



CD6.14

DEVELOPMENT AND SITE ALLOCATIONS LOCAL PLAN

Rother District Council
Town Hall
London Road
Bexhill-on-Sea
East Sussex
TN39 3JX

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www.rother.gov.uk

Development boundaries

- 7.8 Development boundaries differentiate between the substantially built-up areas of towns and villages, where further development, including redevelopment or intensification, would be acceptable in principle, and the countryside (i.e. outside development boundaries) where it would not. Development boundaries both positively focus growth on sustainable settlements and help to protect the surrounding countryside from unnecessary and intrusive development.
- 7.9 The principle of the continued use of 'development boundaries' around settlements, has been reaffirmed by Core Strategy Policy OSS2, which also sets out the basis for their definition.
- 7.10 The supporting text to Policy OSS2 clarifies that '*within development boundaries there is a presumption that infilling, redevelopment and changes of use will be acceptable subject to other policies of the plan.*' At the same time, proposals within development boundaries are still subject to a number of other policies to ensure that development does not adversely impact on other interests of acknowledged importance.
- 7.11 While land outside development boundaries is regarded as 'countryside' for planning policy purposes, this is not an absolute restriction on development. The potential for development outside development boundaries to support vital rural communities and also conserve or enhance its intrinsic qualities is recognised. There are specific policies to promote a sustainable rural economy, including farming, tourism and to meet recognised local needs for facilities or affordable housing both in the Core Strategy and, in some cases, elaborated upon in this Plan.
- 7.12 As the criteria in Policy OSS2 imply, development boundaries are policy lines; they do not seek to define settlements as such. There may be fringe areas of settlements as well as some smaller settlements and enclaves of development in the countryside that are excluded in order to maintain the overall rural character of the locality. While development boundaries will normally follow physical boundaries, on occasion, the full depth of property curtilages may be excluded to make clear a policy statement that backland or in-depth development is unacceptable, often because of its additional visual or amenity impact.
- 7.13 This approach is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework, which highlights the need to recognise 'the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside' and the need to manage patterns of growth to realise opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport, with significant development focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable.
- 7.14 The substantial AONB coverage of the District is a further key justification for carefully managing development in the countryside in line with the provisions set out in Policy DEN2. Policy DEN3 sets out the circumstances where development will be acceptable within Strategic Gaps, i.e. where proposals are unobtrusive and do not detract from the openness of the area.

Implementation Development boundaries

Policy DIM2: Development Boundaries

The development boundaries of settlements, defined in accordance with Core Strategy Policy OSS2, are shown on the Policies Map.⁵⁶

New development shall be focused within defined settlement boundaries, principally on already committed⁵⁷ and allocated sites, together with other sites where proposals accord with relevant Local Plan policies.

In the countryside (that is, outside of defined settlement development boundaries), development shall be normally limited to that which accords with specific Local Plan policies or that for which a countryside location is demonstrated to be necessary.

Figure 14: Settlements with Development Boundaries

Settlements with Development Boundaries in the Plan	Settlements with Development Boundaries in Neighbourhood Plans
Bexhill	Battle
Hastings Fringes	Rye
Beckley Four Oaks	Burwash
Brede and Cackle Street	Burwash Common
Broad Oak	Burwash Weald
Camber	Crowhurst
Catsfield	Etchingham
Guestling Green	Flimwell
Fairlight	Hurst Green
Icklesham	Netherfield
Iden	Robertsbridge
Northiam	Sedlescombe
Peasmarsh	Stonegate
Pett	Ticehurst
Rye Harbour	
Staplecross	
Three Oaks	
Westfield	
Winchelsea	

NB. Until such time as Neighbourhood Plans are in place, the development boundaries of the 2006 Rother District Local Plan continue to be saved, even though in some cases, they may not accommodate the housing requirements of the Core Strategy.

56. Towns and villages with development boundaries are listed in Figure 14.

57. That is, sites with planning permission (or resolution to grant permission subject to a legal agreement) as identified in the Local Plan Monitoring Report.

Part B: Site Allocation Policies

- 8. Overview**
- 9. Bexhill**
- 10. Hastings Fringes**
- 11. Villages with Development Boundaries and site allocations**
 - Beckley / Four Oaks**
 - Broad Oak**
 - Camber**
 - Catsfield**
 - Fairlight Cove**
 - Iden**
 - Northiam**
 - Peasmarsh**
 - Rye Harbour**
 - Westfield**
- 12. Other Villages with Development Boundaries**
 - Brede and Cackle Street**
 - Guestling Green**
 - Icklesham**
 - Pett**
 - Staplecross**
 - Three Oaks**
 - Winchelsea**
- 13. Other Policies**
 - Land adjacent to High Views, Loose Farm Lane, Battle**
 - Land at Felon's Field, Marley Lane**

9. Bexhill

Context

- 9.1 Bexhill is by far the largest settlement in Rother district, with a population of some 44,395 people (ESCC 2016), equivalent to some 48% of that of the district as a whole. It is primarily residential in character with an established employment, shopping and service centre role.
- 9.2 The underlying environmental quality of the town is high. Key assets are the seafront, the internationally acclaimed De la Warr Pavilion, the well-preserved and mixed-use town centre and a variety of pleasant residential areas interspersed with substantial areas of parkland and open space.
- 9.3 The countryside setting of the town, although not part of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is also undulating and attractive. The area is rich in wildlife habitats. Parts of High Woods and the Combe Haven are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, the latter being integral to the Combe Valley Countryside Park which is covered in the Hastings Fringes chapter. Beyond the western fringe are the Pevensey Levels, which are of international nature conservation importance.
- 9.4 The town centre maintains its vital shopping and service centre role for the town, even though a significant proportion of retail expenditure is “lost” to Ravenside Retail Park, Hastings and Eastbourne. Competition from other centres allied with the physical constraints on development in the town centre, as well as the increase in online shopping, have combined to limit retail investment in recent years.
- 9.5 The amount of business accommodation is relatively low for the size of the town, with only Beeching Road and, to a lesser extent, Brett Drive and Elva Way forming recognised industrial estates, although this is changing with the major new “Bexhill Enterprise Park” off Combe Valley Way becoming established.

Development Provisions and Development Boundary

- 9.6 In view of its relative size, range of services and location outside any national landscape or nature conservation designations, the Core Strategy identifies Bexhill as the focus for development within the District. It sets a requirement of 3,100 dwellings to be built over period 2011 to 2028, as well as at least 60,000sqm of new business floorspace within Bexhill. In terms of housing, 533 dwellings have been constructed to date (2011-2018) and a further 1,772 dwellings have planning permission – a large majority of which are at ‘North East Bexhill’ – see below. This leaves a remaining requirement of 795 dwellings to 2028.
- 9.7 Allocations both within and on the edges of the town are identified to ensure that sufficient housing is built in the plan period. Most notable is the identification of three linked sites to the north of the town, together providing some 530 new homes, as well as associated infrastructure.

Bexhill

- 9.8 There has been significant progress in bringing business land forward since the construction of the Link Road, with completions and planning permissions already accounting for some 27,814sqm of floorspace. The further large allocation for a business area off the new North Bexhill Access Road, as set out at Policy BEX1 below, (which has very recently been granted planning permission), essentially meets the residual minimum quantitative requirement.

North East Bexhill

- 9.9 A large part of the development for Bexhill over the next 10 years will take place through a major urban extension to the town at North East Bexhill, which was planned in the earlier Rother District Local Plan adopted in 2006. This involves both residential and business areas either side of Combe Valley Way as it enters Bexhill.
- 9.10 To the immediate east of Combe Valley Way, off Mount View Street, is the Bexhill Enterprise Park. The first building was completed in December 2015, whilst other buildings are currently under construction. Beyond this, will be the new community of 'Worsham'. The building of 108 dwellings off Pebsham Lane is now substantially completed while, in March 2016, outline planning permission was granted for a residential-led mixed use development providing 1,050 dwellings and associated facilities including a primary school, based on Worsham Farm (RR/2015/1760/P). Much of the guidance in the earlier North East Bexhill SPD is still relevant as this major new development area takes shape.
- 9.11 The developments to the west of Combe Valley Way that were also the subject of policies in the Rother District Local Plan 2006 but have not yet gained planning permission are reallocated below.

Retail Needs

- 9.12 The Core Strategy (policy BX2) identifies the potential for an additional 2,000sqm convenience goods floorspace and 4,000sqm for comparison goods, primarily through edge of centre development north of the railway, as well as effective use of town centre units. The Council's Updated Retail Capacity Study⁶¹ confirms that this further convenience goods floorspace is still justified and that 'Land South-East of Beeching Road' is the most appropriate location for this, as set out below.

Playing pitch provision

- 9.13 The Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) assesses existing pitch provision and identifies where new provision is needed and how future provision of playing pitches should be secured. It highlights specific deficits in both football and rugby pitches and the need for two artificial grass pitches across the district. The PPS indicates that the deficit of football pitches is particularly acute in Bexhill, particularly due to a number of Bexhill-based clubs who require enclosed pitches to progress through the football league structure. In addition, it highlights the need to enable Sidley Cricket Club, which was displaced outside of the district when its home ground closed, to return locally.

61. Retail Capacity Study for Bexhill available at: www.rother.gov.uk/background-evidence/employment-retail

- 9.14 As such, it is imperative that existing facilities are safeguarded, in line with Core Strategy Policy CO3, but also new sites are found/previously used sites are brought back into use. However, opportunities for new playing pitches within Bexhill are limited due to the availability of land and the topography of the town. Therefore, proposals are set out below to bring back the former Sidley Sports and Social Club site for playing pitch provision and associated community use. In addition, Policy BEX10 for Northeye provides an opportunity to provide new playing field provision alongside redevelopment.
- Development boundary
- 9.15 The development boundary is drawn tightly around the built-up area of Bexhill, which prevents encroachment into the countryside, aside from taking into account the allocation sites set out in this Chapter, as well as some limited small scale development opportunities.
- 9.16 Further growth of the town is severely limited to the east, as it is a priority to retain the open countryside gap between the town and Hastings and to further establish the Combe Valley Countryside Park in the area, which includes the relatively tranquil and ecologically sensitive SSSI.
- 9.17 To the north, the development boundary envelops the approved developments south of the Worsham ridge at North East Bexhill and, further west, the allocated sites contained in this Plan. The North Bexhill Access Road (NBAR) provides a clear edge between the urban area and the countryside to the north, while important open areas to the south of NBAR are also excluded, notably ecologically important amenity land south-west of the junction with Combe Valley Way, fields to the west of Watermill Lane and proposed open space/playing fields to serve new development.
- 9.18 West of the A269, development beyond the exiting built-up area would detrimentally and unnecessarily erode the countryside setting of that part of the town and is resisted while, further west, the pattern of fields, defined by trees and hedgerows as well as blocks of woodland, relates much more to the surrounding countryside. This runs into the heavily wooded ridge of High Woods and Whydown, which feels relatively remote from the town. Hence, the development boundary follows the existing urban edge in this direction.
- 9.19 Towards the western end of the town, the surrounding countryside is less wooded, but a pastoral landscape which runs into the exposed and open landscape of the Barnhorn and Hooe Levels. Development is clearly resisted on the Levels and on the sloping land overlooking it. An exception to this at Northeye, where the redevelopment of this redundant site, formerly in institutional/educational use, is provided for. At the same time, as it is well beyond the built-up area of Bexhill, it is still outside the development boundary.
- 9.20 The Development Boundary and site allocations are detailed on the Policies Map Inset Map at the end of this section.