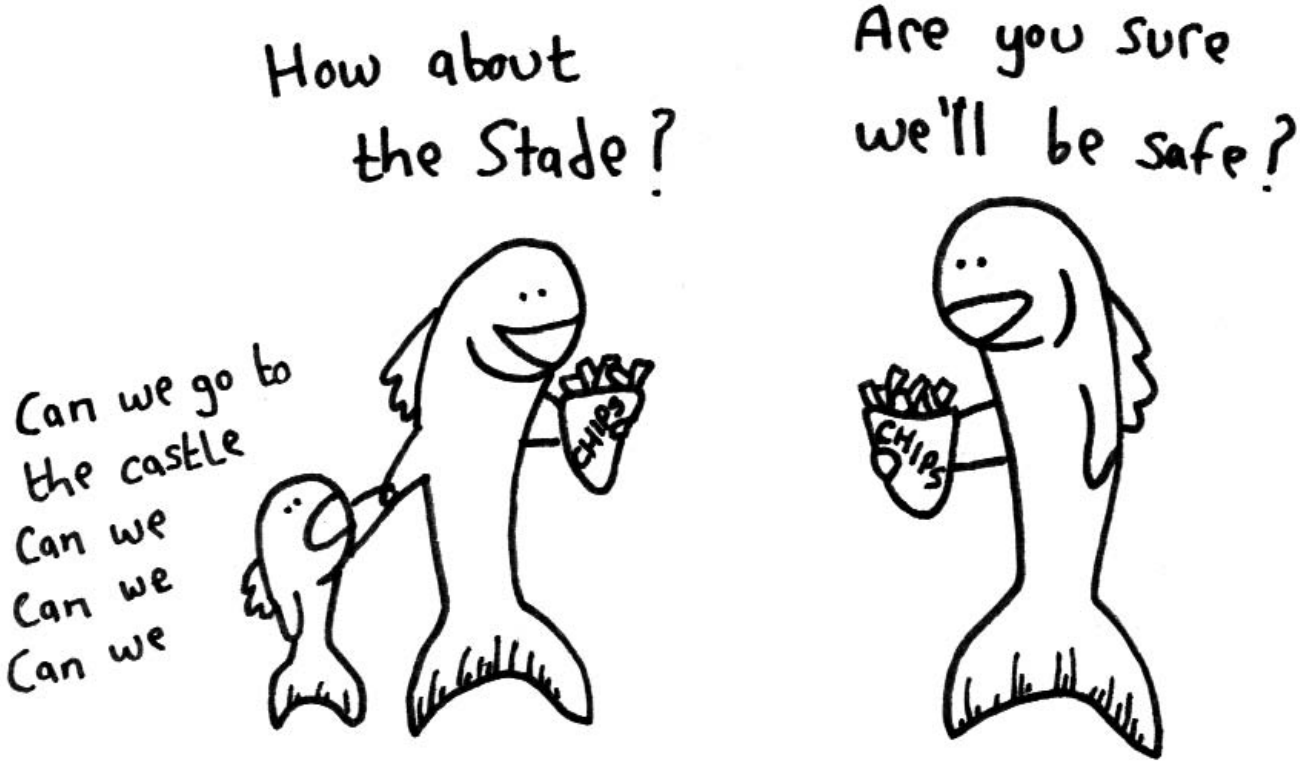
Community Strategy Target 19:

Increase the total number of bus passenger journeys.

What the Local Development Framework could contribute to the Community Strategy

It could require major new development to be located near good public transport links, focus on Hastings' role as a regional transport hub and support the public transport infrastructure, implement the provisions of the Local Transport Plan and set out the case for improvements in the road and rail transport network.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND QUALITY OF LIFE



Chapter 10

The Issues

10.1 Hastings must be a town for everyone and it is important everyone feels they are included and can access the opportunities the town has to offer.

10.2 Planning needs to take into account the needs of all the community, including particular requirements relating to age, sex, ethnic background, religion, disability or income, being positive about diversity and developing an environment that recognises that a richness of culture is good for Hastings.

10.3 The health and social well being of the town's residents and their educational attainment levels are vitally important to the regeneration of the town. Spatial planning policies will need to reflect the complementary role of planning in supporting other strategies and initiatives that seek to provide essential services and facilities within the town.

10.4 Deprivation: Hastings has many of the problems associated with larger urban areas and is in the top 11% of most deprived Local Authority areas in England.

10.5 Health: life expectancy in Hastings is lower than the national average

10.6 Education: at present Hastings has the lowest GCSE attainment levels of East Sussex.

10.7 Crime: although the overall crime rate has been reducing in recent years, many people still feel unsafe walking in the town centre, or their local neighbourhood at night. We want to be in a position where residents, visitors and the business community are able to go about their daily lives protected from crime and free of the fear of crime. We want to create an environment that contributes to help people feel safe, building on the good work so far such as wardens, the tackling of anti-social behaviour, and the other initiatives of the Safer Hastings Partnership.

10.8 Access to services: Hastings has relatively low rates of car ownership and it is important that people are able to access local services such as shops, GP surgeries, community centres and schools by public transport or on foot. This will mean providing accessible facilities within the communities they serve.

10.9 Young people need better access to affordable social and leisure activities and facilities, in particular, places that people can identify with as a home, base or "spiritual centre".

10.10 Access to a range of facilities and activities for an increasingly culturally diverse community.

10.11 Vibrancy and richness of experience are essential if the town is to see a step change in the quality of life it offers and the image it projects. We need to clarify how spatial planning can support arts, culture, sports and play in bringing together local communities and promoting well being for everybody.

10.12 From our consultations it is clear that culture is important. People want Hastings to have a wide range of events and things to do, suggesting fireworks events, skateboard areas, music and bands, sport and healthy recreation.

10.13 Our consultations also showed that Hastings needs to recognise and reap the economic and social benefits that diversity can bring to the town. As one group explained "our cultural ignorance means that services are affected; when we understand and respond to the wide range of cultures in the town, shops and services will expand their range of goods. and that will contribute greatly to the economy"

10.14 Health is a subject that many people wanted to raise with suggestions of having policies that support healthy lifestyles such as restricting fast food outlets.

What our consultations told us

- "Think about the main pedestrian routes for example the change you see walking a few yards from Old town to the New town is startling"
- "The town would benefit from lots of green areas and flowers to brighten it up"
- "We need and want good leisure facilities that are different – what about a bathing pool what about a White Rock youth centre?"
- "We should have a good community facility in each neighbourhood renewal area"
- "We need a dedicated building for youth"
- "Allow young people to shape their youth provision – this means responding quickly, otherwise all that happens is they plan for the next group of young people – whose needs will be different"

Community Infrastructure **– The Options**

10.15 We propose that the Core Strategy contains a strategic policy based on the following principles/approach:

"Development proposals must contribute to improving the education attainment, health, safety, quality of life and well-being of the town's residents and visitors to the town"

This will be achieved by:

- Providing for health and social care facilities supporting the estates strategy of the Primary Care Trust and the improvement plans of the Conquest Hospital and other key health and social care agencies
- Securing the physical infrastructure needed to maximise the impact of the Higher Education/ University campus in the Town Centre and at Ore Valley Campus along with parallel development of a town wide educational and skills training infrastructure
- Making sure that the future land requirements of education and skills, health and social services, local emergency services and utilities are adequately catered for
- Promoting the location of community facilities and services within the area they serve
- Safeguarding existing and promoting new opportunities for cultural, recreation and community facilities
- Making sure land and buildings are used in a way that reflects people's needs and buildings are designed and located in accessible ways that contribute to all sectors of the community
- Making sure the design of new buildings, and their relationship to adjacent public areas, contribute to improving public safety (including road safety and crime reduction) and minimise crime and the fear of crime

Have your say

Do you support this overall approach?

To have your say on these options complete sections 10.1 to 10.3 of the response form.

Neighbourhood Planning – **'Area Coordination'**

10.16 Area Coordination is about working at a local level to improve quality of life. In Hastings service provision is being organised around four areas, each containing four wards. In each of these areas service providers, residents and local councillors work together so services meet the needs of individual neighbourhoods. Co-ordinated by our Neighbourhood Renewal team, this system aims to tackle crime and raise levels of education, health, employment, housing and environmental standards across the town, whilst maintaining the focus on the neighbourhoods most in need of improvement according to the most recent data.

10.17 It is important that the Local Development Framework supports the spatial aspects of each of the four area delivery plans and vice versa, and that Area Coordination is used to gain greater community involvement in, and understanding of, planning issues affecting local neighbourhoods and the town as a whole. We're committed to this and the Local Development Framework provides an important opportunity to put it into practice. We already know we can make improvements – for example, local residents responding to a planning application off Victoria Avenue, near Ore Village, were shocked to find the land in question had been allocated for housing development in the 2004 Hastings Local Plan – they were not aware that the Local Plan existed, or what its implications could be for the future use of land in their local area. We want to avoid this type of situation in the future and will be much more proactive through the new planning system in going out to local communities to talk to people about planning policy issues relevant to their neighbourhoods and to the town as a whole.

10.18 We think that Area co-ordination should be recognised in the Core Strategy as:

- key way of putting planning policies into practice
- an important way to involve local communities in planning issues relevant to their neighbourhood/ local area
- a mechanism for ensuring continual improvement in services provided by the council

Have your say

Do you agree with this approach?

Are there any other links which need to be made?

To have your say on this issue complete sections 10.4 to 10.10 of the response form.

Links To The Community Strategy

Community Strategy Objectives:

- ***We want everyone to have an equal opportunity to take part in the regeneration of our town and for our communities and service providers to work together to achieve our shared vision of the future***
- ***We want to improve health, prevent and treat disease, and reduce inequalities in health faced by people in the town***
- ***We want to improve school performance and give people more opportunities to continue learning throughout their lives. This will encourage them to participate in the regeneration of the town***
- ***We want to build strong and stable communities where individuals can realise their aspirations for work, learning, health and leisure within an environment that's inspiring to live in and a pleasure to visit***

Community Strategy Target 1:
Narrow the gap – halve the number of neighbourhoods in the 10% most deprived nationally (A neighbourhood is defined as a Super Output Area).

Community Strategy Target 2:
Increase the % of local people satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live to 85% by 2013.

Community Strategy Target 5:
Halve the gap between overall crime rates per 1000 for Hastings and St Leonards and the average for England and Wales.

Community Strategy Target 6:
Increase the % of residents who feel safe walking alone in their local neighbourhood at night.

Community Strategy Target 10:
Increase the number of residents who feel that people from different backgrounds live harmoniously in the town.

Community Strategy Target 11:
To increase voluntary and community sector (including community) participation by 5% by 2013.

Community Strategy Target 12:
Increase the % of people surveyed who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local areas.

Community Strategy Target 13a:
Reduce death rates from circulatory disease (coronary heart disease and stroke) in people under 75.

Community Strategy Target 13b:
Reduce death rates from cancer in people under 75.

What the Local Development Framework could contribute to the Community Strategy

Ways of working: Encouraging community involvement in spatial planning at the local level by raising the profile of planning in the new area co-ordination structures. Helping local people and businesses become more aware of policies and proposals affecting their local areas. Ensure that through our community involvement processes, a wide range of groups and individuals are encouraged to get involved in planning the future of the town. Encourage the shared use of community facilities and provision of accommodation for mixed communities in new developments.

Supporting change in the most deprived areas: Area based policies to support social, economic and environmental regeneration initiatives, for example in Hastings Town Centre, Ore Valley Millennium Community, and the Central St Leonards Master Plan.

Improving quality of life: By ensuring good design of buildings, good transport, access to local services and community facilities, local open space provision and enhancement and a sense of place.

Design and control: Ensure that crime is 'designed out' as far as possible in new developments. Prevent the over proliferation of bars/nightclubs in town centre locations.

Encouraging Healthy Lifestyles: Important indirect links are about encouraging healthy lifestyles by providing, protecting and enhancing parks and open spaces in locations accessible by walking or cycling. Encouraging exercise and healthy eating by protecting allotments and encouraging the farmers market in the town centre. Facilitating leisure/sports developments.

Links To Other Key Strategies

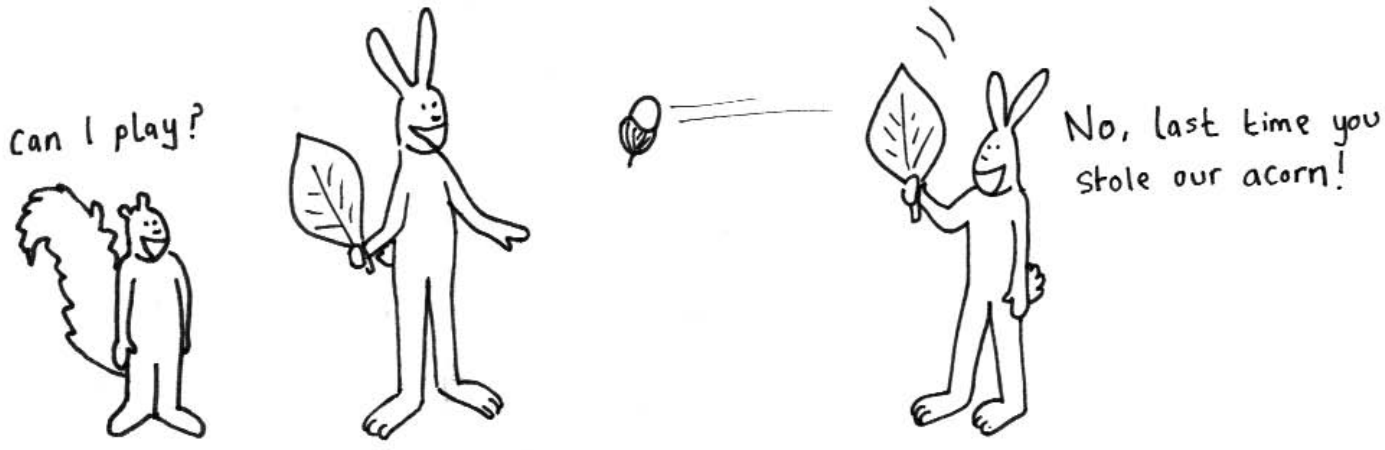
Safer Hastings Strategy 2005 – 08

The Local Development Framework can help deliver on the key themes of public reassurance, violent crime and burglary by ensuring we 'design out' crime in new developments, and the Council can work with the Safer Hastings Partnership to ensure a suitable mix of town centre uses which will help perceptions of safety in the area at night time.

Youth Strategy 2004 – 2014

One of the most important ways the Local Development Framework can support the Youth Strategy is by making sure the voices of young people are heard and responded to in the plan–making process.

BIODIVERSITY, GREEN SPACE, AND URBAN RENAISSANCE



Chapter 11

The Issues

11.1 The town's natural and historic environment is a key asset, making it an attractive place to live and work in.

11.2 The ongoing development of the town needs to enrich and enhance the environment and character of Hastings.

11.3 Government guidance now requires enhancement as well as protection of our most important wildlife sites and habitats and promotion of biodiversity.

11.4 The draft South East Plan says that unavoidable damage to wildlife interest should be minimised through mitigation, that any damage is compensated for, and that such measures are monitored.

11.5 For a small urban area we have a very comprehensive range of wildlife and habitat protection designations already protected through existing Local Plan policies:

- International importance – Hastings Cliffs Special Area of Conservation
- National Importance – 3 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Importance – 7 Local Nature Reserves and 30 Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance

11.6 It is very important that these areas are protected from unwarranted development, although it must be realised that priorities for protection are higher for international and national sites than local designations.

11.7 We need to address issues of biodiversity conservation and enhancement.

11.8 The draft 2006 Parks and Open Spaces Strategy specifies that the focus for the future will be to improve the quality and value of existing open spaces, rather than establish new ones.

11.9 The 2005 Open Spaces Audit found that the current policy of providing fully equipped formal children's play areas is not working as the play spaces are often underused and expensive to maintain and manage.

11.10 Sense of place and local identity are important characteristics of our town. It is important that future planning policies are proactive in retaining the best of the existing townscape and shaping the future form of developments so they add to local character and distinctiveness.

11.11 Public art and lighting schemes have had a very positive impact on the image of the town in recent years.

OPTIONS - Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity

11.12 The draft South East Plan specifies a list of strategic actions that we should include in the LDF and other plans and strategies to avoid a net loss of biodiversity and actively pursue a net gain. These could form the basis for a strategic policy in the LDF Core Strategy:

- Provide the highest level of protection for nationally and internationally designated sites
- Avoid damage to locally important wildlife and geological sites wherever possible
- Ensure that unavoidable damage to wildlife interest is minimised through mitigation, that any damage is compensated for, and that such measures are monitored
- Make sure areas of wildlife importance are accessible and well promoted, identifying

areas of opportunity for biodiversity improvement and setting local targets to contribute to regional biodiversity targets and quality of life

- Influence and apply agri-environment schemes, forestry, flood defence and other land management practices to deliver biodiversity targets
- Maintain and establish accessible green networks and open green space in urban areas

11.13 These actions could also form the core of the Biodiversity Action Plan currently being prepared by the Council.

11.14 This is in keeping with national government guidance and the actions are necessary for the delivery of sustainable development. Alternative approaches are therefore not put forward.

Have your say

Do you support this overall approach?

To have your say on this approach complete sections 11.1 and 11.2 of the response form.

Open Spaces

11.15 We need to make the best use of our open spaces to promote healthy recreation, community safety, accessibility, urban renaissance and regeneration. The draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy which follows on from the open spaces audit 2005, sets out the strategic direction for the provision and management of green spaces in the town by us and our partners.

11.16 The policy approaches set out below show how the LDF can support the draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. Your views on the general policy direction are invited.

a) The progressive enhancement of existing provision rather than the creation of more provision - so that priority is given to sites within or adjacent to the most deprived neighbourhoods. The development process could be one means of funding this enhancement through the pro-active use of planning agreements. In particular this could be used to support the proposals for the Ore Valley Millennium Community, the Central St Leonards Master Plan, play provision and the open space network. However where major new development is proposed in areas with no access to open space, we'll seek to secure provision in line with the demand likely to be generated by the development.

b) The identification of accessible Borough–wide spaces and facilities with safe pedestrian and cycle links. These spaces could be identified in the Local Development Framework along with policies to protect, manage and enhance them, and to improve accessibility within and to them. The following spaces have been identified as having significance throughout the town:

- **Greenspaces:** Alexandra Park, BOS Field, Church Wood, Gensing Gardens, Hastings Cemetery, Hastings Country Park, Old Roar Ghyll, Ponds Wood, St Leonards Gardens, St Helens Wood, Warrior Square, West Hill, White Rock Gardens, Summerfields Wood, a site in the Ore Valley Millennium Community
- **Other Spaces:** The pedestrians-only streets in the town centre and the seafront
- **Sport and Recreation Facilities:** Bexhill Recreation Ground (football), Horntye Park, White Rock Gardens (bowling greens), William Parker Sports College, Sandhurst Recreation Ground (cricket), Tilekiln Recreation Ground (football & cricket)

Please note we are seeking your views on the concept as a whole – not on the individual sites as these have already been subject to consultation as

part of the development of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

c) Working with local communities to foster the enhancement of local greenspaces and residential environments, initially in the regeneration areas. We currently work with a number of community groups which have been established to manage Local Nature Reserves.

Have your say

To have your say on this policy complete sections 11.3 to 11.8 of the response form.

Children's Play Provision

11.17 The Open Spaces Audit found that the current policy of providing fully equipped formal children's play areas was not working as the play spaces were often underused and expensive to maintain and manage.

11.18 The Local Development Framework needs to support the new approach to play provision set out in the draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. This is based on:

- Designing local greenspaces in such a way as to maximise their play value for children of different ages with opportunities to hide, climb, run around, see nature at work, handle sticks and stones and get dirty and wet
- Having a relatively small number of large equipped play spaces at key locations around the town that are accessible to all
- Requiring developers to design housing environments in which children have space to play informally and safely and where they have priority over vehicles, and where such spaces contribute to the provision of open space. These spaces to be developed in accordance with quality standards for play provision adopted by the Council.
- Planning traffic calming schemes with the objective of making streets child friendly (Play Streets) rather than simply slowing down traffic, and where possible promote 'Home Zones'

Have your say

Do you support this new approach to children's play provision?

To have your say on this approach complete sections 11.9 and 11.10 of the response form.

Sense of Place and Local Identity

11.19 We already have a set of development control policies relating to the design and appearance of new development. Should we be more proactive in requiring new buildings and spaces to be innovative and complementary to local urban form and building styles and more accessible to everyone? Should we require public art and lighting schemes to be provided as part of major new development?
This could involve:

- preparing an urban design guide for the whole town or
- preparing urban design guides for those parts of the town where new development is most likely to impact on features of local identity or
- preparing site specific design briefs for major development sites
- continue as at present and use our planning resources to address other priorities such as affordable housing or economic development
- having a policy that encourages developers to invest in public art in the development and surrounding area

Have your say

Which of these options do you support?

To have your say on these options complete sections 11.11 to 11.16 of the response form.

Links To The Community Strategy

Community Strategy Target 2:
Increase the % of local people satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live to 85% by 2013.

Community Strategy Target 13a:
Reduce death rates from circulatory disease (coronary heart disease and stroke) in people under 75.

Community Strategy Target 13b:
Reduce death rates from cancer in people under 75.

Community Strategy Target 20:
Increase the % of households within 300m of an accessible open space that meets the council's quality standard.

What the Local Development Framework could contribute to the Community Strategy

Improving Quality of Life: By ensuring good design of buildings, good transport, access to local services and community facilities, local open space provision and enhancement and a sense of place.

Encouraging Healthy Lifestyles: By providing, protecting and enhancing parks and open spaces in locations accessible by walking or cycling. Encouraging exercise and healthy eating by protecting allotments and encouraging the farmers market in the town centre.

Accessible Open Space: The new spatial plan will contain policies to protect, provide, enhance and improve open space and access to it.

ENVIRONMENTAL & SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

Chapter 12

The Issues

12.1 Climate change is likely to be one of the major environmental issues facing Hastings over the next 20 years. Such change is likely to increase the probability of flooding due to sea level rise, increased storminess, rapid run-off and increased winter rain fall.

12.2 A major contributor to climate change is the burning of fossils fuels resulting in increased emissions of Carbon Dioxide. Fossils fuels are burned to power transport and to produce the electricity we all use.

12.3 Home energy use is responsible for 27% of all UK Carbon Dioxide emissions.

12.4 The UK is currently on target to meet its 1997 Kyoto Protocol target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 12.5% below 1990 levels by 2008/12, but is not on target to meet its voluntary target of 20% reduction by 2010.

12.5 The UK has a target of achieving 10% of total electricity generation by renewable energy resources by 2010 – set under the European Union Renewables Directive.

12.6 We need to address the causes and impacts of climate change by

- Reducing energy use e.g. reducing the need to travel
- Increasing energy efficiency e.g. building more energy efficient homes
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Promoting and encouraging renewable energy
- Protecting groundwater and water quality
- Planning ahead to provide adequate water infrastructure and development
- Seeking to reduce the risk of flooding and rising sea levels

12.7 Our consultations showed that issues of the environment and sustainability are a high priority to local people and this needs to be reflected throughout the Local Development Framework.

12.8 Key to the success of policies that address environmental and sustainability issues is working with local people. In particular, informing people about the need for a particular policy or what happens when they take part is a vital way of engaging people. For example, as one consultee commented, "if we're encouraging people to recycle, demonstrate what happens to the rubbish".

Options

12.9 Environmental sustainability covers a wide range of issues and the Core Strategy provides the opportunity to bring these together under a strategic policy which can be supported by more detailed specific polices and planning guidance. The strategic policy, which will relate to new development, needs to cover issues such as:

- light, air, noise and water pollution
- the risk from flooding
- minimising water use and requiring water conservation and recycling
- sustainable urban drainage systems
- incorporating renewable energy production facilities into new developments to minimise Carbon Dioxide production
- minimising energy use through appropriate layout and orientation, building form and design, and design to take account of the micro-climate
- incorporating recycling facilities and using waste as a resource wherever possible

Have your say

Do you think there are any other issues that need to be covered in a general policy?

To have your say complete section 12.1 of the response form.

Sustainable Design

12.10 Government guidance encourages all local authorities to include principles of sustainable development in their planning documents. The Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Methodology (known as BREEAM) assesses the environmental performance of buildings in terms of their construction, building materials, energy use, pollution, transport, land use and ecology. Buildings are rated on a scale of pass, good, very good or excellent. The assessment covers factories, shops, offices and schools. Homes fall under a similar EcoHomes Assessment.

12.11 The government already applies the Eco-Homes standard to some forms of development – all affordable homes built with Housing Corporation or English Partnerships financial support are required to meet Eco-Homes 'very good' standard. The Millennium Community homes to be built at Ore Valley will be required to meet the Eco-Homes 'excellent' Standard.

12.12 Developers who achieve BREEAM standards can promote their environmental credentials to investors and purchasers and a BREEAM certificate guarantees reduced maintenance and running costs for owners and tenants.

12.13 Although design and build costs are usually higher for energy efficient buildings, such costs can be compensated for by lower running costs plus the health benefits and comfort of occupants.

Have your say

Should we require all new development to meet the minimum level of sustainable construction for example the Building Research Establishment's 'BREEAM' and 'Eco-homes' standard?

To have your say complete sections 12.2 and 12.3 of the response form.

Renewable Energy

12.14 We could specify the provision of micro-renewable energy as part of larger development proposals – this could take the form of householder mini-turbines, solar electricity (photovoltaics or 'pv'), solar thermal (solar hot water), ground source heat pumps, biomass, combined heat and power.

12.15 We have identified the following possible options relating to renewable energy:

- require developers to submit an assessment of a development's energy demand and require that at least 10% of this demand is supplied from on site renewable energy
- or should we 'encourage' rather than 'require'?
- Should this requirement relate only to housing schemes of 10 or more dwellings and commercial schemes of over 1000msq, or should it relate to all developments?
- Should we identify sites/opportunities for renewable energy schemes?

Have your say

Do you agree with this approach?

To have your say on this approach complete sections 12.4 to 12.11 of the response form.

Flood Risk

12.16 A Shoreline Management Plan has been prepared for the area from South Foreland to Beachy Head, Eastbourne. This provides an objective, large scale assessment of the risks to both people and the environments from coastal processes such as flooding, storms and erosion. The policy for Hastings is to 'hold the line' – this means there is a long-term commitment to maintain or upgrade the existing coastal defences.

12.17 The Environment Agency has prepared maps which highlight areas that are at risk from coastal and river flooding. The areas most susceptible to flooding in Hastings are centred around Bulverhythe.

12.18 The Local Development Framework may provide policies which restrict development in flood risk areas, yet the pressures for the Borough to continue developing land and providing housing and employment opportunities for residents are significant. A feasibility study looking at the development potential of the Bulverhythe area is currently underway – this will give a clearer steer as to whether the flood risk issues in the area can be overcome by careful design and location of development.

12.19 The Local Development Framework must not duplicate policies set out in the South East Plan. It is proposed that draft South East Plan Policy NRM3 Sustainable Flood Risk Management is used for development control purposes in Hastings.
This specifies that:

'The sequential approach to development in flood risk areas set out in PPG25 (to be superseded by PPS25) will be followed. Inappropriate development should not be allocated or permitted in zones 2 and 3 of the floodplain or areas with a history of groundwater flooding, or where it would increase flood risk elsewhere, unless there is over-riding need and absence of suitable alternatives.

Where development is proposed for parts of zones 2 and 3, local authorities (in the case of plan allocations) and developers (in the case of specific proposals) with advice from the Environment Agency should undertake a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to provide a comprehensive understanding of the flood risk and options for managing that risk in a cost effective manner. This should have regard to climate change and identify appropriate types of development and suitable mitigation and adaptation measures in scheme design and layout.

Existing flood defences will be protected from development. Where development is permitted in appropriately defended floodplains it must be designed to be resilient to flooding (to minimise potential damage) and to allow for the future maintenance, realignment or management of the defences to be undertaken...'

Have your say

Do you consider that this policy covers the flood risk issues for Hastings?

To have your say on complete section 12.12 of the response form.

Comments received through consultation

- Every (new) house should have solar panels and use renewable energy, and water butts, composting
- Encourage recycling
- Reduce land fill
- Use recycled bricks for development
- Encourage the use of things like bi-fuel cars, desalination, insulation
- Wind power – small and large scale

- Encourage a debate on the different types of power e.g. nuclear v renewable etc
- Provide an environment/policy framework that encourages people to think and act creatively and innovatively regarding sustainable solutions
- Let the town be celebrated as a flagship for recycling
- Decentralisation of energy supply e.g. burning wood pallets to provide local power for local use

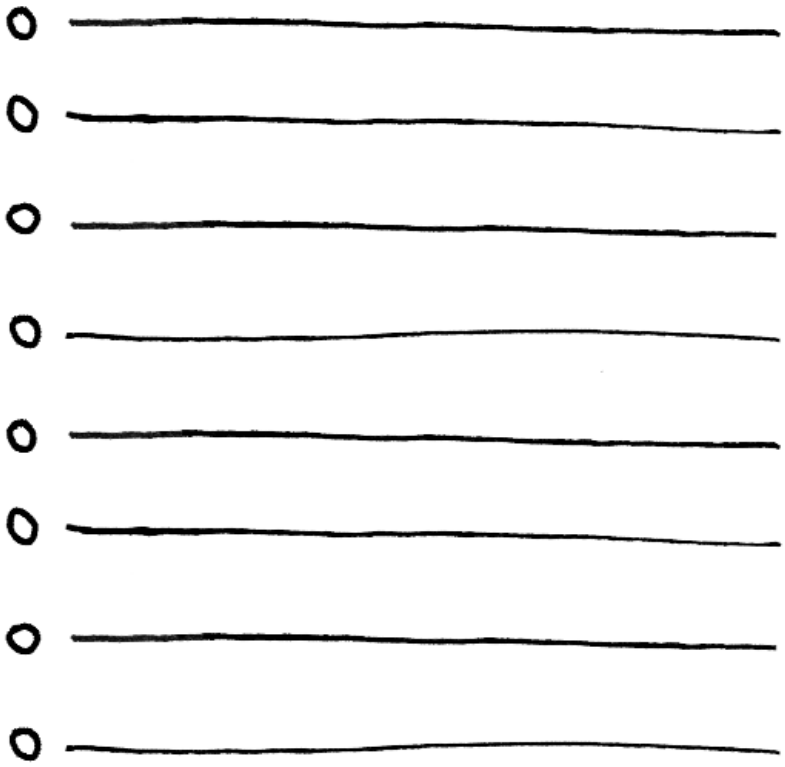
Links To The Community Strategy

Community Strategy Target 21a:
Increase the amount of household waste recycled and composted.

What the Local Development Framework could contribute to the Community Strategy

Design and Waste Storage: We can ensure that new developments are designed to have facilities for the storage of household waste prior to recycling and that community recycling points are provided in appropriate locations.

GLOSSARY



Note about the Glossary

Documents that were part of the old planning system (the Local Plan) are marked with an asterisk (*).

Affordable housing

Affordable housing can take many forms - social rented, low cost home ownership, key worker housing. Most of the demand in Hastings is for social rented housing, but we could look at having a more flexible policy to provide a greater choice and mix of affordable housing types – reflecting the marginal economics of developing some sites in Hastings.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)

The Council is required to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to show progress of the Local Development Scheme, and how well the planning policies are working, as well as identifying new issues to be addressed.

Area Action Plan (AAP)

Area Action Plans will help to ensure development is of an appropriate scale, mix and quality for key areas in the town.

Brownfield sites

A broad term to describe land which is or has been developed e.g. a factory site which could be cleared and redeveloped, as opposed to land which has never been developed e.g. greenfield land.

Core Strategy

This will contain a vision for what kind of place we want the town to be in 10-15 years, will make sure all development is consistent with our Community Strategy, and will give an analysis of the strategic challenges and opportunities facing the town

Development Plan Document (DPD)

This is the name given to any one Local Development Framework documents that are part of the statutory development plan. The following parts of the Hastings LDF will be known as Development Plan Documents or DPDs:

- Core strategy
- Site specific allocations of land
- Area action plans (where needed)
- Proposals map (with inset maps, where necessary)

Examination in Public (EIP)

An examination chaired by an independent inspector into objections to the LDDs and the overall “soundness” of the LDD.

Greenfield sites

These are sites which have never been developed or used for an urban use, or are on land that has been brought into active or beneficial use for agriculture or forestry i.e. fully restored derelict land.

Lifetime homes

A home built with design features that create a flexible blueprint for accessible and adaptable housing in any setting. Designs incorporate features that allow for flexible living over the lifetime of the occupants and the property. For example in addition to the normal ground and first floors, a house could be provided with full basement, and accessible useable roof space. These areas of the house may be fully furnished and divided or left to be fitted out as and when needed or finances arise.

Local Development Document (LDD)

This is the name given to any one of the LDF documents that set out policies for specific topics and for named geographical areas.

Local Development Framework (LDF)

The collective name given to all policies and documents forming the planning framework for the town.

Local Development Scheme (LDS)

A project management document setting out what the LDF will contain, a timetable for its production, proposals for monitoring and review.

Local Plan *

Under the old planning system, a statutory document prepared by the Council which sets out land use policies and proposals for the whole of Hastings Borough. The current Hastings Local Plan (link to existing Local Plan was published in 2004 and will be replaced by the LDF under the new planning system.

Mixed use

The term 'mixed use' is used to describe development which includes a range of different facilities, which might include for example shops, bars, restaurants, cafes, offices, homes, hotels, cinemas, clubs and other leisure facilities. Mixed use developments have many benefits, particularly in a town centre. The range of activities can help to attract people at different times of the day and night which helps make the area feel alive and therefore safer. This in turn helps to attract custom and helps the area to thrive both economically and socially.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) *

Under the old planning system, these provided statements of Government planning policy on a range of issues. Now being replaced over time by Planning Policy Statements.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS)

Government statements of national planning policy, being phased in to supersede Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs).

Proposals Map

A map showing site allocations and geographical areas where policies apply.

Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) *

Non-statutory guidance under the old system, that were approved by central Government and setting out regional planning policy. Now to be replaced by the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

A statutory document setting out regional spatial strategy and policies, that replaces Regional Planning Guidance. In Hastings this will be known as 'The South East Plan'. Local Development Documents will have to be in accordance with it.

SEERA – South East England Regional Assembly

The South East England Regional Assembly is the representative voice of the region. It comprises 112 members, including elected councillors nominated by the region's local authorities.
The Assembly has three key areas of work:

- promoting the interests of the South East to Central Governnment
- making sure regional organisations work to meet the region's needs
- advising Government on regional planning, transport and housing priorities for the South East and important topics such as sustainable development, social inclusion, health and education

South East Plan

The South East Plan is produced by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA), and sets out a vision for the future of the South East region to 2026, outlining how challenges facing the region such as housing, the economy, transport and protecting the environment should be responded to. The South East Plan is currently in draft

format, and is scheduled to be finalised in early 2008. As it covers a larger geographical area, the South East Plan will influence and shape the Hastings Local Development Framework.

Spatial Planning

Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning of considering pieces of land. It seeks to bring together land-use policies with other policies, programmes and strategies (e.g. the Hastings & St Leonards Community Strategy) which can influence the nature of places and how they function.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

This document sets out how Hastings Borough Council will involve the community in the preparation, alteration and review of the Hastings LDF and in the consideration of planning applications.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Environmental assessment of policies, plans and programmes required under the European SEA Directive 2001/42/EC.

Structure Plan*

Under the old planning system, a statutory document prepared by county councils and strategic planning authorities setting out a broad strategy and land use policies for county areas. They will cease to exist under the new system.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Non-statutory documents within the LDF, the purpose of which is to expand upon policies or proposals in Development Plan Documents. These replace Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)*

Non-statutory guidance prepared under the old planning system to expand upon policies and proposals in a Local Plan. Have been replaced by SPDs under the new system.

Sustainable Development

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable living

Sustainable living is a lifestyle that meets the needs of the present day without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable travel / sustainable transport

Often meaning walking, cycling and public use of transport (and in some circumstances "car sharing"), which is considered to be less damaging to the environment and which contributes less to traffic congestion than one-person car journeys.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

Assessment of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the polices and proposals contained within the LDF.

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