

Battle Town Study



Part 1 - Main Report

August 2011

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Issues &
Options

Strategy
Directions

Pre - Submission

Adoption

Examination



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1. Introduction

Context and Aim

- 1.1 This document is to be used as a background paper and as part of the evidence base to inform Rother District Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document. It follows on from the 'Core Strategy Consultation on Strategy Directions' and the 'Urban Options Background Paper to the Core Strategy' both published in November 2008.
- 1.2 As a result of public consultation, the Council received representations from interested parties on the Core Strategy and on the Battle chapter. These will be used to inform the forthcoming submission version of the Core Strategy.
- 1.3 In the intervening period the Council has also published a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which identified specific sites in Battle with housing potential, as well as publishing other evidence work.
- 1.4 In 2010 there was a change in national government and as a consequence changes to the planning system are in progress, most notably the revocation of the regional strategies, including the South East Plan. Other changes to the planning system

require clarification at this point in time, although the Localism Bill (published in November 2010) will almost certainly give local councils more powers over housing and planning decisions.

- 1.5 This study is undertaken in the above context. It will ensure the emerging Core Strategy for Battle takes on board local views including the representations received and moves forward in a coherent and consistent manner. It will help inform the Core Strategy and defining and shaping the service role, and needs of the town.

Methodology and Membership of the Working Group

- 1.6 A meeting was held between representatives of Battle Town Council and Rother District Council on 28/07/10 to discuss the possibility of working jointly on a Battle Town study in order to ensure a full local involvement in the future strategy for the town. The outcome of that meeting was the decision to form a working group comprising members of Battle Town Council and an officer from Rother District Council.

Geography of the Study

- 1.7 Rother is a predominantly rural district. Bexhill is the only settlement of significant size, whilst Battle, together with Rye, are best described as small market towns of historic interest.
- 1.8 It is important to make the distinction at the outset between the ‘settlement’ of Battle, which is the focus of this study, and the larger administrative boundaries of Battle Town ward (which elects two District councillors) and Battle Town (which elects the Town Council). Map A1 is helpful in this regard.
- 1.9 It is the ‘settlement’ of Battle which is the focus of this study. The term ‘settlement’ in this context is defined as a contiguous or coherent area of housing and services, not fragmented by large expanses of intervening countryside. It comprises the town development boundary (as defined in the 2006 Local Plan) as well as adjacent urban fringe.
- 1.10 Therefore smaller settlements, such as Netherfield (although within the Battle Town Council area) are not the domain of this study. Netherfield, together with other villages has been included within the scope of another background evidence study to
- the LDF, the ‘Rural Settlements Study’.
- 1.11 However, whilst this study is concerned with just the settlement of Battle town, much of the statistical information utilised to inform the study is only available on a wider parish or ward basis. Such statistics may have been used as a proxy indication as to the likely socio-economic conditions within Battle, but nonetheless have to be treated with care when being applied to just the town of Battle. In most cases, statistics relating to the Battle town ward have been used in preference to those relating to the much larger Town Council boundary.
- 1.12 Some statistical information is available at ‘super output area’¹ level, allowing analysis of the characteristics of different parts of Battle. Three different super output areas cover Battle, namely
- 006a Battle (south-west)
 - 006b Battle (east)
 - 006c Battle (north-west)
 - 006e Crowhurst (north)
- 1.10 Therefore smaller settlements, such as Netherfield (although within the Battle Town Council area) are not the domain of this study. Netherfield, together with other villages has been included within the scope of another background evidence study to

¹ Super Output Areas (SOAs) are a set of geographies developed after the 2001 census. The aim was to produce a set of areas of consistent size, whose boundaries would not change (unlike electoral wards). They are an aggregation of adjacent Output Areas with similar social characteristics. Lower Layer SOAs, such as 006a, 006b and 006c typically contain a population of around 1500.

Together the first three super output areas listed above comprise Battle Town Ward. A fourth super output area (006e) has been included in some tables of analysis as it covers most of Hastings Road even though it is within Crowhurst ward.

- 1.13 The boundaries of parish, ward and super output area can also be seen on Map A1.
- 1.14 It is also important to note that information on businesses, facilities and services that are further afield from the town development boundary may often be referred to where they are used by town residents or have an impact on town life.

Sources of Information

- 1.15 A selection of data studies has been utilised. This selection has been used to devise a spatial strategy to meet the needs of the town, while supporting quality of the living and working environment for its residents, workers and visitors.
- 1.16 In identifying and appraising strategic options for development and change at Battle, the following documents have been reviewed:
 - Rother District Local Plan 2006
 - East Sussex Local Transport Plan March 2006
 - Battle Local Area Transport Strategy, 2005
 - Rother Core Strategy Consultation on Strategy Directions 2008

- Rother Core Strategy Urban Options Background Paper
- Rother Culture and Leisure Strategy 2006 – 2011
- Battle Conservation Area Appraisal 2005
- Hastings and Rother Employment Land Strategy and Review 2008
- Rother Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2008
- Rother Rural Settlements Strategy 2008
- Rother Shopping Assessment 2008
- PPG17 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation – Audit and Assessment – November 2007
- Core Strategy: Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment August 2009
- The High Weald AONB Management Plan
- Primary Care Development Plan (Hastings & Rother)
- Battle Partnership – Strategic Plan 2002 – 2012
- Battle Local Action Plan – April 2007 (Battle Town Council)
- Rother Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2010
- Rother Housing Market Assessment 2005
- Rother Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2010
- Battle Visitor Survey, by Tourism SE in December 2009
- 1066 Destination Management Strategy
- 'Hastings, Bexhill & 1066 Country Hotel & Guest Accommodation Futures' Prepared by Hotel Solutions on behalf of Seaspace April 2007.
- 'Hastings, Bexhill & 1066 Country Visitor Accommodation Futures' Prepared by Hotel Solutions on behalf of Sea Space 2009.
- Tourism South East's 'The Economic Impact of Tourism Rother 2009'

Structure of Document

- 1.17 This main document starts with a review of county and district wide strategies and consultations (section 2) including the Local Plan, LDF as well as policies of the Town Council.

1.18 There follows a review of relevant Government Guidance, national and regional planning policy informing this strategy (section 3).

1.19 Section 4 looks afresh at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to Battle in light of the most up to date information. It examines in more detail some of the key issues facing the town.

1.20 Section 5 is the Formulation of strategy options and conclusions.

1.21 The document is supplemented by a set of 'Appendices and Maps' contained in a separate document. These contain more detailed information that is cross-referred to throughout the document.



2. Town Profile

Heritage and Pattern of Development

2.1 Battle is the world renowned site of the 1066 Battle of Hastings which gave the town its name. Battle Abbey was built by the Norman victors and is reputedly the place where King Harold fell in Battle. Senlac Hill and the area south of the town are protected by English Heritage as a historic battlefield and designated an Archaeological Sensitive Area (ASA).

2.2 Today, Battle is a small market town of considerable character. Being situated astride one of the principal High Weald east-west ridges, the town has grown up in a linear fashion. Development has extended over time along this ridge and the pattern of development, having the appearance of a dumbbell when viewed in plan, means that movement around and across the town is channelled through the centre.

2.3 The town centre forms the historic core, and consists of a long central street, High Street, with the imposing Abbey Gate House and open space of Abbey Green at its south-eastern end and the medieval precincts wall beyond. To the south of the Gatehouse lies the Battlefield itself. The High Street is continued to the south-east in Upper Lake and Lower Lake and to the north-west with Mount Street. Almost all the

buildings in these four streets date from the eighteenth century or earlier.

2.4 The town core (as well as large expanses of countryside to the south) has been a designated conservation area since 1970. There are many buildings listed for their architectural and historic importance within the conservation area, and to a lesser extent outside it within the wider town.

2.5 Map A16 shows the main areas of importance to the historic environment of Battle.

Population Profile

2.6 Battle is a relatively small town. The population of the town ward area in 2010 was approximately 4,872.

2.7 In common with the rest of Rother District there are relatively low numbers of young adults (15-44 age groups), but much higher numbers of older age groups (45+). However, these imbalances of population are not as marked in Battle as they are in the rest of Rother District.

2.8 Interestingly, Battle has a relatively high proportion of 0-14 year olds, not just in comparison to Rother district but also to the wider county, region and nation.

2.9 The breakdown of households by type indicates a relatively high proportion of married couple households compared to England and Wales, combined with a relatively low proportion of both cohabitating couple households and lone parent households. There are high numbers of one parent households, probably reflecting the relatively elderly population. To a large extent the patterns exhibited in Battle reflect the patterns that are also apparent within the wider Rother District.

2.10 There are a very low proportion of other multi-person households in Battle relative to all areas, perhaps reflecting the low numbers of young adults and the lack of any student population.

2.11 Life expectancy is high in Battle (74.9) and higher than wider Rother, the south-east and England and Wales.

Profile of Local Facilities and Services

2.12 As would be expected of a market town, Battle enjoys a good range of services and facilities and acts as a service centre for a large rural hinterland.

2.13 Map A2 illustrates the location of some of the main services in the town.

Shops

2.14 Battle Town Centre has about 110 shop units comprising 11-12,000

sq.m of retail floorspace. Budgens/Jempsons is the largest convenience retailer in the town with a sales area of about 650 sq m. The Co-op supermarket is 190 sq m.

2.15 In the appendices, Table A7 gives a more detailed breakdown of the town's retail offer, whilst Map 3 delineates the Battle Shopping Area (as defined in the Rother District Local Plan adopted in 2006).

2.16 Reflective of the popular tourist nature of the town, there is a particularly high proportion of service uses, including cafes, restaurants, hairdressers, banking and other business facilities.

2.17 More detail on retailing in Battle can be found in the subsequent section 3, with reference to the Retail Study, on page 22. Discussion of the pattern of movement for retail trips is on page 38 in discussion of the Main Key Issue. Also discussion of how to address retail need is in section 4 (page 68).

Schools

2.18 Battle has one locally authority funded comprehensive school and one local authority funded primary school.

2.19 Claverham Community College for pupils aged 11+ is located to the west of the town along North Trade Road. Since September 2006

Claverham has officially had Specialist Sports College status. A Specialist Sports College is a School which uses Physical Education and sport outside the curriculum to improve the whole school. It achieves this by sharing expertise and resources with its partner schools and the wider community.

- 2.20 Battle & Langton CE Primary School is located relatively centrally on Market Road.
- 2.21 In addition there is one private secondary school – Battle Abbey.
- 2.22 Further information regarding forecast school numbers is contained in section 4 Key issues.

Economic Profile

- 2.23 Average income in Battle is high compared to wider Rother and East Sussex but low compared to the national average and lower still in comparison the wider south east (see table A20).
- 2.24 Battle has relatively low numbers of people who are economically active (particularly in north-west Battle), which is perhaps not surprising given the demographic profile (see Table A9).
- 2.25 The workforce has comparatively high numbers working in ‘public administration, education and health’ and ‘construction’ but comparatively low numbers

working in ‘manufacturing’ (see Table A10).

- 2.26 There are high numbers of ‘managers and senior officials’, but relatively few people employed in ‘sales and customer service’ or ‘process, plant and machinery operatives’ (see tables A10 & A11).
- 2.27 In common with wider Rother and East Sussex, a higher proportion of the work-force works part-time rather than full-time when compared to national and regional figures. Conversely, a relatively high proportion work very long hours (49 hours+ per week).
- 2.28 Battle has low unemployment, but also very few local vacancies (see Table A16).
- 2.29 Fewer households have an internet connection compared to national and regional figures (see Table A18).
- 2.30 Generally, there are low levels of deprivation and Battle East ward is the least deprived ward in all Rother. However, it appears this hides high levels of inequality since comparatively high numbers of households are defined as being in poverty (28%), compared to 26% in GB and just 21% in the south-east (see Table A21). Relatively few children are living in poverty however, with the exception of Battle south-west where 26% are, which is well in excess of comparable national, regional and local figures.

Main Employment Areas

- 2.31 With reference to Map 3, there are a number of centres of employment dotted in and around Battle.

Town Centre

- 2.32 The town centre itself is a large retail and service sector employer, with much revenue gleaned from tourist visitor spend.

Station Approach

- 2.33 A number of B2 and B8 uses are located on the north-east side of this area. Some of the larger occupiers include Howard Bothers, Senlac Storage, Battle Mower Centre, Foster Motors. At the western end there are a cluster of office uses in two buildings, including the Sussex NHS Partnership, and a solicitors and a Law firm in Beckett House.

- 2.34 In addition, the site contains Battle Health centre and large areas of private parking (in addition to the Train Station car park).

Marley Lane

- 2.35 This business and industrial area comprises a mix of A1, B1, B2, B8 and D2 uses spread across two sites east of Battle.
- 2.36 Occupiers include RHM Frozen Foods, Rutherfords Pools, Furness Controls Ltd, Dairy Crest Ltd and a number of other smaller

businesses. There are also a number of vacant premises.

- 2.37 Further employment land was allocated at Marley Lane in the 2006 Local Plan and the area is now in the process of expanding.

Beechdown Sawmills

- 2.38 This small area is located on the A271 west of Battle flanked to the north by ancient woodland in the form of Beechdown Wood.

- 2.39 The sawmill has been located at Beechdown since the mid twentieth century, but in recent times this rural based industry has diversified and the construction of a research and development and solar panel production facility is currently in progress. This will bring a high value / high skill based employer to the local labour market.

British Gypsum, Mountfield

- 2.40 Gypsum and anhydrite are minerals of national importance used for plaster and plasterboard products; in cement production and in many other industrial processes. The resources in East Sussex form the largest deposit within the United Kingdom and the only economic source of these industrial minerals in the South of England making them regionally and nationally important.

2.41 Gypsum has been mined and processed at Mountfield since 1876. In the 1960s, a second mine was opened at Brightling with raw material transported to the plant at Mountfield (known as the Robertsbridge Works) by an aerial ropeway which was replaced in 1989 by an overland conveyor. In the 1960s and 1970s a new plaster mill and a plasterboard manufacturing plant were built and subsequently extended. The Robertsbridge Works has direct road access to A2100, 1.5km south of its junction with the A21 trunk road, and is served by rail sidings from the Charing Cross - Hastings line. In 1990, the Mountfield mine was abandoned, and all mining is now concentrated at Brightling.

2.42 In 1994 planning permission was granted for the import by rail of desulphurgypsum for processing at Robertsbridge to supplement local rock, and trains now operate from Drax in South Yorkshire.

2.43 In recent years, British Gypsum has shown strong commitment to their Mountfield/ Brightling operation with major investment in the mine and in plant, including the overland conveyor. The various mineral related operations at Mountfield/Brightling constitute an important source of employment in the Rother and Hastings area and they currently employ about 200 people, including 119 at Mountfield. British Gypsum was forced to scale back production earlier in the year

because of a sharp decline in demand, caused by the current financial climate.

Watch Oak Business Park

2.44 Located to the north of Battle in London Road, this business park comprises a number of smaller units including Lifetime Financial Services Ltd, Housing Law Services and NFU Mutual Insurance.

Glengorse Estate

2.45 This area to the south east of Battle, whilst mostly being in equestrian use, does also include some office development (as a result of two planning permissions in the early 1990s. These permissions resulted in the development of some 9 office suites (use class B1a) totalling an estimated 1600 – 1700 sq.m.

Beech Farm Estate

2.46 Located off Netherfield Road this small business area includes 'Yurt Shop Ltd', Sox-U-Wear UK and Plumbwell Heating. It is located upon a groundwater source protection zone.

Tourism Profile

2.47 Largely as a consequence of its history, tourism plays big part of daily life in Battle. The town has many fine listed buildings, in addition to the Abbey. The historic battlefield site, which extends to the south of the Abbey, is a protected

heritage site. The town is a pivotal part of the tourist destination '1066 Country'.

2.48 Tourism is a valuable source of both revenue and employment for the area. Visitor business is buoyant, but on the down side it also adds significantly to volumes of traffic and congestion.

2.48 The issue of tourism in Battle benefits from a number of detailed evidence studies on the subject, namely:

- Battle Visitor Survey, prepared by Tourism SE in December 2009
- 1066 Destination Management Strategy
- 'Hastings, Bexhill & 1066 Country Hotel & Guest Accommodation Futures' Prepared by Hotel Solutions on behalf of Seaspace April 2007.
- 'Hastings, Bexhill & 1066 Country Visitor Accommodation Futures' Prepared by Hotel Solutions on behalf of Sea Space 2009.
- Tourism South East's 'The Economic Impact of Tourism Rother 2009'

2.49 The focus of the more recent Sea Space Study in 2009 is self-catering accommodation, caravan and camping sites, holiday parks, youth and group accommodation. The earlier 2007 study was concerned with hotel and guest accommodation as the title suggests.

2.50 There is now one four star hotel (Bannatyne's Hotel) in the Battle area. At the time of the 2007 Study, there were no four or five star hotels in Battle (or indeed anywhere within the whole of 1066 Country), but there were four 'three-star' hotels in Battle and the surrounding area Brickwall, Powdermills, The George, Leeford Place). Table A23 in the Appendices provides more details.

2.51 According to the '1066 Destination Management Strategy'², Battle and its surrounding area has almost 200 rooms in hotels and other serviced accommodation, representing 17% of the total for 1066 Country³. There are further 180 self-catering properties or static caravans or touring caravan sites in the Battle area.

2.52 A Battle Visitor Survey was prepared by Tourism South East in December 2009. Some key findings were as follows;

- Day visitors accounted for 87% of all visitors, comprising of day visitors from home (23%) and day visitors from holiday bases outside Battle (64%). The remaining 13% of visitors were staying overnight in

² Locum consulting commissioned in March 2005 on behalf of the Hastings and Bexhill Area Investment Framework, Sea Space and the 1066 Country Marketing Partnership.

³ 1066 Country encompasses Rother District, Hastings Borough and parts of Kent and Wealden District.

commercial or non-commercial accommodation within Battle.

- Seventy-one percent of visitors fell into the 'ABC1' socio-economic group.
- Eighty-nine percent of all visitors were domestic visitors and 11% of visitors were from overseas countries.
- The main areas of origin for overseas visitors were USA, Germany and Australia and the Low Countries.
- Almost a quarter of day visitors on holiday were staying nearby in Eastbourne. A further 10% of visitors were staying Hastings and 8% in Rye.
- A quarter of visitors staying in Battle were staying overnight in touring caravans and 21% were staying in hotels.
- On average, day visitors were spending around 2.64 hours in Battle. Fourteen percent of visitors had visited Battle TIC.
- Both the general atmosphere and feeling of welcome were highly rated aspects of Battle.

2.53 Tourism South East's 'The Economic Impact of Tourism Rother 2009' indicated that 13.1% of all employment in Rother District is tourism related. It is likely that in Battle the proportion is even greater.

Weekday Markets

2.54 The evidence from Hotel Solutions (2007) indicates that weekday markets are similar for hotels and guesthouses across 1066 Country.

2.55 Business visitors are a key midweek market for 3 star hotels in the Battle area (as well as Hastings and Bexhill). However, a company survey supporting the 2007 Sea Space study suggested

that the business market is relatively weak in these areas with very few major corporate users of hotel accommodation in Battle (or Hastings).

2.56 Hastings companies primarily use the Beauport Park and Powder Mills for visitors and senior managers, but use the Premier Travel Inn and Travelodge for sales teams. This lack of business demand is the key factor behind the relatively low 3 star occupancies in 1066 Country.

2.57 Midweek breaks are the key weekday market during the summer months for most hotels and guesthouses in Hastings, Battle and Rye, and a small market for Bexhill hotels and guesthouses. This market is predominantly retired couples coming from London, the South East and the Home Counties.

Weekend Markets

2.58 Weekend breaks are the main weekend market for most hotels and guesthouses in Hastings and the Battle and Rye areas. Weddings are a significant weekend market for country house hotels in the Battle Area.

2.59 These tourism-related issues are discussed further in section 4 on Key Issues.

Housing Profile

2.60 With reference to the appendices (Tables A24 to A41), the following conclusions may be drawn regarding households in Battle;

- Relatively few lower value properties (council tax band A and B), but relatively high proportions of intermediate and higher value properties (council tax bands C-G)
- High proportion of one person households, particularly in south-west Battle.
- Average proportion of married couple households, but uneven spread in town with very few in south-west, but relatively high numbers everywhere else in Battle.
- Low proportions of 'cohabitating households' and 'other multi-person households'
- Average dwelling size is quite large, although smaller dwellings are concentrated in south-west Battle. High proportion of detached properties in all areas except Battle south-west (where flats and terraces are the dominant accommodation type).
- High levels of owner occupancy and high proportion owning outright. Low level of rentals and of social housing.
- High numbers of both vacant and second homes.
- Very low level of overcrowding.
- Relatively high numbers of households in poverty compared to nation and

region, although not as high as Rother District as a whole.

- Relatively low numbers of children living in poverty compared to nation and region, although Battle south west is the exception to this with a higher proportion of children living in poverty than the national average.
- High levels of need for housing with 120 Battle households on the housing register seeking accommodation.
- There is an even greater demand for accommodation in Battle from residents currently resident elsewhere in the District, with 560 households falling into this category.

Profile of Accessibility

2.61 Battle is about 4 miles from Hastings along the A2100 and about 5 miles from Bexhill.

2.62 Nearby villages include Catsfield (two and a half miles away to the SW), Crowhurst (two and a half miles away to the South), Netherfield to the north-west and Sedlescombe to the east.

2.63 Table 42 has summary information regarding Battle's accessibility. Map A6 illustrates the main roads, whilst Map A5 illustrates the main public transport options.

Trains

2.64 Battle Railway station is located to the south of the town and

provides a direct service to London Charing Cross and to Hastings, Trains to London take about one and a half hours.

Buses

2.65 With reference to Map A5, it can be seen that Battle benefits from bus services to all major centres of population in the area (Hastings, Eastbourne, Tunbridge Wells, Heathfield, Bexhill, Hawkhurst) as well as surrounding villages.

2.66 However, there is no service that operates 7 days a week and only two services (304, 305 countryliner between Hastings and Robertsbridge) that are timed to allow for convenient commuting.

Community Transport

2.67 The Battle Area Community Transport operates a service in the area, including scheduled services, and a driver service for medical appointments.

Roads

2.68 With reference to Map A6, it can be seen that the main roads serving Battle are the A21 (London-Hastings Primary Route) which is in turn served by the A2100 Inter-Urban route which passes along Battle High Street. The A271 Inter-Urban route flows into the west of the town from Hailsham. The B2095 goes to Ninfield and Catsfield, while the

B2096 serves Heathfield via Netherfield.

2.69 The Battlefield, the Abbey and the historic town centre fuels a strong tourist industry, with both economic benefits and consequent pressures on car parking and rising cross-town congestion issues

2.70 As well as local and visitor traffic, there is also through traffic on the cross-country A271 and the north-south A2100.

Parking

2.71 Battle has four centrally located off-street car parks. In 2005 the Battle Local Area Transport Strategy reported that there were 355 District Council controlled and 496 private controlled off street car parking spaces. There is pressure at peak times. There is a limited amount of on-street car parking in the High Street.

2.72 There are 11 designated coach parking spaces at Market Road car park.

2.73 With reference to Table A44 it can be seen that Car ownership at Battle is high. This adds to the pressures for car parking and reducing congestion.

2.74 A map of off-street car parks can be seen at Map A7 in the Appendix.

Cycling

2.75 Pedestrian links through and around the town are relatively good. Cyclists are less well catered for. The National Cycle Network does not run through the Battle area. There is also a lack of secure cycle parking at schools and community facilities throughout the strategy area.

2.76 The issue is discussed in more detail in the key issues at section 4.

Environmental and Habitats Profile

2.77 The whole town is within the High Weald AONB.

2.78 Large expanses of Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland are located beyond the town development boundary, most notably 'Great Wood' to the east which is more precisely defined as 'ancient re-planted woodland'

2.79 A large groundwater source protection zone lies north west of the town development boundary.

2.80 There are a number of protected species recorded both within the town and just outside its boundary, including Pipistrellus pipistrellus bat, Daubenton's Bat, Natterer's Bat, Brown Long-eared Bat, Great Crested Newt, Hazel dormouse, grass-snake and water vole.

2.81 There are two notable Biodiversity opportunity areas of relevance. 'Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods' covers a huge area beyond the town development boundary to the north-west, whilst 'Great Wood area' covers the eastern side of town.

2.82 Map A15 shows environmental and habitat designations.

3. Review of Relevant Policy, Strategies, Studies and other Published Material

Rother District Local Plan

- 3.1 The Local Plan was adopted in 2006. The broad planning strategy for Battle, contained in Policy BT1, proposed to maintain the historic small town character, to maintain a substantial open countryside strategic gap to Hastings, to enhance the commercial and tourism attractiveness of the town centre and to minimize the demand for cross-town vehicular traffic.
- 3.2 The Plan allocated 'Land at Blackfriars' for development including housing (220 dwellings on two areas totalling 7.3ha). Other land between the two areas for residential development was allocated for a single form entry primary school and for open space. A subsequent planning permission differed slightly from the wording of the Local Plan allocation, by permitting 246 dwellings and an early learning centre rather than a primary school.
- 3.3 A smaller area of 30 dwellings was also allocated at land north of North Trade Road.

Changes in Circumstances since Plan Adoption

- 3.4 There is now delegated approval for 245 dwellings on the Blackfriars site.
- 3.5 At North Trade Road, planning permission has been granted for 24 dwellings (now under construction) on the greater part of the allocation. It is estimated that a further 12 dwellings could be accommodated on the residue of the site.

Rother District Core Strategy

- 3.6 The emerging Core Strategy has now gone through two stages, the 'Issues and Options' in 2006 and the more recent Consultation on Strategy Directions in 2008/09.
- 3.7 The latter document noted that 'A key element of the strategy for Battle is the balance between supporting the quite buoyant market town role and respecting its environmental constraints.' Because of the level of environmental, accessibility and conservation limitations, it was considered that a high level of future growth for Battle is inappropriate.

3.8 The document outlined how the strategy will be achieved by a range of measures, including :

- 450-500 net additional dwellings
- 10,000 additional sq.m of employment floorspace
- 1,000 additional sq.m of retail floorspace
- Providing land for an Early Years facility
- A replacement Martins Oak surgery
- Implementing the recommendations of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study.

3.9 Peripheral expansion is to be based on an area of search to the East and South-East of the town, as elaborated upon in the supporting 'Urban Options Background Paper', which is discussed below.

Representations Received on the Consultation on Strategy Directions

3.10 Some 45 persons/organisations made comments on the Battle section. There were a wide range of comments received, notably:

- Strategic Gap – representations both for and against.
- The need to preserve historic character and landscape setting
- Retail – a range of comments on need, type and location – both in support and against new floorspace

- Problem of cross-town traffic and congestion.
- A single suggestion that Battle should seek to achieve 'World Heritage' status.

Rother District Core Strategy Urban Options Background Paper

3.11 The Urban Options Background Paper assessed two 'Strategy Options'. The preferred option was careful implementation of Option 1 'Continued development to support the market town role of Battle. This would mean a continuation of the adopted Local Plan's strategy. It was felt that this option would most benefit Battle in terms of recognising the town's role providing for local economic, housing and community needs. It was considered that this level of growth would be achievable over the Plan period largely through outstanding commitments as well as unimplemented allocations mainly at Blackfriars that can be carried forward.

3.12 It was noted that this in effect allocates between 22 and 25 dwellings per annum to Battle. It was felt that this constitutes a relatively modest level of growth, which with the right cross-cutting policies in place should meet the needs of Battle residents without compromising the landscape setting within the AONB.

3.13 In terms of location for new development, areas of search were identified with a view to

determining which offers the best prospects for development that meet the objectives – particularly in terms of reducing congestion and general locational criteria. To this end Battle lends itself to being sub-divided into 5 strategy option areas, these areas are shown on Map 1. Each was considered.

1. Land south of North Trade Road, west of High Street and north of the historic battlefield.
2. Land north of North Trade Road, west of London Road (A2100) and south of Netherfield Road.
3. Land east of London Road (A2100), north of High Street and west of the open land around Little Park Farm.
4. Land north of Hastings Road (A2100) and east of the open land around Little Park Farm. This area includes the Blackfriars development.
5. Land south of Hastings Road (A2100) and east of the historic battlefield. This area includes a part of the Strategic Gap between Battle and St. Leonards.

3.14 It was considered that on balance sectors 4 and 5 offer most potential for sensitive and sustainable development in the longer term.

3.15 Whilst sectors 1,2 and 3 have some distinct advantages, in that they are closer to the secondary school and to a lesser extent the

primary school, sectors 4 and 5 would better address the key issues as they would:

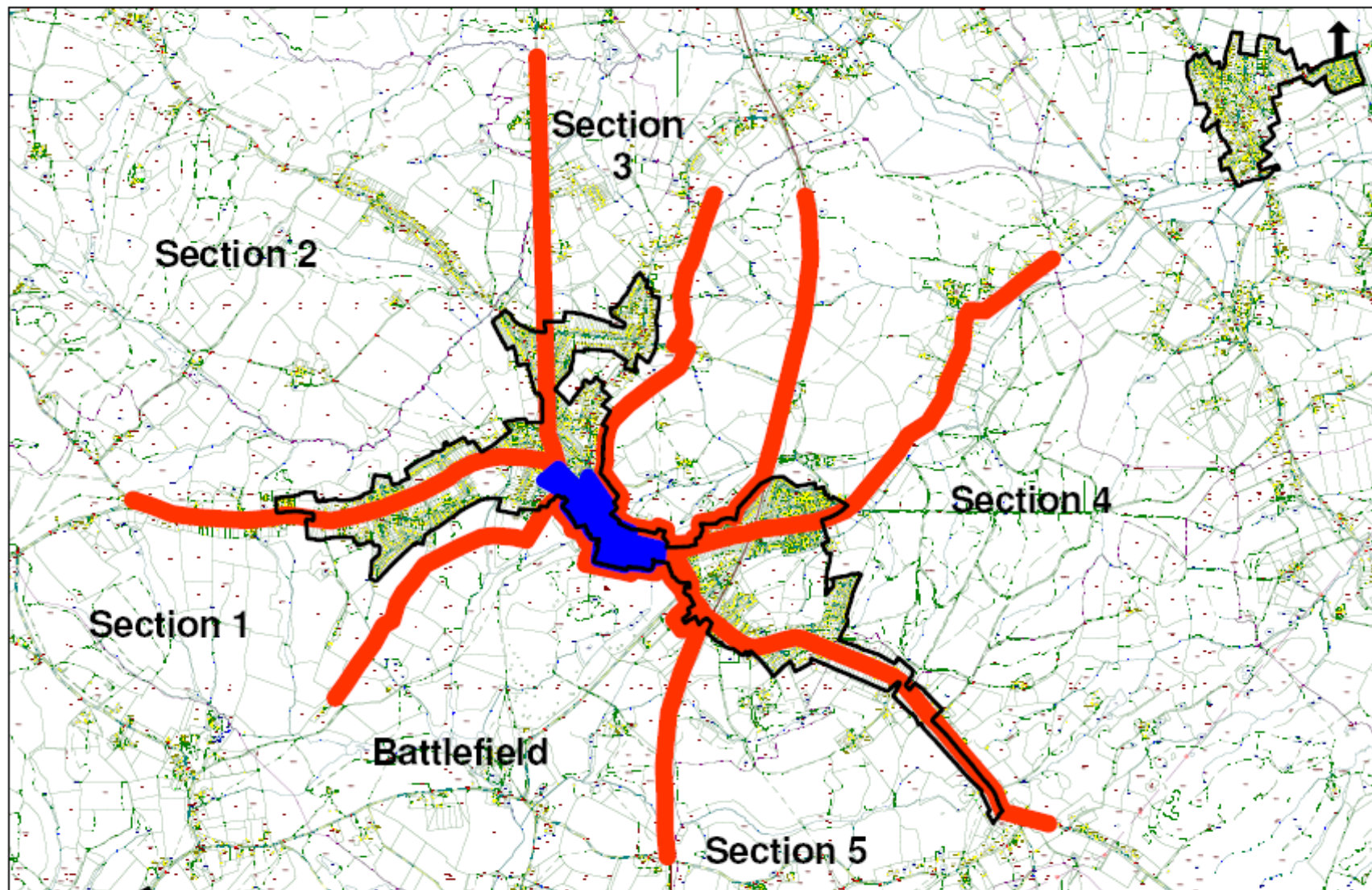
- Have better access to employment at Hastings/ St Leonards, Marley Lane and Station Approach, giving rise to less cross town movements at Battle
- Have better access to the main line railway station, with more rail users being within easy walking distance from their homes
- Be generally less exposed within the landscape of the High Weald AONB

3.16 In addition, Early Years facilities could be located on the former Local Plan primary school allocation, within sector 4.

3.17 Development would rely on improving bus services between Battle and Hastings and improved parking on the eastern side of the town centre.

3.18 The Urban Options background paper concluded that more detailed work is needed in order to determine any new land allocations, especially in relation to landscape and traffic impacts. It is therefore not appropriate at this stage to put forward a preferred location. It is also worth bearing in mind that only a modest amount of additional land will be required over and above that which has already been allocated.

Map 1 Battle Area of Search – from Core Strategy Urban Options Background Paper



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LDF Evidence Studies

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

- 3.19 Published in March 2010, this study identified sites with potential for some 6,800 houses across the District by 2026.
- 3.20 In Battle, potential for up to approx 600 dwellings was identified over the Plan period 2006-2026. This comprised some 260 dwellings already 'in the pipeline' as a result of early completions, permissions or outstanding allocations (including Blackfriars).
- 3.21 Further land with potential was identified to the south east of the town, south of the Hastings Road. These areas coincided with the preferred directions for growth highlighted in the emerging Core Strategy.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

- 3.22 This document was produced by consultants on behalf of Rother District Council. It provided much useful evidence regarding housing need, appropriate mix and tenure. Such issues are drawn on further in the housing section of the Key Issues.

Affordable Housing Viability Assessment

- 3.23 This document was produced by consultants on behalf of Rother

District Council. It suggests that a threshold of 40% affordable on new housing developments would be appropriate in Battle.

Retail Study

- 3.24 The 2007 GL Hearn Study commented that 'qualitatively, Battle town centre has a distinct niche retailer and tourist related shopping offer, characterised by local independent retailers.'
- 3.25 The study showed that Battle is little used for main food shopping, with residents choosing to travel to the large food stores in St Leonards/Hastings. It concluded that Battle could improve the amount of trade retained in the town, from 17% to 60%, the potential uplift recognising Battle's proximity to the large foodstores at St. Leonards. To achieve this, 1,350 sq m (1,000 sq m sales area) gross additional floorspace would be required. The Study recommended that the Council should assess opportunity sites which would allow Battle to recapture convenience goods trade. The level of floorspace identified (around 1,000 sq m sales area) could be achieved by way of a new foodstore or an extension to one of the existing smaller supermarkets within the town centre. GL Hearn suggested that further consideration should be given to assess the potential to accommodate this within the clearly important historic environment of Battle town

centre, which is a conservation area.

3.26 GL Hearn do not consider there is any strong justification for seeking to make planning policy provision to increase the comparison goods market share of Battle town centre, although they do anticipate that planning permission may be sought for smaller infill and store extension proposals within the Town, and suggest that these should be favourably considered in local retail policy terms.

3.27 An interesting survey within the study asked shoppers what improvements would make them visit Battle Town centre more frequently. 'Improved parking' (39%) and 'Better Traffic management' were the most frequently cited potential improvements

Employment Strategy and Land Review

3.28 The Employment Strategy and Land Review indicates that when the total employment requirement is disaggregated, of the order of 10,000sqm of land for employment is appropriate for Battle to 2026. Some 7,000 sq m is currently available (at the Blackman, Pavie and Ladden site, Marley Lane – 2,400 sq m; land west of DB Earthmoving site, Marley Lane – 1,900 sq m, and land at Rutherfords, Marley Lane – 2,700 sq m), leaving a requirement for a further 3,000 sq.m.

3.29 The Core Strategy commented that this is an appropriate target both to secure further land/premises for employment use at Station Approach and, potentially as part of new mixed-use developments.

Leisure Facilities Strategy

3.30 This study was produced in 2009 by Capita Symonds on behalf of RDC.

3.31 Identified Needs for Battle are as follows:

- Swimming Pools – The Study identified a need for 3-4 lanes across Battle and West Rother, with Battle being the obvious location. However it important to note that the same study identified the shortfall specific to just Battle amounts to just 1 lane. The study concluded 'While supply and demand modelling across the Rother may support the need for 3-4 lanes in Battle this would need to be tested further through a detailed feasibility study. Given that Battle has a population of approximately 6,000 and is within a 20 minute drive catchment of Hastings and Bexhill pools, the sustainability of such a facility may be questionable'.
- Sports Hall – Similarly the study identified that 4 badminton courts are required across West Rother, although Battle itself actually has a 2 court over-supply. The Study recommended that 'This could be linked to Robertsbridge Community

College, which has been identified as having a long standing need.'

- Health and Fitness stations – The study showed Battle having a very tiny shortfall of 1-3 stations, relatively insignificant compared to the shortfall of up to 101 stations across Rother.
- Multi-Use Games Areas – The study commented that there were no MUGAs in Battle and concluded 'Further MUGAs to be provided in the future. The quantity and location of these will be subject to further investigation by the Council, depending on their priorities for targeting provision.'
- Synthetic Turf Pitch (STP) – Training facility in Battle. Claverham Community College has secured significant funding from the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) for a new STP surface to serve curricular needs. Such a facility if floodlit and made available to community users could meet demand in West Rother. This would need to be subject to a detailed feasibility study to identify clear demand and to ensure that it complements the existing provision.
- Skate Parks – Further skate parks to be provided. The quantity and location of these will be subject to further investigation by the Council, depending on their priorities for targeting provision.

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study

- 3.32 In June 2007 a PPG17 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation – Audit and Assessment was produced by Consultants for the

Council. It highlights and prioritises shortfalls in both quantity and quality. The main findings in respect of Battle are:-

- Consideration to be given, in the longer term, to a new swimming facility.
- Consideration to be given to new provision for children and young people as part of the housing development at Blackfriars, at Glengorse playing field, Great Wood and around the Old Mill in north Battle.
- To concentrate on qualitative improvements to existing natural and semi natural open space sites, and to amenity green spaces.
- To provide, subject to demand, a new allotment site in south Battle, through new provision or the reallocation of existing provision

- 3.33 These needs are further assessed including possible measures to address them in the key issues section on page 65.

Rother Play Strategy

- 3.34 The Children and Young People's Play Policy and Strategy for Rother expired in August 2010. A revised strategy for 2011+ has not yet been produced, but the policy remains central to the work of RDC Amenities.

- 3.35 The Policy and Strategy for Rother aims to provide children

- and young people with a range of play opportunities within a practical journey of their homes. The document was developed by Rother District Council in conjunction with the Rother Play Partnership.
- 3.36 Regarding Battle, the study stated 'The Battle area contains two play areas that cover the central areas well but leave the southern, northern and western areas without access within the accessibility standard set. New play areas should, in the first instance, be prioritised in the south and north due to the greater number of residents living in these areas'. The concluding recommendation was 'Consider new provision as part of the housing development in Blackfriars Battle, Glengorse playing field, Great Wood and around the Old Mill in North Battle'.
- 3.37 Regarding teenage facilities, the study recommended 'There are currently three teenager facilities in Battle. The new housing allocations in the south of the town provide an opportunity to provide a new facility. Ideally a new facility should also be considered to the west of Battle, but there is less opportunity there.' The concluding recommendation was 'Prioritise a new teen facility as part of the housing/open space developments in south Battle.'
- The East Sussex County Landscape Assessment (2004)
- 3.38 This assessment was developed in 2004 and sub-divided the District into a number of Landscape Character Areas, including 'Battle' – for which it identified:
- characteristics,
 - special features,
 - problems, pressures and detracting features (including traffic, ribbon development, and parking encroaching onto the AONB)
 - landscape action priorities (including traffic management, a 'Tree Conservation Plan', need for a new bold entrance feature at roundabout, landscape improvements to central car park, particularly tree planting, to reduce its impact, improved pedestrian links between town centre, viewpoints and countryside)
- Core Strategy: Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment (August 2009)
- 3.39 This LDF Background evidence study was produced by the Environmental Advice Team of East Sussex County Council in August 2009.
- 3.40 Broad-brush Landscape Character Areas were previously established in the East Sussex County Landscape Assessment 2004. Battle is bounded to the west, north and east by the

- Brede Valley landscape character area and to the south by the Coombe Haven Valley area.
- 3.41 The 2009 assessment evaluated twelve landscape character areas around Battle in terms of their quality, value, visual sensitivity, character sensitivity to change and capacity to accept change (for both housing and business uses).
- 3.42 Most of the 12 areas on Battle's urban fringe were good or high quality. Areas bounding Battle's development boundary ranged from no capacity to accept change through to moderate capacity. The results are visible on the colour coding of Map A17 in the appendices or in more detail within the Assessment itself.
- 3.43 A number of areas (namely the battlefield, The Old Mill/Caldbec Hill, Almonry Farm/ Coombe Haven valley, Saxon Hill Farm/Claverham, Lake Meadow/ Little Park Farm) were viewed as high quality and high value AONB with very little or no capacity to accept change. Broadly speaking, central and south-western areas were categorised as having no capacity to accept change, while the northern boundaries had low capacity.
- 3.44 Other areas, (such as Glengorse/ Telham, Starrs Green, Blackfriars Oast, Marley Lane Sewerage works, north of North Trade Road) although still of high quality, were considered by the study to have some capacity to accept change for residential development. More broadly the findings can be summed up as saying that areas to the south east and east of Battle were rated as having moderate capacity for change as well as the area north of North Trade Road.
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)
- 3.45 This document was produced by consultants on behalf of Rother District Council in June 2008.
- 3.46 Not surprisingly, given its inland location and distance from major rivers, Battle does not have significant areas at risk from coastal or fluvial flooding. However as Table A52 in the appendices indicates, Marley lane is subject to fluvial flooding after heavy rain.
- 3.47 Furthermore, as Map A14 shows there are several areas scattered around the town of reported sewerage flooding and highways flooding, with the following locations being particular problem areas.
- Powder Mill Lane Battle 300 meters from the junction with the A2100
 - Powder Mill Lane Battle at the bottom of Richards Hill

- North Trade Road Battle near Fredrick Thatcher place
- Netherfield Road, Battle 200 yards down from the A2100

3.48 This issue is discussed further in the 'Key issues' section on Public Utilities infrastructure.

East Sussex Local Transport Plan (LTP)

3.49 Draft LTP3, the Draft Community Transport Strategy and the Draft Freight Strategy was published for consultation by ESCC in late 2010. LTP3 sets out the County Council's transport agenda from 2011 to 2026. Generally the more detailed and relevant information for Battle is contained within the Battle Local Area Transport Strategy (LATS), published in 2005.

Battle Local Area Transport Strategy

3.50 The Battle Local Area Transport Strategy (LATS) published in December 2005 was produced by ESCC, in partnership with Rother District Council and Battle Town Council.

3.51 It sets out the framework for transport investment in the town from 2005–2015. A set of key objectives has been identified, from which the following transport proposals have been developed:

- pedestrian improvements in Battle High Street

- identifying a local lorry network for the Battle area
- improving public transport waiting facilities
- developing school travel plans and 'Safer Routes to School'
- junction improvements, including the Powdermill Lane/A2100 junction and the Station Approach /A2100 junctions
- improved parking management.

3.52 These proposals may be made in the short, medium or long term and are subject to funding. The Battle LATS was developed in partnership between ESCC, Battle Town Council, Rother District Council, Battle Steering Group and Transport Forum. These groups will also play a key part in the development of the transport improvements. Appendix A50 updates progress regarding the measures identified in the BLATS.

3.53 With regard future updates of the BLATs, as of February 2011, ESCC state that there are no plans to review the LATS for Battle. They are moving to a new process for identifying and prioritising local transport schemes to reflect the priorities set out in their draft Third Local Transport Plan.

Battle Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA)

- 3.54 Battle Conservation Area was designated in June 1971 and reviewed in 2005.
- 3.55 Published in 2006, the Battle CACA is an assessment of the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation area (the extent of which is visible on Map A16). As such it serves as a basis for both the formulation of policy and of development management decisions.

Battle Local Action Plan

- 3.56 In April 2007 Battle Town Council published its Local Action Plan, and a copy was sent to every household. It is a living document which will be reviewed regularly by the Steering Group.
- 3.57 It was initially informed by a questionnaire which was sent to every electoral register address in Battle in 2006.

- 3.58 The Local Action Plan summarises the actions proposed to achieve the aspirations of the town's residents, including the follow-up action to be taken by the Town Council itself.
- 3.59 These highlight a number of commitments with particular relevance to land use planning, namely;
- Promote provision of public toilet facilities in the Abbey Green area
 - To be more pro-active in protecting and improving the Town's street scene.
 - Promote, in the medium term, the need for a replacement Town Centre Community Hall (together with an indoor swimming pool)
 - Provide car parking for North Trade Road Recreation Ground

4. Key Issues

Key Issues from Urban Options Background Paper

- 4.1 The following key issues were identified within the Urban Options Background Paper.
- Need to relieve traffic congestion in Battle Town Centre (High Street) as well as improve accessibility by alternatives to the car
 - Improve car parking situation by increasing the number of spaces available
 - Need to support the 'market town' and tourist centre role, consistent with its important historic and environmental character and setting
 - Need to increase opportunities for residents to work locally
 - Ability to accommodate development without detracting from the character
- 4.2 The above formed the basis for further discussion of key issues for an updated version of the Core Strategy.

Emerging Key Issues for Submission Version of the Core Strategy

- 4.3 Lists of the town's strengths and weaknesses were included within the Urban Options Background Paper.
- 4.4 This has been elaborated into a full SWOT analysis in Figure 1. Further strengths and weaknesses have emerged, with opportunities and threats identified, as a result of the recent partnership working on this Battle Town Study. The recent work has also resulted in additional research on the key issues. All of the key issues previously identified within the Urban Options Background Paper are still key issues and are discussed further in this 'Key Issues' section. Additional issues have also emerged, as well as more detail on those key issues already recognized by the Core Strategy so far. They have emerged both from representations on the Core strategy and from further discussion on the Battle Town Study working group.

Figure 1: SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ High quality historic environment and important archaeology ○ High quality landscape setting ○ Good pedestrian access ○ Good range of community facilities ○ Railway station ○ Thriving tourist economy (1066 publicity machine) ○ Relatively high household income ○ Community Spirit ○ Low unemployment ○ Good quality of life and high life expectancy ○ Good quality schools ○ Good range of flourishing independent retailers, distinctive shopping centre and clear concentration on definable “High Street”. ○ Large number of small businesses in and around town centre (source Retail study). 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Traffic congestion - significant numbers of visitors for major events and at peak periods. ○ Location of schools exacerbating traffic congestion. ○ Pattern of development exacerbating and contributing to congestion problems ○ Lack of car parking ○ Poor cycle access ○ Few residents undertake their main weekly food shopping trip locally. ○ Weak office market ○ Lack of tourist accommodation in town boundary, relative to peripheral area ○ Lack of employment opportunities and out-commuting amongst young people ○ Bus Services (both level of usage and frequency of service) ○ Pockets of relative disadvantage ○ Concentration of wealth amongst retirees and out-commuters ○ Local Housing Need ○ Developers building housing primarily for wealthy retirees and out-commuters. ○ Public Utility Infrastructure - prone to power cuts and localised flooding.
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<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Further potential to capitalise on Abbey and historic legacy. ○ Aspiration for a new hotel to enhance tourist revenue. ○ Attractions, particularly more festivals and events to attract visitors throughout the year. ○ Employment opportunities – particularly availability of capacity for light industrial at Marley Lane. ○ Potential to ‘clawback’ food retail expenditure by improvement of local offer. ○ Station Approach area has potential both for high quality employment floorspace in a sustainable location, but also for rationalisation and improved car parking provision. ○ Housing to meet local need. ○ Town centre tourism, both extension to existing and encouragement of new. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ability to effectively manage increasing congestion pressures weakened in event of link road delay or cancellation. ○ New housing further exacerbates congestion. ○ Demographic imbalance and income disparities continues to be exacerbated ○ Continuing pressures on public funding for tourism. ○ Pressure on school provision, particularly primary school, meaning they are close to being over-capacity (although many pupils are not Battle residents).
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Main Key Issue:
Traffic Flows, Congestion and Cross-Town Traffic - the Relationship to New and Existing Development Patterns

The Problem

- 4.5 Congestion within the central area is detracting from the overall quality of the living and working environment. The volume of traffic in the area also contributes to the production of pollutants as traffic noise and vibration, particularly HGVs. Congestion at junctions and in the High Street increases the production of pollutants. Vehicle emissions can be responsible for the deterioration of structures.
- 4.6 Traffic congestion in and around the High Street has been seen as a major issue for many years. In the past, a bypass has been proposed as has rear vehicular access to serve the shops in the High Street. These proposals have been dismissed as environmentally unacceptable or for practical reasons.

Evidence Relating to the Issue

Evidence: Current Traffic Flows

ESCC Data

- 4.7 Figures A7 to A9 show traffic flows (ESCC data from 2008 and 2009) at the three main junctions in Battle, namely:

Figure 1: Squirrel Corner (junction of A271 and B2096). This indicates large volumes of traffic in both directions along the A271, with a comparatively small number turning off or in to the B2096 to/from Netherfield.

Figure 2: Battle roundabout (junction of A271, A2100 and High Street). This is a busy roundabout, with the largest volume of traffic moving between North Trade Road and the High Street in both directions (i.e. cross town traffic). London Road (A2100) accounts for a slightly smaller volume of traffic than either the High Street or North Trade Road, although numbers are still significant (just over 9,000 vehicles in both directions daily). Of vehicles coming into Battle roundabout from the A2100 roughly half go left down the High street and roughly half go right into North Trade Road.

Figure 3: Powdermill Lane junction (junction of A2100, Powdermill Lane and Station Approach). The majority of movements are between central Battle and Hastings in both directions, with much smaller numbers going into/out of Powdermill Lane and a tiny number travelling to/from Station approach.

- 4.8 From these three figures it is possible to conclude that the volume of traffic using Battle High Street is significantly in excess of that skirting the fringes of Battle (i.e. between North Trade Road and the London Road and between Powdermill Lane and Hastings). Although it is a busy area for pedestrians with high heritage and conservation value, Battle High Street does form part of the A2100 – one of the county's key strategic routes.

*Blackfriars Planning Application
Transport Assessment*

- 4.9 The ESCC figures discussed above indicate a slightly higher number of vehicles along Battle High Street/Upper Lake from west to east (i.e.: towards Blackfriars and Hastings) than going in the opposite direction. However, research produced By Countryside Properties in support of the Blackfriars planning application RP/2007/1896 (see figures A10 to A11) appears to show the opposite, with slightly higher numbers of vehicles heading in an east to west direction up the High Street (towards London) rather than west to east. It is noteworthy though that the Blackfriars research surveyed a much shorter period (just 2 hours a day) and demonstrates a very different pattern of movement between am peak hour and pm peak hour. In the morning the dominant flow is up

from east to west, but in the pm peak this is reversed with more vehicles heading down towards Hastings. The reason for this apparent discrepancy with ESCC traffic flow data may be due to the times of the survey in relation to school times. The Blackfriars survey of the am peak (8am to 9am) would have captured the 'school run' trips towards the schools on the west side. However the time of the Blackfriars survey in the evening (4pm to 5pm) would have been too late to capture many 'school run trips'. This would also explain the differing flow patterns between am and pm peaks within the Blackfriars Transport Assessment.

- 4.10 The Blackfriars transport assessment also indicated that development of the Blackfriars site, will result in an increase in am peak hour traffic on Hastings Road (+4.2%), Battle Hill (+2.9%), High Street (+5.8%), Marley Lane West of Harrier Lane (+5.8%), Marley Lane East of Harrier Lane (+13.7%). The only stretch of road that will see a decrease in pm peak hour traffic as a result of the Blackfriars development is Lower Lake (-4.3%). In pm peak hour all roads show a similar result except Marley Lane (West of Harrier Lake) which shows a decrease in flow.

*Traffic Flows Compared with Similar
Towns*

- 4.11 The following table compares daily flow of vehicles in the main roads of Battle, with two similar market towns in East Sussex. Whilst Heathfield appears to generate more traffic, it is important to note that it does have a higher population than both Battle and Rye.
- 4.12 Battle's traffic flows are effectively concentrated on the A2100, which for the purposes of the survey was sub-divided into four through-fares, namely Battle Hill, Lower Lake, the High street and London Road.

Table 1: Daily Vehicle Flows – Battle compared with Rye and Heathfield

Rank	Road	Town	Daily Flow of Vehicles
1	A267 (W)	Heathfield	18,398
2	Burwash Road	Heathfield	13,941
3	Battle Hill (A2100)	Battle	13,292
4	Lower Lake (A2100)	Battle	12,842
5	High Street (A265)	Heathfield	12,016
6	High Street (A2100)	Battle	10,614
7	New Winchelsea Road (N)	Rye	10,424
8	North Trade Road	Battle	10,364
9	Mutton Hall Hill	Heathfield	10,204
10	London Road (A2100-N)	Battle	9,164
11	Fishmarket Road	Rye	8,668
12	New Winchelsea Road (S)	Rye	8,664
13	New Road	Rye	8,339
14	Guldeford Road (A259S)	Rye	7,403
15	A267 (S)	Heathfield	6,806
16	Rye Hill	Rye	6,697
17	Bedford Place	Rye	6,021
18	Powdermill Lane	Battle	5,837
19	Tower Street	Heathfield	4,738
20	Rye Harbour Road	Rye	3,316

Source: ESCC

Evidence: Origin and Destination Surveys

- 4.13 The traffic flow figures discussed in the previous section provide useful insight into volumes of traffic using Battle's roads. However they do not get to the

bottom of the issue of origin/destination, and the related issue of how many of these journeys terminate in central Battle vis-à-vis those which continue elsewhere. The only origin/destination information that exists for Battle dates from 1998/99, although more recent data relating solely to freight traffic is available (2006), and discussed in the section 'Evidence: Service Trips' on page 40.

Origin and Destination Survey all Vehicles (1998/99)

- 4.14 Origin and Destination surveys were conducted at two Battle locations (as well as one in Crowhurst). The two Battle locations are North Trade Road and Powdermill Lane. However the A2100 was not included in the research. As such it is difficult to extract any definitive conclusions from this now dated research.

- 4.15 However, the 1998/99 surveys do provide a useful insight into the broad split of trips by purpose, as demonstrated by Tables 3 and 2.

Table 2: Breakdown of Trips that give Battle area as the Final Destination

	Number	%
Total Destination Purpose = 'Home'	386	35.1
Total Destination Purpose = 'Other'	229	20.8
Total Destination Purpose = 'Emp. Business'	166	15.1
Total Destination Purpose = 'Recreation'	144	13.1
Total Destination Purpose = 'work'	133	12.1
Total Destination Purpose = 'Shopping'	42	3.8
Total Trips with Battle as Final Destination	1100	100

Source: ESCC O&D Surveys 1998/99

Table 3: Breakdown of Trips that give Battle area as the Origin

	Number	%
Total Destination Purpose = 'Home'	527	39.1
Total Destination Purpose = 'Emp. Business'	240	17.8
Total Destination Purpose = 'Other'	210	15.6
Total Destination Purpose = 'work'	177	13.1
Total Destination Purpose = 'Recreation'	124	9.2
Total Destination Purpose = 'Shopping'	69	5.1
Total Trips with Battle as Origin	1347	100

Source: ESCC O&D Surveys 1998/99

- 4.16 It is important to clarify that 'work' is a static location, i.e. an office, factory, shop etc. 'Employee business' entails delivering goods, visiting clients homes, engineers etc..
- 4.17 Not surprisingly, most trips are to and from home. Trips that originate in Battle are more likely to be persons heading home – perhaps confirming Battle's service centre role for the surrounding area, as people head back to their place of residence having made use of Battle's services and facilities.
- 4.18 Persons heading into Battle are more likely to be doing so for the purposes of 'recreation' or 'other' than persons heading out of Battle. This perhaps confirms both Battle's tourist role and its role as an education provider.
- 4.19 The pattern of movements for 'employee business' also provides evidence of Battle service centre role, with persons based in Battle heading out into the surrounding area for deliveries, visiting clients, etc.

4.20 Conversely, Battle does not seem to have such a role as a shopping centre. People tend to head out of Battle to do their shopping – a finding which is supported by the results of the Retail study (as discussed in section 3).

4.21 For 'work' more people appear to head out of Battle than into Battle. This does not sit easily with the findings of the 2001 census (as presented in the 'Commuting Flows' table at Appendix A46) which indicated Battle has more in-commuters than out-commuters. One possible explanation for this apparent anomaly is the location of the two survey points in 1998/99 (North Trade Road and Powdermill Lane) do not serve as access points to the large employment areas at Marley Lane, so may not have been best placed to capture in-coming commuters. Furthermore, both in-coming and out-going commuters between Battle and Hastings/ London/ Tunbridge Wells would be more likely to use the A2100 which was not included in the survey.

Evidence: Volume and Direction of School Trips

Proportion of School Trips Nationally

4.22 Nationally, school trips account for approximately 1 in 5 of all journeys in the morning peak hour (source: LTP). The 2005

BLATs suggests that in Battle it could be higher.

Numbers of Children in Battle

- 4.23 This will of course vary according to the numbers of school age children and schools within any given place.
- 4.24 Table A1 indicated that Battle Town has a fairly high proportion of 0-14 year olds, although this age band has seen no growth in the last decade,
- 4.25 Table A28 'Households by type' indicated that in Battle some 62.3% of all households are 'family households'⁴. Table A30 'Family Households by type' suggests that just under half of these (49.2%) have dependent children in Battle. This is an identical proportion to East Sussex and the South East region, but a slightly lower (by 1%) proportion than the equivalent national figure.
- 4.26 Therefore, at the time of the 2001 census, some 30.7% of *all* Battle households had dependent children, the majority of which (estimate 75%) can be assumed to be of school-attending age.
- 4.27 Whilst Battle may have typical numbers of children, the census does not tell us the method of

transportation by which they get to school. Other sources can give an indication of this however, as discussed below.

Likely Level of Vehicle Trips to Primary School

- 4.28 The 2007 Transport Assessment provided in support of the Blackfriars application (RR/2007/1896) analysed⁵ the likely vehicle trip rates to be generated as a result of a new primary school of 210 pupils. It suggested 0.43 vehicle movements per pupil at the 8am to 9am peak (arrival and departure at school each count as separate trip) which equated to 89 vehicle movements for 210 pupils. Across the whole day total trip rates amounted to 1.1 vehicle trips per pupil.
- 4.29 According to the 2010 Ofsted report, Battle and Langton Church of England Primary School has 420 pupils on the roll. Using the TRICs figures used in the Blackfriars application, this suggests about 460 consequential vehicle movements every school day.
- 4.30 Table 4a shows the place of residence of pupils of Battle and Langton CE Primary.

Likely Level of Vehicle Trips to Secondary School

⁴ Comprising married couple, cohabitating couple or lone parent households

⁵ TRICs database figures

4.31 Claverham College has 1184 pupils (2010 Ofsted report) and attracts pupils from a much wider catchment area than Battle and Langton Primary School (as seen in Table 4b)

reports that the congestion impact of the school is exacerbated by this, and also that the main school increasingly uses facilities on Battle High Street.

4.32 National Indicator 198 measures 'Children travelling to school – usual mode of travel'. Unfortunately NI198 is not currently available in East Sussex, although it is in Kent where approximately 25-30% of 11-16 year olds arrive to school by car (although the rate varies from 20% to 38% across different districts).⁶ Therefore it is estimated that some 325 pupils arrive at Claverham College by car, resulting in an estimated 650 daily vehicle movements Monday to Friday. Very roughly this equates to 0.55 daily vehicle trips per secondary age pupil.

Likely Level of School Vehicle Trips Generated by a Housing Development

4.35 As discussed previously it is estimated that primary schools result in about 1.1 vehicle trips per pupil daily, and secondary schools in about 0.55. On this basis an overall estimate of 0.825 vehicle trips per pupil (primary and secondary) is assumed.

4.36 Using these figures the following can be surmised: If an estimated 23% of Battle households have school attending children and these average an estimated 0.825 vehicle trips per pupil, then a development of 100 houses results in approximately 19 school related vehicle journeys every day.

4.33 Battle Abbey School is also present in central Battle but only has about 206 pupils, 44 of whom board at the school (according to 2004 figures from the Department for Education and Skills)

4.37 Overall, based on the above figures it could well be that there are in excess of 1,200 vehicle movements per day (Claverham 650, Primary School 460, + Battle Abbey) as a result of journeys to and from Battle's three schools.

4.34 They also have a Preparatory school in Bexhill, and around 40 of the younger pupils are dropped at Battle with an older sibling and are taken to Bexhill by bus. Battle Town Council

4.38 A significant proportion of these car journeys would be made across town. It is possible to estimate how many via analysis of home addresses of Battle

⁶ Maidstone Borough Council 'Maidstone Profile Report' produced for the Local Strategic Partnership

pupils, information on which has been provided by Battle Town Council. From the two tables below it can be seen that the greater number of pupils access the school from an easterly direction, due to the large numbers of pupils resident in East Battle, Hastings and to a lesser extent Westfield. These pupils are likely to contribute towards the cross-town congestion in the High Street.

Tables 4: Broad Locations of Home Addresses of Children Attending Battle Schools 2010/11

Table 4a: Battle and Langton CE Primary

Location	Estimated Number
Battle West (West of Abbey)	130
Battle East (East of Abbey)	150
Hastings	110
Bexhill	10
Villages/Rural	20
Total	420

Table 4b: Claverham Community College

Location	Estimated Number
Battle West (West of Abbey)	180
Battle East (East of Abbey)	180
Hastings	180
Bexhill	90
Ninfield Lower St	80
Crowhurst	40
Catsfield	30
Sedlescombe	50
Westfield	100
Netherfield	40
Other Villages/Rural	190
Total	1160

4.39 This information is taken from Dot Maps produced by ESCC's School Admissions System. It is assumed that the locations of these students for which location data is missing will reflect that of known cases. The tables should be interpreted as providing only a general indication of the location patterns of students attending both schools.

New School?

4.40 A new primary school at Blackfriars (as proposed in the 2006 Local Plan) may have helped reduce cross-town traffic and greater justified the preferred development strategy focussing on sectors 4 and 5. However this is no longer the Education Authority's preferred option, so the problem of cross-town traffic resulting from the location of the school remains.

Evidence: Volume and Direction of Journeys to Work

4.41 Perhaps surprisingly given its proximity to the much larger urban centres of Hastings and Bexhill, the Census Workplace Statistics tell us that Battle has slightly more in-commuters than out-commuters (as Table A49 demonstrates in more detail). Overall there is a net movement of 78 commuters to Battle.

4.42 The detail of commuting flows can be seen in Table A46. It

shows that there are net in-flows of commuters from Hastings (143) and from the rest of Rother (198). These are balanced by net out-flows to Greater London (-105) and Kent (-86) and to Tonbridge Wells (-68) in particular. .

4.43 The Table 'Mode of Travel to Work' indicates that just under 2/3 of Battle residents in employment travel to work by car. But if 'home-workers' are discounted, the proportion of those who commute to work by car from Battle is even greater, rising to 74.2%, with just 25.8% travelling to their workplace by more sustainable means of transport. Rother as a whole shows an even greater reliance on the private car for commuting than Battle does.

4.44 In actual numbers, Table A47 (Mode of Travel to Work - Breakdown of Private Vehicles (Absolute Numbers) shows that 1,111 cars driven by Battle residents leave for work every day (and logically return again each evening).

4.45 The BLATs states that of the *workforce* (as opposed to residents) of Battle, 63% commute in as car driver, 6% as car passenger and 1% on motorbike.

4.46 If it is assumed that approximately ¾ of the car journeys listed in the Table A49

'Journey to work movements' are made by car, it highlights the extent of the problem. It means about 950 cars bring commuters into Battle each working day (or approx 1900 vehicle movements), with over 300 from Hastings and about 400 from the Rest of Rural Rother. Moreover these figures exclude Battle residents who choose travel to work by car within their own town.

4.47 Therefore in total, there are approximately 2,200 vehicle movements (leaving + returning) as a result of Battle residents out-commuting. There are approximately 1900 additional vehicle movements daily as a result of people coming from elsewhere to work in Battle (leaving + returning. In total there are approximately 4,100 vehicle journeys daily as a result of journeys to and from work.

Evidence: Volume and Direction of 'Employee Business' trips

4.48 'Employee business' trips entail delivering goods, visiting client's homes, engineers etc. Based on the 1998/99 Origin & Destination surveys, vehicle trips for this purpose comprise 15-18% of traffic within Battle (as visible in Tables 2 and 3 earlier).

4.49 Tables 5 and 6 below show where these trips are originating from and heading for

Table 5: Emp. Business Trips with Battle as Final Destination

Origin	Number	%
Hastings	60	36.4
Battle Area	57	34.5
North Rother	18	10.9
Wadhurst Area and Neighbouring Kent	10	6.1
Bexhill	8	4.8
Rye, Winchelsea Area	3	1.8
Crawley Area and A23 corridor (North)	3	1.8
A259 Corridor (East)	2	1.2
Hailsham, Polegate Area	1	0.6
Royal Tunbridge Wells Area	1	0.6
East Grinstead Area	1	0.6
Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath Area	1	0.6
East Grinstead Area	1	0.6
TOTAL	166	100

Source 1998/99 Origin & Destination Survey

Table 6: Emp. Business Trips with Battle as Origin

Final Destination	Number	%
Bexhill	102	42.1
Battle Area	57	23.6
Hailsham, Polegate Area	26	10.7
Eastbourne	18	7.4
Heathfield Area	10	4.1
Uckfield Area	5	2.1
Newhaven (East of Ouse), Seaford	4	1.7
Hove, Central Brighton	4	1.7
Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath Area	4	1.7
A27 Corridor (West)	4	1.7
Wadhurst Area and Neighbouring Kent	2	0.8
Lewes Area	2	0.8
North Rother	1	0.4
Crawley Area and A23 corridor (North)	1	0.4
East Brighton, Newhaven (West of Ouse)	1	0.4
East Grinstead Area	1	0.4
TOTAL	242	100

4.50 Table 3 shows that employee and business trips with Battle as final destination predominantly arrive from Hastings or the north. Table 2 shows that employee and business trips with Battle as origin predominantly head south or west.

Origin and Destination Survey of HGVs and commercial vehicles over 30cwt (2006)

4.51 In July 2006 East Sussex County Council carried out an origin and

destination survey of HGVs and commercial vehicles over 30cwt entering Battle. Surveys were carried out at Powdermill Lane, A2100 Hastings Road, Marley Lane, North Trade Road and A2100 London Road.

4.52 From the HGV origin / destination surveys undertaken it is apparent that most of the HGV's in the High Street are there for deliveries to local businesses. 88% of Battle High Street businesses have deliveries or collections. Most take less than 15 minutes with almost half taking less than 5 minutes. 34% are by lorry (29% rigid lorry, 5% articulated lorry), with almost half by light van and the remainder by car and motorcycle. 43% are made between 9am and 12pm in the morning. Problems experienced by delivery vehicles accessing premises in Battle include traffic levels, illegal parking, Loading/unloading facilities and Traffic levels on main access routes.

4.53 Particularly busy routes are Marley Lane (entering Battle), Hastings Road (from Hastings to Battle or going elsewhere via Battle), Powdermill Lane (both terminating in Battle or via Battle to Hastings) and North Trade Road from Bexhill (mostly heading north, but some heading into Battle).

4.54 The outcome of the trader's freight questionnaires undertaken at the same time demonstrates that the traders have little control over the delivery times.

4.55 The Battle Local Area Transport Plan (BLATs) recognised this problem and has proposed a range of potential solutions as outlined in paragraphs 4.76 – 4.94.

Evidence: Volume and Direction of Retail Trips

4.56 The 1998/99 Origin & Destination Survey showed that shopping trips accounted for a low proportion of trips (between 3.5% and 5.5%). However the two survey locations did not include the A2100 so would have missed shoppers heading to Hastings, which the 2007 Retail Study suggests is the main flow of shoppers. Therefore the 3.5% to 5.5% estimate is a likely under-estimate.

4.57 A more accurate guide to traffic generated by shopping trips may therefore be the Retail Study which showed some 73% of Battle area shoppers do their main food shopping in Hastings and St Leonards.

4.58 The Retail Study indicated that for Battle residents, the most popular stores for their 'Main Food and Grocery shopping' were in St Leonards (Sainsburys

and Tesco). Budgens in Battle was the third most popular choice. Only 9.1% of Battle area residents did their main food shopping in Battle Town centre.

4.59 A caveat to this is the 'Battle area' defined in the Retail study incorporated a large area including Robertsbridge, Sedlescombe, Bodiam, Mountfield and Ewhurst. Therefore it is likely that a higher proportion than 9.1% of actual Battle *town* residents shop within their own town. This is balanced the other way by the fact that subsequent to 2007 further convenience retail developments in West Hastings and St Leonards has increased the appeal of these destinations for weekly food shopping.

4.60 The 2007 Retail Study showed that 70% of Battle shoppers did so in their own car and a further 17% as passengers in friends/relatives cars. The remainder either walked took the bus or did their food shopping online. It is logical to assume that the 5.5% who walked did so at a more local store than Hastings/St Leonards. Therefore the vast majority of Battle residents who shopped in Hastings/St Leonards do so by car and usually as the driver

4.61 In terms of overall volume, if 73% of Battle town ward 4,872 residents obtain their main food shopping in Hastings and St

Leonards that equates to some 3,500 persons. The average household size in Battle is 2.2 (Table A31) so assuming there is one trip per household per week means about 1600 shopping trips to Hastings. Based on the figures discussed in the previous paragraph if it is assumed that 70% (just over 1,100) would be by car. This would equate to 2,200 weekly vehicle movements or just over 300 vehicle movements per day as a result of Battle residents shopping in Hastings.

- 4.62 For comparison goods, Hastings town centre followed by Tunbridge Wells and Bexhill Ravenside were the most popular destinations.
- 4.63 The intention to provide more convenience retail floorspace within Battle would hopefully 'clawback' some of this lost trade if completed. However, there is still a clear pattern of traffic heading out of Battle for shopping, predominantly towards Hastings and St Leonards.
- 4.64 Map A11 in the appendices were originally produced for the Local Transport Plan and shows accessibility by sustainable transport modes to supermarkets. It shows that as a result of proximity to Budgens/Jempsons, the centre, west and north of Battle all enjoy

marginally better accessibility than the south east of Battle

Evidence: Volume and Direction of Services Trips

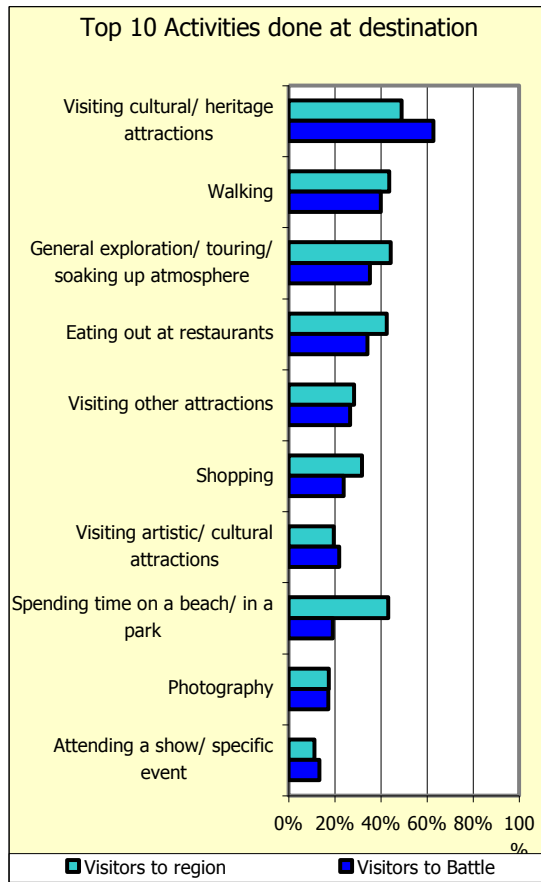
- 4.65 Battle is a service centre for residents of the town and its satellite communities. Local surgeries and the Hastings Conquest Hospital provide health services for the area. Visits to the GP, chemists and dentist, grocery shopping, the library, the closure of village post offices, banking and social activities are all generators of journeys.
- 4.66 Map A2 'Key Services' in the appendices shows the location of some of the main services in Battle. Not surprisingly most services are clustered around the High Street, although there is a small cluster in the vicinity of the train station and the top end of Battle Hill.
- 4.67 Maps A10, A12 and A13 in the appendices were originally produced for the Local Transport Plan and show accessibility by sustainable transport modes to Hospitals and Colleges. The south-east of the town along Hastings Road is more accessible to Hospitals as a result of its proximity to the Conquest. Central and south east areas enjoy the best access to Hastings College, but all areas have similar access to Bexhill College, with

the exception of the far north of the town.

Evidence: Volume and Direction of Tourism Trips

- 4.68 There is no source that gives a direct indication of how much traffic is generated by tourist visitors to Battle, but rough estimates can be inferred from other sources.
- 4.69 Tourism South East's 'The Economic Impact of Tourism Rother 2009' estimated that 493,000 staying trips were spent in Rother District in 2009, of which around 439,000 were made by domestic visitors (89%) and 54,000 by overseas visitors (11%). A considerable proportion of these would have visited Battle.
- 4.70 The Battle Destination Profile 2007 by Arkenford (derived from the Hastings and 1066 Country Visitor Study) showed that about 75% of visitors to Battle do so for just a day trip and do not stay overnight.
- 4.71 The 1998/99 Origin & Destination surveys (detailed in Table 3 above) showed that for trips that gave Battle as their final destination, 13.1% were for the purpose of recreation and 20.8% for the purpose of 'other'. ESCC are unable to say which category tourism would have fallen into, but the 33.9% of trips to Battle for 'recreation/ other' certainly exclude work, business, shopping and home. The 33.9% must therefore include school, medical, eating out and tourism. Just 24.8% of trips that *originate* in Battle do so for the purpose of 'recreation/ other'. The discrepancy with trips heading into Battle lends support to Battle's service centre and tourist role.
- 4.72 Information provided by Battle Tourist Information Centre (January 2011) indicates that approximately 130,000 people visit Battle Abbey per annum, which averages about 350 per day. There is considerable seasonal variation however, with perhaps 1,000 visitors per day in the July/August peak. Approximately 500-600 visit daily in April/May/June and also in September/October. But in winter months visitors number 20-100 daily. The Battle of Hastings re-enactment weekend in October is a one off peak of about 10,000 visitors across the weekend.

Figure 2: Top 10 Tourist Activities in Battle



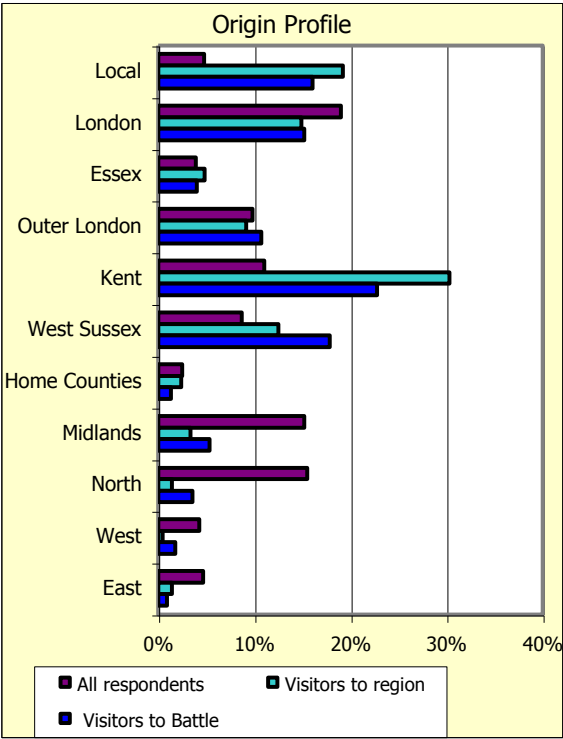
4.73 The Hastings and 1066 Country Visitor Study showed that almost 90% of visitors to Battle arrive by car, although the survey did not distinguish between drivers and passengers. The same survey showed that the most popular reasons for tourism in Battle are not surprisingly 'Visiting cultural and Heritage attractions' (as Figure 2 above indicates). The main draw is of course the Abbey and Battlefield located on the south of the town. This suggests much cross-town traffic is generated by tourist visitors. Other attractions are the 1066

Country Walk, Yesterday's World, Battle Museum and the Almonry Gardens.

4.74 Even if 90% of the 350 average daily visitors to the Abbey arrive by car, many will do so as passengers. Therefore it is estimated that on average 100-150 cars arrive daily to visit the Abbey, resulting in 200-300 daily movements. Not all tourists would visit the Abbey of course. Based on Figure 2 above showing 60%+ visit cultural/heritage attractions, it is suggested that perhaps half of all visitors would visit the Abbey. Therefore a ballpark of 400-600 average daily vehicle movements as a result of tourism seems reasonable, rising to about 1,500 in the July/August peak period.

4.75 Evidence suggests that most visitors to Battle arrive from a northerly direction (especially Kent and London) as evidenced in Figure 3 opposite.

Figure 3: Origin of Tourist Visitors to Battle



Source: Hastings and 1066 Country Visitor Study by Arkenford Market Modelling and Research



Potential Solutions to the Issue

4.76 Transport planning solutions are generally the domain of the County Highways Authority, and the Battle Local Area Transport Strategy (BLATS) contains a number of solutions and measures to address the transport problems of Battle for the short, medium and long term. Latest updates on progress are contained in Appendix A50.

4.77 Two of the more key potential transport planning solutions are discussed in this section. Conclusions regarding the location of future development are discussed in the next section on page 45.

(i) Link Road

Evidence: ESCC Link Road Modelling

4.78 Evidence shows that the building of the Bexhill to Hastings link road would significantly reduce congestion in Battle town centre. As maps A10 and A11 illustrate, Battle would positively benefit both in terms of reduction of flows and reduction in junction delays. It is important to note that these map models are based on housing figures derived from the Local Plan and South East Plan, which may be an under-estimate in light of the most recent housing figures presented in the emerging Core Strategy (Consultation on Strategy Directions November

2008). Maps A8 and A9 therefore are presented with a strong caveat that the situation regarding development in Bexhill and Hastings is a fluid one, the outcomes of which will inevitably impact upon Battle.

4.79 Elsewhere in the Link Road Model, it indicates that Powdermill Lane is over-capacity, but this has been addressed by the recent development of a mini roundabout.

4.80 The BLATs supports the findings of the Link Road modelling in highlighting the benefits of the Link Road for Battle. The origin/destination surveys of freight traffic seem to suggest a significant volume of freight in the area would instead use the link road once it is built, although it has to be said that a significant volume of freight has Battle as either an origin or destination.

4.81 Following the change of national government, all funding for transport schemes, including the link road, is on hold. In late 2010, the government announced its intention to make a final decision regarding funding for the link road by the end of 2011. It is hoped that the link road will eventually proceed following this unavoidable delay, but it is in effect in direct competition with a number of nationwide transport schemes for a limited pool of funding.

(ii) HGV Restrictions

4.82 It is clear that problems with commercial deliveries are fairly fundamental to the problems of High Street congestion. Although only 34% of deliveries are by lorry (29% rigid lorry, 5% articulated lorry), they have a dis-proportionate impact due to their size.

4.83 The problem would be helped to a large extent by simple enforcement of parking restrictions, particularly on the High Street. North Trade Road's designation as a 'freight traffic route' up to the roundabout is felt to be an issue by the Town Council. Freight routes are identified in the BLATs and in the context of Battle, the following roads have been identified in the hierarchy of freight routes:

- A21 (London – Hastings) Strategic Trunk Road Route
- A2100 (Johns Cross – North Trade Road Roundabout) Local Route
- A271 (Boship Roundabout – Battle) Local Route

4.84 The Battle Local Area Transport Strategy (BLATs) contained a number of recommendations to address the impact of HGV movements, including those set out in the table below (Table 7).

4.85 The table has been subject to an update (2nd column) as part of the recent work on the Battle

Town Study using information provided by ESCC. Further updates on progress on wider BLAT objectives are in Appendix A50.

Table 7: Update on Key BLATs recommendations regarding HGVs

The Battle Local Area Transport Strategy (BLATs) Recommendation	2011 Update
Work with local freight hauliers and businesses to develop a Freight Providing dedicated unloading facilities for goods vehicles in Battle High Street;	A loading bay has recently been developed by the co-op and zebra crossing.
Consider the introduction of cameras north and south of Battle High Street to 'catch' lorries using Battle to avoid the A21 or accessing the industrial estates in North Hastings;	No further update from ESCC.
Considering the introduction of a delivery scheme that could be developed to alleviate town centre congestion;	Survey conducted by ESCC for BLATs. Implementation scheme was supported by some traders and the efforts to mitigate the problems met with some success.
HGV ban between particular hours of day to restrict deliveries to outside peak periods; and	
Dialogue with the	

Chamber of Trade and Commerce will be encouraged regarding varying business delivery times in the town.	
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Conclusions Regarding Locations of Development

Conclusions Regarding Pattern of Traffic Movements

4.86 There are approximately 4,100 vehicle journeys daily as a result of journeys to and from work. Hastings and the 'Rest of Rother' were the largest generators of both 'in' and 'out' commuting. Although the previously published version of the Core Strategy made much of the inter-relationship with Hastings, particularly as a workplace destination, more Battle residents actually work

elsewhere in the Rest of Rural Rother than in Hastings. Even so, Hastings is easily the town with greatest community links with Battle.

4.87 The 1998/99 Origin & destination surveys suggest there is an even greater quantity of vehicle trips as a result of employee and business trips (e.g. delivering goods, visiting clients homes, engineers, etc) than of work trips. The pattern seems to be of employee business trips coming in from Hastings and of heading out to Bexhill.

4.88 There has been much discussion of the impact of the 'school run'. The evidence suggests there are well over 1,200 daily vehicle movements resulting from journeys to schools, which is still less in number than trips for work and employee/business trips. However the impact of school traffic may be felt more keenly as a result of its concentration at certain hours of the day, notably the morning rush hour. The locations of the schools on the west side is without doubt a cause of cross-town traffic and congestion due to the number of pupils who travel from the east side of the High Street.

4.89 There is an estimated average of 300 vehicle movements per day as a result of people heading to and returning back from Hastings to do their food shopping. Many

of these are presumably heading across Battle via the High Street in order to do so. The fact that so few Battle residents choose to shop locally is a pattern that for a number of reasons it would be advisable to reverse, including sustainability, reduction in unnecessary trips and supporting the economic viability of Battle shopping centre.

4.90 It is estimated a further 400-600 vehicle movements result on an average day for tourism purposes (Although this is subject to considerable seasonal variations). Most of these arrive from a northerly direction.

4.91 The station on the east side attracts a number of cars, but many of these will be commuters from Hastings, Bexhill and villages.

4.92 Whilst east and south east Battle is closer to the Hospital and to the colleges, the level of trips generated for these uses is not as great as for the uses discussed above. Furthermore, it is not significantly quicker for east/south-east Battle residents to access them by sustainable transport than it is for west and north Battle residents (as Maps A10, A12 and A13 demonstrate).

4.93 Based purely on an assessment of 'car journeys, impacts on cross-town traffic and congestion', there does not appear to be a particularly

overwhelming case for saying that south-east and east Battle (sectors 4 and 5⁷) should be the preferred locations for future housing development. There is no clear pattern of residents of west Battle being pulled eastwards across town to a significantly greater extent than there is of the reverse journey (east Battle residents heading west).

4.94 However, there are a number of other factors that should be considered when deciding upon the most sustainable pattern of development, including:-

- Need for development
- Proximity to key services
- Location of environmental assets
- Location of heritage assets
- Landscape assets
- Representations received from interested organisations and persons
- Site opportunities

4.95 In subsequent sections covering 'Economy and Employment', 'Housing' and 'Community and Service Needs' these matters are discussed further.

⁷ as defined in the Urban Options Background Paper and illustrated on Map 1 (page 22) of this study

Other Key Issues

Other Transport Issues

Parking

4.96 More Battle residents are dissatisfied with 'car parking at facilities' than with any other facility. 31% of Battle residents responding to the Issues and Options consultation identified them as being poor or very poor.

4.97 The main thrust of the ESCC Battle Local Area Transport Strategy (LATS) is to improve accessibility by alternatives to the car. It notes that 'there is pressure with parking at peak times of the year with an influx of visitors to the town and its tourist attractions.'

4.98 The Core Strategy 'Consultation on Strategy Directions' concluded that additional off-street car parking needs to be identified and that if practicable, this should be on the south-east side of the town centre, so as to provide a better balance across the town.

4.99 This recommendation did not stem from the BLATs and has subsequently been disputed by Battle Town Council, who say that if there is a need it is on the north side of the town, located so as to cater for tourist visitors. The Town Council suggest that the ESCC 1066 Management Survey support

this. The Town Council also point to the fact that the Senlac site within the vicinity of the train station has already provided additional parking.

4.100 Furthermore, Battle Town Council also take the view that local dissatisfaction is more directed at charging rather than a lack of availability. For example it is felt that there is sufficient parking at the station, but people frequently park their vehicles at Caldbec Hill and Glengorse to save money.

4.101 BLATs measures to '*Review existing Traffic Regulation Orders relating to parking restrictions in the town. Consider appropriate amendments to Order(s) and advertise, & implement changes accordingly*' and to '*Investigate options for improved management of parking including appropriate signage*' need to be maintained at a high priority to address these issues.

4.102 Map A7 shows the location of car parks within Battle together with their capacity (where known).

4.103 On balance, it is felt the Town Council have a point in that there is little reason to prioritise the south east of the town as a location for a new car park, if as the BLATs states the pressure is at peak seasons as a result of tourist visitors. This is for two main reasons.

- (i) The two largest car parks (station and Abbey) are already on the southern sides of the town centre. The former caters largely for commuters and the latter largely for tourists.
 - (ii) Tourist visitors and users of Battle as a service centre generally arrive from the north, so car parking on the south would increase cross-town traffic.
- 4.104 It is advantageous for visitors to park on the north side of the town centre, not just for reasons of reducing cross-town congestion, but also for economic reasons. Parking on the north side would encourage tourist visitors to enjoy Battle High Street and the museum, rather than just visiting the Abbey and departing. Encouraging longer stays in Battle will have knock-on benefits for the local economy.
- 4.105 In any event it is difficult to see where opportunities for new car parking may arise. Representations have suggested that the Market Street Car Park has potential to extend onto the cricket ground and other areas to the south. However these areas all fall within the 1066 Battlefield and as such are protected by English Heritage. The battlefield boundary marks the southern boundary of the car park.
- 4.106 Other representations to the Core Strategy proposed solutions such as extending Mount Street car park, and more car parking at the rail station. The Mount Street option may be possible, although the gradient of the surrounding area is restrictive. The 2004 ESCC Landscape Assessment also identified this as a problem area that would benefit from tree planting to reduce its impact on the AONB.
- 4.107 With regard the train station, it is difficult to see how much more parking could be achieved without multi-storey or underground parking for which economic viability would be an issue. Nonetheless, given that Station Approach offers considerable potential for new employment floorspace, the site would benefit from further investigation in the Site Allocations DPD of the potential to rationalise and improve car parking.
- 4.108 Some time in the past, English Heritage looked at the north side of Powdermill Lane as a potential car park, as well as other uses ranging from a hotel to a garden centre. As recently as 1995 this area was allocated in planning policy for commercial and business uses, although there was opposition

to English Heritage's proposals from County Highways. The issue has arisen again as a result of recent discussions. However this is not a preferred solution as the area is now included within the now extended 1066 Battlefield site.

- 4.109 Overall it seems that traffic management (by addressing issues and measures identified in the Battle LATs) would do much to address the problem.

Cycling

- 4.110 Cycling has considerable potential in Battle to act as a realistic alternative to the car, particularly for school related traffic.
- 4.111 The Battle Local Area Transport Strategy (BLATs) contained the following recommendation:-
- 'Provide cycle route which link residential areas to key destinations such as schools and shops, cycle links to the rail station'*
- 4.112 The BLATs mentions that 'Cycle links to the Railway Station and behind the High Street are local aspirations.
- 4.113 The Battle Transport Forum also noted that are few routes suitable for cyclists linking housing to schools, particularly Claverham Community College. There has been discussion

between interested stakeholders including ESCC, RDC, Sustrans, 'Battle Cycle' and English Heritage in order to try and provide cycle routes to and from the schools. Funding has been an issue, but this is something that could potentially benefit from S106 as a result of future development.

- 4.114 Another issue identified in the BLATs is the lack of secure cycle parking, particularly in the town centre and at the rail station. The same strategy aimed to address this issue by 'providing secure, sheltered and clean cycle parking facilities at key destinations'. ESCC have been asked for an update in 2011 as part of this study but confirm that that they have "not provided any cycle stands since 2005 and that there are no immediate plans to provide more". It is the view of this study that the aspiration should remain a priority and that Mount Street overflow car park is one potential site.

Public Transport

- 4.115 The BLATs identified a number of both issues and potential solution measures for Battle bus services. These are to a large extent dependent on the collection of future development contributions.

4.116 One solution not included in the BLATs which has emerged from discussion with Battle Town Council is the greater deployment of smaller transit buses, particularly for the under-used daytime services.

4.117 Congestion in the High Street has an inevitable impact on bus journey reliability.

Economy and Employment

New Employment Needs

4.118 The Employment Strategy and Land Review indicates that when the total employment requirement is disaggregated, of the order of 10,000 sq m of land for employment is appropriate for the Battle area to 2026.

4.119 Allowing for a less strict adherence to parish boundaries, there is some 7,000 sq.m in the pipeline which whilst not necessarily within Battle Town ward or Battle parish, nonetheless serves the Battle employment market.

4.120 The breakdown of the available 7,000sqm is as follows;

- Blackman, Pavie and Ladden site, Marley Lane – 2,400 sq.m (but just over the boundary in Sedlescombe Parish);

- land west of DB Earthmoving site, Marley Lane – 1,900 sq m (also just over the boundary in Sedlescombe Parish); and
- land at Rutherfords, Marley Lane – 2,700 sq m (Battle Parish)

4.121 Broadly speaking this leaves a requirement for at least a further 3,000 sq.m, which would seem an appropriate target both to secure further land/premises for employment use.



Broadband

- 4.122 Broadband speed can be an influence on location of business.
- 4.123 With reference to Map A4, it can be seen that most of Battle town enjoys broadband speeds of 5 megabytes per second or more. This places it in the top bracket for speed within Rother District.

Location of New Employment

- 4.124 Map A3 indicates the main existing employment generating areas in and around Battle. These were discussed in detail in the Employment Profile in Section 2.
- 4.125 The Core Strategy defines the overall quantum of new employment floorspace required (3,000 sq.m), whilst the forthcoming Site Allocations DPD will allocate exact locations. Therefore, at this stage of the plan process it is not necessary to define the exact locations of the additional 3,000 sq.m.
- 4.126 Nonetheless the five possible sites have been identified, of which the first three would appear to be the most suitable. The latter two areas (Watch Oak and Glengorse) although less advantageous in many respects may require further investigation if needed.

Town Centre

- 4.127 New development also provides the opportunity for business accommodation within the town itself. The Core Strategy therefore will promote employment in suitable locations to reduce reliance on 'out-of-town' employment areas.

Marley Lane

- 4.128 There is potential to increase space along Marley Lane. New space for employment is expected to come forward, as access restrictions are being overcome. A recent A21 junction will particularly improve the feasibility of development on Marley Lane close to the A21 which has planning permission and the rationalisation and the already planned expansion of Rutherfords Business Park.

Station Approach

- 4.129 The office market, generally does not currently justify commercial investment. However, 1,000 sq.m of office space has recently been developed at Station Approach in a mixed use redevelopment including housing and community facilities. It is considered that this area has potential for further redevelopment/ site rationalisation. It has a good

location adjacent to the railway station. Investigation of this area for new employment floorspace should be concurrent with investigations to rationalise and improve car parking provision.

Watch Oak Business Park

- 4.130 There is the possibility of expanding the Watch Oak Business area into surrounding areas to north and west, although there are environmental and landscape constraints as well as possible access difficulties. This would require further investigation.

Glengorse Farm

- 4.131 Existing office space exists at Glengorse within a large site that could have potential for expansion, albeit in an out of town countryside location. This would require further investigation.

As part of new mixed-use developments

- 4.132 New business and employment opportunities may also be feasible alongside new housing developments as 'mixed-use' opportunities.

Tourism

- 4.133 The 'Tourism Profile' within Section 2 of this report highlighted some of the main

features of the sector in Battle, drawn largely from 4 evidence studies. Together these studies have provided a wealth of information regarding the current market, trends and prospects of the Battle tourism market. For the purposes of the Battle Town Study, this information has been supplemented by further discussion and meetings with Battle Town Council, Rother District Council Regeneration & Tourism Officer and Hastings Borough Council Regeneration & Tourism Officers.

- 4.134 This 'Key Findings' section develops some of the themes highlighted earlier in the profile and examines trends, prospects and LDF policy direction.

Supply of Tourist Accommodation

- 4.135 Table A23 in the appendix shows hotel and guest house supply. Although there is no apparent undersupply of *hotels* relative to other areas, there does appear to be a relative shortage of *guest-house* accommodation. For example, the Rye area has 16 guest houses with 146 rooms compared to Battle area's 3 guesthouses with 25 rooms.
- 4.136 The 2007 Sea Space study commented that

“The stock of accommodation in the Battle area comprises mainly rurally-located hotels. There are few hotels and guesthouses in Battle itself. Standards are not particularly high, although there are some signs of investment beginning to take place in hotels here.”

4.137 There is a feeling in the Town Council that the town is failing to fully capitalise as a consequence of these two related issues, namely hotels being of both insufficient quality and not located sufficiently centrally. The problem is felt to particularly relate to coach tours, since a relatively low number of visitors choose to stay overnight. It is felt by the Town Council that the lack of a single centrally located and top quality hotel with sufficient bed-spaces to cater for a tourist coach was a particular weakness of the town and one that was resulting in lost revenue.

4.138 Battle Town Council has also highlighted their own concern that the supply in the Battle area comprises mainly rurally located hotels and that there are few hotels and guesthouses in Battle itself. As a result those visitors that do choose to stay overnight in the area, will be less inclined to spend evenings within the town and more likely to remain

at their place of lodging. This is a concern corroborated by Rother’s Regeneration & Tourism Officer. There is also some statistical evidence of this derived from the 2009 Battle Visitor Survey, which shows a low proportion of visitors staying overnight when compared to other market towns. This is despite the fact that the same survey showed visitors to Battle are more likely to recommend the town as a place to visit, than visitors to other market towns.

Table 8: Proportion of day and staying visitors in Battle

	2009	2005	ALL MARKET TOWNS
Day visitors	87%	90%	72%
Staying visitors	13%	10%	28%

Source: Tourism South East ‘Battle Visitor Survey’ 2009, Prepared by Tourism South East

4.139 With regard self-catering units, the 2009 Sea Space study indicated a concentration around Battle – residential self catering let out accommodation and self-catering barn accommodation, many on farms. The study showed that the Battle area has a good supply of self-catering accommodation with 33 establishments and 44 units, a good proportion of which are 4*. It is also notable

that the Battle area has the largest supply of touring caravan and camping pitches in the District with 4 sites.

Trends and Prospects

- 4.140 According to the '1066 Destination Management Strategy'⁸, 'the challenge for Battle will be to capitalise on the 2006 investment in the Abbey facilities while managing effectively pressures in the town caused by significant numbers of visitors for major events and at peak periods. Additional visitors should be encouraged to use the good public transport links and the tourist information centre's role could extend to acting as a gateway to the 1066's countryside.'

Recent Closures and Developments

- 4.141 In the last few years there have been two hotel closures in the Battle Area:
- Netherfield Place Hotel
 - Burntwood House Hotel
- 4.142 There has also been a development in the Battle Area, with Powder Mills Hotel adding a further 10 bedrooms together with a conference and banqueting suite in 2007.

⁸ Locum consulting commissioned in March 2005 on behalf of the Hastings and Bexhill Area Investment Framework, Sea Space and the 1066 Country Marketing Partnership.

- 4.143 Beauport Park Hotel is on the Battle Road and technically in Hastings, so does not appear on the tables of Battle accommodation in Table A23. Nonetheless it is worth mentioning that it has been taken over, renamed 'Bannatyne's Beauport Park Hotel' and expanded considerably in size.

- 4.144 The 2009 Sea Space study noted that Crowhurst Park had recently received planning permission for a further 49 timber holiday lodges of high quality.

Hotels and Guest Houses Market Trends

- 4.145 Key trends in the Hastings, Bexhill and 1066 Country hotel and guesthouse market have been as follows over the last few years:
- The residential conference market has been static for country house hotels in the Battle area.
 - Leisure break business has generally increased in Hastings, Battle and Rye for better quality hotels and guesthouses, particularly those that have invested in improving their product and that are using Internet marketing effectively

4.146 Achieved room rates are high for some country house hotels in the Battle area

4.147 There is some evidence that companies in Hastings tend to use hotels further afield for residential conferences and meetings as the hotels in Battle (as well as Hastings and Bexhill) are not sufficiently large or of an adequate standard to meet their requirements.

4.148 The HS Solutions research in 2007 suggested good prospects for growth in leisure break business for hotels and guesthouses in Battle (as well as Hastings and Rye) given :

- Improvements in the quality of existing accommodation establishments;
- The development of new good quality hotels and guest accommodation establishments;
- Effective marketing to attract leisure break business by hotels and guesthouses and by the 1066 Country Marketing Partnership.

4.149 The same study also suggested good scope for growth in leisure break business for hotels and guesthouses in Battle and other areas as the accommodation and leisure offer of these locations improves and develops.

Hotels and Guest Houses Developer Interest

4.150 The 2007 study conducted for Sea Space identified plenty of interest in Hastings area and in Bexhill and, to a lesser extent Rye. However the only interest in the Battle area at the time appeared to be for extensions to existing 3 star hotels in Battle.

4.151 Hotel Solutions commented in 2007 that the whole 1066 area “is not on the ‘Hit List’ of acquisitions targets of the main branded operators”. Although a number of potential sites were identified within the 1066 area, no sites were identified in Battle.

Hotels and Guest Houses Future Prospects and Potential

4.152 The 2007 research suggests that the hotels and inns in Battle and the surrounding area could command higher prices if they upgraded. Their potential to achieve higher occupancies is more limited however, as the market for accommodation here is primarily leisure driven. There would appear to be scope for some of the country house hotels in the Battle area to upgrade and possibly expand. The HS Solutions company survey in 2007 showed some dissatisfaction with these

hotels in terms of service standards and their food offer.

4.153 The 2007 Sea Space study recommended the following for Battle and Surrounding Area:

- Potential for the hotels and inns in Battle to upgrade;
- Scope for the country house hotels in the Battle area to upgrade and possibly expand.

Self-Catering Accommodation, Caravan and Camping Sites, Holiday Parks, Youth and Group accommodation - Market Trends

4.154 The 2009 Sea Space study showed a strong demand for self-catering accommodation, caravan and camping sites, holiday parks, youth and group accommodation across Rother.

4.155 The 2009 Sea Space study recommended that Battle could be a suitable location for a new youth hostel in longer term.

Prospects: Coach Market

4.156 Hastings Borough Council Tourism Manager has advised that coach tourism, particularly domestic coach tourists, generally caters for those on a budget. As such, upmarket hotels may be beyond their preferred price range. International coach visitors

(generally Americans or Japanese) may be more 'high-spend' but few tour the south-east or visit Battle (preferring far flung destinations such as York, Bath, the Cotswolds and Stonehenge). Hastings and Battle are simply too close to London to justify international coach tours and generally result in day trips instead. European tourists don't generally visit by coach.

Prospects: Events

4.157 Battle excels at events, organised both by English Heritage, the Chamber of Commerce and individuals. Notable regular draws include the annual Battle of Hastings re-enactment and the annual Bonfire parade.

4.158 The Battle Contemporary Arts Fair and Battle Scarecrow festival were recent successes. The Battle Arts Trail is expected to be live in 2011.

4.159 Rother's Regeneration & Tourism Officer has suggested further potential for developing an 'Events programme' throughout the year.

Prospects: Tourist Information Centre (TIC)

4.160 4.158 Rother District Council provides funding towards the annual Battle Marketing

- Campaign, which includes the production of a visitor guide. Although not a statutory requirement, Rother District Council also provide funding to English Heritage for the delivery of the Battle and Bexhill Tourist Information Centre (TIC). The current contract for the TIC in Battle expires in March 2012. From April 2012 a new Visitor Information Services structure will be introduced within the district to include; one Hub TIC, two satellite information points to be located within existing businesses and a series of local information points.
- 4.161 The 1066 Destination Management Strategy observed, the tourist information centre's role could extend to acting as a gateway to the 1066's countryside. Battle Town Council have made similar observations and certainly Battle is well placed to provide tourism services and information to the wider 1066 country, located as it is upon the transport corridor between London and Hastings and at the very heart of the areas historic interest.
- Future Policy Direction
- Core Strategy*
- 4.162 The Battle section of the Core Strategy Consultation on Strategy Directions 2008 briefly outlined the importance of tourism in the town (paragraph 7.39), but did not cover the subject extensively within the preferred strategy directions, other than to 'promote working on conservation and tourism in connection with the Abbey'. Given Battle Town Council's views on the importance of tourism, it will be important to give the issue due prominence in the submission version of the Core Strategy.
- 4.163 The 2007 Sea Space study suggested that in the rest of Rother – including Rye, Battle and the rural area – policies should allow for:
- The development of new accommodation where suitable properties for conversion are identified, especially properties of character;
 - The addition of rooms to existing facilities e.g. pubs, restaurants and golf courses.
- 4.164 A policy statement of this nature would seem to be the appropriate way forward for the Core Strategy, perhaps with a greater emphasis on the promotion of accommodation within Battle Town itself rather than in the rural hinterland.

Site Allocations

- 4.165 During the course of producing the Town Study, specific sites for tourist accommodation have been discussed. Overgrown areas within the vicinity of Mount Street Car Park have been suggested, an area that has the advantage of being central although conservation area constraints are likely to apply.
- 4.166 English Heritage's proposals in the past for developing a hotel site at the top of Powdermill Lane were thwarted at the time by Highways objections. Today a further obstacle would be the extension of the 1066 Battlefield so that this area is now included within it.
- 4.167 In light of the evidence discussed in this section, it would not seem appropriate to allocate a specific site for tourism in the Site Allocations DPD or elsewhere in the LDF, particularly as the evidence has not demonstrated high levels of market interest.
- 4.168 However, in view of the concerns highlighted regarding Battle Town's hotel market it would seem appropriate to frame policy so as to allow/encourage further tourist accommodation to develop should a developer/owner wish to do so.

Housing

Existing Proposals

- 4.169 The location of development should respect the town's close relationship to landform and landscape setting. The Blackfriars area is seen as the principal location for future growth. Land in this area lying between Marley Lane and Hastings Road has been earmarked for housing development for some 35 years. It is still considered to be the most appropriate location, and the retention of large open areas that will create a permanent "green lung" extending into the urban fabric of the town should provide amenity for the development and the wider area.
- 4.170 The current development strategy already provides for over 360 dwellings taking into account completions since 2006, current permissions and allocations. There is only a relatively modest requirement for additional allocations to meet the requirement of the Overall Spatial Development Strategy.

Housing Figures

Position set out in Core Strategy Consultation on Strategy Directions

- 4.171 A preferred distribution of housing numbers for the plan period 2006-2026 was contained in the Core Strategy 'Consultation on Strategy Directions' in Appendix 3 (November 2008). The District wide requirement of 5,600-5,850 was essentially a 'top-down' target derived from the South-East Plan. The Core Strategy demonstrated the how this District wide-target would be achieved, by apportioning it between smaller geographical components within Rother District.
- 4.172 For Battle this amounted to 450-500 dwellings, the majority of which was accounted for by current allocations, current permissions and completions in the period 2006-2008. This left a remaining requirement on sites yet to be identified of between 88 and 138 dwellings.

Implications of Recent Developments, Representations made to the Core Strategy and Changes of National Policy

- 4.173 Although two years has since passed since the above housing figures were published, the downturn in the housing

market means that the position regarding completion and status of allocations remains broadly the same as that set out in the Core Strategy Consultation on Strategy Directions.

- 4.174 A significant question however does need to be addressed in this Battle Town Study. Namely; is the housing target for Battle still appropriate – particularly in the light of the revocation of the South East Plan (and the top-down housing targets contained within it) by central government in 2011?
- 4.175 Perhaps not surprisingly, the majority of respondents to the formal consultation (12 week period November 2008 – January 2009) who chose to comment on the subject did so by objecting to the level of housing development envisaged in Battle. The majority of objectors were private individuals. However, there were some responses (typically from consultants) in *support* of the housing levels envisaged including a handful who wished to see higher levels of house-building in Battle.
- 4.176 The national government position was partly set out in July 2010, when DCLG Chief Planner Steve Quartermain wrote to all local authorities.

He confirmed that local planning authorities would still need to “collect and use reliable information to justify their housing supply policies and defend them during the LDF examination process. They should do this in line with current policy in PPS3” (paragraph 11). This applies whether LPAs decide to retain their existing housing targets that were set out in the revoked Regional Strategy; replace Regional Strategy targets with “option 1 numbers⁹” or something else because “any target selected may be tested during the examination process especially if challenged and authorities will need to be ready to defend them”. He added that although the RSS has been revoked, the evidence base underlying it remains valid and can be used by local planning authorities along with more up to date material.

4.177 In effect, central government has given the local authority a choice;

9 ‘Option 1’ housing figures were those that individual local authorities own projections of the number of houses they believe will be necessary by 2026 to meet local needs. They were derived from analysis of trends, opportunities and outstanding permissions. In many cases, central government interposed to impose significantly higher targets within regional spatial strategies. However, Rother DC’s option 1 housing figure was accepted and adopted in regional policy.

1. To revert to the so-called ‘option 1’ numbers (also 280 per annum in Rother’s case).
2. To continue using the South East Plan housing figures (280 per annum in Rother’s case).
3. ‘Something else’ that is robust enough that local authorities can defend the figures to the Planning inspectorate at examination.

4.178 In Rother, the SE Plan figure (and the Option 1 figure it derived from) were both based on the assumption that the Hastings-Bexhill link road would go ahead. The continuing uncertainty over the link road funding may ultimately mean that the District’s housing figure needs to be re-considered, as significant amounts of new housing is dependent on the road’s completion. However this does not directly affect Battle. The logical assumption must therefore be that the option 1 housing figure was appropriate, unless overwhelming recent and locally specific evidence shows otherwise. The following section on ‘Evidence of Housing Need’ examines the evidence for housing need in the context of Battle.

Evidence of Housing Need

Evidence of Housing Need: House Completions Trends

4.179 Tables A24 and A25 show a consistent level of housing completions in Battle, and in Rother as a whole over the last 10 years. This demonstrates a buoyant housing market and an ongoing need that has been met.

Evidence of Housing Need: Projected Population Growth

4.180 Table A4 in the appendices show the projected population growth in the District to 2026. They show that Rother's population is projected to rise up from 87,800 in 2006, to 95,415 in 2026. Most of this accounted for by a rise in numbers of older persons (aged 65+). Conversely, there is a projected fall in numbers aged 30-44 and in married couples. It is important to note that these are 'policy-based' projections. That is to say they are projected according to future levels of fertility, mortality and migration and reflecting the level of housing being planned across the district.

4.181 The fact that migration is a component of these projections leads onto the debate as to whether this justifies a 'local' need and

justification for house building. In this respect Figures A1 to A3 in the appendices need further consideration.

4.182 Population projections 2006-2026 based on zero net migration (as seen in Figure A1) demonstrate that by 2026, Rother would have an unsustainable demographic make-up, with an increased retired population with far fewer persons of working age. Indeed, without in-migration some working age groups would fall by as much as 50%. The likely affects of this would be irreparable harm to the local economy and may lead to many key supporting services being unable to function.

4.183 Migration led population would redress the balance and lead to an increase in the 20-35 year old age groups. To a large extent the policy based population projections are similar to the migration-led, albeit policy would temper some of the more extreme impacts of un-restricted inward migration.

Evidence of Housing Need: Affordability

4.184 Although the housing market has dipped in recent years, there was previously continual housing market growth for more than a decade. The recent downturn has not yet

- made a significant impact on the affordability of home ownership. Broadly it is still very difficult for those on low incomes to afford even the cheapest homes in the local housing market. In Rother the affordability ratio for the lower quartile is 10.4 in 2009. This means that the average lower quartile house price is 10-11 times the lower quartile income in Rother. The problem of affordability is much more severe in Rother than in the wider nation, region or county. This may partly explain the net out-migration of the 15-24 age band in the area.
- 4.185 Although, figures are not available for Battle, there is no reason to suppose the affordability problems in Battle are any less acute. Whilst incomes in Battle are slightly above the Rother average (see Table A20 'Average Household Income'), house prices also hold up well.
- 4.186 Evidence contained in the 2010 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA Figure 4.6) suggested that on the basis of existing household incomes in Rother only about 30% of households are able to buy. A further 30% may be able to rent privately, but the remaining 40% are unable to rent or buy in the market. These figures are income based and is caveated by the fact that households may have access to equity from savings or property. Furthermore, in practice, many households stretch themselves further than their incomes would imply, although access to credit has become more restricted in the last couple of years.
- 4.187 Earlier evidence in the form of the 2005 Housing Needs Survey (by DCA) calculated there was an annual shortfall of 256 properties in Rother and that the need for affordable housing vastly outweighed the supply of affordable housing. With reference to these figures, DTZ consultants stated in 2010 that 'there is little reason to believe the level of housing need has declined over the last 4 years'. They suggested this was supported by a range of evidence, including;
- Numbers of households on local authority registers
 - Marked increase in households receiving housing benefit since 2005 (20% up from 2005 to 2009).
 - Recent rise in unemployment.
- 4.188 Moreover, there is little reason to believe that Battle is in any more fortuitous a position than the rest of Rother in this regard. Indeed the available

evidence suggests Battle may be even be in a comparatively worse position, particularly its less affluent residents.

Evidence of Housing Need: Housing Register

4.189 As Figure A9 demonstrates, Battle (in common with Rother as a whole) has a low proportion of social housing stock when compared to the national and regional averages.

4.190 As Table A35 shows, there are 560 households on the Rother register seeking accommodation in Battle. But only 120 of those are already living in Battle – This latter figure equates to 5.3% of all households in Battle (2253 total households). Whilst this proportion is typical for East Sussex, it is high compared to the rest of Rother District where the equivalent proportion averages 4.1%. This suggests there is more locally derived need unmet in Battle than there is elsewhere in Rother.

Evidence of Housing Need: Conclusions

4.191 The need for new housing both nationally and locally within Rother is hard to dispute. It is therefore concluded that the housing figures published in the Core Strategy Directions were the correct ones and Battle will need a ballpark

figure of 450-500 new dwellings over the plan period 2006-26. This will include allocations of approximately 100 additional dwellings on newly identified sites (i.e.; sites not already having permission or subject of a Local Plan allocation).

4.192 Notwithstanding the relatively good services and facilities, because of the topography and other over-riding constraints, the growth potential of the town is fairly limited. The following section examines what locations may be suitable to meet the need for new housing.

Location of New Housing

Position set out in Core Strategy Consultation on Strategy Directions

4.193 Section 3.13 summed up the main points of the emerging Core Strategy and Urban Options Background paper that supported it. The crucial point for new housing development was that sectors 4 and 5 (to the east and south-east of the town) were preferred as they 'offer most potential for sensitive and sustainable development in the long term.'

Response of Consultees in Representations

4.194 The preferred geographical directions for development

raised a number of objections or points raised in concern, most notably from Battle Town Council, East Sussex County Council and the National Trust, as well as a number of individuals. Although there were one or two representations in support, the overwhelming feeling was opposed to the RDC preferred strategy of focussing development in sectors 4 and 5 (to the east and south-east of the town).

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

4.195 The Core Strategy Consultation on Strategy Directions was followed by the publication of a detailed supporting evidence study, the SHLAA, in March 2010. This examined specific sites in more detail for the purpose of demonstrating to what was then regional government that the SE Plan housing targets could be achieved.

4.196 For Battle, the SHLAA largely confirmed the position established by the Core Strategy Consultation on Strategy Directions, by identifying suitable land primarily to the east and south-east of the town. It is important to state that the SHLAA is a background evidence study and not a formal policy document. The

SHLAA was always underlined by the caveat that sites would be subject to further investigation and consultation as part of the process of producing a Site Allocations DPD, and therefore its findings should not be interpreted as final or definitive. This is particularly the case if the overall Battle strategy were also to be subject to amendment.

Factors that Influence the Choice of Location of New Housing Allocations in Battle

4.197 Factors that influence the choice of location of new housing allocations have been discussed throughout this Battle Town Study, but are summed up in the following table

Table 9: Summary of Factors
Influencing Geographical Direction of
Growth for New Housing

Traffic generation, particularly cross-town traffic	No clear conclusion (see main key issue section 4)
Proximity to public transport	Centre, east and south east located preferably for access to rail station. Bus services are similar (see map A5), although Marley Lane has a bus service on less than 5 days a week.
Existing Policies	Strategic Gap at south-east of town. AONB comprehensive coverage.
Heritage Impact	Battlefield ruled out.
Landscape Impact	South-east and east of town generally marginally preferable. Central areas ruled out as unsuitable.
Biodiversity	Ancient woodland dotted around town's proximity, generally further removed from the development boundary. South-east and

	east included within Sussex Biodiversity Partnership's Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.
Proximity to Schools	West of Battle preferable
Proximity to Supermarket	West and north of town preferable, even more so if existing supermarket were to be expanded in the future
Proximity to medical services	Two GPs serve both sides of Battle equally. Conquest Hospital more accessible by road from south east.
Proximity to key services	Central areas preferable, although opportunities limited
Representations Received on emerging Core Strategy	Opposition to focussing housing growth to south east and east.
Pattern of Development	Historic 'dumb-bell' pattern of development has seen similar levels of growth on north and west sides compared to south and east.

Conclusions for Core Submission Version

- 4.198 There is an undoubted need for housing in Battle, as discussed in section 4.
- 4.199 However, the case for a preferred direction of growth being limited to the east and south-east (sectors 4 and 5) is not overwhelming (As discussed in the conclusions to the main key issue (page 30). The area does have some advantages (as identified in the Consultation on Strategy Directions) notably proximity to the train station and Hastings. But there is also a case for seeking opportunities in other areas such as the west and north-west.
- 4.200 Core Strategy wording may be better served by simply refer to meeting the need for housing in Battle by 'opportunities within the development boundary and modest peripheral expansion opportunities'.
- 4.201 Whilst any extension of the ribbon development needs to be resisted, modest peripheral expansion opportunities do exist. Areas that should be subject of more consideration and investigation at Site Allocations DPD stage are outlined in the following table. In some instances these may

update the published recommendations of the 2010 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). In any event, all sites will be subject to further investigation and consultation as part of the process of the forthcoming Site Allocations DPD.

Table 10: Specific Sites for Further investigation within Site Allocations DPD

Area (SHLAA IDs)	Approximate Land Area of Further Investigation (Ha) and Details
West Battle	
BA3	0.4ha Remainder of existing allocation
BA40	1.4ha. Not ideal site as has semi rural feel, but further post-SHLAA investigation shows this site is not especially exposed in long distance landscape to Telham Ridge.
BA10, BA13	1ha
North-West Battle	
BA45, BA16, BA17	2.5ha (2ha outside groundwater source zone that is developable) Would need to be a comprehensive development only, requiring creation of highway in place of existing footpath. Access issues would

	<i>need to be resolved.</i>
BA26	<i>Approx 2.3ha South-east side adjacent to Netherfield Rd only, including possible relocation of Watch Oak Allotments Access may be a difficulty.</i>
North Battle	
BA1, BA33	<i>1.1ha</i>
East Battle	
Blackfriars	<i>7.3ha Allocation and outline permission</i>
South-East Battle	
BA54	<i>2.3ha. Access issues to resolve.</i>
BA31	<i>At least 1 ha North-east field only. Further post-SHLAA investigations appear to show that other areas of site immediately adjacent south side of Glengorse and west along the ridge may be too exposed in the landscape from a southerly direction.</i>
BA23, BA28 (west side only)	<i>5ha + Accessed either from Glengorse or Hastings Road</i>

Phasing of Development

- 4.202 Allocations remaining from the 2006 Local Plan (such as Blackfriars) should ideally be phased first. In any event, newly identified sites within

the LDF will need to go through several further stages prior to formal adoption as allocations.

Housing Type and Tenure

- 4.203 The evidence suggests a need for more, smaller residential units in Battle. With reference to Tables A31 and A32 in the appendices, it can be seen that whilst average household size in Battle (in terms of numbers of people) is on the low side, the average rooms per household is comparatively high. Not surprisingly given this imbalance, levels of overcrowding are very low (see table A40). Furthermore single person households are projected to increase in Rother (see Table A29) which will further add to the demand for smaller properties.

- 4.204 The Town Council support the 40% affordable housing requirement but would prefer greater proportion of shared ownership (+prevent step up to full ownership).

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs

Identified Needs

- 4.205 Needs for Battle were identified in the Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study, and have been reflected in the emerging Core Strategy. More recently, further needs were

identified in the Leisure Facilities Strategy. The recommended needs are repeated, together with initial discussion of how they may be achieved, in the section on 'Sites' below.

- 4.206 In addition the Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study sets standards for Quantity, Quality and Accessibility to open space that are to be achieved. For Battle these standards are set out in Table 4 in the Appendix. Essentially they show that while Battle has a plentiful supply of 'Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace' it is short of allotments and outdoor sports facilities.

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

- 4.207 The Sussex Biodiversity Partnership has identified Biodiversity Opportunities Areas across the County. This work is wholly independent of the Open Space Sport and Recreation Study,
- 4.208 BOAs identify where the greatest opportunities for habitat creation and restoration lie. Two BOAs impact upon the Battle area, notably the Great Wood area east of Battle and the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods area to the west of the town.

Future Policy Direction

Core Strategy

- 4.209 The Core Strategy Consultation on Strategy Directions stated the intention to implement the improvements set out in the Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study. This commitment remains, although there needs to be a continuing dialogue with Battle Town Council regarding the details of these recommendations.
- 4.210 Elsewhere in the Core Strategy there will be a continuing commitment to meeting the standards for open spaces in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility.

- 4.211 The approach to BOAs is yet to be confirmed, but may state that opportunities for management, restoration and creation of habitats will be sought where possible.

Sites

- 4.212 Possible means of achieving are discussed the Recommendations of the Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study are discussed in Table 9 below.

Table 11: Potential Means of Achieving Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs

Identified Need	Potential Means of Achieving
Long term consideration to be given to a new swimming facility.	Potential to allow public access to swimming pool at Glengorse?
<p>The Leisure Facilities strategy talked about need for both Multi-use gaming areas (MUGAs) and Skate Parks but was not location specific.</p> <p>Need for a new facility for older children/teenagers as part of housing/open space developments in South Battle was identified in Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study.</p>	<p>The refurbishment of Battle Recreation Ground basketball court to become a MUGA for football, basketball and short tennis is expected to be completed in Summer 2011. The funding will be 50:50 between RDC and BTC and was approved in April 2011.</p> <p>Since the above development is in the north-west of the town, the recommendation of the 2007 study is arguably still valid and it is therefore appropriate to consider means of addressing it.</p> <p>The Blackfriars outline permission was for a LEAP (a Local Equipped Area for Play), a type of play area designated and equipped for children of early school age, However, RDC Amenities comment that 'Provision for older children and teens doesn't necessarily have to be provision of space/equipment for ball games or wheeled sports. There is now very good play equipment designed for this age group which could be accommodated within the same space as the equipment for younger children provided thought is given to the zoning and landscaping it so that it becomes an appealing place for teenagers to be.' With this in mind it may be preferable if the Blackfriars facility was not restricted to a LEAP, but was rather a facility that catered for a wider range of ages to include older children and teenagers.</p>
<p>Children's play area: The Council to consider new children's play areas as part of the housing development in Blackfriars, Glengorse playing field and around the Old Mill in North Battle.</p>	<p>A children's play area (400 sq.m LEAP) was included in the Blackfriars outline permission (RR/2007/1896/P). Logically it is assumed that 'the Old Mill' refers to Caldbec Hill, as this was included in the PMP study. Ownership may be a constraint on this site. Battle Town Council further comment that Glengorse is neither a playing field nor a good location for new provision. In RDC's view this would not be a good location as it stands as it is on the residential periphery and therefore the catchment would be limited. The position would change in the event of Glengorse seeing housing development.</p>
Qualitative improvements to existing natural and semi natural open space sites, and to amenity green spaces.	Section 106/CIL contributions could be sought alongside development to address this:
New allotment site in south Battle subject to demand.	<p>Battle Town Council have queried this 'need' on the basis that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) South Battle is predominantly large gardens. (ii) As of Jan 2011, there is no one on the waiting lists for Town Council managed allotments <p>As of July 2011, RDC Amenities department report that the RDC allotments at Watch Oak are fully occupied (26 plots) with a waiting list of 3, which is a comparatively low waiting list in comparison to most RDC allotment sites – some of which have waiting lists in excess of the number of actual occupied plots. In conclusion it should be noted that the original recommendation said 'subject to demand' and it seems the demand in Battle is actually very limited compared to other parts of the District.</p> <p>However, potential residential development site BA26 does include Watch Oak allotments, so there is also the possibility of replacement allotments being required. If there is a need, an extension to existing allotments may be possible, with Cherry Gardens allotments on Mount Street being a candidate for further investigation.</p>
Synthetic Turf Pitch – possible at Claverham (as set out in Leisure Facilities Strategy)	Position as set out in section 3 on Leisure Facilities Strategy.

Community and Service Needs

Retail Needs

- 4.213 Previous sections 1, 2 and 3 have all touched upon retail issues. In particular, the need for 1,000 sq.m of new convenience retail space was outlined in the Retail assessment (as outlined in section 3) of the same study.
- 4.214 Battle Town Council have suggested that subsequent to the time of the 2008 Retail Study, Budgen/Jempsons and the smaller Co-Op and Tesco have all improved in terms of quality and range.
- 4.215 However, there is still a considerable out-flow of shoppers from Battle to the Hastings and St Leonards area (a pattern discussed in more detail in the earlier section 4 'Main Key Issue: Traffic Flows, Congestion and Cross-Town Traffic - the Relationship to New and Existing Development Patterns'). It is likely that this pattern has been exacerbated further since the evidence was produced in 2008 as a consequence of new retail floorspace being developed on the West side of Hastings/St Leonards (including a new Asda, a new Tesco and an extended Sainsburys).
- 4.216 The extent to which new convenience retail floorspace in Hastings / St Leonards will have met the needs of Battle shoppers is debatable. The debate touches on wider issues such as sustainable travel patterns and whether it is desirable for Battle to stem or reverse the pattern of shoppers heading to Hastings by 'clawback'.
- 4.217 For the sake of the health of Battle town centre, and also in order to reduce the flow of cross-town traffic heading to Hastings as much as possible, it seems appropriate to encourage new convenience retail in Battle. Core Strategy policy should therefore be framed accordingly.
- 4.218 The identification of sites would ultimately be the role of the Site Allocations DPD or Neighbourhood Development Plan. Locations close to the town centre and preferably within the Local Plan defined 'shopping area' would be most appropriate. An initial examination of potential areas suggest there is potential, particularly to the north of the town shopping area, possibly as an extension to the existing store. However, the feasibility of these options would require further investigation within the Site Allocations DPD, particularly in order to assess if this target is realistic and compatible with environmental factors, not least maintaining

the character of the historic core.

Empty Shops

- 4.219 Generally Battle is a buoyant shopping centre which has historically had low vacancy rates. However, in common with all areas, the town has suffered the effects of the economic down-turn and vacancies have increased as a consequence. In response to this the Battle Chamber of Commerce has set up a 'High Street Group'.

Restaurants, Cafes and Pubs

- 4.220 Section 2 'Profile of Local Facilities and Services' highlighted that the town has a relatively high proportion of cafes and restaurants, reflecting its service centre role. However it has also been noted in this study that tourist visitors typically have a relatively short length of stay. Therefore it seems appropriate to frame planning policy to facilitate additional restaurants, cafes and/or retail service establishments that enhance the profile of the town as a visitor destination and encourage visitors to stay for a longer period thereby contributing to the local economy.

School Numbers, Locations and Usage

- 4.221 Introductory information on Battle schools was outlined in section 2. This section continues by drawing out why the schools are an issue affecting the future development of the town.
- 4.222 The location of schools is also a key issue in so far as it is a factor influencing the location of new housing. As such reference was made to schools in the main key issue section regarding 'Analysis of school Trips'
- 4.223 Figures A5 to A8 in the appendices indicate future forecasts of pupil numbers. These figures do build in proposed new housing at Blackfriars and elsewhere.
- 4.224 Pupil forecast numbers to 2026 from ESCC suggest that whilst many schools in rural Rother District are forecast to have spare capacity, the Battle schools will become more squeezed. There are forecast to be slightly too many pupils for teaching space (in the case of the primary school), whilst Claverham College will be at capacity.
- 4.225 ESCC (Children's Services) has advised that the Local Plan primary school allocation at Blackfriars is no longer required and therefore it is not

- necessary to carry it forward to the LDF. Instead it is proposed to construct a permanent extension to the existing Battle and Langton Primary School.
- 4.226 The main reason that it was (and still is) felt by ESCC that a primary school is not required on the Blackfriars site is that the admissions system will redirect 'out of area' applicants back to schools nearer their homes, thereby creating capacity to accommodate children being generated by new housing in Battle. This is why the Figure A5 shows Reception Year Pupil Numbers remaining at the school's intake number at 60. There may be a small bulge in numbers in Year Groups higher up the school (the admissions system can't redirect 'out of area' children already in the school) but nothing like the number required to justify the provision of a new school on the Blackfriars site.
- 4.227 Battle and Langton CE school capacity is 420, albeit some of this capacity is made up of temporary accommodation. ESCC Education stated in January 2011 that "Any small bulge in the future would need to be addressed through the use of temporary accommodation if we were unable to accommodate the children within the current building infrastructure"
- 4.228 However, ESCC have maintained that 'Early Years' facilities are still needed. Consideration is being given to utilising part of the current primary school allocation site for Early Years facilities and for the remainder of the site to be used for other community/educational facilities. This matter is discussed in more detail in the next section.
- 4.229 ESCC (Children's Services) has advised that additional housing will impact on secondary school provision, by more out-of-area pupils not gaining places at Claverham Community College.
- 4.230 The Battle schools are all highly regarded, attractive to parents and it is likely that pressure on their capacities is as a consequence of their high appeal.
- Claverham College Sports Facilities – Level of Use by the Community*
- 4.231 Since September 2006 Claverham has officially had Specialist Sports College status. A Specialist Sports College is a School which uses Physical Education and sport outside the curriculum to improve the whole school. It achieves this by sharing expertise and resources with its partner schools and the wider

community. The Town Council suggest the sports facilities are under-used, so the local community should be encouraged to make maximum use of these facilities.

Early Years Facilities

4.232 As discussed in paragraph 4.225 above, ESCC have in the past suggested a need for early years facilities instead of a primary school on the Blackfriars site. Further evidence on this need has been sought from ESCC as part of the process of undertaking the Battle Town Study and the matter remains under discussion.

4.233 However in the absence of a proven need for 'early years facilities' it seems prudent to adopt a more cautious approach in the LDF regarding the former primary school site at Blackfriars.

4.234 Therefore in order to maintain a degree of flexibility and to be responsive to needs on the ground, consideration may be given to utilising the current primary school allocation site for general community/educational facilities.

Medical Care

4.235 Bexhill and Rother's Primary Care Trust's '2006 Primary Care

Development Plan' stated that Battle's Martins Oak surgery will need replacement within 3 to 5 years. The Primary Care Trust will work with the practice and the Local Planning Authority to identify a new site and allow a smooth transition to new purpose built premises, potentially to include a new or relocated pharmacy. It should have a floor area of 600sq.m.' This aspiration was repeated in the emerging Core Strategy.

4.236 Subsequently however, the PCT have requested RDC remove the Core Strategy references in the document to the replacement of Martins Oak Surgery (e.g. on pages 56 and 58). The PCT state "Our proposal in Battle is to increase the number of patients registered at Battle Health Centre where we consider we have sufficient space to absorb the increased population."

Community Services Hub and Fire Station

4.237 The possibility of a combined community hub has been discussed, and remains a Town Council aspiration. This might comprise community services and/or Town Council premises. It may also serve as a replacement Battle Memorial Hall in the event of this building being developed as a retail arcade. A new community hub would not

however comprise GP services for the reasons outlined in the preceding section. This aspiration would still require a centrally located site, of which few are readily available. One possibility may have been the existing Fire Station in the event of it relocating.

- 4.238 RDC has discussed the matter with the Fire & Rescue Service as part of the process of this Battle Town Study. The Service stated their position as follows;

'The Service has recently undertaken a review of emergency cover in the rural areas which included Battle Fire Station. The review determined that the fire station is in a suitable location in terms of meeting the salient risks, although it did recommend that further work will be needed should the Hastings/Bexhill link road materialise as a potential development. Consequently, the Authority is not minded to pursue any option to dispose of this site at the present time. However, if there are changes with regard the link road or where there are opportunities to re-locate the station at zero cost to the Authority then this position will be reconsidered.'

- 4.239 Other potential sites for a 'community hub' may be discussed further in the

forthcoming Site Allocations DPD.

Public Utility Infrastructure

- 4.240 The need for adequate infrastructure is critical to the town and to support any further development. Battle Town Council have suggested town is prone to power cuts and localised flooding. Unfortunately there is no documented evidence in Battle Town Council's records, but information is derived from anecdotal experience and reports of both residents and councillors. There have been no reported problems in relation to gas supply.

Electricity

- 4.241 The Town Council reports an increased number of power outages, although they are mainly very brief. This may be due to an ageing infrastructure, with some additional loading and lack of investment being the likely main reasons.
- 4.242 Rother District Council has made further inquiries with UK Power Networks, National Grid and EDF Energy regarding this issue, and is currently awaiting further response.
- 4.243 UK Power Networks have responded suggesting short term loss of supply would

- indicate overhead power cable issues which could be weather related (rain, wind tree branches etc). They state that UK Power Networks teams will be looking into these faults and dealing with them accordingly.
- 4.244 UK Power Networks state they have a resilient programme of asset replacement which is on going so it is unlikely that these problems are the result of any form of 'under investment'. However they suggest it may be that there has been a gradual growth in the area resulting in parts of the network being subjected to increased load which could lead to network difficulties and if that proves to be the case then certainly that too will be addressed by UK Power Networks.
- 4.245 UK Power Networks further comment "Where new developments occur, the developer will ask for a quotation from UK Power Networks to connect the development to our network, a 'connection fee' will be paid and this will provide the funding to reinforce the infrastructure enabling the development to go ahead. It can be the case that new development will force the issue of reinforcement at a higher voltage as well all of which would be addressed as part of our responsibilities
- under the requirements of our regulator Ofgem."
- 4.246 UK Power Networks Infrastructure Planning (South) team have said they will look into the issue of power interruptions around Battle and respond further.
- Water
- Localised Flooding*
- 4.247 Issues of localised flooding have been identified and outlined elsewhere in this report in section 3 and illustrated on Map A14 and Tables A51 to A52. Battle Town Council have commented that the flooding issues identified result from downhill surface drainage and topography.
- 4.248 The Town Council have raised questions as to whether surface water carriers are inadequate or not properly maintained, for example the erosion of kerbs which are to assist and direct surface drainage. It is further suggested that cost efficient methods of highway maintenance in recent years such as surface dressing and resurfacing without kerb raising have had an adverse impact on surface drainage and contributed to the problem. In the view of the Town Council "Any one localised flooding problem can not, at present,

be attributed to a major infrastructure deficit, as is evidenced by the level subsiding when heavy rainfall ceases and lack of specific data.”

- 4.249 The matter of surface water and the maintenance of ditches, watercourses and streams is the responsibility of the Southern Water (the sewerage undertaker for the area) and the Environment Agency. Rother District Council is currently awaiting further response from Southern Water and the Environment Agency to enquiries made in respect of these matters.

Dirty Water – Sewerage

- 4.250 Battle Town Council suggest that the numbers of blockages cleared by Southern Water and private contractors has risen slightly in the last couple of years, which may be linked with surface drainage where combined systems exist and that leads onto a lack of renewal and investment in pipe sizes and carrying capacity. Again there is a slightly increased loading and will be year on year. Battle Town Council stress that it is paramount that any large development provides at least for the current level of service to existing connections, especially when close to the Treatment Plant.

- 4.251 Rother District Council is currently awaiting further response from Southern Water and the Environment Agency to enquiries made in respect of these matters.

Clean Water

- 4.252 Battle Town Council say there is anecdotal evidence that water pressures in some areas have lowered slightly and that there is no evidence that this is due solely to leakage. It is suggested that it may be affected by an increased draw-off, which in turn means that investment will be needed in the future, or by effecting economies in the system operating method. The effect of the work on the North Trade Road water main will not be known until the work is completed, tested and experienced.

- 4.253 South East Water is responsible for supplying water to both residential and commercial properties. These comments relating to water supply and pressure are thus relevant to South East Water. Rother District Council has therefore made enquiries on this issue as part of the process of producing the Battle Town Study. SE Water have commented as follows; “South East Water is statutorily required to put in place and

- annually review a 25 year rolling, forward looking water resources plans that take account of current and future growth in housing, population and water use over that period. These 25 year plans are used to feed into 5 yearly investment plans, which are determined by the economic regulator Ofwat. The current investment plan that South East Water is running to is 2010 to 2015 and this plan includes investment required to support existing and future water demands in the Battle area.
- 4.254 The works referred to at North Trade Road are part of South East Water's ongoing mains renewal programme, where an old 100mm (four-inch) diameter cast iron water main has been replaced with a new 1,800 metre length of tougher 125mm (five-inch) diameter plastic water main. The cast iron main was around 70 years old and had suffered an increased number of bursts - there have been 11 bursts in the last three years. Each time it burst it did cause considerable damage and disruption to the highway and interruptions to customers' drinking water supplies. South East Water is therefore confident that the work they have undertaken will improve local water pressure and consistency of supply. South East Water will continue to monitor levels of service and where necessary, address any issues through future investment plans."
- 4.255 The question of whether these issues inhibit future development was also put to SE Water, to which they replied "South East Water has a statutory duty to develop and maintain an efficient and economical system of water supply within its area and to provide water to meet both the existing and any future demands of local residents and businesses. It is therefore important that South East Water understands local planning authorities' proposals for where and when new growth is to take place, so that we can take account of this in our forecasts and ensure that we can meet any increased need for water."
- 4.256 Whilst, Rother District Council has informed all utility providers of emerging proposals for growth in the LDF, South East Water is intending to further engage during the early part of 2011 to discuss strategic planning issues".
- Impact of New Development*
- 4.257 Regarding the possibility of up to 140 new houses in Battle up to 2026, Southern Water have

commented that they have no preference regarding locations within Battle. They state that all options would require investment into the sewerage system, and that they would look to the developer to fund this work.

5. Conclusions and Formulation of Strategy Options

Broad Conclusions of the Battle Town Study

- 5.1 This section sums up the evidence and conclusions contained in the earlier sections of the Battle Town Study, as well as briefly touching upon the implications for statutory policy documents.
- 5.2 Key points are as follows:
- Cross-town traffic and congestion is recognised as a major negative issue for the town.
 - There is a clear need for new housing within both Rother and Battle. In addition to existing commitments (most notably at Blackfriars) a ballpark figure of allocations for 100 additional dwellings in the town by 2026 is considered appropriate.
 - Based on detailed analysis of journeys, there does not appear to be an overwhelming case for saying that developing on any one particular side of the town will have a significantly greater impact in relieving congestion. Although there are some advantages to promoting the South-East of Battle for development, the Blackfriars allocation will already concentrate development in the area and therefore there is not a strong case for reinforcing this still further. Therefore, the Core Strategy may simply refer to meeting the need for housing in Battle by 'opportunities within the development boundary and modest peripheral expansion opportunities'.
 - However within this study, various options have been identified at the urban fringes of the town. In some instances the options have updated the previously published SHLAA. This has been done in light of further work and evidence. Further work on these options will be undertaken as part of the forthcoming Site Allocations DPD.
 - Approximately 10,000sq.m of employment floorspace is required in the Battle area. Approximately 7,000sq.m is already in the pipeline and there are various options proposed around the town to address the remaining need, including at Station Approach.
 - Tourism policies should be framed to allow for new tourist accommodation via conversion and extension, with a particular emphasis on locations within Battle Town development boundary and within close proximity of the centre.
 - Approximately 1,000 sq.m of convenience retail floorspace is required and Core Strategy policy should be framed accordingly. Areas to the north of the town centre seem to offer the most potential.

- A commitment to meeting the identified needs for open space and recreation remains. The Study has proposed various options as to how this may be achieved.
- Regarding services; there is no longer a need to re-locate the Martin's Oak surgery. The Fire Station remains needed and in an appropriate location. Infrastructure provision (water, sewerage and electricity) remains a concern and RDC is engaged in a continued dialogue with providers in response to the concerns.
- Measures contained in the Battle Local Area Transport Strategy 2005 remain relevant as potential solutions to the cross-town congestion problem, and the Study has updated progress on some of those considered most key.
- Parking remains an issue, though possibly relating to cost as much as quantity. Opportunities to provide more are limited, but there appears is no significant case for prioritising the south-east of the town as a location for more parking. Given that Station Approach offers considerable potential for new employment floorspace, the site would benefit from further investigation in the Site Allocations DPD of the potential to rationalise and improve car parking.

Core Strategy Aim & Objectives

5.3 Following discussion within the Town Study working group there was general support for the Aims and Objectives as set out in the emerging Core Strategy¹⁰

5.4 However, minor amendments were agreed, in particular the Town Council wishes to see the Objectives ranked in priority order, so that the Aims and Objectives in the final submission version of the Core Strategy will appear as follows:

Aim:

To support the market town and tourist centre role and character of Battle and conserve its historic core and setting.

Objectives:

- (i) to reduce congestion and improve accessibility, especially by non-car modes;
- (ii) to enhance the commercial and tourism attractiveness of the town centre;
- (iii) to conserve the key characteristics of the town and its setting that contribute to the AONB;
- (iv) to provide increased opportunities for employment locally;
- (v) to improve the level of community and sports/recreation facilities.
- (vi) to preserve and enhance the historic character of the Abbey and Battlefield and maintain the town's physical identity.
- (vii) To make an appropriate contribution towards meeting local housing needs.

¹⁰ Consultation on Strategy Directions November 2008.

More detailed strategy directions will be formulated in the Core Strategy Submission version based upon the findings and conclusions of this study as well as in response to representations received.