

- 7.26 Environmental factors have been very influential in setting the levels of development in Rother. Most notable are:
- the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This covers 82% of the district, including all the inland parts, where national policies giving priority to conservation of the 'natural beauty' of the landscape limit major growth;
  - international and national nature conservation sites. The low-lying marshlands to both the south-east and south-west of the district have overlapping international designations. In total, these cover 14% of the district, and have particular impacts on Rye and its environs;
  - areas vulnerable to flood risk. The low-lying position of most coastal settlements makes them heavily constrained by flood risk considerations, while some inland settlements are also vulnerable.
- 7.27 Even so, the balance of homes and jobs may be assisted by housing investment, while affordable housing remains a local priority. This is elaborated in the ['Affordable Housing' Background Paper](#).
- 7.28 Local communities needs and aspirations for more affordable housing and jobs, as well as for improved services and facilities, have also been reviewed, notably through work on 'Local Action Plans' as well as through dialogue with Town and Parish Councils, and in Bexhill, the Town Forum Executive. Further detail of such needs and aspirations are contained in the town and Rural Areas chapters, as well as in their respective Background Papers.
- 7.29 It is concluded that an appropriate overall target for net additional housing in the district over the period from April 2011 to March 28 (17 years) should be at least 5,700 dwellings, or an average of 335 dwellings/year.
- 7.30 This represents a substantial increase on previous rates of housebuilding, being 37% higher than the average of 245 dwellings per year (1991-2011). In fact, given the low rate of housing completions in the first two years of the plan period (275 dwellings), the actual rate of housing now required 2013-2028 (of 362 dwellings per year), represents an increase of 48% on past rates. Hence, and notwithstanding the constraining environmental factors, the District will see a significant boost in housing supply over the plan period.
- 7.31 This growth is justified primarily in terms of contributing to the projected demand for new homes, as well as in meeting the local need for housing and the need to support economic regeneration. The possibility of further opportunities for sustainable housing (as well as employment) development arising over time cannot be ruled out; hence, the requirement is expressed as a minimum for the purposes of plan-making. These will be further assessed as part of site allocations/ neighbourhood planning processes.