

ROTHER LOCAL PLAN 2020 - 2040 REGULATION 18 VERSION. PUBLISHED APRIL 2024

Public consultation – April-July 2024

Welcome!

We are preparing the new **Rother Local Plan**. It will guide development and land use in our area. We want to work with our communities to shape Rother's future.



How To Participate

1. Attend the exhibition.
2. Visit the official **consultation webpage**:
www.rother.gov.uk/draftlocalplan
3. Explore the plan, share your thoughts, and provide feedback.



Hard Copies Available

You can view **hard copies of the Local Plan** at:

1. Bexhill Town Hall
2. Libraries in Bexhill, Battle, Hastings, Heathfield, Hollington, Rye and Wadhurst
3. Community libraries in Northiam, Ore and Ticehurst.



Have Your Say

Your opinions matter!

Whether you find something positive or have concerns, we want to hear from you.

You don't need to comment on every aspect, focus on what matters most to you.

Your valuable feedback will guide us in refining this version of the Local Plan to align with the **community's vision**.



Get In Touch

For any consultation questions, please email:
draftlocalplan@rother.gov.uk.

Or write to us at:
Planning Policy Team
Rother District Council
Town Hall,
London Road,
Bexhill-On-Sea TN39 3JX

Thank you for being part of this important process.

Introduction

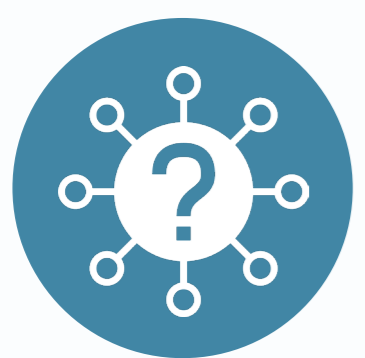
This is an introduction to our draft Local Plan. While it won't provide you with all its content, we hope it will be of interest and encourage you to explore the comprehensive documents we are consulting on.



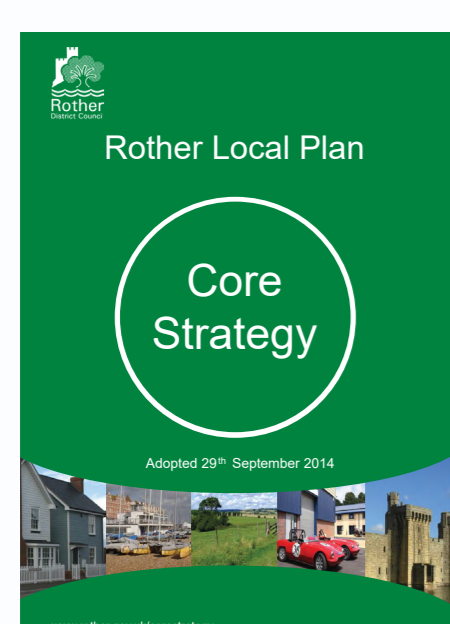
The Geography of Rother



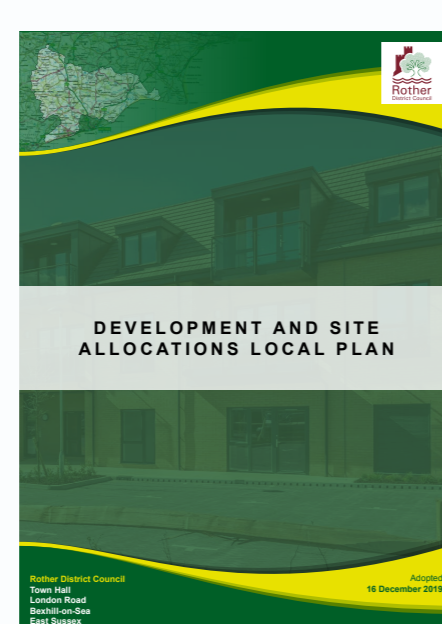
The Local Plan responds to the unique circumstances of Rother – where around half of the population lives in Bexhill and the other half in small towns, villages, hamlets and in open countryside, the majority of which is in the High Weald National Landscape (NL), the new name for this designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Rother also has a high number of visitors, but poor connections by road or rail to and from surrounding areas. Along with Hastings, we have areas with high levels of deprivation and a chronic affordable housing shortage.



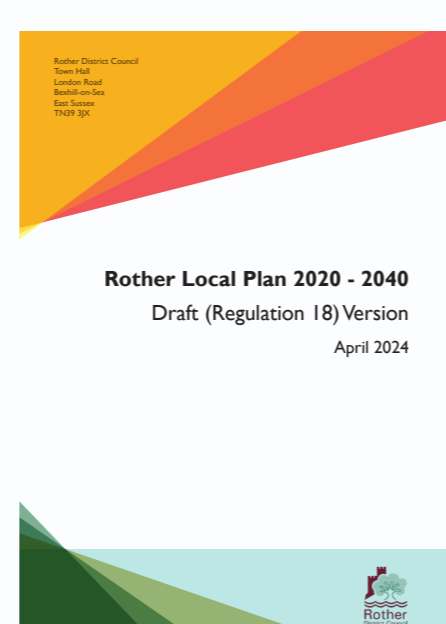
What is the Local Plan for?



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Once adopted, the new Rother Local Plan will replace Rother's Core Strategy (2014) and Development and Site Allocations (2019) Plans. Therefore, it is vitally important and will significantly influence what is built in Rother in the future.

This draft version of the new Local Plan will not be used to decide planning applications.

What's in the Plan?

Our draft plan seeks to be **ambitious and bold** in its response to the climate, biodiversity, housing, economic and health and wellbeing challenges that we face.

It revolves around two Overall Priorities '**Green to the Core**' and '**Live Well Locally**'.



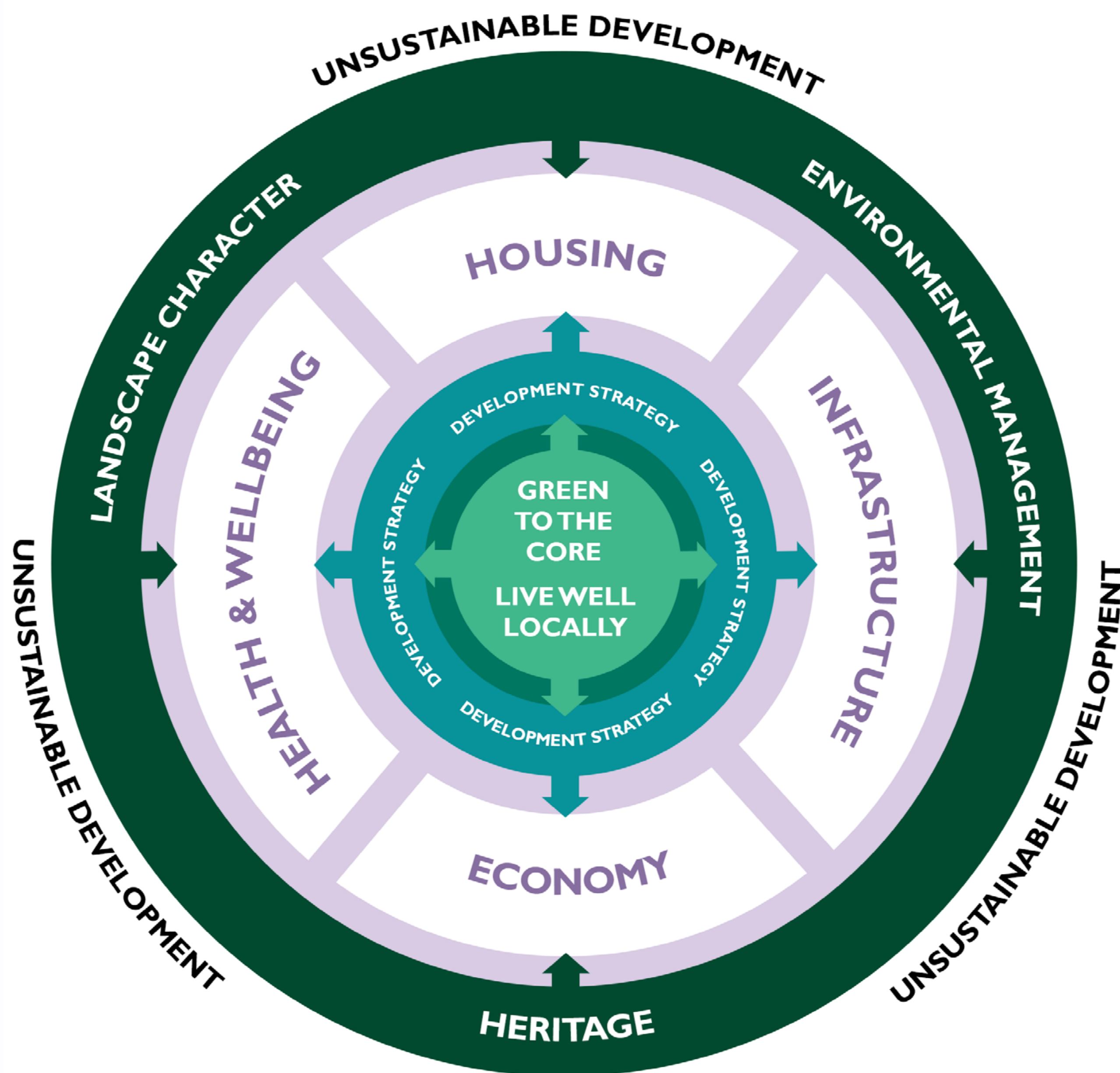
Green to the Core:

This priority emphasises considering the impact of our planning decisions on the climate emergency, biodiversity crisis, and the High Weald National Landscape.



Live Well Locally:

In all planning decisions, the goal is to create healthy, sustainable and inclusive communities.



The diagram provides a pictorial representation of how the plan supports sustainable development. The two overall priorities of 'Green to the Core' and 'Live Well Locally' sit at the centre and shape the development strategy.

This influences the housing, economic, infrastructure and health and well-being policies. These are set within the confines of the district's landscape character, environmental designations and built heritage. These areas of planning policy ensure that development is appropriate and sustainable.

Proposed Policies

There are **72** proposed policies in the draft Local Plan.



= Policies that respond to Green to the Core priorities.



= Policies that respond to Live Well Locally priorities.



= New policies.



Policy Format

Each proposed policy is presented in the same format:

Status

Policy wording

Explanatory Text

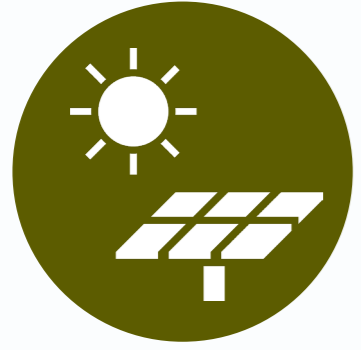
Regulation 18 commentary

Consultation Questions

- The **status** of each policy (whether it is strategic or non-strategic; a new or an updated policy; and whether it responds to our Green to the Core and/or Live Well Locally priorities).
- The **proposed policy wording**.
- **Explanatory text**, which explains the policy.
- **'Regulation 18 Commentary'** to explain how the proposed policy may evolve following this consultation.
- **Consultation Questions** for each policy for which we would like your feedback.

Chapter 3 - Green to the Core

Being Green to the Core means considering the impact of all planning decisions on the climate emergency, the biodiversity crisis, and the High Weald National Landscape.



Climate Emergency Policies

We propose policies which support the Council's aim to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by requiring low energy use in new buildings; high standards of retrofit; careful consideration of construction materials and waste and efficient use of water; encouraging heat networks and supporting renewable energy infrastructure.

GTC1: Net Zero Building Standards	★ ∞	GTC4: Water Efficiency	∞
GTC2: Net Zero Retrofit Standards	★ ∞	GTC5: Heat Networks	★ ∞
GTC3: Construction Materials and Waste	★ ∞	GTC6: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	★ ∞



Biodiversity Policies

We propose policies which respond to the Environment Act 2021 through alignment with the East Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy and 20% Biodiversity Net Gain.

GTC7: Local Nature Recovery Areas	★ ∞	GTC8: Biodiversity Net Gain	★ ∞
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High Weald National Landscape Policies

We retain and update our policy which conserves and enhances the High Weald National Landscape (the new name for this designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), which covers 83% of our district.

GTC9: High Weald National Landscape	★ ∞		
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Chapter 4 - Live Well Locally

Live Well Locally means considering, in all planning decisions, the goal of creating healthy, sustainable and inclusive communities, connected and compact towns and village clusters in our rural locations, and places that foster a sense of belonging, identity and shared experience.

We have utilised national guidance written by Homes England, the NHS, Active Travel England and Sport England to create bespoke policies to meet Rother's needs.



Live Well Locally Policies

We propose policies that set density ranges for our town centres, suburbs, new development sites and our villages; require new development to be within walking distance of facilities and services; set standards for walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport infrastructure both on and off development sites; and ensure developers create distinctive places and streets.

LWL1: Compact Development	★ 🚶	LWL5: Distinctive Places	★ 🚶
LWL2: Facilities & Services	★ 🚶	LWL6: Built Form	★ 🚶
LWL3: Walking, Wheeling, Cycling & Public Transport (Outside the Site)	★ 🚶	LWL7: Streets for All	★ 🚶
LWL4: Walking, Wheeling, Cycling & Public Transport (Within the Site)	★ 🚶	LWL8: Multimodal Parking	★ 🚶

Chapter 5 - Development Strategy and Principles

An essential role of the Local Plan is to set targets and identify sites for new housing and employment floorspace. The draft Local Plan does not include proposed site allocations at this stage, but Chapter 5 includes indicative figures for housing and employment floorspace, based on sites considered in the draft Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).



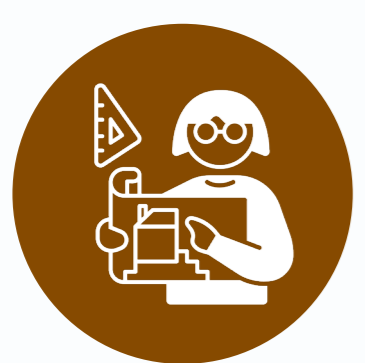
Draft Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (the HELAA)

We have conducted a comprehensive assessment of nearly **1,000** sites, considering their suitability, availability and achievability for development.

Employment Land: Based on evidence, our Development Strategy proposes a target figure of 74,000 sqm of additional employment floorspace. Our evidence shows this target can be met.

Housing:

- Our draft HELAA identifies potential land for between 5,000 and 7,000 new dwellings to 2040, or 250 to 350 dwellings annually.
- This is less than the Government target of around 14,000 dwellings over the same period (over 700 per year).
- On average, just over 200 dwellings have been built annually across Rother since 2011.
- We need to strike a balance: enable much-needed new housing while safeguarding the environment. The HELAA takes a thorough approach, leaving no stone unturned.
- The draft Local Plan presents a housing target range for each town, village and parish. We are seeking comments on these targets and on individual HELAA sites.
- The final draft Local Plan will include site allocations.
- The draft Local Plan also sets targets, based on identified need, for gypsy and traveller sites.



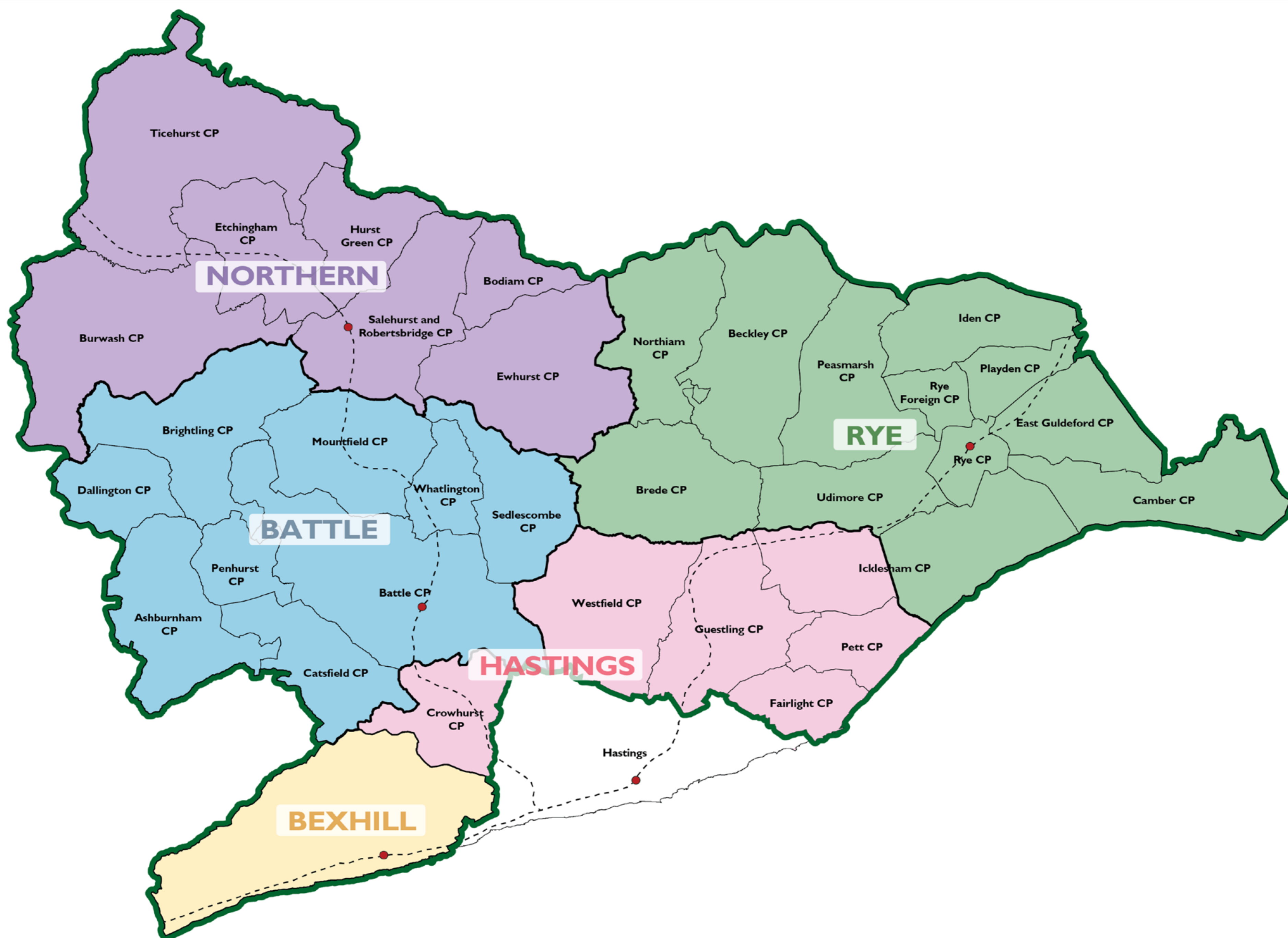
Development Principles

The chapter also contains important policies that will help influence development that comes forward, as follows:

DEV1: General Development Considerations	 	DEV4: Retention of Sites of Social or Economic Value	
DEV2: Comprehensive Development and Masterplanning	 	DEV5: Development on Small Sites and Windfall Development	 
DEV3: Development Boundaries		DEV6: Strategic Green Gaps	 

Five Spatial Sub-Areas

Chapter 5 proposes a Development Strategy which splits Rother into five sub-areas, each containing clusters of towns and villages. This is an intentional shift from the current Core Strategy vision. The new Local Plan seeks to emphasise the interconnectedness of communities and the relationships between different places.



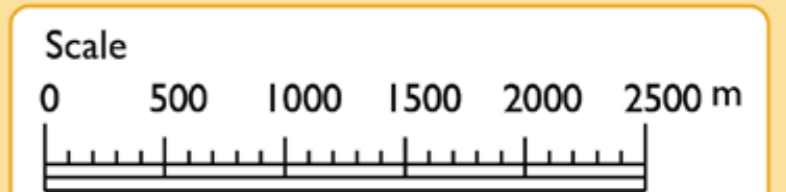
Each of these spatial sub-areas has their own vision statement and an identified and potential amount of development.

In all five sub-areas there is open countryside. It relates to those areas outside of villages with development boundaries and includes farmland, woodland, hamlets and scattered development. Open countryside has its own vision and would remain protected from most forms of development.

Bexhill Sub-area



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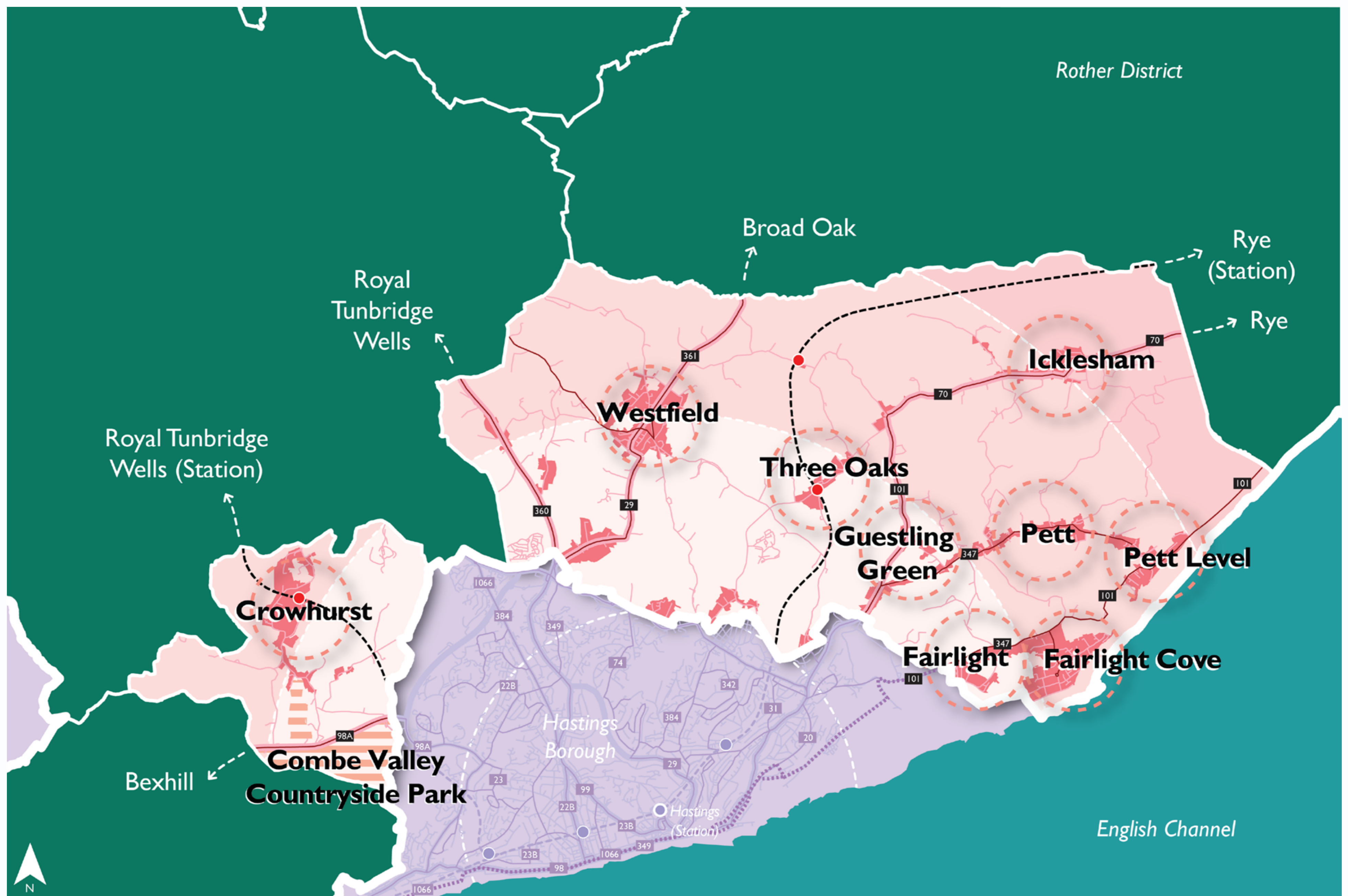


Rother District Boundary	Areas of Built Form	A Road	District Centre
Sub Area Boundary	Rail Line	Other Roads	Town Centre
Bexhill (Sub Area)	Rail Stations	West Bexhill Potential Development Growth Area	<3km from Bexhill Station*
Rother District	Bus Routes	North Bexhill Potential Development Growth Area	<i>*Each white dashed concentric circle line represents a further 3km from Bexhill Station.</i>
Areas Outside of Rother District	Bus Route Number		
Combe Valley Countryside Park	Cycle Path		

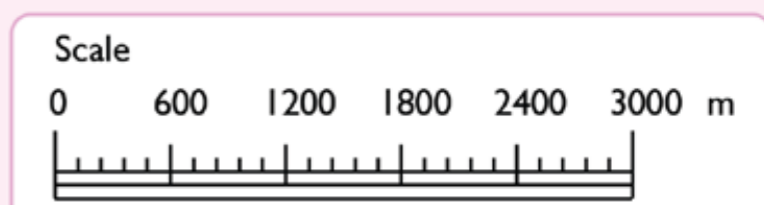
The **Bexhill sub-area's vision** is for:

- Bexhill to be the key focus for **sustainable** residential and commercial growth. Supporting infrastructure will cater to the needs of those living, working, and visiting Bexhill.
- The 'broad locations' of west and north Bexhill will serve as 'live well locally' urban extensions. These areas will be well connected to the main urban areas and local neighbourhoods through sustainable transport options. Growth will only occur in areas that are well connected to the existing transport network.
- The **Combe Valley Countryside Park** will play a vital role in providing recreational space and supporting biodiversity.

Hastings Fringes and Radial Settlements sub-area



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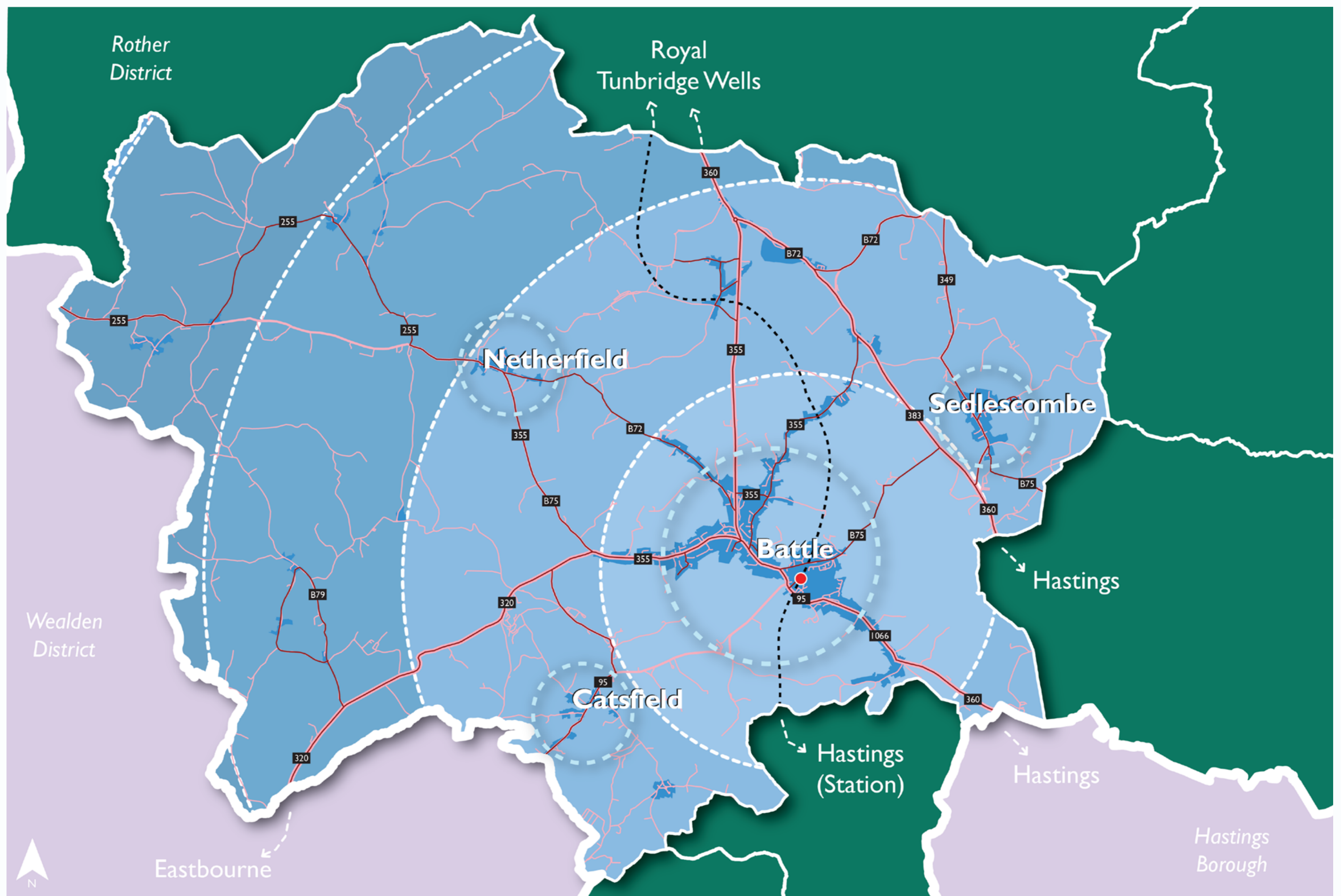


Rother District Boundary	Areas of Built Form	A Road	Bus Route Number (Hastings)
Sub Area Boundary	Rail Line	Other Roads	A Road (Hastings)
Hastings Fringes (Sub Area)	Rail Stations	<3km from Hastings Station*	Other Roads (Hastings)
Rother District	Bus Route Number	Rail Line (Hastings)	Cycle Path (Hastings)
Areas Outside of Rother District	Bus Routes	Rail Stations (Hastings)	<i>*Each white dashed concentric circle line represents a further 3km from Hastings Station.</i>
Combe Valley Countryside Park	Population 0 - 3500	Bus Routes (Hastings)	

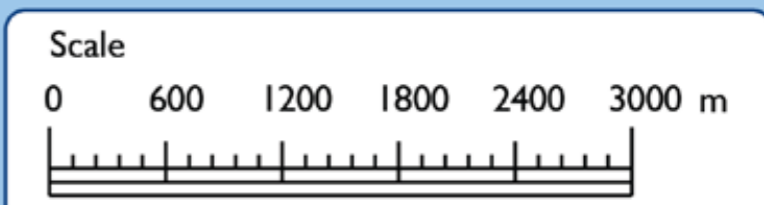
The **Hastings Fringes and Radial Settlement sub-area's vision** is for:

- **Sensitive** development, however, opportunities for development are limited due to the landscape setting of the High Weald National Landscape, which wraps around Hastings.
- Sensitive small-scale development can be delivered in villages surrounding Hastings. These developments should adhere to densities consistent with the surrounding area.
- Residential development can play a vital role in supporting existing facilities and services within the villages. Additionally, it can enhance connections to Hastings.

Battle and Surrounding Settlements sub-area



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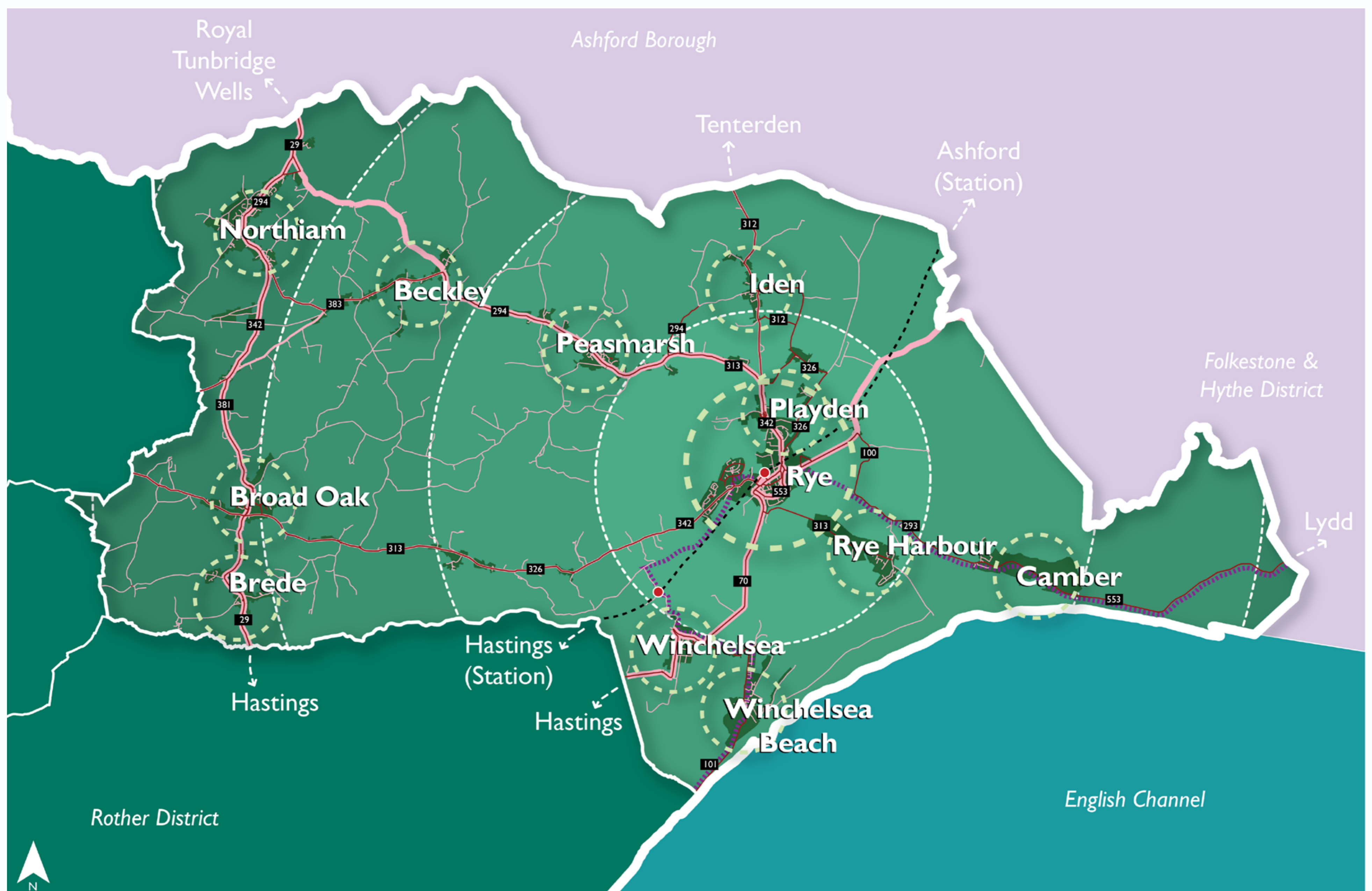


Rother District Boundary	Areas Outside of Rother District	Bus Routes	Population 0 - 3500
Sub Area Boundary	Areas of Built Form	Bus Route Number	Population 3500 - 7000
Battle (Sub Area)	Rail Line	A Road	<3km from Battle Station*
Rother District	Rail Stations	Other Roads	<i>*Each white dashed concentric circle line represents a further 3km from Battle Station.</i>

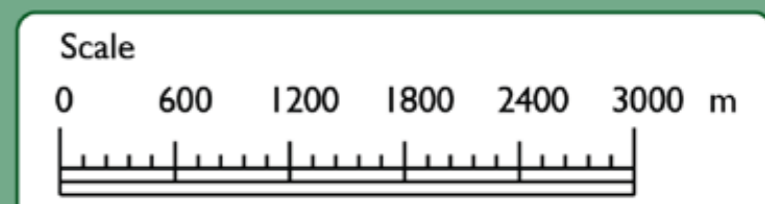
The **Battle and Surrounding Settlements sub-area's vision** is for:

- Battle to retain the **historical character** of its core and preserve its local distinctiveness.
- Sensitive growth is planned to occur south of North Trade Road and west of Hastings Road.
- In the villages surrounding Battle, sensitive small-scale development will be undertaken. It will support existing services and facilities while also delivering developer contributions for wider community benefit, thereby maintaining and improving health, wellbeing and community cohesion.

Rye and the Eastern Settlements Cluster sub-area



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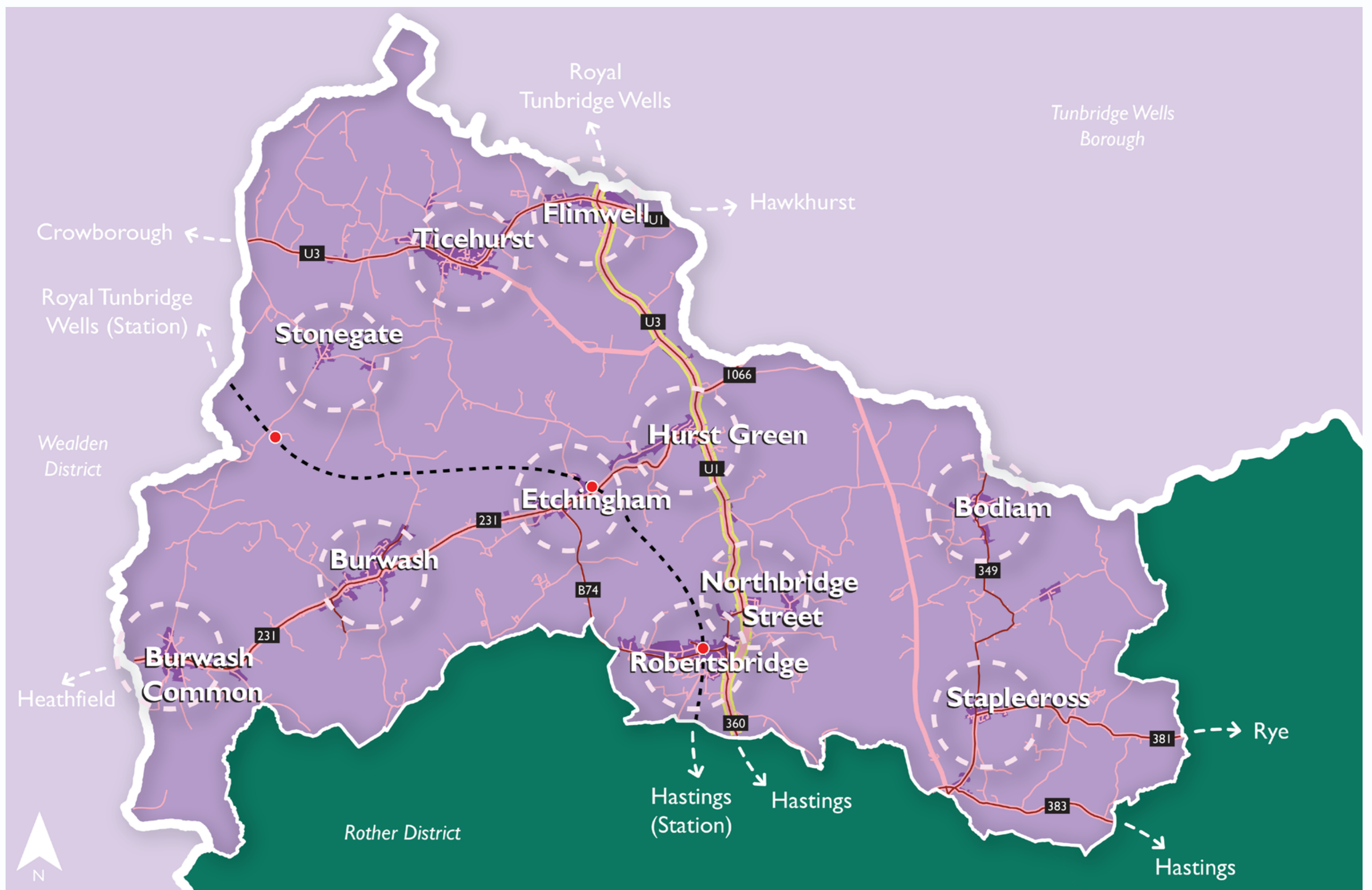


Rother District Boundary	Areas of Built Form	Bus Route Number	<3km from Rye Station*
Sub Area Boundary	Rail Line	A Road	*Each white dashed concentric circle line represents a further 3km from Rye Station.
Rye (Sub Area)	Rail Stations	Other Roads	
Rother District	Cycle Path	Population 0 - 3500	
Areas Outside of Rother District	Bus Routes	Population 3500 - 7000	

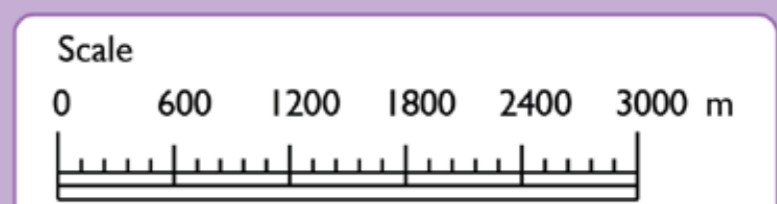
The **Rye and the Eastern Settlements Cluster sub-area's vision** is for:

- The important **historical character** of Rye to be preserved and enhanced, with a strong retail and services core, access to sustainable tourism and leisure opportunities.
- The key employment areas within Rye Harbour should be retained, along with other commercial areas across the town. Additionally, key tourism areas like Camber should be promoted, emphasising improved accessibility to reduce car dependency.
- The eastern cluster of settlements should be better connected through sustainable transport, with Rye serving as a pivotal transport hub.

Northern Rother sub-area



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Rother District Boundary	Areas Outside of Rother District	Bus Routes	A21 Corridor
Sub Area Boundary	Areas of Built Form	Bus Route Number	Population 0 - 3500
Northern (Sub Area)	Rail Line	A Road	
Rother District	Rail Stations	Other Roads	

The **Northern Rother sub-area's vision** is for:

- Its settlements and communities to continue to thrive, through small-scale sensitive residential development and growth in villages. The aim is to maintain and improve health, wellbeing and community cohesion.
- Enhanced **connectivity** between rural settlements and the Hastings-London rail line is a priority. This will involve promoting and improving sustainable and active transport infrastructure.
- The Etchingham and Robertsbridge stations will continue to serve as essential transport hubs.
- Over a 30-year timeframe, there is potential to create a sustainable transport corridor along the A21. This could include bypasses for Flimwell and Hurst Green, with opportunities for development along this route.













Chapter 6 - Health & Wellbeing

Contains policies to improve the health and wellbeing of the community within the overall priority to Live Well Locally.



Health and Wellbeing Policies

These proposed policies include a new requirement for major development to submit a Health Impact Assessment and a consideration of the harmful impact on health of some planning uses. It also contains policies to protect and enhance community facilities and services; green and blue infrastructure (open space); public rights of way and the Combe Valley Countryside Park.

HWB1: Supporting Health and Wellbeing  	HWB5: Green and Blue Infrastructure 
HWB2: Health Impact Assessments  	HWB6: Public Rights of Way  
HWB3: Reducing Harmful Impacts on Health  	HWB7: Combe Valley Countryside Park  
HWB4: Community Facilities and Services 	

Chapter 7 - Infrastructure

Explains the importance of infrastructure delivery to support growth in the Local Plan in relation to transport, community facilities and green and blue infrastructure.



Infrastructure Policies

It has a strengthened proposed policy to ensure that strategic infrastructure improvements offset the impact of new development and a policy relating to digital connectivity.

INF1: Strategic Infrastructure Requirements 	INF2: Digital Connectivity  
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Chapter 8 - Housing

Contains policies relating to new residential development to ensure mixed and balanced communities and the delivery of affordable housing, and policies to guide existing householder applications.



Housing Policies

There are new policies to respond to the chronic undersupply of affordable housing including support for 100% affordable housing and rural exception sites as well encouraging sub-division of dwellings and infill dwellings in the countryside. There are additional policies to plan for housing for older people, as well as policies relating to gypsy and traveller accommodation and custom and self-build housing.

HOU1: Mixed and Balanced Communities 	HOU11: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Criteria 
HOU2: Affordable Housing 	HOU12: Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding 
HOU3: 100% Affordable Housing Developments  	HOU13: New Dwellings in the Countryside 
HOU4: Allocating Sites for Wholly or Substantially Affordable Housing 	HOU14: External Residential Areas 
HOU5: Rural Exception Sites 	HOU15: Extensions to Residential Gardens 
HOU6: Sub-division of Dwellings, and Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs)  	HOU16: Extensions, Alterations and Outbuildings 
HOU7: Residential Internal Space 	HOU17: Annexes 
HOU8: Access Standards 	HOU18: Boundary Treatments and Means of Enclosure 
HOU9: Specialist Housing for Older People 	HOU19: Accesses and Drives 
HOU10: Residential Care Homes for Older People  	

Chapter 9 - Economy

Economic development comprises employment, retail and leisure uses as well as visitor accommodation and agriculture and forestry. The continued economic prosperity within the towns and rural communities of Rother is necessary to ensure the vitality and sustainability of settlements across the district.



Economy Policies

The chapter contains important policies that will help influence development that comes forward, as follows:

ECO1: Supporting New Employment Development	★ ∞ ⊕	ECO6: Holiday Sites	⊕
ECO2: Protecting Existing Employment Sites and Premises	⊕	ECO7: Agriculture Development and Forestry	★ ∞
ECO3: Designated Town Centres	⊕	ECO8: Agricultural Diversification	★ ∞
ECO4: Retail and Leisure Impact Assessment	⊕	ECO9: Local Employment & Skills	★ ⊕
ECO5: Visitor Accommodation	★ ∞ ⊕	ECO10: Equestrian Developments	∞

Chapter 10 - Landscape Character

Rother's landscape is of great environmental and economic importance as well as contributing to the sense of identity and health and wellbeing.



Landscape Character Policies

This chapter contains policies relating to rural areas and their landscapes, trees and woodlands and dark skies.

LAN1: Rural Environments and Landscape Character	∞	LAN3: Dark Skies	★ ∞ ⊕
LAN2: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows	★ ∞		

Chapter 11 - Environmental Management

This chapter contains policies relating to flooding and sustainable drainage, coastal issues, biodiversity, including designated sites and pollution.



Environmental Management Policies

These policies are all important to the management and protection of the environmental quality of Rother district.

ENV1: Coastal, Water and Flood Risk Management	★ ∞	ENV5: Habitats and Species	∞
ENV2: Sustainable Surface Water Drainage	∞	ENV6: Sustainable Access and Recreation Management Strategy	★ ∞
ENV3: Land Stability Standards	∞	ENV7: Environmental Pollution	∞ ⊞
ENV4: Fairlight Cove Coastal Change Management Area	★ ∞		

Chapter 12 - Heritage

Rother district has a rich heritage with a valuable and extensive historic building stock. This underpins the distinctive character of Rother with its pattern, form and appearance of settlements and individual buildings.

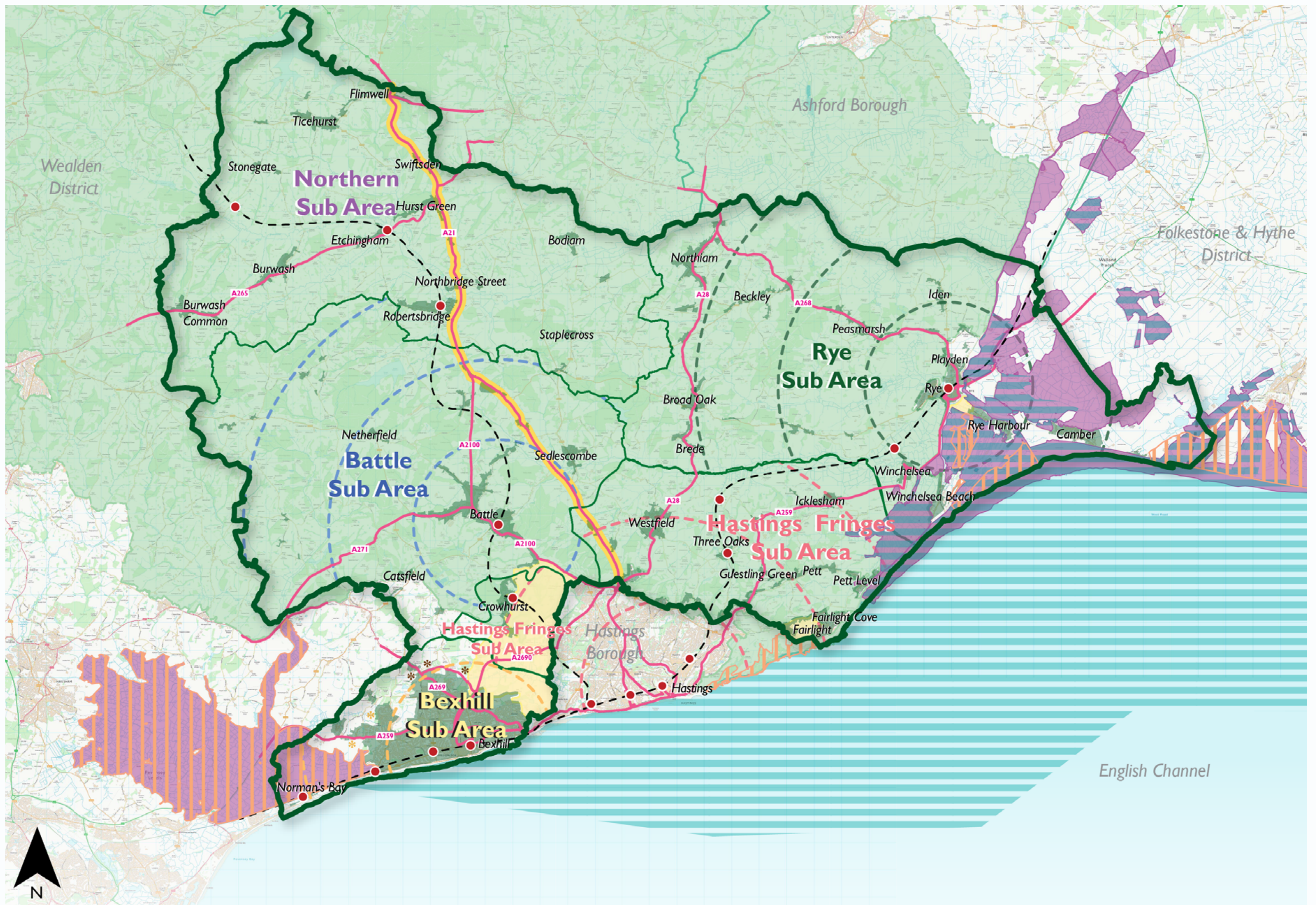


Heritage Policies

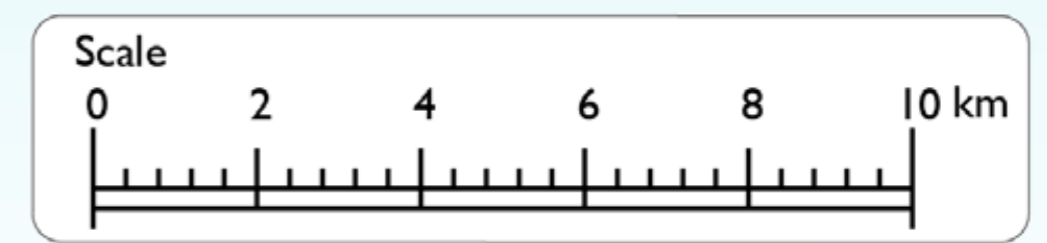
This chapter sets out policies to preserve the historic built character across the district as well as policy for signs and advertisements.

HER1: Heritage Management	⊞	HER3: Shopfronts, Signage and Advertising	⊞
HER2: Traditional Historic Farm Buildings	⊞		

Key Diagram Of Rother



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|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| Rother District Boundary | Ramsar Site | A21 Corridor | Immediate Neighbouring Authority Boundary |
| Areas of Built Form | Special Protection Area | Sub Area Boundary | <3km from a Train Station* |
| High Weald National Landscape (AONB) | Rail Stations | West Bexhill Potential Development Growth | <i>*Every dashed concentric circle line represents a further 3km from each of the train stations of Bexhill, Hastings, Battle and Rye.</i> |
| Strategic Gaps | Rail Line | North Bexhill Potential Development Growth | <i>Yellow - Bexhill, Pink - Hastings, Blue - Battle, Green - Rye.</i> |
| Special Area of Conservation | A Roads | | |

Next Steps

Once the consultation finishes, in **July 2024**, we will review and consider all comments received. At the same time, we will continue to refine our proposed policies and work on new evidence base documents. In **spring 2025** we expect to publish the final draft of the new Local Plan, (known as the 'pre-submission' version). All representations received on that version will be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination, along with the proposed draft Local Plan. It is anticipated that this will be in **summer 2025**. If the submitted Local Plan is found sound at examination, it will then be for the Council to formally adopt the Plan - this is currently programmed to occur in **summer 2026**.