



Rother District Local Plan 2020 - 2040

Engagement and Duty to Cooperate Statement

Draft (Regulation 18) Version - April 2024

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1 Introduction & Context

Introduction

- 1.1 Rother District Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the period 2020 – 2040, which will replace the current Local Plan, consisting of the Core Strategy and the Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) Local Plan. It will form a critical part of the Local Development Plan, and it will steer land use and the type and location of development in the District, while setting the planning policies by which planning applications will be determined over the period.
- 1.2 A local authority's preparation of a Local Plan is subject to a requirement of national legislation and planning policy that is referred to the 'Duty to Co-operate'. The Duty requires local authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis on strategic cross-boundary matters with other local authorities, county councils and prescribed bodies when preparing a Local Plan.
- 1.3 This Regulation 18 Engagement and Duty to Co-operate Statement sets out what the Council has so far done as part its formal Duty to Co-operate requirements. It summarises the development of Memorandum's of Understanding (MOU) with other local authorities, county councils and prescribed bodies that establish the relevant strategic cross-boundary matters; with the ultimate goal of signing Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) in advance of the Plan's Examination, following its future submission to the Secretary of State as part of Regulation 19. It also summarises the formal consultation on the Development of the Local Plan's SA/SEA Scoping Report.
- 1.4 This statement also sets out how the Council has sought to engage widely in setting the Plan's vision and objectives, as well as in the development of the Plan's evidence base.
- 1.5 This is an interim Statement for this stage of the preparation of the Local Plan. As a result it should be noted that the majority of the MOUs that have been listed are in draft form only, and have not yet been signed by either Rother District Council or the relevant party(ies). SoCGs will become more numerous as the Plan develops,

including a number of SoCGs may be produced for topics (with multiple signatories) rather than with individual organisations.

Legislation and National Policy

- 1.6 Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) requires that Rother District Council has a Duty to Co-operate in the preparation of its Local Plan. Specifically, the Duty requires the Council to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with other local authorities, county councils and prescribed bodies, in order to maximise the effectiveness of the activity so far as it relates to a strategic matter.
- 1.7 A strategic matter is defined by subsection (4) of the Act as sustainable development or use of land that has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas, including (in particular) sustainable development or use of land for or in connection with infrastructure that is strategic and has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas.
- 1.8 Strategic matters that relate to the Local Plan include, for example, meeting housing needs, employment, retail and leisure needs, transport infrastructure including the decarbonisation of transport, other infrastructure, including health and wellbeing, the management of water and flooding, and the conservation of the environment, the landscape and heritage assets.
- 1.9 The groups listed in subsection (1) of the Act with whom the Council has a duty to co-operate are:
- other local planning authorities,
 - county councils that are not a local planning authority, and
 - bodies that are prescribed or of a prescribed description
- 1.10 The bodies prescribed for the purposes of section 33A(1)(c) of the Act are set out in Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The below sets out the prescribed bodies and bodies of a prescribed description that form part of this Statement.

Context

- 1.11 Alongside other areas of the County, when set against local salaries, housing in Rother is on average less affordable compared to the South East and the country as a whole. There is a shortage of housing in the District, which is compounded by the fact that some 83% of the District is located within the High Weald National Landscape as identified in Figure 1 below, with a further 7% of the District being within areas that are part of Internationally designated sites for ecological conservation, namely the Pevensey Levels Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar Site and the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site and the Dungeness SAC.
- 1.12 In addition, like many coastal communities, there are areas of social and economic deprivation within the district. In terms of strategic transport links, the district is connected to the north by the A21 and the Hastings to London Railway line operated by South Eastern. It is connected east to Ashford and West to Eastbourne and Brighton by the A259 and a rail service operated by Southern Rail.
- 1.13 The preparation of the Local Plan must also take into consideration the conservation of the significant number of heritage assets within the district, including the 'Historic Battlefield' at Battle and over 2,000 listed buildings.
- 1.14 The specific local planning authorities to be engaged with are those with whom Rother shares strategic cross boundary issues related to planning. The below map shows the local planning authorities that bound Rother.

Figure 1: Contextual map of Rother District



1.15 On this basis, the local planning authorities that Rother District Council is bound by the Duty to co-operate with are:

- Hastings Borough Council
- Wealden District Council
- Tunbridge Well Borough Council
- Ashford Borough Council
- Folkestone and Hythe District Council
- Eastbourne Borough Council

1.16 Although Rother does not share a boarder with Eastbourne BC, it shares a number of strategic planning issues due to its proximity as a major town, its connection to the A259, and its relationship to the Pevensey Levels.

2 Early Engagement and Early Local Plan Consultations

2.1 Engagement and consultation with a range of organisations and individuals has been a key component of the Plan's early development up to Regulation 18. This section sets out the key engagement and consultation activities, while briefly describing their scope and how they have impacted the Plan's development.

Consultation on the Joint Rother and Hastings SA/SEA Scoping Report

2.2 This stage was undertaken from Friday 17 April 2020 and 5pm on Friday 29 May

2.3 It is a requirement of local plan development that they are underpinned by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which is used as a tool to assess the environmental, social and economic impact of a local plan, and to ultimately ensure that the policies in the plan contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Through the joint SA/SEA Scoping Report, RDC and HBC will identify the framework of SA objectives that will be used to assess their local plans, and ensures a joined-up approach.

2.4 Rother District Council and Hastings Borough Council have been in the process of developing new Local Plans, and both Councils decided at the outset to undertake a joint SA/SEA Scoping Report as part of the initial stages of Plan production. This decision is due to the depth of the functional links that the two areas share; together Rother and Hastings constitute the same Housing Market area and Functional Economic Market Area. In sharing much of the same planning related geography, having a joint SA/SEA framework best ensures that the spatial development strategies pursued are effective and any cross-boundary impacts are properly considered.

2.5 Work on the joint SA/SEA Scoping Report started towards the end of 2019, and by April 2020 a draft was completed that could be put to consultation with the statutory consultation bodies as required by Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. These statutory bodies are identified by the Regulations are Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency.

2.6 Further to these statutory bodies, comments also invited from a limited group of additional organisations given a number of specific issues arising from the scoping exercise related to health, transport and accessibility, the coastal context along with potential cross boundary issues which need cooperation with neighbouring authorities. The total list of consultees therefore included:

- Historic England
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- East Sussex County Council;
- East Sussex NHS Clinical Commission Group;
- Sport England;
- Highways England;
- Marine Management Organisation;
- South East Coastal Group
- Other authorities neighbouring RDC: Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Ashford Borough Council, Wealden District Council and Folkestone and Hythe District Council.

2.7 This targeted consultation on the joint SA/SEA Scoping Report ran for 6-weeks between Friday 17 April 2020 and 5pm on Friday 29 May, while the final Scoping Report which incorporates comments from the consultation was published in January 2021.

Early Engagement

Early Engagement Questionnaire and Services & Facilities Questionnaire

2.8 This stage was undertaken August–October 2020

2.9 An Early Engagement Stage Questionnaire was sent to Rother Councillors, Parish Councils, and targeted local organisations. The purpose of this engagement was to consult on the scope of the plan, its vision, and overall objectives, and to provide a steer on the development of policy on key topics. The questionnaire asked questions on the following topics:

- Overall Local Plan vision
- Local Plan objectives
- Key housing issues
- Considerations of a new settlement
- Growth options
- Employment growth
- Town Centre
- Meeting wider strategic needs
- Infrastructure
- Climate change
- Protection of natural and built heritage
- Local Communities
- Impact of the Pandemic
- Other planning issues

2.10 The responses to the Questionnaire were collated, and have been factored into the analysis of the Background Papers in their development of policy options for the Local plan. Summary of the responses given can be found in the New Local Plan: Early Engagement Document, which can be found on the website.

2.11 As part of this piece of early engagement, an additional Services & Facilities Questionnaire was sent to the district's parish councils, which was to collect data on the number and range of services and facilities in the many rural settlements throughout the district. Accompanying the Questionnaire were maps outlining the identified 'areas of built form' for each parish. This data was subsequently used to develop the Settlement Study document, which forms a key piece of evidence that underlines the Local Plan's development strategy.

Early Engagement Document & Duty to Co-operate Action Plan

2.12 This stage was undertaken August–October 2020

2.13 In order to initiate the Duty to Co-operate process, two separate documents were sent to neighbouring planning authorities and Duty to Co-operate bodies for their comments in relation to Strategic Matters.

Early Engagement Document

- 2.14 This document sets out the key strategic issues that the new Plan would be required to address, and how key stakeholders and neighbouring authorities may be involved at an early stage, to assist with meeting the requirements of the 'Duty to Co-operate'. The document also set out the key stages of engagement as part of the overall development of the plan.
- 2.15 Following the consultation, the Early Engagement document was updated in order to be published alongside the Early Engagement Strategy. The published version also includes summaries of the responses made to the Early Engagement Questionnaire. As mentioned previously, the Strategy includes the finalised Duty to Co-operate Action Plan previously consulted on.

Duty to Co-operate Action Plan

- 2.16 This document was intended to outline the various 'Duty to Co-operate' (DtC) matters that are of relevance to the production of Rother's new Local Plan. The strategic cross-boundary issues in relation to each organisation/relevant body are initially outlined, before being used as the basis of formulating the Action Plan. As the subject of informal engagement with the relevant organisations, the document served as a means of confirming these strategic issues and to identify additional strategic/cross boundary issues for consideration as part of the Duty to Co-operate. Following the consultation, the Duty to Co-operate Action Plan was then finalised and forms part of the Rother Local Plan Engagement Strategy.
- 2.17 RDC sought comments from the following organisations:
- Hastings BC
 - Wealden DC
 - Folkestone & Hythe DC
 - Ashford BC
 - Tunbridge Wells BC
 - Eastbourne Lewes Cs
 - ESCC
 - Highways England

Natural England
Office of Rail & Road
South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)
Sussex Wildlife Trust
MMO
Historic England
Homes England
Environment Agency
Sothorn Water
South East Water
High Weald AONB Unit
Flood Authority
NHS CCG
Civil Aviation Authority
Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board

Early Engagement Strategy

- 2.18 The Early Engagement Strategy was developed following the informal engagement carried out between August and October 2020, and it was published alongside and updated version of the Early Engagement Document. The Early Engagement Strategy provides a summary of how Rother District Council will engage with various stakeholders as the new Local Plan progresses to the Regulation 19 consultation stage. It was intended that this would further help organisations and the public understand at what points the Council will interact and engage on the Plan and will form its proposed engagement strategy.

Infrastructure Development Plan and Infrastructure MOUs

- 2.19 This stage was undertaken between: 15 October - 26 November 2021
- 2.20 As part of the process of updating the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), in order to reflect the plan period and development needs of the new Local Plan, the council sought input from bodies and organisations that are involved in providing infrastructure throughout the district. To this end, between 15 October - 26 November 2021, the Planning Policy Team consulted a range of infrastructure

bodies, town and parish councils, as well as ward councillors, by sending out an IDP Questionnaire.

- 2.21 The questionnaire was created to ensure that the Council had accurate reflection of current infrastructure planned and required for the new plan period. For reference, attached to the Questionnaire was an Infrastructure Delivery Plan Schedule, which listed planned infrastructure projects and their likely cost, funding source and status. The Schedule also identified the lead body to deliver the infrastructure, any development which relies on its implementation, its importance to the Local Plan, any risk to its delivery, and alternatives/ mitigation. Identified infrastructure included that relevant to Transport, Community Infrastructure, Education, Health, Environment, Green Infrastructure, Flood Defence, Utility Services, and Emergency Services.
- 2.22 Infrastructure bodies that were consulted were also provided with a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) template, as a starting point for discussions; with the goal of developing MoUs (and later Statements of Common Ground – SoCGs) to work together with the Council on specific matters for the Local Plan. Alongside this, an invitation was extended to infrastructure bodies in order to set up a date for a meeting with the Council to further discuss issues to be included within MOUs and the IDP Questionnaire.
- 2.23 Following responses made to the IDP Questionnaire, meetings and a MoU was drafted between RDC and the following infrastructure bodies:

EA

Sussex Police

UK Power Networks

Southern Water

East Sussex CCG (now NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board)

East Sussex Fire and Rescue

ESCC Highways

Southeast Water

SGN

Highways Agency

- 2.24 A list of the infrastructure bodies that were consulted, along with a blank IDP Questionnaire and template MoU, is included in Appendix A.
- 2.25 It is intended that the Council will continue to build on the draft MOUs and prepare Statements of Common Grounds with various organisations to support the Regulation 19 stage of the Local Plan.

Additional Engagement with Parish Councils

- 2.26 Other liaison meetings with parish councils to set out and explain Local Plan timeframes and general information have taken place throughout the Plan's development. These are further detailed in the HELAA section of this report. The Council intends continuing engagement with parish councils throughout the Local Plans's Development. As part of the Consultation Plan for the Regulation 18 stage consultation the Council has engaged with the individual parishes to organise meetings to discuss the draft Local Plan with parish council groups at their parish council meetings.

3 Joint Documents

- 3.1 This section sets out joint evidence base documents, which the Council has developed by the Council and its respective partners. Most notably, a significant amount of work has been done with Hastings Borough Council, to ensure that both Local Plan's are coordinated around the same evidence where necessary. In addition, Rother has taken part in developing county-wide documents, from which it draws its evidence in relation to transport and Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs.

Joint Hastings and Rother Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA)

- 3.2 Given that Rother District and Hastings Borough form a single Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA), it was early on agreed that both councils would commission a joint Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) to support both emerging Local Plans. This shared

evidence base ensures a that both plans are coordinated in terms of their development strategy and housing needs and economic development policy.

3.3 An initial HEDNA was previously prepared by GL Hearn in August 2020, however the HEDNA was subsequently updated by DLP Planning Ltd as a new document published in April 2024. It was necessary to update the HEDNA in order to ensure that each authority has the most up-to-date evidence available to inform the housing and employment policies of their new Local Plans, in particular taking account of the recent effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and changes to Government policy and guidance since the previous HEDNA was published.

3.4 In particular, the HEDNA identifies the centrality of the Hastings-Bexhill urban area, with 88% of the FEMA's employment being located within its urban areas, while Hastings itself contributes some 55% of the FEMA's total GVA. Travel to work patterns are also a point of analysis for defining HMAs. The HEDNA identifies that the overall self-containment rate of Rother and Hastings combined is 79%, which exceeds the ONS's notional target for a Travel to Work Area which requires at least 75% of an area's resident workforce to work in the area and at least 75% of the people who work in the area to also live there. There are also strong migration links between Rother and Hastings, with an average net flow of 282 people from Hastings to Rother each year.

Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy 2023 – 2039

3.5 The joint strategy for Hastings and Rother was produced in line with Sport England's latest guidance and is the follow-on document to the Rother and Hastings Playing Pitch Strategy 2016 and the Leisure Facilities Strategy 2009-2020. It is considered that, as with housing and employment, that there is a close functional relationship between both councils in terms of resident's access to sports and leisure facilities.

3.6 This is an evidence base document that supports the Local Plan. It informs future policy regarding the demand and supply of existing and new indoor and outdoor sports and leisure facilities in a given area, with an consequent action plan which details potential facility developments in the two adjacent local authority areas.

- 3.7 Moreover, it is intended that the action plan will be reviewed and adjusted where necessary on an annual basis by the Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy Steering Group, which has managed the development of the strategies. The Playing Pitch Strategy Steering Group comprises of representatives from Rugby Football Union, Sussex County FA, English Cricket Board, Sussex Cricket, England Hockey, Lawn Tennis Association, Stoolball England, Football Foundation, Bowls England, British American Football Association, Baseball Softball UK and Active Sussex.

Shared Transport Evidence Base (STEB)

- 3.8 The Council, in collaboration with key transport stakeholders including East Sussex County Council and National Highways, has had a Shared Transport Evidence Base (STEB) produced which sets out an Interim Assessment on potential transport impacts of future growth. The latest version of this document is from March 2022. The STEB will be taken forward and used to inform the next stage of transport assessment using the SATURN based East Sussex Countywide Transport Model (ESCWTM). The Council also worked independently with East Sussex County Council on a follow on feasibility study for West Bexhill.

East Sussex Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment

- 3.9 In order to the support the Council's new Local Plan, we have worked alongside all of the East Sussex local authorities, and the South Downs National Park Authority to commission a joint Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment for the study period between 2021 and 2040. The requirement to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is established through the national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), published by Government in 2015. This study provides a summary of accommodation need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in respect of both their permanent and transit needs for pitches/plots over the study period.

4 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)

HELAA and Call for Sites

4.1 The emerging Local Plan is supported by the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), which is currently published as an Interim HELAA Report at this Regulation 18 stage of the Plan. The HELAA forms an important part of the evidence base for the new Rother Local Plan to inform plan-making and will provide information on the potential amount of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses (including renewable energy schemes) over the plan period. In particular, the HELAA will enable Rother to:

- Identify specific sites and broad locations with the potential for housing and economic development, or other land uses.
- Assess the development potential of sites.
- Appraise the suitability, availability and achievability of different sites for development in line with the guidance set out in the PPG.

4.2 An essential part of the development of the HELAA is the Call for Sites, which invites site submissions by landowners, developers, site promoters and individuals, for consideration of their development potential, provided that sites submitted would be capable of delivering five or more dwellings is suggested and for economic development sites measuring 0.25 hectares (or 500 square metres of floor space) and above.

4.3 The original “Call for Sites” ran from 12 October 2020 to 7 December 2020. When it was launched, direct notification via email and letter were sent to the following groups and people:

- Town and parish councils
- Relevant bodies undertaking neighbourhood plans
- Landowners and promoters
- Developers
- Planning agents
- Local property agents (residential and commercial)
- Local Enterprise Partnerships

- Businesses and relevant local interest groups

4.4 The Call for Sites was also on the Councils MyAlerts weekly email notification service providing information for Rother residents and businesses.

4.5 However, while the Call for Sites was originally publicised for that period the Council is indefinitely accepting site submissions, and it continues to be publicised on the Council's website.

4.6 The development of the HELAA has also involved a number of workshops with the following groups:

- Ward Councillors during Autumn 2021.
- Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups between December 2021 and January 2022.
- Parish/Town Councils and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups between January and November 2023.

4.7 The purpose of these workshops was to discuss sites under assessment through the HELAA, including the identification of potential additional sites for assessment through the HELAA. The workshops have been an important stage in the development of the HELAA. Call for Sites – Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Sites

4.8 One of the requirements for the emerging Local Plan is to assess the accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople in the District. While setting targets to address these needs, the Council is required to identify an annual supply of deliverable (5 years' worth) sites, as well as a supply of developable sites or broad locations from (6 to 15 years' worth).

4.9 In support of delivering this requirement of the Local Plan, the Council has worked alongside all of the East Sussex local authorities and the South Downs National Park Authority to commission a joint Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment for the study period between 2021 and 2040.

4.10 The Assessment identifies that additional sites for gypsies and travellers will be needed in Rother district to meet needs over the duration of the plan period.

Consequently, the Council has opened a Call for Sites to give landowners, developers, site promoters and individuals the opportunity to put forward sites to be considered for allocation for gypsy or traveller pitches or travelling showpeople plots.

4.11 The Call for Sites originally ran from 7th August to 6th October 2023, although the Council remains open for new site submissions with a dedicated running on the Council's website. When launched, the Council notified the following groups and individuals of the Call for Sites:

- All Parish and Town Councils
- East Sussex County Council
- Planning agents
- Any other agents who are not on JDi list but who have submitted recent G&T planning applications
- Land promoters (Gladman etc)
- All known private, authorised Gypsy & Traveller sites in Rother
- Friends, Families and Travellers
- Landowners of Gypsy & Traveller sites

5 Other Documents Involving Engagement

5.1 Aside from the joint evidence base documents identified above, the Council has developed a number of evidence base documents in consultation with partner organisations. These evidence base documents relate to areas where specialist knowledge and oversight has been required. These documents are set out below.

Rother District's Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2021)

5.2 The SFRA has been prepared by JBA Consulting on behalf of Rother District Council in consultation with the Environment Agency, East Sussex County Council (as lead local flood authority), the Romney Marshes Area Internal Drainage Board and the Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board.

- 5.3 The SFRA will assesses the risk to Rother district from flooding from all sources, now and in the future, taking account of the impacts of climate change. It also considers the impact that land use changes and development in the area will have on flood risk.
- 5.4 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment refines information on river and sea flooding risk shown on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Seas). It also considers risks of flooding from surface water, groundwater, reservoirs and sewers.

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

- 5.5 The HRA examines the effects of the new Local Plan on internationally important wildlife sites. It is a statutory requirement that is set by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). At this stage, the Council has undertaken an HRA Screening of its Regulation 18 Local Plan. In the development of this version of the HRA, Rother consulted with Natural England for their input, who have opted not to comment at this stage. They will be consulted again at the next stage of the development of the HRA.

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) Review (2020 – 2023)

- 5.6 The review of Local Wildlife Sites is a general responsibility of the Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) in partnership with the local authority, and they currently have a rolling programme of site surveys/assessments on an annual basis across all sites in East and West Sussex. In March 2020, RDC commissioned the SWT to undertake a targeted review of the most potentially vulnerable sites, in order to ascertain their environmental importance as the Council develops its spatial development strategy in the new Local Plan.
- 5.7 The Review constituted the following:
- a full survey of 8 identified high priority sites
 - A recommendation from the SWT as to the importance of reviewing/assessing an LWS at Glyne Gap
 - A targeted survey of 5 sub-sections of the Brede Valley LWS

- To Provide feedback on the Council's derived priority list for medium and low priority sites
- Provide recommendations and implement a process for which small boundary changes can be made to Local Wildlife Sites identified through previous work undertaken in 2019.

5.8 While SWT conducted the above elements of the Review, RDC was able to support the Review through GIS digitisation/mapping services.

6 Duty to Co-operate Summary by Organisation

6.1 As part of the Duty to Co-operate, Rother District Council has been working with other strategic policy making authorities, and other bodies, in relation to strategic cross-boundary issues. These various organisations are set out below:

Local Planning Authorities and County Councils

Hastings Borough Council
Wealden District Council
Ashford Borough Council
Folkestone & Hythe District Council
Tunbridge Wells District Council
Eastbourne/Lewes District Council
Rother District Council
East Sussex County Council

Prescribed bodies and bodies of a prescribed description relevant to Rother District Council

Environment Agency
Historic England
Natural England
NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (formerly East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group)
ESCC Highways
Highways Agency

Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
ESCC Waste and Minerals
Sussex Police
SGN
UK Power Networks
Southern Water
South East Water
Water Level Management Board
Lead Local Flood Authority
Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels Catchment Partnership
East Sussex Fire and Rescue
Sussex Wildlife Trust
High Weald AONB Unit
Transport for the South East (TfSE)

Summary of Cooperation and Engagement with Local Authorities

Hastings Borough Council

Adopted Plan Documents

- Hastings Planning Strategy – adopted February 2014
- Hastings Development Management Plan – adopted September 2015

New Local Plan

- 6.2 Hastings Borough Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan to cover the period from 2019-2039. Regulation 19 consultation on the Pre-submission draft Local Plan is expected to take place in Quarter 2 2024/25, with a later adoption timeframe as Quarter 1 of 2026/27.
- 6.3 A Regulation 18 consultation on the new Local Plan was undertaken January-March 2021. Rother District Council responded to this consultation.

Joint Statement agreed with HBC

- 6.4 The Introduction chapter of the Rother Local Plan includes a Joint Statement signed with HBC. This is a reflection of the clear intention to develop and action matters of cross-boundary importance and most importantly, explore joint opportunities to maximise housing delivery. It is set out as follows:
- 6.5 “Together, both Councils form a strongly defined Housing and Functional Economic Market Area. Hastings, as one of East Sussex’s largest towns, provides a strong draw for many residents within Rother, with the inhabitants of many towns and villages visiting Hastings to access wider services and facilities.
- 6.6 The Councils understand these interactions and will continue to work closely to develop evidence bases in support of their respective Local Plans. We will continue to look for opportunities for joint studies and are working together to assess the impacts of our development strategies to ensure that the needs of the wider Housing and Functional Economic Market Area can be best met.
- 6.7 Both Councils will aim to shape development to radically reduce carbon emissions by aligning growth and infrastructure to enable our communities to live well locally, while enhancing the natural and built environment, and adapting to the effects of climate change.”

Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) / Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- 6.8 A MOU between Rother District Council and Hastings Borough Council was signed in July 2022. The MOU establishes the key principles of working together; the geographical coverage of the Housing Market Area (HMA) and the Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA); the identification of a number of Strategic Matters; and agreement to methods of cooperation on these matters, including the setting out of actions and timescales throughout the Local Plan development process. Both parties also agreed to explore opportunities to work together on cross boundary issues, including where this would require the commissioning of evidence.

- 6.9 A SoGC has been drafted, and most recently updated in September 2023. The SoCG will be updated in the course of Plan development.

Joint evidence documents between RDC and HBC

- Joint Hastings and Rother Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA)
- Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy 2023 – 2039

Key Cross Boundary Issues

Housing Market Area (HMA) and the Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA)

- 6.10 The overall administrative areas of Hastings Borough Council and Rother District Council together form a single HMA and the FEMA. Consequently, the Councils jointly commissioned a Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment, to cover issues related to housing and economic need within this area.

Housing Need

- 6.11 The Standard Methodology sets a housing need figure of 737 dwellings per annum for Rother and 481 for Hastings. Hastings Borough Council made a formal request to Rother District Council on 3rd December 2021, along with requests other authorities, as to whether Rother could accommodate any of Hastings' residual unmet need.

The Strategic Gap

- 6.12 The Strategic Gap is important for the maintenance of the distinctive identities of Bexhill and Hastings as different settlements. It is located within Rother, and borders Hastings. While there is a requirement to positively plan for growth, much of the area unsuitable for development due to its location in flood risk zones and nature conservation sites, while much of the Strategic Gap is designated as the Combe Valley Countryside Park. This focus is agreed by both Councils.

Combe Valley Countryside Park

- 6.13 The Combe Valley Countryside Park (CVCP) straddles the Hastings / Rother administrative boundaries. The CVCP, is a strategically important area of open space in the eastern of East Sussex County, and was established by Hastings, Rother and East Sussex Councils in response to the need to protect and enhance strategic open spaces and natural environments arising between the district and borough.

Potential Development Sites within the Hastings Fringe

- 6.14 Through their respective housing land supply processes, the councils have jointly looked at potential housing and economic development sites which either straddle or occurs close to the Hastings and Rother boundary. These areas are significant in the context of the HMA and the FEMA.

- 6.15 Such sites include land in the Queensway area in the north east of Hastings Borough, Bredsell on the northern boundary of Hastings, and sites along the east and west of The Ridge, which forms much of the northern boundary between district and the borough.

Hastings Country Park

- 6.16 This is an area of countryside that sits mostly within Hastings Borough Council, and a small north-eastern section of the park is located within Rother. The Park is owned and managed by Hastings Borough Council and is forms the largest area of public open space in the Borough. It is a designated Local Nature Reserve with statutorily protected national and international designations. It includes a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation. Both Councils agree that there is no scope for major developments in the Park.

Formal Local Plan consultations and engagement

- 6.17 RDC responses to HBC consultations
- RDC responded to HBC's draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan consultation & potential development sites – responded 25th September 2020.

- RDC responded to HBC's Regulation 18 public consultation on its Draft New Local Plan, 2019-2039 - responded 24th March 2021.
- RDC responded to HBC's formal request for help in meeting their unmet need – responded 13th December 2021.

6.18 HBC responses to RDC consultations

- HBC responded to RDC's targeted early engagement on its Engagement Plan and Duty to Co-operate Action Plan on 22nd October 2022.

Wealden District Council

Adopted Plan Documents

- Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan – adopted May 2016
- Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan – adopted February 2013
- 'Saved policies' from adopted Wealden Local Plan - adopted 1998

New Local Plan

6.19 Wealden District Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan to cover the period up to 2040. The new Local Plan is currently at Regulation 18 consultation, which closes 10th May 2024. According to the LDS, Wealden has an expected adoption timeframe as Quarter 1 of 2026/27 for the new Local Plan.

6.20 As part of an early stage visioning process for their new Local Plan, Wealden also conducted a 'Direction of Travel' public consultation between November 2020 and January 2021.

Statement of Common Ground (SoCG)

6.21 A SoGC has been drafted, and most recently updated in October 2022. The SoCG will be updated in the course of Plan development. Topics that are subject of agreement include: the issue of housing provision in each authority, how that relates to each Housing Market Areas (HMA), as well as the issue of unmet need; the Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMA), including catchment areas of each

authority; cross-boundary strategic infrastructure; the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site, as well as the High Weald AONB that is located within both districts; acknowledgement of their respective governance arrangements; and, agreed actions of working together throughout the plan making process. It is agreed that the next update of the SoCG will include the topic of the Ashdown Forest Transport Model.

Key Cross Boundary Issues

Housing Market Area (HMA) and the Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA)

- 6.22 The overall administrative areas of Hastings Borough Council and Rother District Council together form a single HMA and the FEMA. By contrast, Wealden District is not a HMA in its own right, but falls within the wider HMA of several other local authority areas. Some 2% of Wealden's population, around the villages of Ninfield and Hooe, is within the Hastings and Rother HMA. This same area of Wealden is also relates to the Hastings and Rother FEMA, which forms the same area as the Hastings and Rother HMA, while the majority of Wealden again relates to the Eastbourne and Tunbridge Wells FEMAs.

Housing Need

- 6.23 The Standard Methodology sets a housing need figure of 737 dwellings per annum for Rother and 1,212 for Wealden, however, in their respective Plans, Rother has set an annual target of between additional 243-343 dwellings per annum, while Wealden sets a per annum target of and additional. Both sets of targets fall short of the need figures derived from the Standard Methodology. At this stage in Plan development, neither district has yet made a request in respect of unmet need.

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople

- 6.24 A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was jointly commissioned by all local authorities in East Sussex. The GTAA shows an accommodation need between 2021 and 2040 for WDC of 32 pitches (based on the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) definition) and a need for 16 pitches in RDC. At this stage, it is anticipated that both WDC and RDC will be able to meet

their Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation need within their own respective administrative boundaries.

Employment Need

- 6.25 The joint Hastings and Rother Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA), identifies a need up to 2040 for 74,189sqm of employment floorspace. While this compares to an existing development pipeline of 106,600sqm, within this there is a supply deficit of 21,762sqm of storage and distribution floorspace. The Eastbourne and Wealden Employment and Economic Study (April, 2022), identifies a need for between 195,242sqm and 213,738sqm of employment floorspace (including office floorspace between 10,743sqm and 29,239sqm and 184,499sqm of industrial and warehouse floorspace) for the period of 2021 to 2039 in Wealden. WDC considers that it would be able to meet its own employment need through existing commitments and allocations within the new Local Plan.

Pevensey Levels

- 6.26 The Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site is located within both Rother and Wealden districts, and is a development consideration in both areas, specifically regarding water quality issues. In respect of these matters, both Plans are aiming for a consistent approach. Both authorities are members of the Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels Catchment Partnership.

High Weald National Landscape

- 6.27 Both authorities continue to liaise on cross-boundary matters relating to the implementation of the High Weald AONB Management Plan (2019 -2024) and to liaise with each other on developments that straddle the administrative boundary between the two authorities and are located in or affect the setting of the High Weald National Landscape, and on other national planning policy requirements related to major development in the High Weald National Landscape.

Cross Boundary Infrastructure

- 6.28 Both authorities liaise on key cross boundary infrastructure matters including highways, education, health, transport and water/flooding related infrastructure. Along with other Local Authorities in East Sussex, both WDC and RDC are working with ESCC and National Highways to develop a Shared Transport Evidence Base (STEB) model and a County Wide Transport Model to assess Local Plan impacts across East Sussex.

Formal Local Plan consultations and engagement

6.29 RDC responses to WDC consultations

- RDC responded to the WDC Direction of Travel Consultation, November 2020 to January 2021.
- RDC responded to the WDC Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report Consultation, 8th July 2020 to 12th August 2020.
- RDC responded to the WDC Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Update) Consultation, 26th June 2023 to 7th August 2023.

6.30 WDC responses to RDC consultations

- WDC responded to the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report in support of the Rother District Council and Hastings Borough Council Local Plan Updates (2019-2039) (responded 26th May 2020).
- WDC responded to RDC's Local Plan Early Engagement Document and Duty to Co-operate Action Plan (responded 29th October 2020).
- WDC responded to a consultation on the RDC draft Statement of Community Involvement (responded 20th July 2021).

Ashford Borough Council

Adopted Plan Documents

- Local Plan 2030 – adopted February 2019
- Chilmington Green Area Action Plan – adopted 2013

New Local Plan

- 6.31 Ashford Borough Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the plan period up to 2041, which will replace the current Local Plan 2030. The council's latest Local Development Scheme (March 2023), schedules a Regulation 18 consultation for the end of Q2 2024, a Regulation 19 consultation on a draft Local Plan in Q1 2025, and future adoption in Q3 2026.

Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) / Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- 6.32 A draft MOU between RDC and ABC is currently in progress, and it establishes the key principles of working together and any shared geographical coverage of the respective Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Areas that relate to each authority. The strategic planning topics identified in the MOU include: the housing quantum in the HMA and in each Council's area; Employment and commercial floorspace needs in each authority; Synergies between each local authority's growth strategies; opportunities to work together on strategic infrastructure delivery, including cross boundary transportation, 'green infrastructure' and wider linkages, and; Local provision of off-site Biodiversity New Gain, including consideration of habitat banking, and consideration over landscape and High Weald AONB issues.
- 6.33 A SoCG has not yet been drafted.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Adopted Plan Documents

- Tunbridge Wells Borough Site Allocations Local Plan – adopted July 2016
- Tunbridge Wells Borough Core Strategy – adopted June 2010
- 'Saved policies' from Local Plan - adopted 2006

New Local Plan

- 6.34 The new Tunbridge Wells Local Plan is preparing a new Local Plan set to cover the period up to 2038, and is currently undergoing Examination having been submitted to the Secretary of State on 1st November 2021. Adoption is currently programmed for the end of 2024.

Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) / Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- 6.35 A SoCG between RDC and TWBC was signed in October 2020, in advance of the TWBC new Local Plan's Regulation 19 consultation and Submission to the Secretary of State in 2021. Topics that are subject of agreement include: the issue of housing provision in each authority, how that relates to each Housing Market Areas (HMA); the Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMA); retailing; cross-boundary strategic infrastructure; the Ashdown Forrest SAC and SPA, as well as the High Weald AONB which is located within both districts; acknowledgement of their respective governance arrangements; and, agreed actions of working together throughout the plan making process.

Key Cross Boundary Issues

Housing Market Area (HMA) and the Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA)

- 6.36 The overall administrative areas of Hastings Borough Council and Rother District Council together form a single HMA and the FEMA. Tunbridge Well's Borough sits within a wider 'West Kent HMA', that includes adjoining areas in Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, Maidstone and Wealden, as well as the furthest northern area of Rother District. Consequently, there is a small cross over between the two HMAs. Rother's FEMA forms the same area as its HMA, while Tunbridge Wells' FEMA relates to a single TTWA centred on Royal Tunbridge Wells, that also includes areas of the surrounding districts, including north-west Rother.

Housing Need

- 6.37 The Standard Methodology sets a housing need figure of 737 dwellings per annum for Rother, and 678 for Tunbridge Wells. In its new Local Plan, Rother has set an annual target of between additional 243-343 dwellings per annum. In their Submission Plan, Tunbridge Wells state that there may be a prospect of unmet need arising from surrounding areas. Rother has not yet made a request to surrounding districts in respect of unmet need.

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople

- 6.38 A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was jointly commissioned by all local authorities in East Sussex. The GTAA shows an accommodation need between 2021 and 2040 in Rother of 16 pitches (based on the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) definition). The new TWBC Local Plan identifies a need for 32 additional pitches up to 2037.

Retailing

- 6.39 Tunbridge Wells is a significant retail centre, and there is a significant degree of leakage from much of Rother District. For example, leakage to Tunbridge Wells means that the district's stores retain only 7.4% of expenditure from north-west Rother.

Cross Boundary Infrastructure

- 6.40 The most recent SoCG identifies the need for both councils to liaise where substantial development is planned in and around boarder areas of the district in respect of any additional traffic impacts on the A21. In particular, the Flimwell Crossroads may be sensitive to any significant levels of development in Hawkhurst. RDC and TWBC have agreed that there are no cross-boundary issues to be addressed in relation to education provision, health issues or drainage matters.

Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation

- 6.41 Both authorities have been active members of the Ashdown Forest SAC Working Group, and are both committed to participation in the group.

High Weald National Landscape

- 6.42 Both administrative areas of RDC and TWBC have a significant proportion of the High Weald AONB. 82.5% of Rother and 69% of Tunbridge Wells borough are within the National Landscape. Both authorities are members of the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), and are committed to continue to work together in partnership, with the aim of ensuring that the objectives and actions set out in the High Weald AONB Management Plan are delivered.

Formal Local Plan consultations and engagement

- 6.43 RDC responses to TWBC consultations
- RDC responded to the TWBC Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation, 20 September to 1 November 2019.
 - RDC responded to the TWBC Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation, ending 4th June 2021.
- 6.44 TWBC responses to RDC consultations
- TWBC responded to RDC's Local Plan Early Engagement Document and Duty to Co-operate Action Plan (responded 14th October 2020).

Folkestone & Hythe District Council (F&HDC)

Adopted Plan Documents

- Core Strategy Review (adopted in March 2022)
- Places and Policies Local Plan (adopted 16 September 2020)

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- 6.45 An MOU between RDC and F&HDC was drafted in May 2022 but not progressed, which relates to the new Rother District Local Plan that is currently in preparation. The F&HDC Local Plan Review was adopted in March 2022.

Key Cross Boundary Issues

The housing quantum in each Council's respective HMA areas

- 6.46 Specific issues include the proposed distribution of housing in the Rother Local Plan, the potential future formal request from RDC to F&HDC and others to help meet unmet need in Rother.

Strategic Infrastructure Delivery

- 6.47 There may be opportunities to work together on strategic infrastructure delivery, including cross boundary transportation, 'green infrastructure' and wider linkages.

Strategic Access and Recreational Management Strategy (SARMS)

- 6.48 The implementation of the Strategic Access and Recreational Management Strategy (SARMS) in relation to the impacts of recreational pressures on the European Designated sites, including any potential impacts of Rother's proposed development strategy. There may be a requirement to engaging jointly with Natural England if required.

Local provision of off-site Biodiversity New Gain. Consideration of habitat banking

- 6.49 There is a need to consider the consistency in terms of % BNG required, on the outcome of evidence and advice, as well as liaising on the potential scale of off-site provision generated and the potential for this to be provided locally on Council-owned or other land through habitat banking.

Formal Local Plan consultations and engagement

6.50 RDC responses to F&HDC consultations

- RDC responded to F&HDC's Draft Green and Blue Infrastructure Action Plan consultation in July 2022.

6.51 F&HDC responses to RDC consultations

- F&HDC informed us that they were unable to comment on our Early Engagement & Duty to Co-operate Action Plan consultation in Autumn 2020 for resourcing reasons as it coincided with the Examination of their Local Plan Review, however they also expressed the wish to be consulted generally going forward.

Eastbourne Borough Council

Adopted Plan Documents

- 'Saved' policies from the Eastbourne Borough Local Plan (adopted in 2003)
- Eastbourne Borough Core Strategy Local Plan²⁶ (adopted in February 2013)
- The Eastbourne Town Centre Local Plan²⁷ (adopted in November 2013)
- The Eastbourne Employment Land Local Plan²⁸ (adopted in November 2016)

New Local Plan

6.52 A new Local Plan for Eastbourne is currently in preparation by Eastbourne Borough Council, covering the period from 2019-2039. A Regulation 18 consultation took place on the Council's Direction of Travel: Issues and Options document, which ended on 24th January 2020, and a second Regulation 18 consultation on the 'Growth Strategy', to set out the level of housing and employment growth that could be accommodated in Eastbourne over the period to 2039 and where it may be located, ended on 20th January 2023.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- 6.53 A draft MOU between RDC and EBC is currently in progress. It establishes the key principles of working together and any shared geographical coverage of each authority. The strategic planning topics identified in the MOU include: the proposed distribution of housing in each authority area, including the future formal request from RDC to EBC and others to help meet unmet need in Rother; Employment and commercial floorspace needs in each authority; Synergies between each local authority's growth strategies; opportunities to work together on strategic infrastructure delivery, including cross boundary transportation and wider linkages; Water quality with regards to the Pevensey Levels; adapting to climate change, including renewable energy provision and strategies for carbon neutrality/reduction; and, Local provision of off-site Biodiversity New Gain, including consideration of habitat banking, and consideration over landscape and High Weald AONB issues.

Key Cross Boundary Issues

- 6.54 The Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site is located within both authority areas, and is a development consideration in both areas, specifically regarding water quality issues. In respect of these matters. Both authorities are members of the Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels Catchment Partnership.

Formal Local Plan consultations and engagement

- 6.55 RDC responses to ECB consultations
- RDC responded to EBC's Direction of Travel: Issues and Options for the Eastbourne Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation, on 23rd January 2020.
 - RDC responded to EBC's Local Plan Growth Strategy (Regulation 18).
- 6.56 RDC did not have any specific comments to make on the questions asked within the consultation document. General comments were made that welcomed the opportunity to consider strategic policy matters jointly and where possible address them through common policy approaches in our respective Local Plans, and the continuation of our DtC discussions and to further discuss strategic matters such as the cumulative impacts of development and growth on the Pevensey Levels and

transport infrastructure. RDC's representation welcomed any opportunities to discuss any synergies between respective work on Habitats Regulation Assessment to support each Local Plan, and develop a stronger understanding of any transport impacts and junctions improvements required on the A259 into West Bexhill.

6.57 ECB responses to RDC consultations

- ECB responded to RDC's Local Plan Early Engagement Document and Duty to Co-operate Action Plan, on 13th October 2020.

Summary of Cooperation with Prescribed Bodies and Bodies of a Prescription relevant to RDC

Environment Agency

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

6.58 A MOU has been drafted, and most recently updated in May 2022. The MOU will be updated in the course of Plan development. The MOU contains a map that identifies the geographic areas of strategic importance to Rother District, which include flood risk areas, and SAC, SPA and Ramsar areas.

The Strategic Matters

Local Plan growth strategy, the distribution of development and the strategic locations for growth

6.59 Cooperation is required to ensure that locations for growth are not developed in a way that would adversely impact on protected sites and areas. EA's input will be ensured through their being consulted on the HELAA, and the Local Plan at Regulation 18 and 19 consultation stages.

SFRA

- 6.60 Rother District's Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2021) has been developed in consultation with the EA. The requirement to develop a Level 2 SFRA has not yet been determined.

Strategic flood related infrastructure required to support development

- 6.61 It is necessary that the Council works in collaboration with the EA and the Lead Local Flood Authority to identify that the necessary flooding infrastructure is identified throughout the production and implementation of the Local Plan, and in the development of the IDP. This includes cross boundary and 'green infrastructure' required to support development.

The impact of climate change on water resources

- 6.62 The EA and RDC will work together if there are any changes that could impact on the location of future development.

Development of the Water Cycle Study by RDC

- 6.63 The EA will provide a key on in leading on the management and scope of the Study.

Formal Local Plan consultations and engagement

- 6.64 EA responses to RDC consultations
- Consultation on draft SA/SEA Scoping Report: April – May 2020
 - Early Engagement Document & Duty to Co-operate Action Plan: August–October 2020
 - IDP Questionnaire: 15 October - 26 November 2021

Historic England

Planning matters for consideration

- 6.65 To ensure that the Plan includes a strategy for the maintenance and use of heritage assets and their protection, rather than a passive approach.
- 6.66 The need for clear strategic policies on heritage, to ensure that tier 2 policies, including those in Neighbourhood Plans, can be adequately guided.
- 6.67 The need to consider areas where certain types of development might need to be limited or would be inappropriate due to the impact that they might have upon the historic environment.
- 6.68 The need for policies and proposals of local plans to be based on an adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence base for the historic environment.

HE responses to RDC consultations

- Consultation on draft SA/SEA Scoping Report: April – May 2020
- Early Engagement Document & Duty to Co-operate Action Plan: August–October 2020

Natural England

Key documents

- Natural England Nature recovery network tool kit

Discussion with Natural England

- 6.69 RDC organised for two 90 minute meetings with Natural England in Summer 2022. These meetings were had with to discuss and receive advice from Natural England on the following areas:

- Nutrient neutrality within WwTW catchment areas, especially in Fairlight and Rye. Also to discuss issues raised by Southern Water on their Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans.
- Pevensey Levels – discuss where to focus new developments and the impacts on the hydrological catchment.
- Review of a draft scoping report for a Water Cycle Study.
- Strategic Access and Recreational Management Strategy (SARMS) – advice on how to implement the strategy which has previously been discussed and agreed with Natural England.
- Discuss strategic planning matters to be included within a Memorandum of Understanding, which could form the basis of a Statement of Common Ground for the future Local Plan.

Planning matters for consideration

6.70 The following planning matters have been considered:

- Sustainable Activity and Recreation Management Strategy (SARMS)
- Nutrient Neutrality within the Region: Water quality issues in relation to the Pevensey Levels. High Risk sites identified in the DWMP. Evidence base requirements to determine if Nutrient Neutrality is to be triggered.
- SuDS: Assessment of HELAA sites in the West Bexhill area, including discussion of larger SuDS schemes that connect to multiple developments being preferable. The need for two or more stages of treatment for SuDS.
- Water Cycle Study
- Protected sites, priority habitats and protected species

NE responses to RDC consultations

- Consultation on draft SA/SEA Scoping Report: April – May 2020
- Early Engagement Document & Duty to Co-operate Action Plan: August–October 2020

ESCC Highways

Key documents

- Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) – 2011-2026
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Key documents in production

- Draft Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) – 2024-2050

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

6.71 A MOU will not be developed until a later stage of the Plan's production when a Transport Assessment is being developed.

Joint evidence documents between RDC and ESCC Highways

6.72 RDC, ESCC Highways and National Highways, are in the development of the Shared Transport Evidence Base (STEB), which will ultimately feed into the East Sussex Countywide Transport Model (ESCWTM).

Planning matters for consideration

6.73 The following planning matters have been considered:

- To ensure that the road network has the required capacity to meet proposed development within the Plan.
- Working together to develop a Transport Assessment to support the proposed development within the Plan.
- West Bexhill Growth Corridor Study Gateway
- ESCC Highways responses to RDC consultations

Formal Local Plan consultations and engagement

- Consultation on draft SA/SEA Scoping Report: April – May 2020
- Early Engagement Document & Duty to Co-operate Action Plan: August–October 2020
- IDP Questionnaire: 15 October - 26 November 2021
- Engagement on draft Local Plan chapters and policies

RDC responses to ESCC Highways consultations

- RDC replied to ESCC's consultation on their draft Local Travel Plan 4 – February 2024

National Highways

Joint evidence documents between RDC and National Highways

- 6.74 RDC, ESCC Highways and National Highways, are in the development of the Shared Transport Evidence Base (STEB), which will ultimately feed into the East Sussex Countywide Transport Model (ESCWTM).
- 6.75 A detailed transport assessment will be undertaken at the next stage of the Local Plan.

Marine Management Organisation (MMO)

Key documents

- 2030 Strategic Plan

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- 6.76 An MOU was drafted between the RDC and the MMO in May 2022. It is agreed that the MoU covers the total administrative area of Rother District Council and the area of cross-over area between the local authority boundary and the South inshore Marine Plan Area.

Strategic Matters

6.77 The following strategic planning matters have been identified:

- Projected housing and employment numbers to be delivered throughout the Plan period.
- Proposed allocations and developments for commercial and recreational use that relate to or specifically impact the marine environment.
- RDC to coordinate their climate change and decarbonisation strategies with the MMO to ensure no negative impact on the marine environment and synergies with Marine Management Plans

ESCC Waste and Minerals

Adopted Plan Documents

- The Waste and Minerals Plan (adopted 19 February 2013)
- The Waste and Minerals Sites Plan (adopted 7 February 2017)
- The Waste and Minerals Sites Plan – Schedule of Suitable Industrial Estates (adopted 7 February 2017)
- The Waste and Minerals Adopted Policies Map
- Supplementary Planning Document on Construction and Demolition Waste (2005)

Statement of Common Ground (SoCG)

6.78 RDC, along with the other Tier-2 local authorities in East Sussex, is a joint signatory of the draft Statement of Common Ground with East Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove City Council and the South Downs National Park Authority. This was most recently updated in July 2021. The SoCG has been prepared alongside the Review of the Waste & Minerals Local Plan for the ESSDBH Plan Area which formed the East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Revised Policies Proposed Submission Consultation Document September 2021.

Strategic Matters (as identified in the SoCG and Waste & Minerals Local Plan Review)

Proposed Minerals Consultation Area (MCA) at Rye Harbour

- 6.79 RDC has concern with the extent of the proposed Minerals Consultation Area (MCA) at Rye Harbour, which has been enlarged significantly compared to the Consultation Areas shown in the adopted Plan. The new proposed MCA at Rye Harbour now appears to correlate with the boundary of the Harbour Road Employment Area (subject to Policy RHA2 of the Rother District Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) Local Plan) and the boundary of the residential allocation (Policy RHA1 of the DaSA Local Plan), together with a significant buffer. We are concerned that extending the MCA could conflict with the development of new employment buildings and related development in the area and potentially affect the delivery of the allocated housing site. In particular, RDC's concern relates mainly to the effect of the new information requirements for planning applications in the area, including an allocated site in the DaSA, and therefore the potential for adverse impacts on local housing supply.

RDC responses to Waste & Minerals consultations

- RDC replied to the Regulation 19 consultation on the draft Waste and Minerals Local Plan Review for the ESSDBH Plan Area – December 2021

Southern Water

Documents

- Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan 2025–50 (May 2023)

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- 6.80 An MOU between RDC and Southern Water was drafted in April 2022. Southern Water are the wastewater provider for households within the majority of Rother.

In the east of the District, Southern Water are also the freshwater provider in addition of the wastewater provider.

Strategic Matters

Housing and employment/ commercial development quantum and distribution across the District.

- 6.81 Rother District Council to share information relating to the numbers of houses and employment floorspace planned through the proposed development strategy to assist Southern Water in their modelling. This includes sharing the locations and phasing of major developments to ensure timely network connections.

Strategic infrastructure

- 6.82 Rother District Council to work with Southern Water to seek reassurances that there is sufficient capacity in the network to meet the future growth, and where infrastructure may need implementing to deliver this. This specifically includes the North East Bexhill development and ensuring there is capacity in the wastewater system to ensure the development can come forward fully as planned.

Other matters

- 6.83 The other following matters have been identified:
- Water efficiencies and responding to the impacts of Climate Change
 - Nutrient Neutrality and wastewater discharge into sites/areas designated for their environmental importance
 - RDC to liaise with Southern Water at the appropriate stages of the production of the Water Cycle Study

RDC responses to Southern Water Consultations

- Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan for the Pevensey Levels and Cuckmere Catchment – April 2022
- Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan for the Rother Catchment – April 2022
- Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (Company Wide / Level 1) – April 2022

Southern Water responses to RDC Consultations

- Early Engagement Document & Duty to Co-operate Action Plan: August–October 2020
- IDP Questionnaire: 15 October - 26 November 2021

South East Water

Documents

- Revised Water Resources Management Plan 2025 to 2075 (August 2023)

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- 6.84 An MOU between RDC and South East Water was drafted in March 2022. The water supply within the majority of Rother District Council is supplied by South East Water, while the east of the District, including Rye and Camber, is supplied by Southern Water. The MOU notes that the nature of water operations means that water can be transferred between zones, so issues outside of the District can have a knock on impact within Rother.

Strategic Matters

Housing and employment/ commercial development quantum and distribution across the District.

- 6.85 Rother District Council to share information relating to the numbers of houses and employment floorspace planned through the proposed development strategy to assist Southern Water in their modelling. This includes sharing the locations and phasing of major developments to ensure timely network connections.

Strategic infrastructure

- 6.86 Rother District Council to work with South East Water to seek reassurances that there is sufficient capacity in the network to meet the future growth, and where infrastructure may need implementing to deliver this. This specifically includes the North East Bexhill development and ensuring there is capacity in the wastewater system to ensure the development can come forward fully as planned.

Other matters

- 6.87 The following other strategic matters have been identified:
- Water efficiencies and responding to the impacts of Climate Change
 - Nutrient Neutrality and wastewater discharge into sites/areas designated for their environmental importance
 - RDC to liaise with Southern Water at the appropriate stages of the production of the Water Cycle Study

South East Water responses to RDC Consultations

- IDP Questionnaire: 15 October - 26 November 2021

Local Lead Flood Authority (ESCC)

Key documents

- East Sussex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2016 – 2026 (September 2016)

Strategic Matters

6.88 The following strategic matters have been identified:

- Drainage in relation to Hydrological Catchments River Basin Catchments
- Coordination with updated South East River Basin Management Plan
- Treatment of SuDS in relation to Drainage. Particularly in respect of the Pevensey Levels and the Dungeness Complex, for which more than two stages of treatment may be required.
- SFRA - Rother District's Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2021) has been developed in consultation with the LLFA. The requirement to develop a Level 2 SFRA has not yet been determined.

LLFA responses to RDC Consultations and Engagement

- Early Engagement Document & Duty to Co-operate Action Plan: August–October 2020
- IDP Questionnaire: 15 October - 26 November 2021 - Early engagement on draft environmental chapter and policies – Summer 2023. The LLFA have made comments on the Environmental Development chapter of the Local Plan, and have therefore fed into its development.

Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board

Documents

- Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board Business Plan and Policy Statement

Strategic Matters

6.89 The following strategic matters have been identified:

- Drainage in relation to the Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels Catchment and the Combe Haven Catchment.
- Matters in respect of managing water levels and the movement of water within its district, as well as changes in the amount of water coming into the drainage district from those areas outside the district but within the catchment/watershed. Any proposed sites within this watershed are required to adhere to the Board's Byelaws, including the agreement of discharge rates.
- The potential increase in flood risk, leading to an increase in the volume of water into the Board's assets.

LLFA responses to RDC Consultations

- Early Engagement Document & Duty to Co-operate Action Plan: August–October 2020

ESCC Public Health Team

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

6.90 An MOU between Local Planning Authorities in East Sussex and the Public Health Team within East Sussex County Council was signed in August 2022. The MOU sets out how the Public Health Team and the LPAs in East Sussex will work together to deliver the County Council's statutory public health responsibilities and LPAs duties to deliver relevant elements of the National Planning Policy Framework through the planning system. It also sets out the high-level actions that parties will take, including working together to agree specific actions around processes, engagement, and parameters to establish robust working outcomes and objectives. It is noted that Rother has significantly higher levels of people with long term health problems in Rother compared to the south-east region and to England and Wales.

Strategic Matters

Planning principles and measures

- 6.91 Planning measures include improving connectivity and walkability, while promoting a mix of land uses with provision of services, accessible places, and focussing on a high-quality public realm.

Quality of housing

- 6.92 Good housing design, including well insulated housing. Affordable housing provision.

Access to healthy food

- 6.93 Community food growing infrastructure including allotments and gardens, as well as the facilitation of Healthy highstreets with a diversity of shops and retail outlets selling healthier food.

Natural and sustainable environments

- 6.94 Reduced air, noise, light and odour pollution; access to natural, green and open spaces; integrated play and recreation opportunities; adaption to climate change risks; and urban greening.

Prioritisation of active travel, road safety and increased mobility for all

- 6.95 Improving sustainable transport alternatives and ensuring health improvements through walking, cycling and wheeling

Engagement on Local Plan chapters

- 6.96 Since 2022 the ESCC Public Health Team have been involved in the development of the Health and Wellbeing Background Topic Paper and the Health and Wellbeing Chapter Local Plan. They have also been involved in reviewing the Plan's Development Strategy chapter.

NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (NHS Sussex ICB) (formerly East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group)

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- 6.97 An MOU between RDC and Sussex Integrated Care System (ICS) was drafted in May 2022. The MOU aims to provide a framework for the two organisations to work collaboratively to ensure appropriate co-ordination and planning for the cross-boundary strategic planning issues that exist and/or are likely to arise in the foreseeable future in relation to growth and development identified in the emerging Rother Local Plan.

Strategic Matters

- 6.98 The following strategic matters have been identified:
- Locations of housing and key employment areas and the impacts on the provision and distribution of health services/GP surgeries.
 - Delivery of new health care facilities and infrastructure for the whole planning period.

NHS Sussex ICB responses to RDC Consultations

- Consultation on draft SA/SEA Scoping Report: June 2020
- Early Engagement Document & Duty to Co-operate Action Plan: August–October 2020
- IDP Questionnaire: 15 October - 26 November 2021

East Sussex Fire and Rescue (ESF&R)

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- 6.99 An MOU between RDC and East Sussex Fire and Rescue was drafted in April 2022. The MOU sets out that of whole East Sussex Fire and Rescue operating region, Rother and Hastings coincide with the operations of the East Group.

Strategic Matters

- 6.100 The following strategic matters have been identified:

- Growth strategy and strategic locations for growth as identified and delivered through the new Local Plan.
- ESFR will need to be consulted on applications for high-rise developments that contain two or more dwellings or educational accommodation, and meet the height condition of 18m or more in height, or 7 or more storeys.
- ESFR to facilitate the appropriate infrastructure to serve the immediate community and population growth.
- ESFR will need to be consulted on any renewable energy schemes that can enhance the fire risk.

(ESF&R) responses to RDC Consultations

- IDP Questionnaire: 15 October - 26 November 2021

Sussex Wildlife Trust

Key documents

- Sussex LNP Natural capital investment strategy

Strategic Matters

- 6.101 The following strategic matters have been identified:

- The identification and delivery of a Nature Recovery Network for Rother District, and the requirement to deliver net gains for biodiversity through policy.
- Delivery of green infrastructure
- Local Wildlife Sites Review into the status of a number of sites. The details of this Review are set out in Section 5.

NHS Sussex ICB responses to RDC Consultations

- Early Engagement Document & Duty to Co-operate Action Plan: August–October 2020

High Weald AONB Unit

Key documents

- High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024
- High Weald Housing Design Guide - 219

Documents in development

- Draft High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029

Strategic Matters

6.102 The following strategic matters have been identified:

- The High Weald National Landscape covers 83% of Rother District's land area - as Rother district contains such a large section of the High Weald National Landscape it is important that the Local Plan's policies achieve the conservation and enhancement of the National Landscape in line with the NPPF. Planning policies should ensure that the scale and extent of development proposed does not harm the purposes for which the High Weald was nationally designated.

- The role of the development strategy in the preservation of the characteristic dispersed settlement pattern of the High Weald.
- The need for affordable housing in rural areas
- ‘Major development’ in the National Landscape
- Nature Recovery Areas and Biodiversity Net Gain

RDC responses to High Weald AONB Unit Consultations

- RDC responded to the High Weald Management Plan 2024-2029 consultation in November 2023. Cabinet and Full Council are seeking to adopt the Management Plan at Cabinet and Full Council in May 2024.

High Weald AONB responses to RDC Consultations

- Early Engagement Document & Duty to Co-operate Action Plan: August–October 2020

Transport for the South East (TfSE)

Transport Strategy

6.103 The Transport for the South East (TfSE) is a sub-national transport body for the south east of England, which is made up of five local enterprise partnerships plus representatives of district & borough authorities, protected landscapes and national delivery agencies.

Key Documents

- Economic Connectivity Review 2018
- Transport Strategy 2020
- Strategic Investment Plan (up to 2050)

Key Documents in development

- Transport Strategy Review

RDC responses to TfSE Consultations

- 6.104 RDC responded to TfSE’s consultation on their Strategic Investment Plan Consultation. RDC agreed with the Plan’s vision to “to decarbonise transport in the South-East and the switch from a ‘planning for vehicles’ approach towards a focus on ‘planning for people’ and ‘planning for places’” – 26/08/2022

7 Appendix A - Duty to Co-operate Meetings Log – 2019-2024

East Sussex County Council

- Internal Drainage Board Conference Call (24/03/2020) regarding the Pevensey Levels. Discussion of Hydraulic Modelling project in relation to the Pevensey Levels and the impact of the emerging Local Plan Update and areas of search for development at land west of Bexhill.
- Public Health meeting (19/06/2020) to update on progress of the Local Plan, DPH report and recommendations around Housing and Planning.
- Meeting (23/11/2023) to discuss Infrastructure Questionnaire response and draft MOU.
- Public Health meeting (09/02/2022) to discuss Local Plan Progress and developing health and well-being policies and evidence base. Discussion of thresholds for Health Impact Assessments and evidence base assistance. RDC To cross reference health and wellbeing Working agreement within its MoU.
- Public Health workshop (19/10/2022) attended by ESCC PH and all District and Borough Councils to reach a shared understanding on Health Impact Assessments.
- Public Health workshop (13/03/2023) attended by ESCC PH and all District and Borough Councils to reach a shared approach to Health Impact Assessments. Creation of a ESCC working group.
- Public Health meeting (24/07/2023) regarding RDC Local Plan. Focused on emerging policies for the Local Plan as well as guidance and templates produced by ESCC PH that PH were seeking feedback on (the Engagement Protocol and the DM consultation template letter).

Hastings Borough Council

- Initial Duty to Co-operate meeting.
- Initial meeting (08/11/2019) to discuss issues in relation to preparing a joint SA Scoping Report.

- Meeting (08/11/2019) to discuss progress of the HEDNA, and joint responses to the draft report from the consultants.
- Local Plan Managers meeting (28/11/2019) to discuss strategic planning issues across the County.
- Meeting (16/12/2019) to discuss issues in relation to preparing a joint SA Scoping Report.
- Local Plan Managers meeting (14/01/2020) to discuss strategic planning issues across the County.
- Meeting (28/01/2020) to discuss issues in relation to preparing a joint SA Scoping Report.
- Local Plan Managers meeting (28/02/2020) to discuss strategic planning issues across the County.
- Local Plan Managers meeting (21/05/2020) to discuss strategic planning issues across the County.
- Meeting (19/06/2020) to discuss progress on the joint HEDNA, Public Health and general Local Plan update.
- Local Plan Managers meeting (30/07/2020) to discuss strategic planning issues across the County.
- Meeting (21/09/2020) regarding informal consultation from Hastings BC on their Infrastructure Delivery Plan and general Local Plan Update in relation to Hastings potential Reg 18 consultation in Autumn 2020.
- Presentation by HBC (29/09/2020) on the initial findings from the Low Carbon Energy Study.
- Meeting to discuss the strategic cross-boundary infrastructure issues to be highlighted in Hastings IDP, further to their targeted engagement/consultation stage on the IDP. Commitment was made for joint working regarding transport modelling in relation to both Local Plans. SA Scoping Report was also discussed.
- SA meeting with AECOM on behalf of HBC (23/11/2020) to agree changes to be made to the SA/SEA Scoping Report. Also to discuss and agree future steps in the production of the SA/SEA Scoping Report and how each Council will move forward separately.
- Meeting with HBC (07/01/2021) to formally sign off of SA/SEA Scoping Report, and other DtC matters of importance. It was agreed that Hastings BC had no initial comments to make to the revised reports, but will check with consultants AECOM that they do not have any comments. Agreed that

Hastings will only publish SA framework when they start Reg 18 consultation at the end of Jan 2021.

- General DtC meeting (18/11/2021)
- Remote workshop event (15/12/2021) to discuss synergies in respective plans, RDC's proposed development strategy, HELAA sites, HEDNA update, and discussion of Draft MOU. Determined that RDC will draft MOU.
- Online meeting to discuss opportunities for synergies in development strategy and consider a wider growth options strategy. Discuss commissioning HEDNA refresh, and working together on the IDP.
- Online HELAA meeting (19/03/2022) to discuss identified HELAA sites on the boundary of Hastings and Rother. The meeting was initiated by HBC who are reviewing and updating their HELAA.
- Online meeting (17/03/2022), including Hastings Borough Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Wealden District Council, South Downs National Park Authority, and RRR Consultancy to discuss collective comments on the Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment report. Also involved discussion on a potential shared approach to dealing with transit needs through a "negotiated stopping" policy, which will necessitate further discussion also involving ESCC. RRR to send revised report based on comments given. Need for further discussion on possible shared approach to negotiated stopping policy.
- Regular DtC meeting (07/02/2023) with agenda: Local Plan evidence updates, NPPF updates, strategic gap discussion, Land supply, IDP, Breadsell site, Land west and east of Beany's lane, Rock Lane/Winchelsea Lane site, Ivyhouse lane and Rock Lane Management Area.
- Regular DtC meeting (25/07/2023) with agenda: Local Plan evidence updates, NPPF updates, strategic gap discussion, Land supply, IDP, Breadsell site, Land west and east of Beany's lane, Rock Lane/Winchelsea Lane site, Ivyhouse lane and Rock Lane Management Area.
- Coastal Change Management Areas meeting (22/08/2023) with Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, regarding having a consistent interpretation and approach to designating CCMA's.

- SoCG meeting (08/11/2023) with HBC, to discuss draft wording. Particular reference to housing and employment need, gypsy and traveller provision, Breadsell site and strategic gaps

Wealden District Council

- Local Plan Managers meeting (28/11/2019) to discuss strategic planning issues across the County.
- Local Plan Managers meeting (14/01/2020) to discuss strategic planning issues across the County.
- Local Plan Managers meeting (28/02/2020) to discuss strategic planning issues across the County.
- Local Plan Managers meeting (21/05/2020) to discuss strategic planning issues across the County.
- Local Plan Managers meeting (30/07/2020) to discuss strategic planning issues across the County.
- Initial formal DtC meeting (03/09/2020) for respective Local Plans which are at an early engagement stage. Discussed progress on the Local Plans, the identification of cross boundary strategic issues and opportunity for joint evidence base. Agreed to work on a Statement of Common Ground/Intent to be published in support of Reg 18 consultation. Wealden to respond to RDC Early Engagement consultation.
- Online meeting (01/12/2021) on draft MOU, and to confirm strategic planning issues in advance of Reg 18 consultation.
- Online meeting (17/03/2022), including Hastings Borough Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Wealden District Council, South Downs National Park Authority, and RRR Consultancy to discuss collective comments on the Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment report. Also involved discussion on a potential shared approach to dealing with transit needs through a "negotiated stopping" policy, which will necessitate further discussion also involving ESCC. RRR to send revised report based on comments given. Need for further discussion on possible shared approach to negotiated stopping policy.
- General DtC meeting (26/05/2022) to discuss: Local Plan update, housing and employment need, cross boundary infrastructure, evidence base, synergies in policy development, Statement of Common Ground.

- Meeting (20/10/2022) to discuss draft SoCG, including update on Local Plans, including thoughts on joint approach to policy development, and updates on evidence base.

Ashford Borough Council

- Meeting (01/12/2021) to discuss draft MOU, confirm strategic planning issues in advance of Reg 18 consultation.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

- DtC meeting (17/03/2020) for respective Local Plans, and to discuss strategic planning issues.
- Meeting (03/12/2021) regarding draft MOU, and to confirm strategic planning issues in advance of Reg 18 consultation.
- (08/11/2023) Update of TWBC Local Plan Examination, regarding the significant reduction in housing numbers, loss of Tudeley village and significant loss of developable area at Paddocks wood due to flood risk rezoning. Also update of Hawkhurst Medical centre - new plan approved with 70 dwellings to enable development - will consider transport impacts through transport assessment of Rother LP.

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

- DtC meeting (04/09/2020) including discussion on the Sustainable Access and Recreation Management Strategy. Specific matters including identifying the need to contact other bodies regarding various actions in the "SARMS Plan".
- Meeting (21/10/2020) to discuss SARMS. Reported that F&HDC made progress in contacting external organisations including the Fifth Continent Landscape Partnership and Romney Marsh Countryside Partnership - further meetings to be arranged with these bodies to also involve RDC. RDC reported progress on researching one of the Category A SARMS actions and passed this to F&HDC for their consideration.

- Meeting (30/03/2021) to follow up NNR meeting 22/03/2021, in order to agree a document listing SARMS measures to be circulated to other NNR group members.
- Meeting (27/01/2022) regarding strategic planning issues, MOU in lead up to RDC Local Plan Reg 18. Main strategic issues agreed to be the Dungeness Complex of internationally protected sites/biodiversity/SARMS/green infrastructure. Agreement that both LPAs do not have a shared housing market area and not significant transport linkages. No issues in principle with MoU.

Eastbourne/Lewes District Council

- Local Plan Managers meeting (28/11/2019) to discuss strategic planning issues across the County.
- Local Plan Managers meeting (14/01/2020) to discuss strategic planning issues across the County.
- Local Plan Managers meeting (28/02/2020) to discuss strategic planning issues across the County.
- Local Plan Managers meeting (21/05/2020) to discuss strategic planning issues across the County.
- Meeting (28/07/2020) to discuss DtC and Early Engagement. Update on progress of the Local Plan, early opportunity to discuss direction, specifically discussed process for undertaken Local Plan Review.
- Local Plan Managers meeting (30/07/2020) to discuss strategic planning issues across the County.
- DtC meeting (16/12/2021) to discuss strategic planning issues, MOU in lead up to RDC Local Plan Reg 18.

Environment Agency

- Initial meeting (14/10/2019) of the Combe Haven Sub-Group, including the Environment Agency, in relation to issues pertaining to the Combe Haven Catchment and related matters concerning flooding.
- Meeting (09/03/2020) of the Combe Haven Sub-Group, in relation to issues pertaining to the Combe Haven Catchment and related matters concerning flooding. The meeting also discussed the activities and management of the Combe Valley Countryside Park.

- Meeting to discuss the RDC SA Scoping Report (17/04/2020), that also provided opportunity for statutory consultees to comment on cross-boundary strategic planning issues during the initial stages of Local Plan development.
- Online based workshop (17/06/2020), on managing the impact of development on water quality in the Pevensey Levels. Input was provided by local authorities on their Local Plans and growth requirements; with a discussion on the potential impacts of growth on the Pevensey Levels, and to consider role of SUDS to manage impacts.
- Online meeting (11/01/2022) to discuss a number of matters, including the EA's responses to RDC's IDP Questionnaire, principles of MOU, confirmation of Strategic Matters, and the future Water Cycle Study.

Historic England

- Meeting to discuss the RDC SA Scoping Report (17/04/2020), that also provided opportunity for statutory consultees to comment on cross-boundary strategic planning issues during the initial stages of Local Plan development.

Natural England

- Initial meeting (14/10/2019) of the Combe Haven Sub-Group, including Natural England, in relation to issues pertaining to the Combe Haven Catchment and related matters concerning flooding.
- Meeting (09/03/2020) of the Combe Haven Sub-Group, in relation to issues pertaining to the Combe Haven Catchment and related matters concerning flooding. The meeting also discussed the activities and management of the Combe Valley Countryside Park.
- Meeting to discuss the RDC SA Scoping Report (17/04/2020), that also provided opportunity for statutory consultees to comment on cross-boundary strategic planning issues during the initial stages of Local Plan development.
- Online meeting (22/06/2022) between RDC and NE on the following matters related to the Local Plan: Nutrient neutrality; the Water Cycle Study; the Pevensey Levels, and whether areas of new development in West

Bexhill may have an impact on the hydrological catchment; and, the Strategic Access and Recreation Management Strategy.

East Sussex County Council Highways

- Online meeting (23/11/2021) to discuss ESCC's response to RDC's Infrastructure Questionnaire and to discuss the draft MOU.
- Online meeting (23/02/2022) West Bexhill Transport: specifically, to discuss the feasibility of a new multi-modal corridor and link to potential development areas; what would be required to justify such a new transport link, and the issues with funding and likely support from ESCC and Highways Agency.

Highways Agency

- Online meeting (20/01/2022) to discuss potential MOU in the lead up to Reg 18, and otherwise the overall SoCG process. Specific planning issues included existing transport network issues, junction issues in relation to the Transport Assessment, testing of the objectively assessed housing need, and the ongoing involvement in discussions with ESCC and RDC's highways consultants.

Marine Management Organisation (MMO)

- Online meeting (12/01/2022) to discuss drawing up of MOU in lead up to Regulation 18. Specific concerns include MOU reference to Rye Harbour landing facilities, regeneration of derelict areas on the coast for fishing activities, community facilities, boating, tourism uses etc in line with MMO national policies.
- Online meeting (22/08/2023) of the South Marine Plan Focus Group to discuss the Plan and its implementation in relation to DM decisions and Local Plan policies.

Sussex Police

- Online meeting (21/12/2021) to discuss their responses to the IDP questionnaire, discussion of Strategic Matters, and principle of MOU.

SGN

- Online meeting (21/01/2022) to discuss drawing up of MOU in lead up to Regulation 18. Specific SGN wanted to discuss RDC's decarbonisation agenda, climate change strategy impacts. Requests were made for RDC GIS shape files of current Local Plan growth and emerging growth when ready.

UK Power Networks

- Online meeting (09/12/2021) to discuss draft MOU and RDC infrastructure questionnaire relating to the IDP.

Southern Water

- Engagement on the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) (02/09/2020) regarding the Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels Catchment, and to discuss key planning issues for the Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels Catchment, setting objectives for the study and agreeing WWTWs that need to proceed to BRAVA. Specific concerns included the need for Southern Water to take account of emerging housing growth in LAs each year; concern about potential for discharge into the Pevensey Levels.
- Engagement on the DWMP (11/09/2020) regarding the Rother Catchment, and to discuss key planning issues for the Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels Catchment, setting objectives for the study and agreeing WWTWs that need to proceed to BRAVA. Specific concerns included the need for Southern Water to take account of emerging housing growth in LAs each year; concerns in regards to Romney Marsh protected areas
- Online meeting (11/01/2022) to discuss draft MOU and RDC infrastructure questionnaire relating to the IDP, with specific reference to confirming Strategic Matters and discussion of Bexhill Network and SW project for Fairlight.
- DWMP meeting (31/03/2022) for Rother catchment.

- DWMP meeting (08/03/2022) for Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels catchment. Discussion of the potential investment needs for the Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels catchment. This included the Bexhill and Hastings WTW catchment; the potential investment needs are contained in the presentation. Discussion of the potential investment needs for the Rother catchment. This included the Fairlight WTW catchment and Rye WTW catchment; the potential investment needs are contained in the presentation.

South East Water

- Online meeting (27/01/2022) to discuss drawing up of MOU in lead up to Regulation 18. Discussion of the location of development and population growth in order to determine where network improvements may be required. Discussion regarding RDC Water Cycle Study.

Water Level Management Board

- Water Level Management Board Presentation and Local Plan meeting (19/08/2020). Presentation/Update on the activities of the WLMB and update on position of Local Plans.

Lead Local Flood Authority

- Meeting (16/06/2023) to discuss water issues regarding emerging Local Plan and how the LLFA can help shape Rother's policies.

Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels Catchment Partnership

- Partnership meeting with stakeholders (29/01/2020) to discuss impact of Local Plan process on River catchments and any related plans and projects.
- Partnership meeting with stakeholders (15/07/2020). Update regarding various projects and presentation from Southern Water regarding imminent engagement on the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans.

East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group (now Sussex Health & Care Partnership)

- Online meeting (29/11/2021) to discuss draft MOU and RDC infrastructure questionnaire relating to the IDP.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue

- Online meeting (11/01/2022) to discuss principle of MOU (including DM matters), confirm Strategic Matters, and RDC infrastructure questionnaire relating to the IDP.

Sussex Wildlife Trust

- Partnership meeting (11/11/2019) with stakeholders. Discussion of impact of Local Plan process on Local Wildlife Site Reviews.
- Meeting (31/01/2020) to discuss scope of Rother Local Wildlife Site Review and discuss the potential timetable and support from the SWT.
- Partnership meeting (04/02/2020) with stakeholders. Discussion of impact of Local Plan process on Local Wildlife Site Reviews.

Ashdown Forest Working Group

- Ashdown Forest Working Group meeting (20/02/2020) to discuss the long term monitoring strategy for the Air quality impacts of development on the Ashdown Forest and to work towards consensus of approach for our respective Habitats Regulation Assessments.
- Ashdown Forest Working Group meeting (02/07/2020) to discuss the long term monitoring strategy for the Air quality impacts of development on the Ashdown Forest and to work towards consensus of approach for our respective Habitats Regulation Assessments.

High Weald AONB Unit

- High Weald AONB Unit engagement (13/05/2020) with regards to emerging Environment Bill and working together to develop consistent Biodiversity Net Gain policy.

- Early engagement meeting on the Rother Local Plan (09/07/2020). Discussion of direction and evidence base being prepared for the Local Plan, and to understand evidence base that AONB unit has prepared to support its approach on landscape character and sustainability of settlements within the AONB.
- High Weald AONB Unit engagement (16/09/2020) regarding BNG. Consideration to work together to develop Biodiversity Net Gain policies for the Local Plan and to ensure a consistent approach for the High Weald AONB. Discussion of Offsetting strategies linked to Nature Recovery Areas.
- Online meeting (17/11/2021) draft MOU, confirm strategic planning issues in advance of Reg18 consultation.

Dungeness National Nature Reserve Steering Group

- Meeting (22/03/2021) with representatives, including from RDC, Folkestone & Hythe DC, Natural England, Romney Marsh Partnership, RSPB, Sussex Wildlife Trust and others) on SARMS, to discuss issues within the area the group covers, including SARMS. Group to become the SARMS oversight group (as per action SA8.1 in the SARMS).

8 Appendix B: Infrastructure Delivery Plan Questionnaire

Infrastructure bodies that were contacted	IDP Questionnaire response	Subsequent meeting	MOU drafted
ESCC Transport Policy (Highways)		Yes	Yes
ESCC Libraries	Yes		
ESCC Education	Yes		
ESCC Children's Services			
SeaChange Sussex			
National Highways	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sustrans	Yes		
Network Rail			
Southern			
Southeastern			
Stagecoach			
ESCC Buses	Yes		
Renown Group			
Battle Area Community Transport			
Bexhill Community Bus			
Rye & District Community Transport			
RDC Community, Arts, Culture and Leisure	Yes		
RDC Cemeteries			
Bexhill College			
East Sussex College Group			
Plumpton College			
Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust			
East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	Yes		

Engagement and Duty to Cooperate Statement

Hastings and Rother CCG			
East Sussex CCG	Yes	Yes	
RDC - Environment			
Environment Agency	Yes	Yes	Yes
ESCC - Environment			
RDC - Green Infrastructure			
ESCC Rights of Way			
Environment Agency - Flood Defence			
RDC - Flood Defence			
ESCC Lead Local Flood Authority	Yes		
Southern Water	Yes	Yes	Yes
South East Water	Yes	Yes	Yes
National Grid	Yes		
UK Power Networks	Yes	Yes	Yes
SGN	Yes	Yes	Yes
EDF			
GTC			
Openreach			
eSussex			
CTIL			
Three			
EE			
ESCC Waste Management	Yes		
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sussex Police	Yes	Yes	Yes
SE Coast Ambulance Service			

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Rother District Council

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Bexhill-on-Sea

East Sussex

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