

Rother in Profile



October 2006

www.rother.gov.uk/corestrategy

This document presents a profile of Rother District today and the factors influencing change in its social, economic and environmental characteristics.

Its function is to provide a basis for discussion about the key issues to address in developing a spatial vision and strategic options as part of Rother District Council's Local Development Framework 'Core Strategy'.

Contents

1.	Purpose and Scope	1
2.	Summary of Main Characteristics	2
3.	Profile	4
(a)	Location and Geography	4
	Landscape and Natural features Character Areas	5
	The High Weald	6
	The Pevensey Marshes	6
	The Romney Marshes	7
(b)	People and socio –economic characteristics	8
	Population	8
	Households	8
	Age Profile	10
	Social Structure	11
	Ethnic Population	12
	Health	12
	Accessibility to Health Provision	13
	Car Ownership	13
	Public Transport	14
	Deprivation Indices	16
	Crime	17
(c)	Education, skills and employment	18
	Education	18
	Employment	19
	Earnings	22
	Unemployment	22
	Travel to Work	24
(d)	Housing	26
	Household Characteristics	26
	Housebuilding Activity	27
	House Prices	28
	Affordability	29
(e)	Environment	30
	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	30
	Nature Conservation sites	30
	Built Heritage	31
	Waste	31
	Water Quality	32

4.	Drivers for change	33
(a)	Population and migration trends	33
(b)	Emerging housing growth requirements	33
(c)	Local housing need	33
(d)	Climate change agenda and use of resources	34
(e)	Regeneration initiatives and employment trends	34
(f)	Infrastructure programmes	35
(g)	Technology	35
(h)	Changing arrangements for service delivery	35

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Purpose

By identifying the main spatial characteristics of the District, this Profile sets the scene for the consideration of future development and change in Rother.

It is intended as a reference source for public consultation on 'Issues and Options' for the new 'Core Strategy' that the Council is undertaking as part of its Local Development Framework (LDF).

Details of the Core Strategy 'Issues and Options' consultation are being advertised and can also be viewed on the Council's website www.rother.gov.uk/corestrategy and at its Community Help Points.

Scope

In accordance with Government guidance, this Profile embraces a broad range of social, economic and environmental characteristics. In particular, it seeks to:

- Identify the functional relationships between land uses and settlements, both within the Plan area and across a wider hinterland;
- Articulate the diversity and needs of local communities and of the whole Plan area;
- Define the local character and distinctiveness of landscape and townscape;
- Identify main transport linkages and levels of accessibility in the Plan area;
- Set out the key 'drivers of change' - these might be social, economic, demographic and environmental; or a combination of all four.

Regularly collected statistical data is used as far as possible in order to provide a consistency and continuity of monitoring information as well as for logistical reasons. It uses relevant data from LSP Action Plans' indicators, the LDF Annual Monitoring Report and the Council's Performance Plan, as well as the 'Integrated Regional Framework'. It also draws on the Audit Commission's 'Local Quality of Life Indicators' and makes extensive use of the '*East Sussex in Figures*' database.

This Profile will be a "living document" through the Core Strategy process, up-dated and refined to reflect the most significant characteristics – strengths and weaknesses – for Rother people.

The importance of the characteristics identified in this Profile will depend somewhat on your particular perspective. You are invited to comment on its scope as part of the current consultation on the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options document. For further details about the consultation arrangements, either go to www.rother.gov.uk/corestrategy, visit one of the Council's Community Help Points or contact the Planning Strategy and Environment team on 01424 787666.

2. SUMMARY OF MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

Location and Geography

For the greater part, Rother is rural in character, forming the south-eastern part of the High Weald. However, it also embraces low-lying coastal areas at both the eastern and western ends of the District.

The settlement pattern reflects this spatial variation, with most of the larger settlements on or close to the coast. Bexhill accounts for nearly half of the population, with the other, much smaller, historic towns being Battle and Rye. However, many jobs and key services are provided by larger towns – notably Hastings – outside the District. This means that close regard should be had to planning and service delivery across administrative boundaries.

People – socio-economic characteristics:

Some 87,200 live in Rother. Their age structure shows a notably higher proportion of elderly compared to county, regional and national averages. This also varies across the District, with the highest proportion of people aged 65+ in Bexhill (35%) and at Fairlight (40%).

There are no sizeable ethnic minority groups in the District.

Average household income, which is an indicator of spending power, is relatively low in Rother, being below the county average and well below the regional average. This may partly reflect the high proportion of retired residents.

The Government's most recent (2004) compilation of indices of social-economic characteristics, the Index of Multiple Deprivation' (IMD) ranks Rother 181st "worst" of 354 local authority area. In other words, it is a little above the national average. There are still pockets of deprivation. In contrast, Hastings is ranked 39th most deprived district in the country.

Rother is a relatively safe place to live, with noticeably lower levels of criminal offences than both the region and country as a whole.

Education, skills and employment

Educational achievement, at GCSE level, of local students is relatively high in both East Sussex and regional contexts. However, a lower proportion of people with a degree (17.7%) compared to the south-east region's average of 21.7% suggests a drift of away from the area.

This is also reflected in the types of jobs people do, with fewer than the national average in managerial and professional posts, although higher levels are found in some rural areas, notably those with closer links to Tunbridge Wells and London.

Some 23,200 people are employed in Rother. On the other hand, it compares with a total workforce of 33,800, meaning that there is a net out-flow of commuters. In fact, some 40% of Rother residents work outside the district.

The rationale for this is evidenced by the difference between average earnings of residents (£502) and people working in Rother (£411).

Of the jobs in Rother, the most significant sectors are public services, followed by financial and business services and retail/distribution. About 10% of jobs are in manufacturing and 3.3% in agriculture/forestry/fishing.

Smaller firms (10 or less employees) predominate, accounting for 89% of business units. Not untypical for a rural area, there are many self-employed people.

Unemployment rates (measured by benefit claimants) are currently low, broadly comparable with the wider area. However, this has not always been the case and in the early 1990s the eastern part of the District and parts of Bexhill were very much higher than the regional average.

Housing

The total number of households in Rother is 38,800, giving an average household size of 2.2 persons, notably lower than the region or country. This is attributable to the fact that single person households account for one third of the total. The proportion is generally higher in coastal parishes.

In 2001 the large majority of homes (78%) were owner-occupied, with 10.6% social rented, 8.0% private rented and 3.5% other rented. This compares to 79% in 1991. Compared to the region as a whole (74%), it is higher.

The District has one of the highest ratios of average house prices to earnings in the South East (ESiF) and has increased over the last 5 years. This fuels the substantial affordable housing need across the District.

House-building since 1991 has averaged 229 dwellings/year. Most of this has actually been in the rural areas, although present plans should shift the balance towards the towns and especially Bexhill.

Environment

Rother has outstanding environmental qualities in its landscape, wildlife habitats and built heritage. There are ongoing national or international obligations to conserve and enhance these. Furthermore, they are integral to the character of the area.

The state of the environment is generally good but there are pressures upon it. The High Weald is subject to continuing financial pressures on agriculture and land management, as well as from development; parts of the SSSIs are defined as in “unfavourable condition”; river water quality is virtually all “fairly good” – “very good” but abstraction is increasing; all Rother’s beaches meet EC Directive on bathing water quality, although only Winchelsea Beach meets its more stringent guideline standard.

3. PROFILE

A. LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY



Source: Rother District Council

Rother District is located in the easternmost part of East Sussex. It is a coastal district that also extends inland well into the High Weald.

The District derives its name from the River Rother, which traverses the northern part of the area to reach the English Channel at Rye. It covers some 200 square miles (51,140 hectares), and has a population of 87,238 inhabitants (ESCC mid 2006 estimate).

The District envelops (but excludes) Hastings, which is largely contained to the south of the Battle ridge. Bexhill is the principal town and administrative centre and has a population of 41,635 inhabitants (ESCC mid 2006 estimate). The smaller, historic towns of Battle and Rye also lie within this mainly rural District.

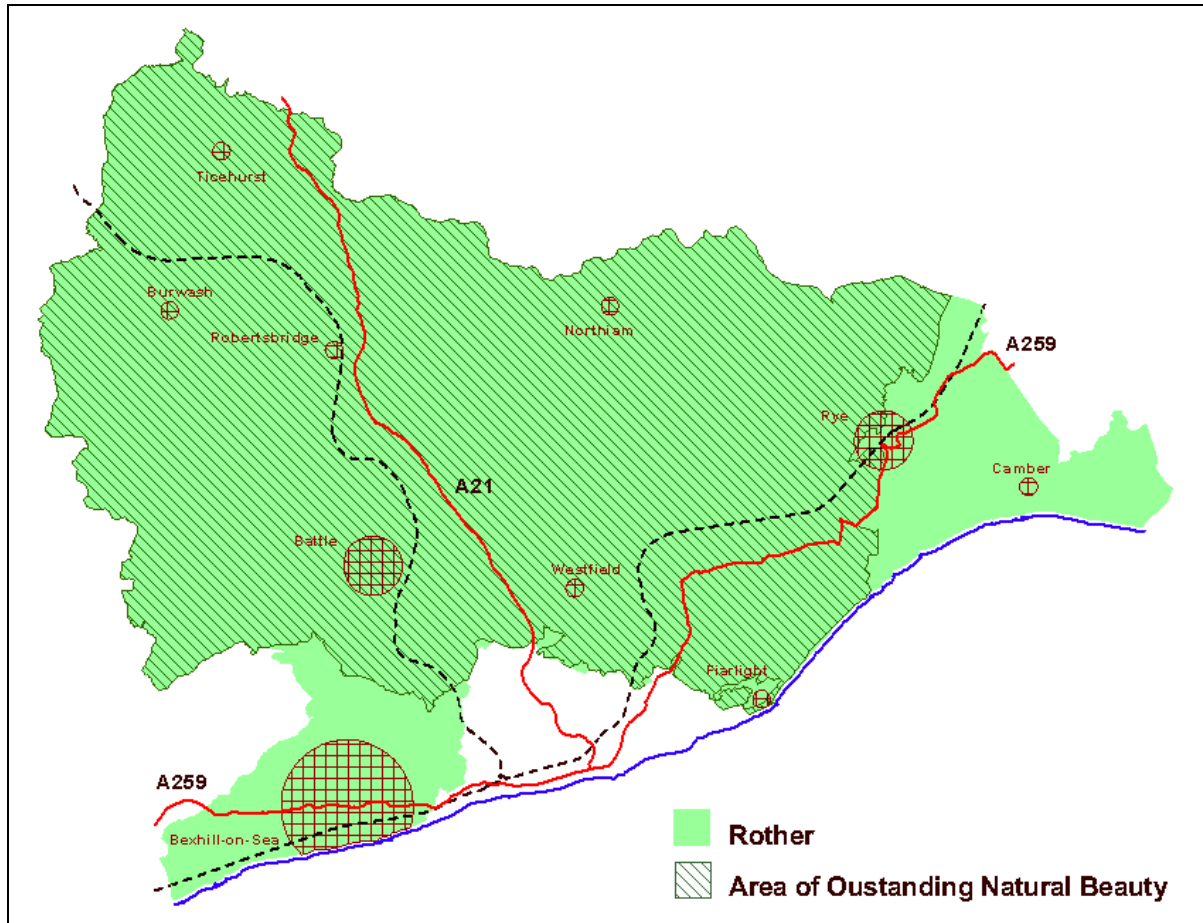
Aside from Hastings, other significant nearby settlements are Eastbourne (12 miles west of Bexhill), Tunbridge Wells (35 miles north of Bexhill). Brighton (32 miles west) and Ashford (36 miles) are further afield, while London is 75 miles to the north.

The A27/A259, which is the main road artery along the coast also connects the district to the ports of Folkestone and Dover to the east and Newhaven to the west. The A21 provides the main north-south road link to Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge, as well as London.

Crowhurst, Battle, Robertsbridge, Etchingham and Stonegate stations are situated on the main Hastings to London (Waterloo, London Bridge, Charing Cross and Cannon Street) railway, via Tunbridge Wells.

Rye, Winchelsea, Three Oaks, Doleham Halt, Bexhill, Collington, Cooden Beach and Norman's Bay are situated on both the Hastings to London (Victoria) railway via Eastbourne, Lewes, Gatwick and Croydon railway and the Ashford to Brighton south coast railway via Hastings, Eastbourne and Lewes. Ashford is an international station with connections direct to Paris, Disneyland (France), Lille and Brussels, though with the opening of Ebbsfleet station, close to the M25, scheduling will be subject to change.

Rother District - Main settlements, road and rail links, and AONB



Source: Rother District Council

Landscape and Natural Features Character Areas

82% of Rother lies within the High Weald. Its ridges and valleys largely define Rother's landscape, with the highest ridge traversing the District from Dallington in the west, dipping towards the sea at the cliffs at Fairlight to the east.

Bexhill, together with the low-lying coastal levels to the west, and the reclaimed land around Rye and Camber to the east, are distinct landscape areas.

Extract of the Natural England's Natural Areas Map

- 122 - The High Weald
- 123 - The Romney Marshes
- 124 - The Pevensey Marshes



Source: A Natural England

These broadly based “Character Areas” defined as part of a national series take into account landscape, wildlife and natural features.

The High Weald

The High Weald developed on one particular outcrop, the Hastings Beds, which provides the foundation for the character of its landscape. Over a period of 140 million years clays, silts and sands were continually deposited over swamp. The land has risen and has been eroded. Now the underlying sandstones and clays, known as the Hastings Beds have become what is now known as the ‘High Weald’.

The sandstones and clays have had a profound influence on the development of the High Weald. Different rates of erosion of different beds of rock have produced the typical ridges and steep ghylls which characterise the area.

The Hastings Beds, especially the Wadhurst clays contain the ore which supplied the Wealden iron industry until the nineteenth century. The sandstones and clays supported great oak trees. The stone, clay and timber provided the building materials used in the construction of ships and houses, for which the Weald was famous.

The Pevensey Marshes

The Pevensey Levels underwent repeated changes during the Middle Ages. Farmland that had been created from the sea was largely lost to successive floods in the late Middle Ages and not regained until the more tranquil weather and expanding economy in Elizabethan and early Stuart times. The struggle of medieval marshmen to erect bordering dykes against the water and build sluices, tide-gates and water lets, so turning soggy, black earth into rich fields, has left many visible vestiges on the ground.

A medieval activity which has left its own impression on the Levels is salt making. The ravages of the sea led to the abandonment of much of the Pevensey Levels during the later Middle Ages and wreaked havoc at its ports. Northeye, once a busy harbour and a limb of the Cinque Port of Hastings was lost to the sea, but is now well inland.

The Romney Marshes

Strictly speaking, the marsh area within Rother District is more correctly known as the Rother Levels and Walland Marsh.

The marshes consist of shingle, alluvium and sands. They are characterised by a complex drainage system based upon a series of private ditches flowing to a network of Internal Drainage Board sewers and main rivers. These include the Rivers Rother, Brede and Tillingham and the Royal Military Canal. The area contains several national and international designated sites and protected habitats, whose features are influenced by changes in water level and flow.

Winchelsea and Rye were both important ports. Winchelsea had been built as a replacement town for the first Winchelsea, situated on the marshes, but destroyed by a severe storm in 1287. However, by the 16th century, because of the silting of its harbour and impoverishment by plagues and French raids it had declined significantly. In the 14th century one of the main activities at Winchelsea has been the importing of wine from Bordeaux.

Rye was also a thriving port, but smaller than Winchelsea until the decline of Winchelsea from the fourteenth century. Iron, wool and foodstuffs to London were the main commodities exported by Rye and her imports were mainly coal and grain.

Most of the District falls within the catchment of the River Rother, draining into the sea near Rye, while the south-western areas are drained by the Combe Haven, Egerton Park Stream Bexhill, and Wallers Haven. The Heathfield – Battle ridge separates the main catchments.

B. PEOPLE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Population

People are unevenly dispersed around Rother. Almost half of the population live in Bexhill (i.e. 41,600 people). The other towns of Battle and Rye (with the contiguous built up parts of Rye Foreign & Playden) are considerably smaller, with populations of some 6,200 and 5,000 respectively. Most of the remainder live in the villages and hamlets across the District.

Households

The mid year estimate for 2006 (ESiF) shows that there are 38,829 households in Rother District.

Towns and Parishes in Rother District



Source: Rother District Council

Population by Parish, Mid-Year Estimate 2006

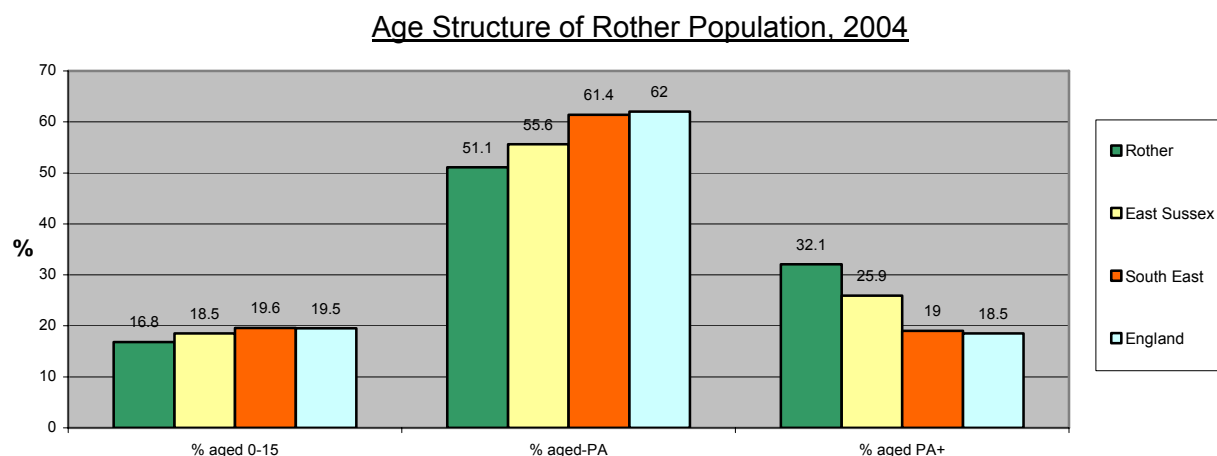
Age group	All people	0-14	15-29	30-44	45-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Geography								
Rother	87,238	15.1	12.4	15.8	28.3	13.1	10.5	4.7
Ashburnham & Penhurst	368	17.4	12.2	17.9	41.8	6	3.8	0.8
Battle	6227	18.3	12.7	17.2	26.9	12.2	9	3.7
Beckley	985	15.2	8.8	18	38.9	11.7	6.6	0.8
Bexhill	41,635	13.2	12.6	14.1	24.8	14.8	13.8	6.7
Bodiam	394	29.4	9.6	27.2	28.7	2.5	1.8	0.8
Brede	1,717	13.7	10.3	16.1	33.8	14	8.4	3.8
Brightling	367	24	6.3	24.5	31.9	11.2	1.6	0.5
Burwash	2,531	15.3	11.9	18	33.5	10.7	7	3.6
Camber	1,239	16.3	21.1	18.2	28.2	10.7	4.8	0.6
Catsfield	806	16.9	9.7	17	35.5	10.8	7.7	2.5
Crowhurst	868	16.6	10.3	15.7	34.7	10.7	8.8	3.3
Dallington	309	12.3	8.7	10.4	46.3	12.6	5.8	3.9
Etchingham	753	19.5	11.7	21.1	31.3	10	5.8	0.5
Ewhurst	1,060	19.4	8.9	17.00	35.8	11.8	5.1	2
Fairlight	1,698	7.8	7.9	10.1	35.5	20.4	14.3	3.9
Guestling	1,264	10.9	11.6	15.1	41.1	13.4	5.9	2.1
Hurst Green	1,473	20.1	15.1	19.1	29.7	7.9	6.2	1.8
Icklesham	2,826	15.5	11.5	16.5	30.5	13.5	9.9	2.6
Iden	453	10.4	15	11.5	39.1	15.2	6.6	2.2
Mountfield	573	30.4	12.7	18.3	20.8	4.4	5.4	8
Northiam	2,121	15.6	10	16.6	33.1	14	8.1	2.6
Peasmarsh	1,180	20.7	12.1	19	29.2	10.7	4.6	3.8
Pett	784	15.9	10.8	16.3	31.5	10.5	10.5	4.5
Playden & East Guldeford	319	11.9	12.9	11.9	43.6	10.7	7.5	1.6
Rye	4,159	13.5	16	16.4	28.8	13.2	9.1	2.9
Rye Foreign	361	20.2	10.8	18.6	26.3	9.7	7.5	6.9
Salehurst & Robertsbridge	2,597	19.9	17.3	18.6	26.9	9.5	5.5	2.2
Sedlescombe	1,339	16.9	13	15.8	30.5	12.6	7.8	3.4
Ticehurst	3,426	19.9	10.6	22	30	8.2	5.7	3.5
Udimore	368	17.7	7.6	19.6	35.9	14.1	3.5	1.6
Westfield	2,641	17.3	12	16.5	33.7	11.7	7	1.9
Whatlington	397	24.4	7.6	20.9	42.3	2.5	2	0.3

Source: ESiF

Of the rural Parishes, Ticehurst is the largest, with Burwash, Icklesham, Robertsbridge and Salehurst and Westfield the only others which have populations over 2,500.

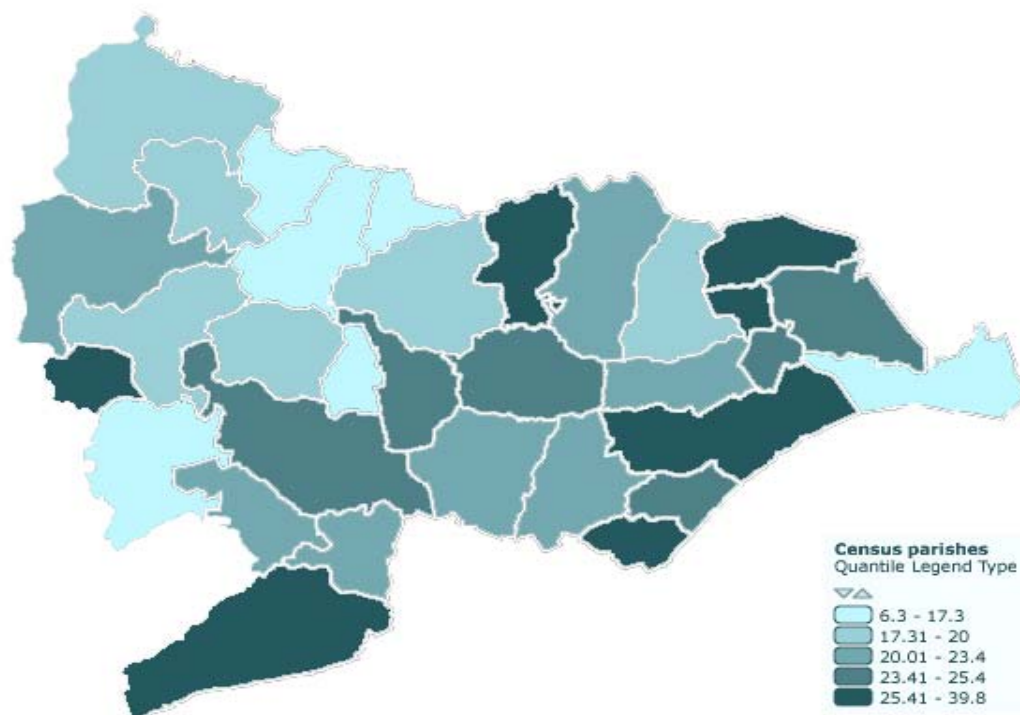
Age profile

The data in the Figure below demonstrates that the proportion of elderly people in Rother is high compared with the county, regional and national position. In fact, Rother recorded the highest proportion of residents aged 85 and over of all local authorities in England and Wales in the 2001 Census. Conversely, the proportion of both young and working age residents in Rother is below the averages for East Sussex, the South East and for England. This relative imbalance in the population structure has implications for both the provision of support facilities for an aging population as well as the future economic fortunes of the District.



Source: Esif

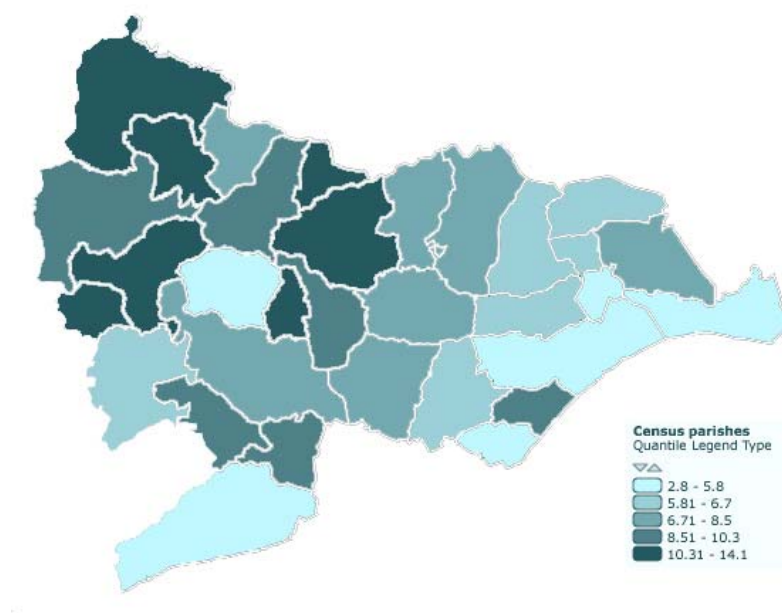
The population aged 65+ by Parish – Census 2001



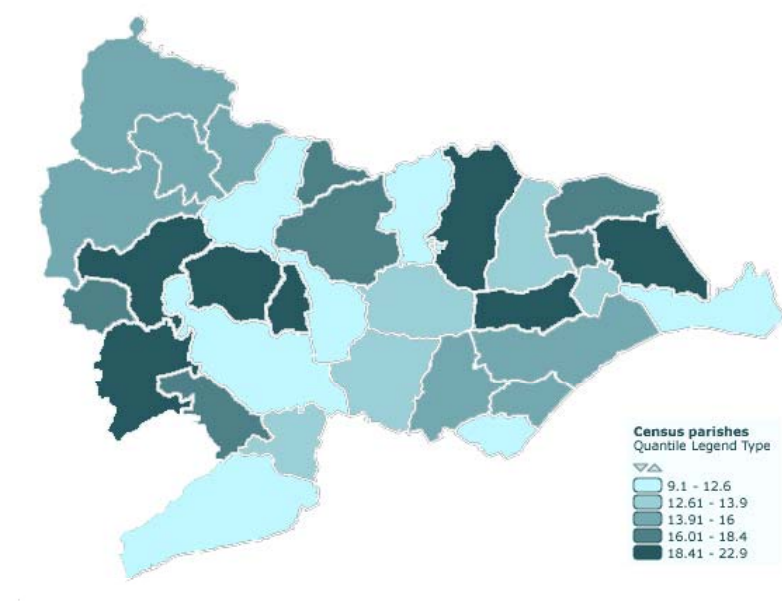
The age profile varies notably across the District, with 35% of Bexhill's population aged over 65, compared to 25% in both Battle and Rye and between 15% and 18% in the larger rural Parishes of Hurst Green, Salehurst and Ticehurst.

Social structure

Higher professional and managerial occupations – Census 2001



Small employers and own account workers – Census 2001



Compared to the national average, Rother District has a low percentage of people in higher professional managerial occupations, lower managerial professional and intermediate occupation and lower supervisory technical and semi-routine occupations. Rother District has a relatively high percentage of small employers and own account workers.

Within Rother District, Bexhill, Camber, Rye and Icklesham have a very low percentage of higher professional and managerial occupations, while Bodiam, Brightling, Burwash, Dallington, Etchingham, Ewhurst, Ticehurst and Whatlington have a very high percentage.

Within Rother District, Bexhill has the lowest percentage of small employers and own account workers, while Brightling, Playden with East Guldeford, Udimore and Whatlington record the highest percentage.

Ethnic population

There is a relatively low proportion of non-white ethnic groups (2004) compared to the wider regional and national averages.

Ethnic groups by percentage, 2004

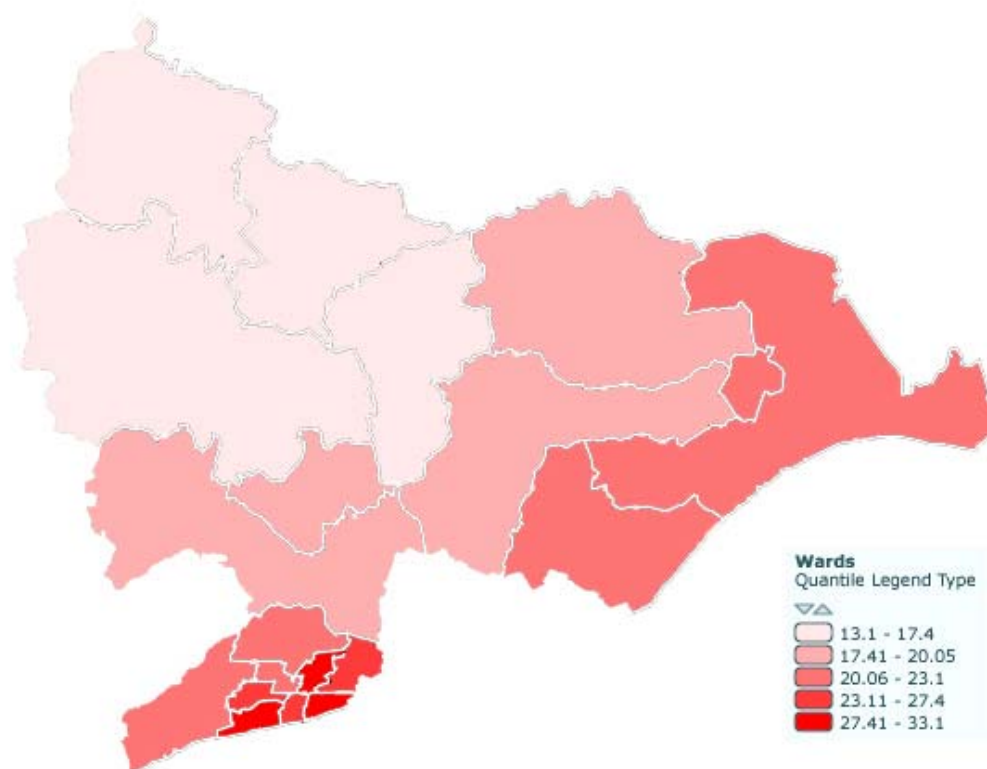
Ethnic groups	All people	All White	All Mixed	All Asian or Asian British	All Black or Black British	All Chinese or Other Ethnic Group
Gender / Age groups	Persons	Persons	Persons	Persons	Persons	Persons
Geography						
England	100.0	89.5	1.5	5.1	2.6	1.2
South East	100.0	93.6	1.3	2.9	1.2	1.1
East Sussex	100.0	96.1	1.1	1.1	0.8	0.8
Eastbourne	100.0	94.8	1.2	1.6	0.8	1.3
Hastings	100.0	94.8	1.5	1.3	1.4	0.7
Lewes	100.0	96.5	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.9
Rother	100.0	96.9	0.8	0.9	0.7	0.5
Wealden	100.0	96.8	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.8

Source: ESiF

Health

The table below shows that there are differences in the relative numbers of people with long term limiting illnesses, with a concentration in Bexhill, perhaps reflecting the demographic profile.

Percentage of people with limiting long term illness by ward – Census 2001



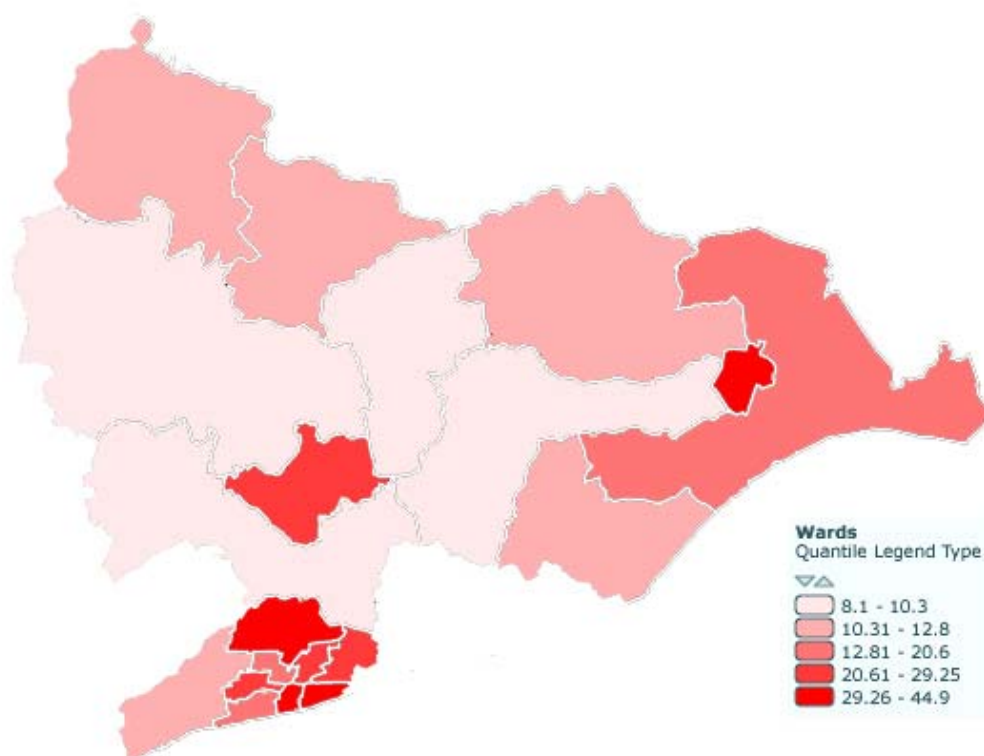
Accessibility to Health Provision

There are hospitals at both Hastings and Bexhill, though Bexhill is a much smaller hospital, with no Accident and Emergency facilities.

Bexhill is served by several General Practitioners and Dentists. Battle, Rye and the larger villages have both General Practitioners and Dentists.

Car Ownership

Percentage of households without a car, by Ward – Census 2001



Source: ESiF

Bexhill, Camber, Rye and Rye Foreign have more than 20% of their households without a car, while in the more remote parishes, mainly in the western part of the District, Ashburnham and Penhurst, Beckley, Bodiam, Brightling, Dallington, Ewhurst and Whatlington at least 93% of the households have a car.

The majority of households without a car are pensioner households.

Public transport

Rother people exhibit a relatively high level of car usage for journeys

The Train Operating Companies record the approximate number of passengers using each station. This is known as the "footfall".

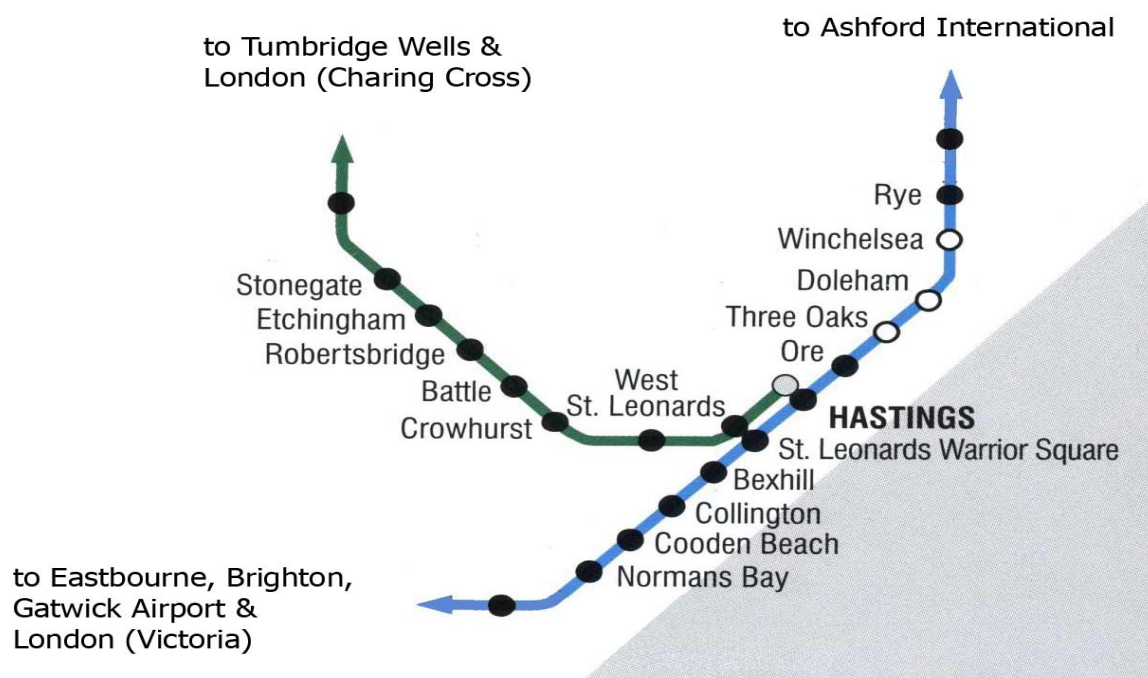
Within Rother District these are as follows (latest available figures):

Crowhurst	40,000	Normans Bay -	N/A
Battle	471,000	Cooden Beach -	96,720
Robertsbridge	226,000	Collington -	N/A
Etchingham	203,000	Bexhill	530,400
Stonegate	166,000	Three Oaks -	N/A
		Doleham -	N/A
		Winchelsea -	N/A
		Rye -	137,280

Source: Rail Companies

Rail Network within Rother District

RAIL SERVICES IN ROTHER



Source: Derived from ESCC Bus Timetables

Key

Service number **346**

Route served by bus **B67**

Route terminus

Route operates in direction of arrow only

Variation to main route

Rail station

School services shown in *italics*

For days and times of operation, please see timetable

0 1 2 3 4 Kilometres
0 1 2 Miles

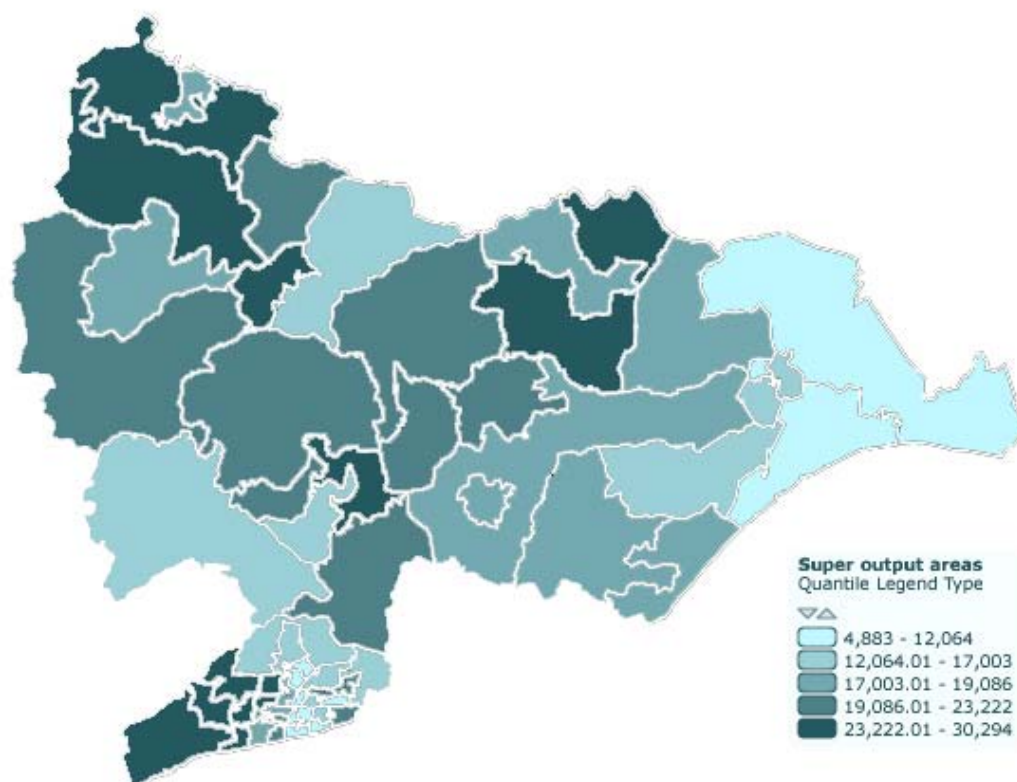
This map shows the bus routes which are included in this Travel Guide. For details of bus services outside the Hastings & Rother area, please see the East Sussex Public Transport Map or appropriate Travel Guide (see page 11).

NB Bus Routes funded East Sussex County Council are due to change from November 2006. For more information pick up the new timetable leaflets for the Rye area and the Battle/Robertsbridge areas. They are also available from the East Sussex County Council website on www.eastsussex.gov.uk

Deprivation indices

The most common indicators of socio-economic needs are the 'indices of multiple deprivation' and the combined 'Index'.

Index of multiple deprivation by super output area* - 2004



* Super output areas are a relatively new geography, designed for the collection and publication of small area statistics below ward level. They are based on 2001 Census Output Areas, with Lower Layer SOAs containing on average around 1,500 people.

Source: ESiF

The 2004 indices rank Rother as the 181st most deprived Local Authority out of the 354 in England.

Within the District, the areas with higher levels of deprivation are the Sidley, Central and Sackville parts of Bexhill and the eastern extremes of the District.

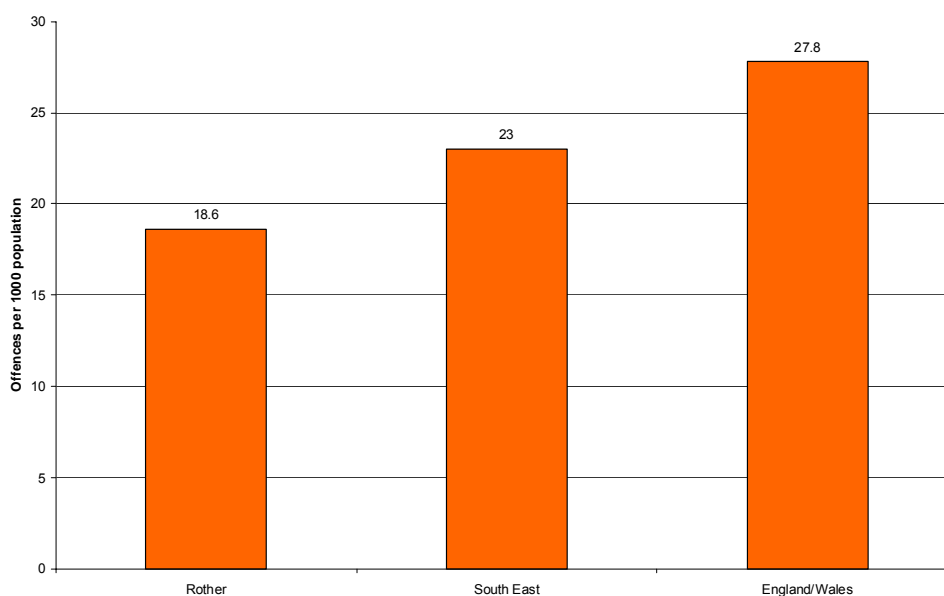
In comparison with the national picture, the only part of the District to fall within the top 20% most deprived areas is within the Sidley ward.

However, for child poverty specifically, the Bexhill areas of St Michaels and Sackville as well as a part of Rye are within the top 20% nationally whilst part of Sidley falls within the top 10%.

Crime

In terms of crime levels, an overall comparison of rates of offences is set out below. This shows that Rother has generally low offence rates compared with the South East and England & Wales.

Criminal Offences per 1000 population, Jan – March 2004



Source: Home Office Crime Statistics for England & Wales

Recorded Crime in Rother

No. of Recorded Offences	
August 2005 to July 2006	
Burglary from dwellings	- 2.1 per 1,000 dwellings
Vehicle crime (damage to, and theft of)	- 2.3 per 1,000 residents
Violent crime	- 4.2 per 1,000 residents

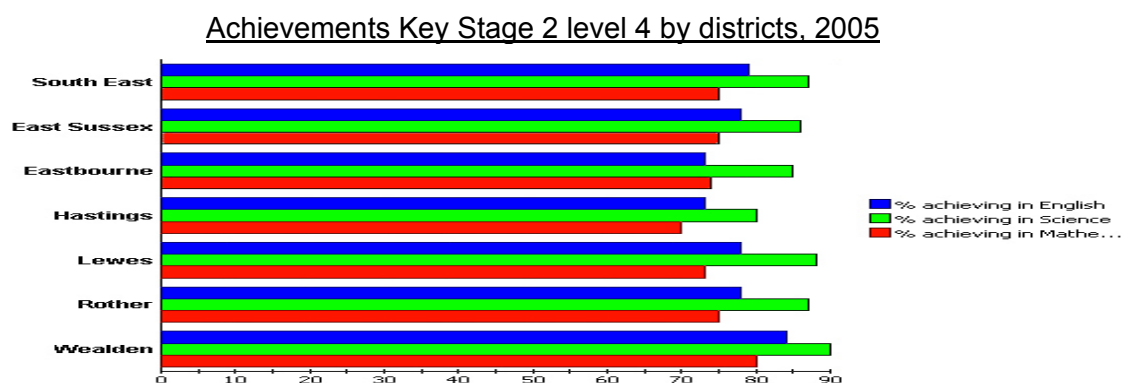
Source: Sussex Police Performance data

C. EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT

Education

Some 1,500 students aged 16+ are in full-time education, representing 2.7% of the adult population. There is no noticeable variation across the district.

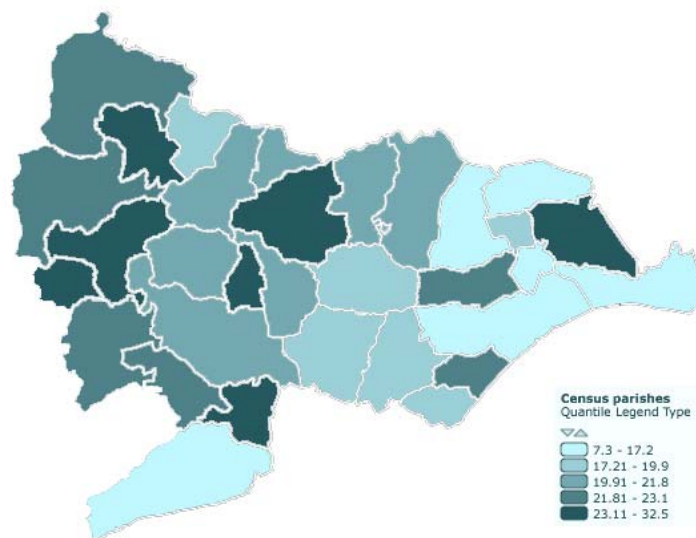
Recent levels of educational attainment, in Rother, in terms of the proportion of secondary school students achieving 5 GCSEs A*-C are relatively high, at 64%, compared to 57% across East Sussex and 58% in the South East.



Source: EsiF

Key Stage 2 tests take place during a pupils final year at Primary School, when they are aged approximately 11 years. Level 4 is the level of achievement expected of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. It can be seen that Rother is close to the county and regional average.

Percentage of Higher Qualifications by parish, attained level 4/5*



*First degree, Higher degree, NVQ levels 4 and 5, HND, Qualified Teacher Status, Qualified Medical doctor, Qualified Dentist, Qualified Nurse, Midwife, Health Visitor.

Source: EsiF

The Plan above shows that a higher proportion of people have higher qualifications in the western rural areas with those in Bexhill and the eastern rural area being less well qualified.

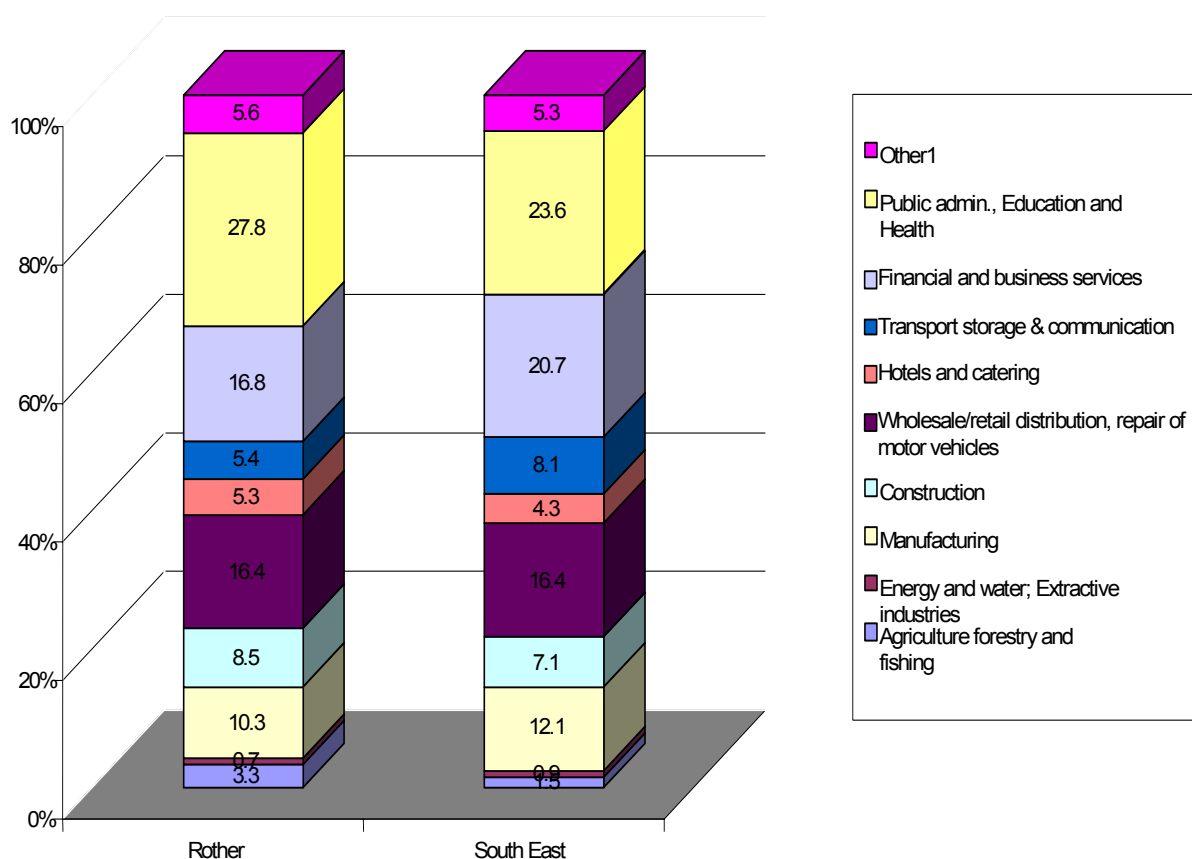
Employment

Rother substantially forms part of the defined Hastings economic area (Travel To Work Area), with the northern part of the District within the Tunbridge Wells TTWA.

There are some 23,200 jobs in Rother compared to 30,000 in Hastings (2004). This represents an increase on the 1994 figure, but a decrease on 2001 when there were 23,900 jobs. These figures represent increases of 10% and 7.5% respectively, compared to 10.3% for all of East Sussex and 6.4% for the South East region.

A significant proportion, some 40% of local jobs, is part time

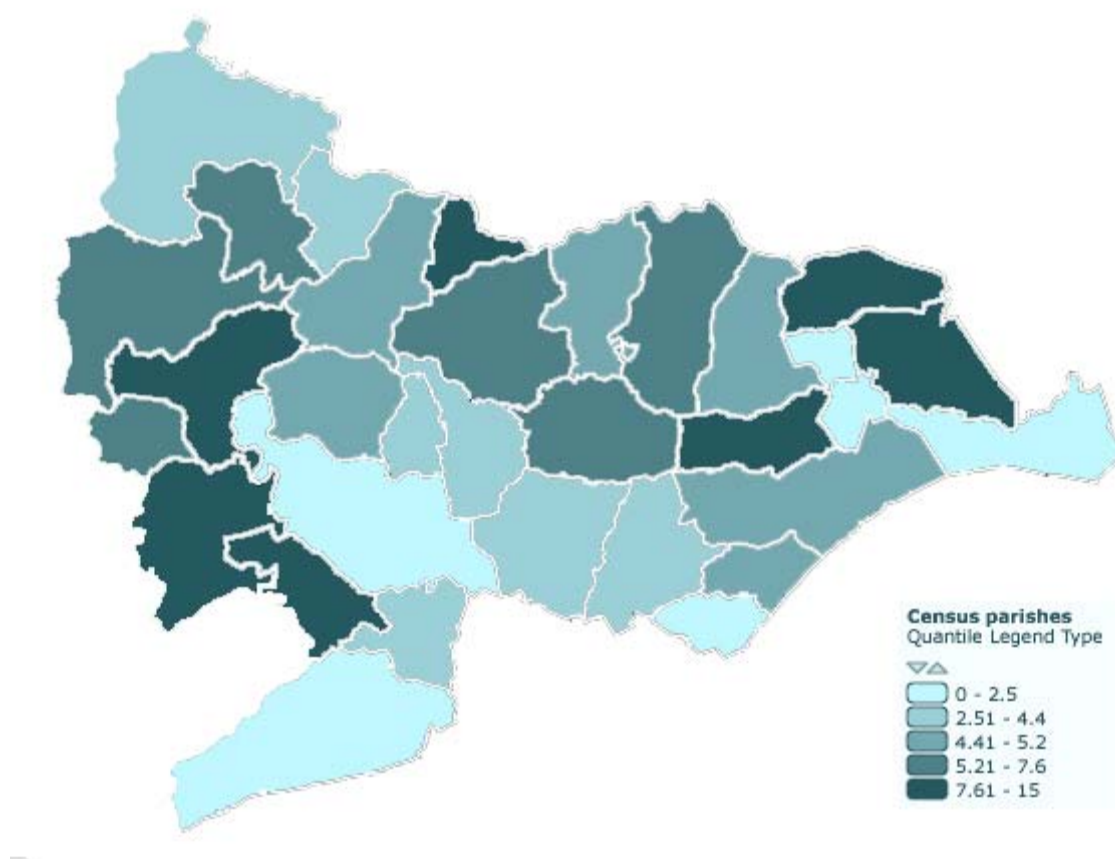
Employment Sectors – Census 2001



In broad terms, the pattern depicted is similar at the local and regional levels. The greatest percentage of Rother's working population is employed in the public service sector (27.8%), a higher rate than for the region as a whole (23.6%). Conversely, the regional importance of financial and businesses services in employment terms (20.7%) is not reflected locally (16.8%), nor is employment in transport, storage and communications (5.4% in Rother, 8.1% in the South East).

Whilst low in overall percentage terms, employment in agriculture and related activities in Rother (3.3%) is significantly above the regional average of 1.5%.

Percentage jobs in agriculture by Parish – Census 2001



Firm Size by Business units

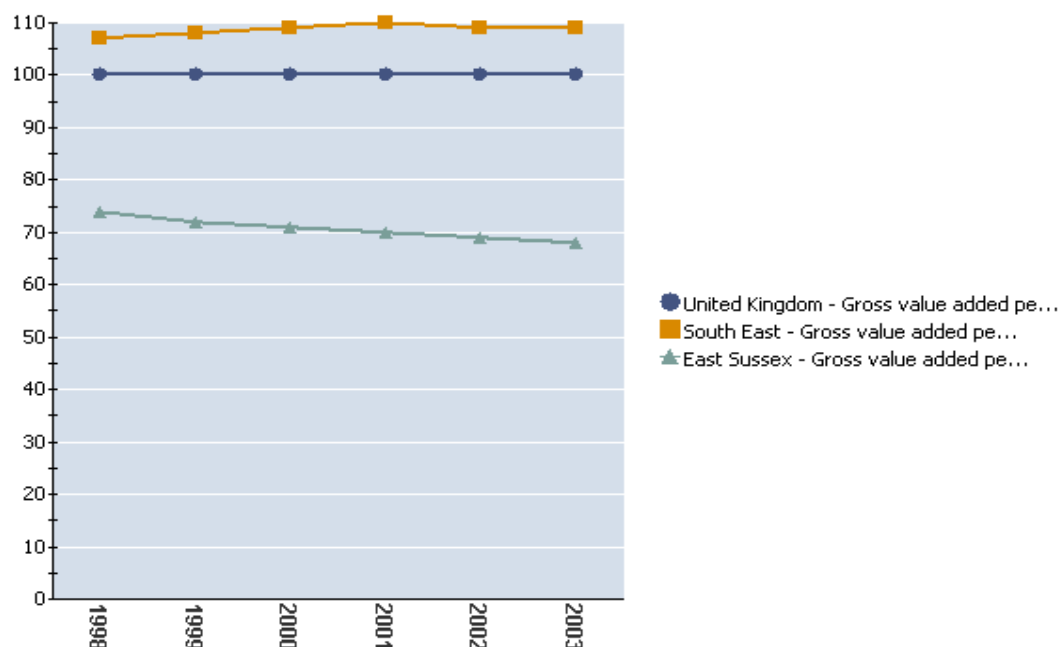
Variable	Business units						
Size band	Total	1 to 4 employees	5 to 10 employees	11 to 24 employees	25 to 49 employees	50 to 99 employees	Over 100 employees
Geography							
Great Britain	2,235,300	1,533,300	329,600	194,200	93,200	48,000	37,000
South East	361,500	261,600	47,300	27,700	13,200	6,800	5,000
East Sussex	20,800	15,500	2,500	1,500	700	300	200
Eastbourne	3,200	2,100	500	300	200	100	100
Hastings	2,800	1,900	400	200	100	100	0
Lewes	3,900	2,900	500	300	100	100	0
Rother	3,600	2,800	400	200	100	0	0
Wealden	7,300	5,800	800	400	200	100	0

Source: EsiF

Rother District clearly has a high proportion of small firms and a very low proportion of large firms compared to the country, the region and the county.

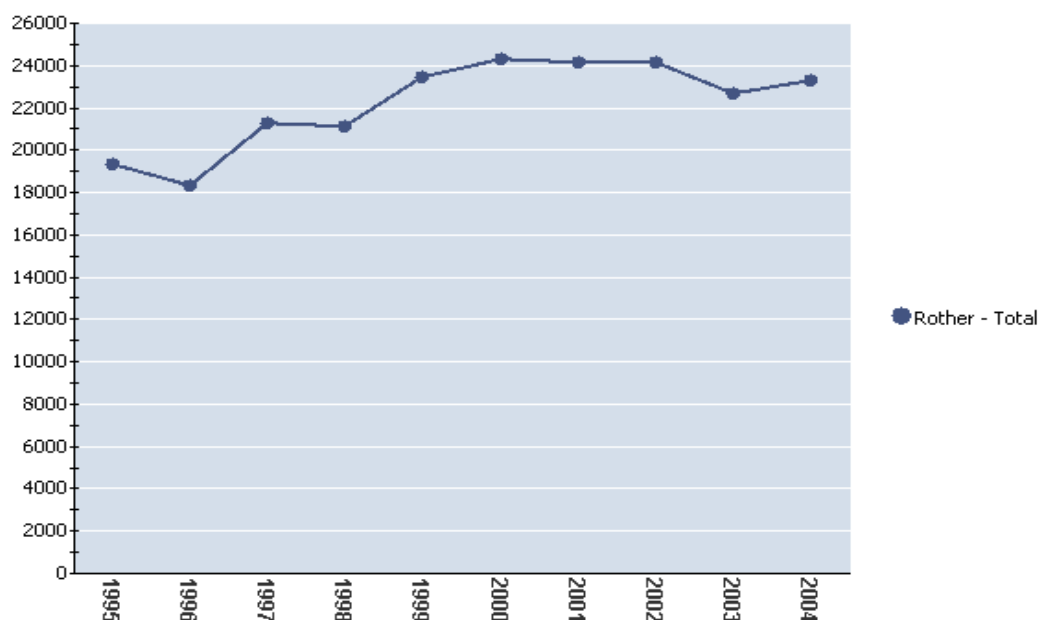
The total 'Gross Value Added' (GVA) by businesses in East Sussex is compared to the region and national picture below. GVA is an indicator of wealth creation within an area, measuring the sum of local economic activity.

'Gross Value Added' by businesses



Source: ESiF

Employment (jobs in Rother 1995 – 2004)



Source: ESiF

The graph shows that the number of jobs in Rother has increased by 20% over the last 10 years.

Earnings

Average Gross Weekly Earnings, 2005

	Av. gross weekly earnings		
	Residents	Employees	% difference
Rother	£549	£425	23%
East Sussex	£507	£436	14%
South East	£577	£539	7%

Source: ESCC and Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2005

Average earnings of people working in Rother is noticeably lower than of residents, illustrating the higher incomes available by commuting out of the District for work

Average weekly earnings of Rother residents are £549, with average full-time male earnings some 50% higher than those of women.

In terms of household income levels, the table below compares the position locally with the county and region. The average household income in Rother falls significantly below the regional average. This may be linked to the high proportion of retired residents. The 2001 Census revealed that of those aged between 16 and 74 in Rother, 22.3% are retired. This is the highest proportion of all the 67 local authority areas in the South East.

Average Household Income, 2006

	Av. household income 2006	% of SE average
Rother	£30,000	83%
East Sussex	£31,600	87%
South East	£36,300	100%

Source: ESCC & CACI

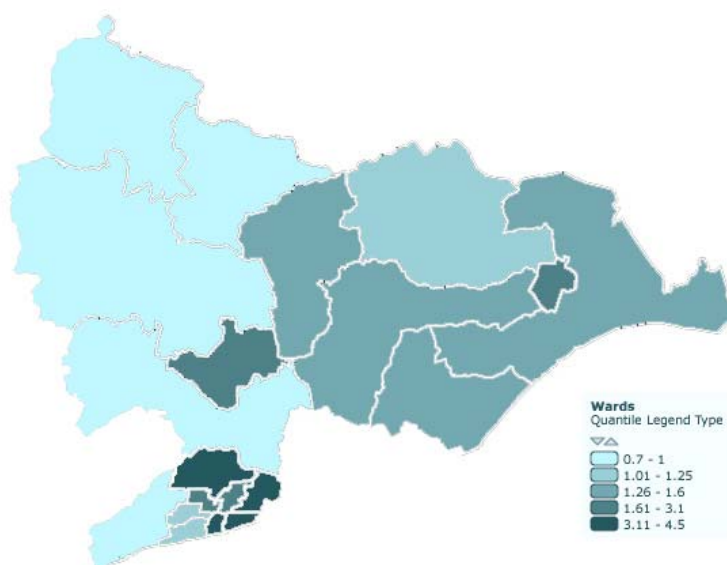
Unemployment

Unemployment rate, Quarterly 2005/06

Quarter	Jan-05	Apr-05	Jul-05	Oct-05	Jan-06	Apr-06	Jul-06
Geography							
Great Britain	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.6	2.6	2.6
South East	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.7	1.7	1.7
East Sussex	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.8	2.1	2.2	2.2
Eastbourne	2.4	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.9	3.0	2.9
Hastings	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.1	3.6	3.7	3.8
Lewes	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.9	1.7
Rother	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.9	1.9	2.0
Wealden	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.0

Source: ESiF

Unemployment rate by ward, July 2006



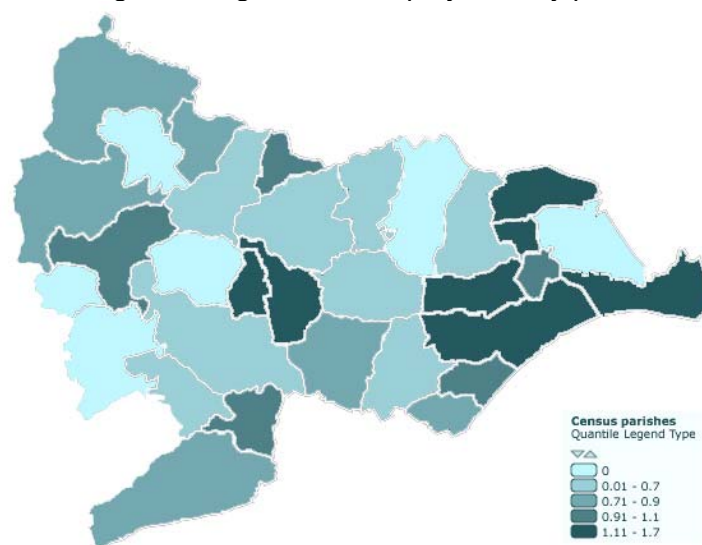
Source: ESiF

Unemployment is currently low. There are some 810 people unemployed in Rother (at May 2006). This figure equates to 1.8% of the resident working age population, which is lower than the rate for East Sussex and Great Britain and only marginally higher than the South East figure of 1.7%. The distribution of unemployment across the district (January 2006) is shown below.

It has increased somewhat over the last 12 months, including in the Rye and Eastern Rother wards, as well as in all except the most western Bexhill wards.

Long-term unemployment is generally greatest in the eastern part of the District, but also at Sedlescombe and Whatlington.

Percentage of Long-term Unemployment by parish, 2005



*Long-term unemployment are those who stated they have not worked since 1999 or earlier (at the time of the Census April 2001)

Source: ESiF

Travel to Work

Commuting Flows In and Out of the District – Census 2001

Commuting flow variable	Live and work in district	In-commuters	Out-commuters	Net commuters
Geography				
<u>East Sussex</u>	164,380	16,380	48,659	-32,279
Eastbourne	26,768	10,404	10,026	378
Hastings	24,984	7,219	10,779	-3,560
Lewes	23,567	12,123	17,874	-5,751
Rother	19,704	8,254	14,078	-5,824
Wealden	35,392	12,345	29,867	-17,522

The East Sussex LTP shows that Rother District has the highest percentage of people working at home. The numbers commuting by cycle or by bus is very low. The numbers commuting by train or by car is close to the average.

Comparison of Commuting Flows in and out of East Sussex County, 1991 with 2001

Commuting flow variable	In-commuters		Out-commuters		Net commuting flow	
	Persons	% change 1991-2001	Persons	% change 1991-2001	Persons	% change 1991-2001
Year						
1991	11,850		38,980		-21,130	
2001	16,380	38	48,659	25	-32,279	19

Source: Journey to work data, 1991 Census and 2001 Census, OPCS/ONS

This table gives changes in commuting flows to and from East Sussex for the period 1991-2001. This data is taken from Census data which records place of work and place of residence, and thus can calculate journey to work movements.

The figures show that the numbers of both in-commuters (into the county) and out-commuters (out of the county) has increased during the 10 year period, particularly in-commuters. The net commuting flow has also increased.

Commuting Flows, distance travelled to work – Census 2001

Distance travelled to work	All people	Less than 2km	2 - 5km	5 - 10km	10 - 20km	20 - 40km	40 - 60km	60km and over	Working at or from home	Other
Geography										
Eastbourne	100.0	29.7	29.3	5.2	5.7	8.9	2.4	4.5	8.6	5.8
Hastings	100.0	28.7	28.8	8.2	3.8	6.7	3.0	5.1	8.7	6.9
Lewes	100.0	21.8	9.9	14.3	20.8	7.4	2.5	5.7	11.4	6.2
Rother	100.0	21.0	11.2	14.9	13.8	7.2	3.2	7.1	14.2	7.4
Wealden	100.0	16.9	9.1	12.5	18.5	11.9	5.5	4.6	13.8	7.2

Commuter Journey Patterns – Census 2001

Local Authority	Car or van passenger or driver	Work at Home	Cycle	On Foot	Bus	Train	Other – Taxi/ Motorcycle
Eastbourne	62.4	8.6	3.5	13.5	6	4.5	1.5
Hastings	64	8.6	1.5	14.4	5.4	4.4	1.7
Lewes	63	11.4	1.7	10.8	5.5	6.2	1.4
Rother	64.5	14.2	1.4	10.6	1.8	6	1.5
Wealden	68.4	13.8	1.1	7.5	2.6	5.6	1
East Sussex	65	11.6	1.7	10.8	4	5.4	1.5
South East	64	10	3	10	4	6	3
Great Britain	62	9	3	10	7	7	2

D. HOUSING

Household characteristics

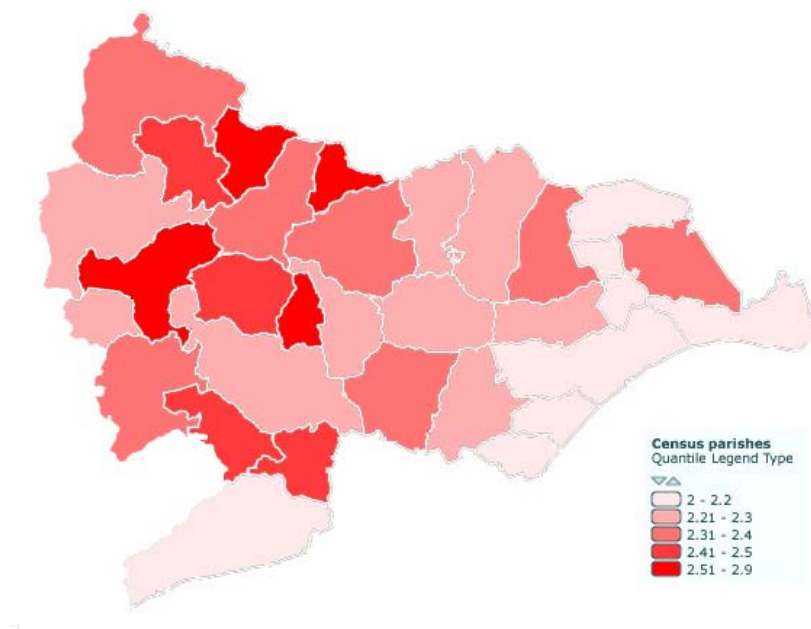
Rother's residents live in a range of household types.

Household Type – Census 2001

	Household Type (as a % of all households)				Average household size
	Couples	Lone parent	Other multi person	Single person	
Rother	57.6%	7.5%	1.9%	33.0%	2.2
East Sussex	56.8%	8.5%	2.2%	32.5%	2.2
South East	59.9%	8.7%	2.9%	28.5%	2.4
England	56.4%	10.5%	3.0%	30.1%	2.4

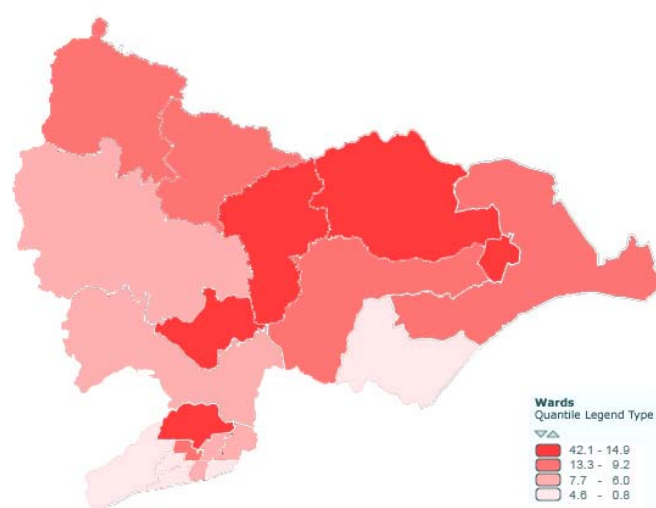
Whilst the majority of households comprise couples, with or without children, the table above shows that there is also a significant minority of single person households in Rother. Overall, the pattern of household types in Rother is broadly in line with the county picture. There are clearer distinctions with the regional and national picture with the proportion of single person households being noticeably higher and the proportions of lone parent and multi-person households being lower.

Household Size by Parish – Census 2001



The 2001 Census reveals that 73% of all occupied household 'spaces' (i.e. dwellings) in Rother were occupied by one or two people. The extent to which smaller household sizes prevail in Rother is similarly demonstrated by the District's average household size, which is 2.17 persons (rounded to 2.2 in the table above). This rate is one of the very lowest in the South East, ranking 64th lowest of the 67 local authorities in the region.

Percentage of households in housing association dwellings by ward, 2006



Source: EsiF and Rother DC

The Sidley ward of Bexhill has by far the largest proportion of social housing units (42.1%) of any ward within the District. No other Bexhill ward is in the top quartile. There are nine wards within Bexhill and four fall into the lowest quartile. Apart from Sidley, Rye (22.2%), Battle (15.2%), Ewhurst and Sedlescombe (15.0%) and Rother Levels (14.9%) have the highest proportion of social housing.

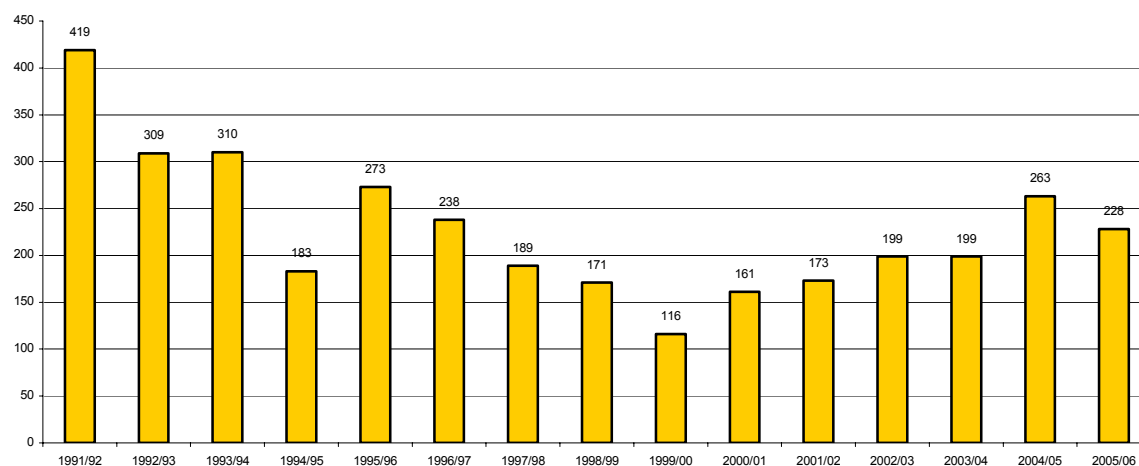
Percentage of Housing Quality, 2005

Tenure type		Total -all tenures	Local authority - rented	RSL - rented	Private
Geography	Housing quality				
Rother	All types	100.0	0.0	10.1	89.9
	Unfit	5.2	0.0	5.7	94.3
	Vacant	8.3	0.0	0.5	99.5

Source: ESiF

House building activity

Housing Completions, 1991 – 2006



Source: Rother District Council

The following tables show the distribution of recent house building and that planned up to 2011. It shows a shift to more urban development.

Distribution of housing 1991 – 2006

Bexhill	41%
Battle	7%
Rye	4%
Rural parishes	49%

Source: Rother District Council

Anticipated distribution 2006 – 2011

Bexhill	43%
Battle	11%
Rye	5%
Rural parishes	41%

Since 1994 housing completions have been low, due mainly to the lack of land allocated for housing. Completions fell steadily to each a low in 1999/2000. Since then the number of completions has risen steadily apart from a fall last year. Nevertheless, annual completions remain consistently below what is required to meet the County Structure Plan Housing requirement for 2011. It is anticipated that completions will rise towards the end of the Plan period with the development of the Blackfriars site at Battle and with the opening of the Link Road at north Bexhill which will enable implementation of the associated housing allocations.

Affordable Housing Completions for the past 10 years

96/97	53		01/02	42
97/98	54		02/03	23
98/99	18		03/04	63
99/00	0		04/05	20
00/01	32		05/06	3

Source: Rother District Council

House prices

Current average house prices in Rother (January – March 2006) are shown in the table below:

	Rother	East Sussex	South East
Flat/maisonette	£130,464	£126,526	£151,056
Terrace	£170,065	£168,598	£178,308
Semi-detached	£202,939	£200,870	£215,128
Detached	£309,167	£304,920	£373,219
Average for all types of property	£215,577	£198,540	£228,762

Source: ESIF

Affordability

The table below shows the changes in average household incomes and the average house price between 2000 and 2005.

Average Household income and average house price 2000 and 2005

	2000	2005	% increase
<i>Rother</i>			
Average household income ¹	£21,200	£29,160	37.5%
Average house price ²	£120,806	£224,920	86%
<i>East Sussex</i>			
Average household income ¹	£22,800	£30,148	32%
Average house price ²	£116,733	£205,387	76%

¹ data from ESCC ² data from the Land Registry, for the Oct to Dec quarter

This table shows that, proportionately, the average price of a house in the District has increased at a much greater rate than the increase in average income over the same period.

The data also shows that the position is marginally worse in Rother compared with East Sussex as a whole. The average income in Rother is below the county average whilst the average house price is higher.

These figures suggest that increasing numbers of households in the District will find it difficult to afford to purchase a home.

Housing need in Rother is evidenced the Council's Housing Register and homelessness statistical data for households in the District.

Further evidence is provided by the Housing Needs Survey. The latest survey was undertaken for the Council in 2005 by David Coutie Associates. It assesses the scale of current and future affordable housing need for sub-areas within the District.

The Survey confirms that there is substantial affordable housing need across all parts of the District. Annually 256 new affordable homes are needed in Rother.

The main findings include:

- 91% of households live in accommodation suitable for their needs;
- The social rented housing stock is 11.3%, much lower than the national average of 19.3%.
- There is a requirement to develop a more balanced housing stock in both the private and social sectors with a need for more flats and terraced houses, particularly in the private sector; and
- The retired population will increase by 35.5% by 2021. 70% of those with a support need are over 60 and over half have a walking difficulty.

The allocation sites in the adopted Local Plan 2006 should be able to provide some 750 affordable dwellings. 308 affordable houses have been completed in the past ten years, but only 3 last year.

E. ENVIRONMENT

The extent of landscape and nature conservation designations, as well as the number of listed buildings and conservation areas, reflects Rother's high quality environment. Only 11% of the District is not designated of national or international landscape or nature conservation importance.

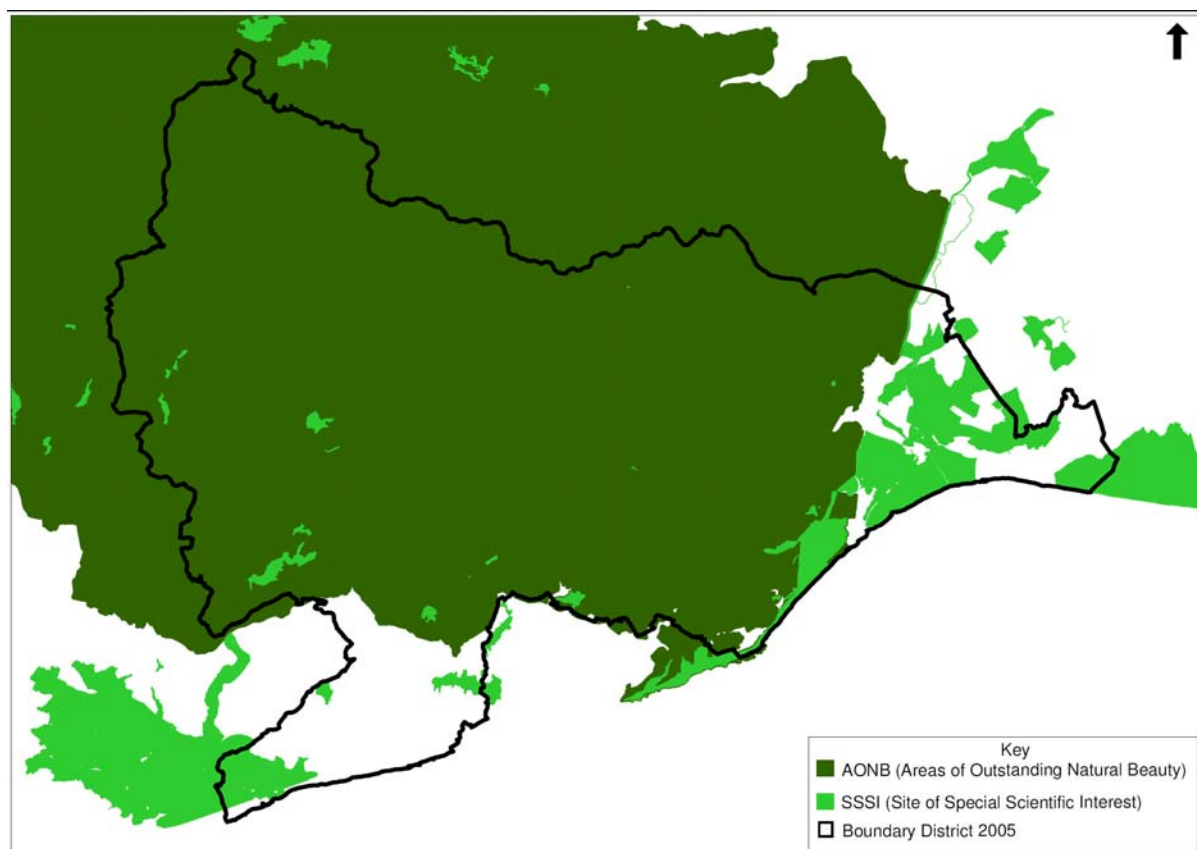
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

82% of the District falls within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – see front cover. Its landscape is of national importance and was designated by the former Countryside Commission (now the Countryside Agency) and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Environment in 1983.

Nature Conservation sites

A further 7% of the District, not within the AONB, is within a nationally or internationally designated site of nature conservation importance.

A map showing the main nature conservation designations in the District is shown below.



Source: Rother District Council

International Nature Conservation Sites - The Pevensy Levels is a 'Ramsar' site, designated in February 1999 for its importance as a wetland habitat. English Nature has proposed as a classified Special Protection Area (SPA) an area between Dungeness and Pett Level. This recognises its importance for wild birds. An area between Dungeness and Pett Level is also a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), in recognition of its flora and fauna. Both SPAs and SACs are designated by the European Union and are of European importance. Hence, these sites form part of a commitment globally and by member states of the European Community to protect the habitats of threatened species of wildlife.

Sites Of Special Scientific Interest - SSSIs are sites which have been identified by English Nature as being important for their flora, fauna and geological or physiographic features. Sites of Special Scientific Interest in Rother are principally located around wetland areas near the coast. Part of the Pevensy Levels Site of Special Scientific Interest is designated as a National Nature Reserve, which represents the best examples of natural habitat.

Sites of Nature Conservation Importance - Following a District-wide appraisal of wildlife sites, a number of SNCIs were designated in 1997 and are of local interest.

Built heritage

Conservation Areas – These are defined as areas of special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. There are designated Conservation Areas in Rother District at Battle, Bexhill Old Town, Bexhill Town Centre, Burwash, Northiam, Robertsbridge, Rye, Sedlescombe, Ticehurst and Winchelsea. (These are primarily the centres of the above towns and villages). Sedlescombe Conservation Area is the most recently designated Conservation Area, in summer 2004.

Listed Buildings – There are 2,114 Listed Buildings within Rother District, as at 31st March 2002, based on List entries. 43 of these are Grade 1 and 74 Grade 2* (based on GIS records, November 2005).

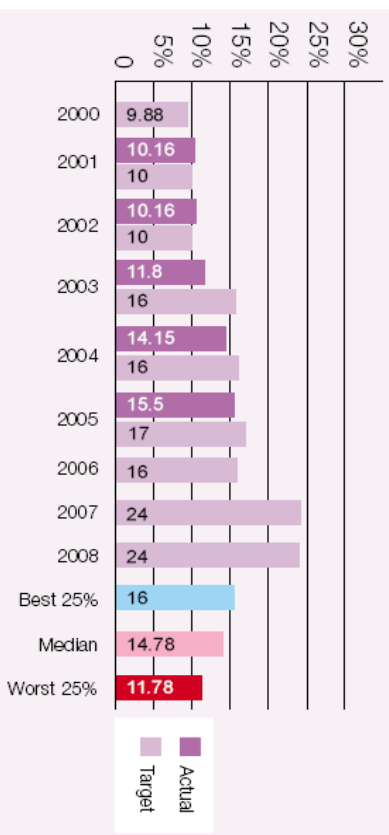
Waste

The East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove Waste Local Plan was adopted in 2006. It deals with waste disposal. The District Council is responsible for waste collection.

All the District Councils and the County Council are currently working together to produce a long-term strategy to manage the county's household waste. A six-week consultation begins in September 2006 and people in East Sussex are being asked for their ideas and opinions on how best to tackle the waste that is created in homes across the county.

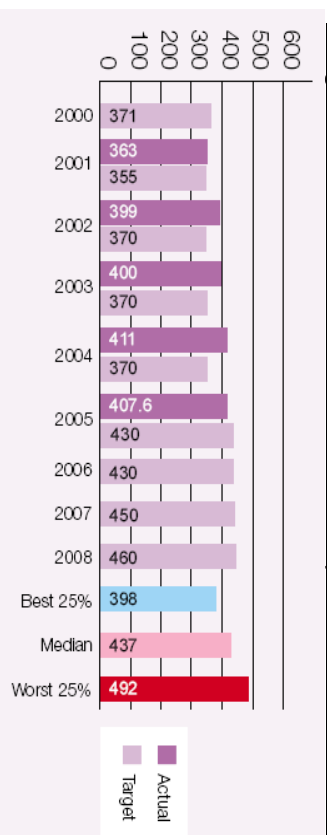
This strategy, known as the 'Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy', and the Plan will be published in summer 2007 and will cover the period 2006 to 2020. It will address the problems of waste collected from households, recycling collections waste taken to recycling banks, collection of bulky waste, street sweepings, collection of household clinical waste, waste collected from some businesses and fly-tipped waste. The strategy will be reviewed and updated every five years.

Recycled household waste collected as a percentage of all household waste in Rother



Source: Rother District Council, Performance Plan 2006

Kilograms of Household Waste Collected per Person in Rother



Source: Rother District Council, Performance Plan 2006

Water Quality

% of samples taken from rivers in Rother and East Sussex reaching water quality grades
(chemical and biological aspects)

Year	% Grade					
	A = very good	B = good	C = fairly good	D = fair	E = poor	F = bad
East Sussex	1990	46.15	38.46	15.39	0	0
	2000	32.5	37.5	25.8	2.5	0
	2004	33.3	51.3	10.3	2.5	0
Rother	1990	60	30	10	0	0
	2000	23.6	41.8	27.3	5.5	0
	2004	36.8	42.1	10.5	5.3	0

Source: Derived from ESIF

Bathing Water Quality at Rother's 4 main beaches

Parameter	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
No. beaches meeting more stringent guidelines	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1
No. beaches meeting mandatory guidelines.	3	4	3	4	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3
No. beaches failing to meet guidelines	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Derived from ESIF

4. DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

(a) Population and migration trends

Rother's population between 1991 and 2006 has grown but at a slower rate than for the county as a whole. Rother's increase of 3.6% is less than the rate for the county (5.9%), the South East (6.3%) or England as a whole (4.6%)

Anticipated population growth is shown below:

Age group		All people	0-14	15-29	30-44	45-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Geography	Year								
Rother	2001	85,100	13,400	10,200	14,600	22,500	11,100	9,300	4,000
	2006	87,728	13,666	10,640	14,269	23,815	11,441	9,217	4,680
	2011	90,979	13,647	11,917	13,137	24,865	12,739	9,327	5,347
	2016	93,160	13,611	12,638	11,998	24,728	14,483	9,949	5,753
	2021	94,971	13,406	12,628	12,170	24,904	14,345	11,174	6,344
	2026	96,557	13,391	12,260	12,988	24,057	14,072	12,690	7,099

Source: ESiF

(b) Emerging housing growth requirements

The Rother District Local Plan 2006 includes land allocations for some 1,874 dwellings. The vast majority of these are part of the planned urban expansion to the north-east of Bexhill (1,110 dwellings). There are also sites identified in other parts of Bexhill (88 dwellings), Battle (250 dwellings), Rye (201 dwellings), Rye Harbour (16 dwellings), Burwash (17 dwellings), Etchingham (15 dwellings), Fairlight (15 dwellings), Flimwell (21 dwellings), Hastings Fringe (30 dwellings), Northiam (30 dwellings), Robertsbridge (44 dwellings), Westfield (37 dwellings). In addition the three towns of Bexhill, Battle and Rye, some 36 village/settlements also have defined development boundaries, within which some intensification could take place.

The current level of housing requirements stemming from the Structure Plan provides for an average of 275 dwellings a year over the period 1991 – 2011. It should be pointed out that housebuilding rates are presently well short of this target, largely due to the delay in being able to release land at north-east Bexhill.

The submitted South East Plan seeks 6,600 total net additional dwellings for Rother between 2006 and 2026, equivalent to an average of 280 dwellings/year. This figure is also broken down to 200 dwellings/year in the coastal belt (Bexhill, Hastings fringes and Rye), and 80 dwellings/year in the rest of Rother.

(c) Local housing need

While the Local Plan will make a significant contribution to the development of more affordable homes, it cannot satisfy the high and increasing total level of assessed local housing need evidenced by the 2005 Housing Needs Study. The data suggests that house prices could continue to rise faster than local incomes.

Efforts to make housing more affordable for local people needs to be considered alongside regeneration initiatives that will increase local earnings.

Furthermore, Rother has a high proportion of one and two person households. Action needs to be taken to better match the types of housing provided with the needs of Rother's population.

(d) Climate change agenda and use of resources

Global climate change has been caused by the increase in greenhouse gases, particularly those released from fossil fuels. The climate change we expect in the next 30-40 years will be due to our past greenhouse gas emissions and climate change later this century will be determined by the emissions we allow now.

In the south-east we expect to see the greatest impact of climate change within the UK. Incidences of more extreme weather are expected with flash flooding, higher sea and air temperatures and the rising of sea levels. In Rother this may translate as increased surface run off from the High Weald causing flooding and impacts on the coastal areas from storms.

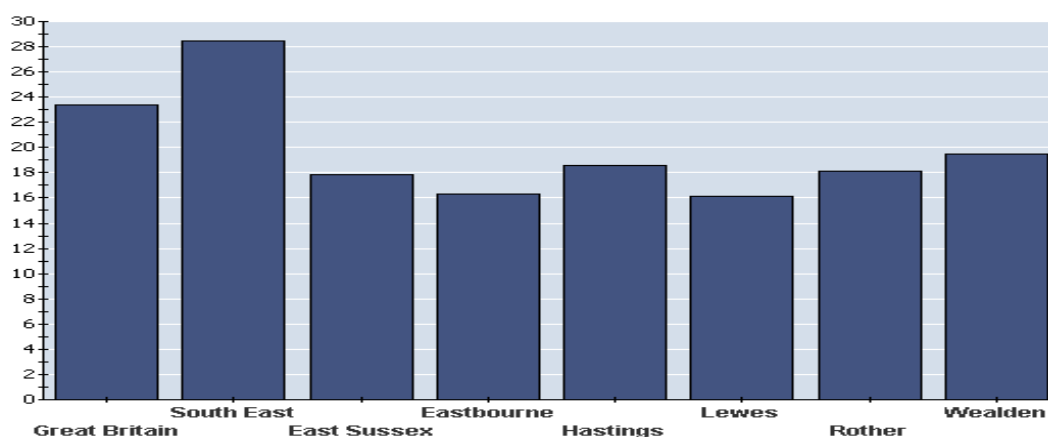
The overarching aims/actions being proposed to mitigate the impacts of our changing climate are to establish effective measures to reduce net emissions of greenhouse gases by increasing use of renewable and other non-fossil fuel based energy and to work with the changing climate through adaptation.

(e) Regeneration initiatives and employment trends

The continuing reduction in manufacturing sectors is evident locally. While Hastings retains a relatively high number of manufacturing businesses, this may make the area more vulnerable to further contractions.

The growth potential of indigenous firms is likely to be crucial given the apparent lack of significant inward investment potential. However, the business base locally, as shown below, does not currently contain a high proportion of companies in growth sectors.

Percentage of total employment in growth and high value added sectors, 2004



Source: ESiF

The current lack of quality sites and premises, coupled with an ageing stock, are often highlighted as issues.

(f) Infrastructure programmes

Water supply and road infrastructure give rise to the greatest concern. Decisions will have to be made soon and the necessary investment put in place to sustain further growth.

The ability to serve development with the necessary infrastructure is vital. Infrastructure programmes need to work in concert with spatial strategies.

The Bexhill Hastings Link Road is perhaps the most significant single element of infrastructure as it is key to releasing employment and housing potentials. The A21 is identified for improvements over time.

The establishment of the University Centre Hastings, coupled with the new Bexhill College and planned Hastings Sixth Form College, should improve local skill levels.

Educational programmes in the light of falling school rolls and health service policies for an ageing population will be vitally important.

(g) Technology

Advances in technology, particularly in Information Technology, have accelerated in past ten years and this trend is likely to continue. It is likely to lead to more homeworking.

Cleaner energy production and vehicles are urgently sought in order to drastically reduce carbon emissions and other forms of pollution. The renewable energy and nuclear power debate will intensify over the next year as Government will have to make decisions and provide necessary investment to avert an “energy gap”.

(h) Changing arrangements for service delivery

Will increased use of the internet for grocery and other types of shopping have implications for Rother's town and village centres and the other, larger centres outside the District which Rother residents use? Will the demand for locally sourced products, particularly food, grow to significantly affect the local agricultural economy?

If there is a trend for public services become more centralised, with larger facilities serving a wider geographic area there will be implications for users' physical access to facilities. Conversely, more localised services raise issues of 'economies of scale'.

Recent Government initiatives have promoted patient choice in respect of health services, parental choice (regarding schools) and greater tenant choice for social housing. If these trends continue, what might the implications be for service delivery in Rother?

Potentially, the timeframe of the Core Strategy will see increasing use of more diverse working practices such as home and flexible working, aided by innovations in IT. This could have implications for issues such as commuting levels, childcare requirements, and the need for employment floorspace.

Overall, how will services be delivered in Rother as the proportion of working age adults in the population is set to decline over the coming years?