ROTHER INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN - PART A

Supporting the emerging Local Plan

January 2026

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Contents

1. About this IDP

Purpose

1.1 The aim of this Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) is to:

a. Provide Rother District Council with the understanding of the infrastructure requirements (including current or projected deficits) in the context of Local Plan growth

b. Plan and co-ordinate new infrastructure required to support Local Plan growth, ensuring a joined-up approach

c. Provide an evidence base to support the preparation and implementation of the emerging Local Plan and CIL review; and

d. Provide supporting evidence in bids for external funding and to support proposals for specific sites to be protected for infrastructure required throughout the plan period.

1.2 The IDP does not consider all infrastructure in the district; instead, it focuses on the key infrastructure required to support the delivery of development strategy and associated growth proposed in the emerging Local Plan for Rother.

Methodology

1.3 This IDP presents an update to the previous 2019 IDP to support and reflect the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan 2011 - 2028 (adopted 2019), emerging Rother Local Plan 2025-2042, and to consider any relevant national, regional, and local planning policy and infrastructure related changes which have taken place since 2019.

Review of the 2019 IDP and Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS)

1.4   A comprehensive review of the 2019 IDP, Rother's latest Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) and East Sussex County Council's IFS has been undertaken. This provided updated findings, funding options, site-specific infrastructure requirements and developer contributions.

Technical evidence review

1.5   Analysis contained within the IDP is also informed by a range of technical evidence which supports the emerging Local Plan (available on the Council's website) as well as those prepared by relevant infrastructure providers. Links to these documents are provided within each infrastructure type section of the IDP.

Engagement with relevant infrastructure providers and Council services

1.6   It is important to note that infrastructure is delivered by a range of stakeholders and authorities and only a small proportion is or will be delivered directly by Rother District Council. As such, the IDP has been prepared and updated through engagement with relevant infrastructure providers and Council services. This process involved:

a.   Liaison with internal and external stakeholders, including other Council departments and services

b.   Cross-boundary working to identify additional strategic infrastructure; and

c.   Desk-based assessments of infrastructure providers' published reports, business plans, and investment strategies outlining current and emerging infrastructure provision.

Figure 1: IDP methodology and process
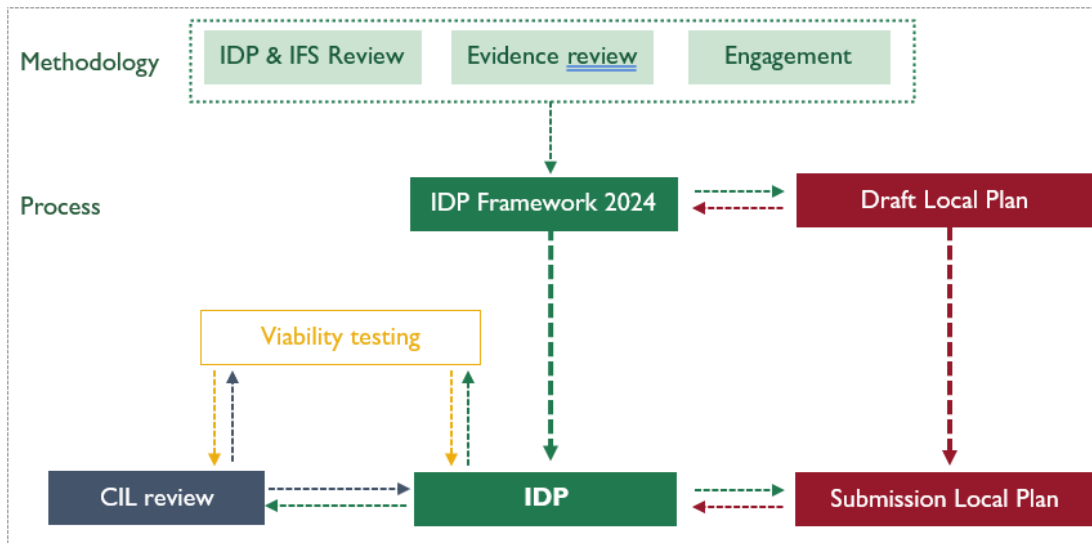
Interaction between the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), viability testing and the IDP

1.7   The IDP forms a key part of the evidence base underpinning the Council's review of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Specifically, the IDP identifies infrastructure needs, timing, costs, and funding gaps, thereby informing how future CIL receipts may be allocated to support those priorities. In turn, the review of the CIL Charging Schedule will inform whether current rates adequately address the identified infrastructure requirements and funding gaps, and respond to development viability, as evidenced by the updated IDP.

1.8   While CIL is an important funding mechanism, it is not expected to cover all infrastructure costs. The review may therefore highlight a funding gap between identified needs and the contributions that can reasonably be secured through S106, or other funding venues. In such cases, the IDP will play a central role in evidencing this gap and supporting the exploration of alternative funding sources to ensure infrastructure delivery aligns with planned growth.

1.9   The IDP and viability testing work in an iterative, two-way process. The IDP provides an evidence base on infrastructure requirements and associated costs, which informs viability testing to assess whether planned development, including anticipated CIL and Section 106 contributions, remains financially feasible. In turn, the outcomes of viability testing can influence the IDP by identifying potential constraints on infrastructure delivery, helping to prioritise projects, adjust phasing, or explore alternative funding mechanisms. This ensures that infrastructure planning aligns with both development needs and financial viability.

Types of infrastructure

1.10   This IDP is structured to reflect types of infrastructure and the requirements for each.

1.11   Part A explains the background to this IDP, its purpose and how it has been prepared. Chapter 3-9 set out requirements for each of the below infrastructure types:

Chapter	Category	Type
Chapter 3	Transport	Cycling and Walking Public transport Strategic and local road network
Chapter 4	Community and cultural facilities	Sports and recreation facilities Libraries Arts, and cultural facilities Youth and community facilities Places of worship
Chapter 5	Education	Early years and childcare Primary and secondary schools Further and higher education
Chapter 6	Health and social care	Primary care: GP surgeries, health centres Secondary care: hospitals, diagnostic hubs Community care: mental health, social care, care homes
Chapter 7	Green and blue infrastructure, and flood defence	Parks, open space and play areas Biodiversity and nature conservation Allotments Cemeteries and burial space Flood defences, sustainable drainage, riverside improvements
Chapter 8	Utility and energy	Water supply and wastewater infrastructure

		Waste and recycling infrastructure Energy infrastructure Digital infrastructure
Chapter 9	Emergency and security services	Police service Fire service Ambulance service

1.12   Each infrastructure type above follows a consistent structure which includes:

a.   a brief overview and context of the infrastructure type

b.   a summary of existing provision and capacity

c.   an assessment of the implications, impact or opportunities from planned growth

d.   financial and delivery requirements

1.13   Part B provides a schedule of infrastructure requirements to support planned development within Rother District during the proposed Local Plan period.

2.   Context

Rother District profile

2.1   This section provides the context of Rother District to support the identification of infrastructure needs. It sets out key characteristics of the district, including its population, economy, transport, services, and environmental assets. Understanding these features helps to ensure that infrastructure planning aligns with current conditions and anticipated growth.

Location

2.2   Rother District is located on the southeast coast of England and is in the county of East Sussex, covering a largely rural area with a mix of small towns, villages, and countryside. Its key settlements include Bexhill, Battle and Rye, which serve as economic, cultural, and

service hubs for the district. The district also covers numerous villages and hamlets scattered across the High Weald and along the coastal belt.

Adjoining areas

2.3   Rother's neighbouring areas include:

a.   Wealden District (East Sussex) to the west

b.   Hastings Borough (East Sussex) to the south west

c.   Ashford Borough (Kent) to the north/ northeast

d.   Tunbridge Wells Borough (Kent) to the north/ northwest

e.   Folkstone and Hythe (Kent) to the east

2.4   The district borders the English Channel to the south, providing a coastline with both residential and tourism functions.

Figure 2 : Rother context map

Population and demographics

2.5   According to the 2021 Census, Rother has a population of 93,114, with many residents dispersed across rural areas, though nearly half live in Bexhill. The district has a much older population structure compared to England, and a lower percentage of younger people (for all ages under 50) than England. The overall age structure of residents is shown below.

Figure 3: Rother residents' age structure[1]
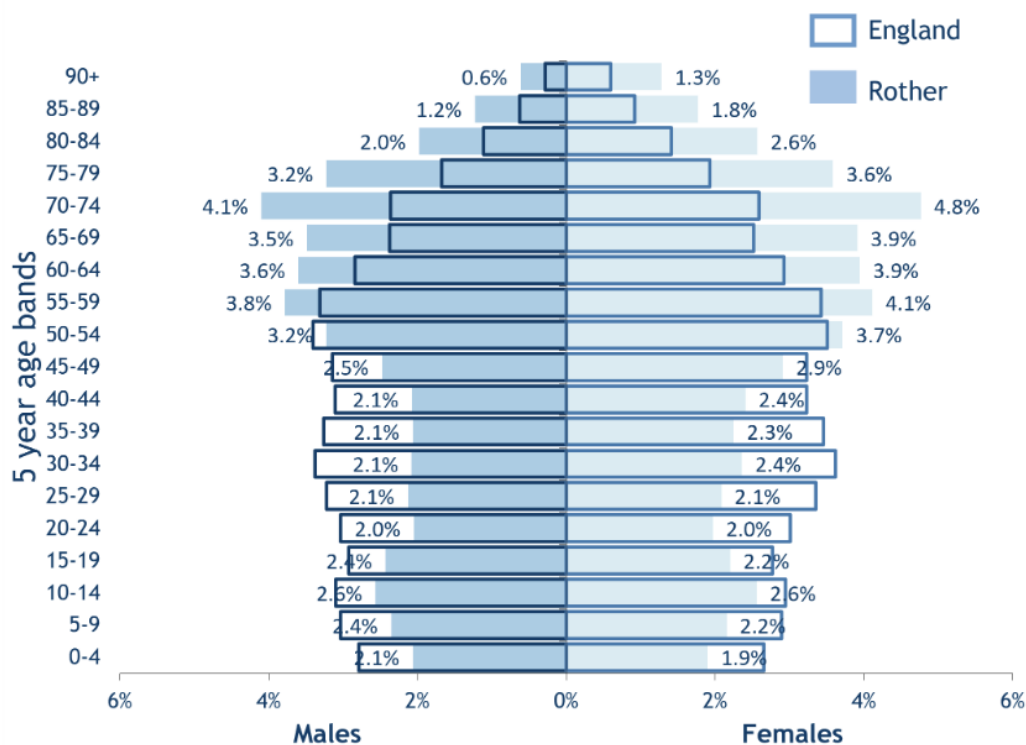
Housing

2.6   According to the 2021 Census, the housing tenure distribution in Rother is predominated by owner-occupied dwellings (approximately 72.7% of households), this is followed by privately rented housing (around 16.2%), and socially rented housing (about 10.2%). The predominance of owner-occupied housing highlights a need for more affordable housing options, particularly for young families and lower-income residents.

2.7   Rother accounts for a significant share of holiday homes in East Sussex, with 13.1 per 1,000 dwellings designated as such, well above the county average of 6.3.

Education and skills

2.8   In Rother District, educational attainment among working-age residents (aged 16–64) remains modest compared to national averages. According to the ONS Annual Population Survey for 2024, 36.9% of the population hold qualifications at RQF Level 4 or above (equivalent to NVQ Level 4+), while 58.9% have reached RQF Level 3 or higher, and 86.8% have at least RQF Level 2 qualifications.[2]

2.9   Additional data from the 2021 Census shows that 36.1% have a degree or higher, 22.3% have two A-levels or equivalent (i.e., Level 3), and 16.3% have five or more GCSEs (i.e., Level 2). Around 8.1% have no formal qualifications.

2.10   This data indicates that while a sizeable proportion of Rother residents have mid to higher-level qualifications, the share with graduate-level credentials is somewhat below national average. This highlights opportunities to enhance access to higher education and promote workforce upskilling locally.

Earnings

2.11   In 2023, the median gross annual salary for full-time resident workers in Rother was approximately £31,019, which is about 17.5% below the national average of £37,794 (LGinform, 2024). This suggests economic challenges such as limited job opportunities and lower income levels. This context is important for infrastructure planning, as it reinforces the need for investment that supports job creation and economic uplift in the district.

Economy and businesses

2.12   Rother District's economy is diverse, with wholesale and retail trade (14%) and construction (13%) being the largest sectors. Other key industries include accommodation and food services, financial and insurance services, agriculture, forestry,

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[2] NOMIS Labour Market Profile – Rother. Available at:
https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157298/report.aspx

and fishing. Manufacturing, professional services, and business support employ fewer people.

2.13   Tourism is a significant contributor, supporting 21.6% of local employment and generating an average of £16.8 million per month in the local economy.

2.14   The fastest growing industry in Rother is Retail, with jobs in the sector increasing 40% between 2020 and 2021. During the same period, Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing saw a 17% decline in the number of roles.

2.15   Rother hosts around 4,600 businesses, the majority of which are small or micro enterprises; 88% employ fewer than nine people. [3]

Employment

2.16   Employment is concentrated in the main towns, particularly Bexhill and Rye, which provide most of the office, retail, and service-based jobs.

2.17   As of 2024, 64.7% of Rother's working-age population were in employment, significantly lower than the national average of 75.5%. Self-employment is relatively high at 14.1%, above both the South East (9.9%) and national (9.3%) averages. The unemployment rate (3.9%) is broadly in line with the national average. This suggests that while overall employment levels are lower than average, Rother has a strong reliance on self-employment and small businesses, highlighting the importance of supporting infrastructure such as flexible workspaces, high-quality digital connectivity, and transport links to sustain local economic activity.

Transport and movement

2.18   Rother District is served by a network of primary and secondary roads that connect key towns and villages within the district and link to surrounding areas. The A21 provides a key north-south route connecting Rother to Hastings and the M25, while the A259 runs along the coast, linking Bexhill, Rye, and other coastal settlements. Local B-roads provide

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[3] Rother District Council (2024) State of District Report.
https://rother.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s9839/Appendix%20A.pdf

access to rural communities. Rother's road network supports local and regional freight movements, particularly to the ports along the English Channel.

2.19   Rail connections are provided mainly by the Southern and Southeastern rail networks, with main stations at Bexhill, Battle, and Rye. These offer direct services to London, Hastings, and Ashford International, supporting both commuter and leisure travel. Rother District's rail freight infrastructure is limited, with no dedicated freight terminals or significant rail freight operations within the district. The existing rail lines primarily serve passenger services, connecting Rother to London, Hastings, and Ashford. This means that most goods movements rely on the road network, which can lead to congestion and increased pressure on local infrastructure.

Health & wellbeing

2.20   Rother's population generally enjoys health outcomes on par with or slightly above national averages. Life expectancy stands at approximately 82 years overall, 84 years for females and 80 years for males, which is modestly higher than England in general (LGInform, 2024). According to 2021 Census, the share of residents identified as "disabled and limited a lot" fell to 7.5% in 2021, down from 8.2% in 2011. Rother's health service infrastructure includes 2 community hospitals, 10 GP practices, 16 pharmacies, and 65 care homes as of April 2024.[4]

Green and blue infrastructure

2.21   The district boasts a diverse range of natural assets, including ancient woodlands, wetlands, and coastal areas, which provide essential ecosystem services such as flood regulation, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity support. The district's blue infrastructure, encompassing rivers, streams, and coastal waters, plays a central role in managing surface water runoff and mitigating flood risks. The Pevensey Levels, a designated Ramsar site, are particularly sensitive to hydrological changes, necessitating the implementation of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to protect water quality and ecological health.

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[4] East Sussex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Rother district area profile
https://www.eastsussexjsna.org.uk/area-profiles/rother-district-area-profile

National planning policy and guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2.22   The preparation of the IDP is guided by national planning policy and associated practice guidance. The NPPF (December 2024 version) establishes the overarching requirement for Local Plans to be supported by an appropriate and proportionate evidence base. Requirements regarding local plans that are relevant to the IDP[5], include:

   a.   identify and coordinate the provision of infrastructure (paragraph 8)

   b.   align growth and infrastructure (paragraph 11)

   c.   be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement with infrastructure providers and operators (paragraph 16)

   d.   be deliverable over the plan period (paragraph 16)

   e.   be informed by effective joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies, particularly to establish where additional infrastructure is required (paragraph 26); and

   f.   set out the infrastructure contributions expected from development (paragraph 35).

2.23   Within the NPPF there are also various references to understanding and planning for types of infrastructure provision including transport, green infrastructure, social and digital infrastructure to support sustainable development and economic growth.

Planning Practice Guidance

2.24   The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)[6] further emphasises the role of the IDP in providing a clear understanding of existing infrastructure capacity, future needs, additional

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[5] Although the IDP is not a development plan document, these requirements are relevant to its preparation.
[6] (reference ID: 61-059-20190315)

strategic infrastructure requirement, and planned investment. It advises that engagement with infrastructure providers and other relevant stakeholders is essential to enable this.

Rother emerging Local Plan

2.25   The Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan. The draft Rother Local Plan 2020-2040 was published for a Regulation 18 stage public consultation during April to July 2024. A second Regulation 18 consultation on the Draft Rother Local Plan 2025-2042, with a revised plan period, commenced in January 2026. The draft Local Plan (2026) sets out updated proposals for the district's Development Strategy to 2042, and sets out provisions to deliver, indicatively, for **8,427** new homes (495 dwellings per year) and at least **74,189 sqm** of additional employment floorspace. Growth is focused through a landscape-led spatial development strategy, strengthening Rother's settlement pattern while meeting needs for housing, jobs, facilities, and services.

2.26   The Draft Rother Local Plan 2025-2042 distributes growth across five sub-areas, reflecting the connections of settlements to nearby towns and infrastructure. This emerging spatial framework provides the most up-to-date basis for identifying infrastructure needs in the IDP and for guiding infrastructure providers in planning improvements.

Figure 4: Five sub-areas of the Development Strategy (Source: Draft Rother Local Plan 2025-2042 – Development Strategy and Site Allocations)
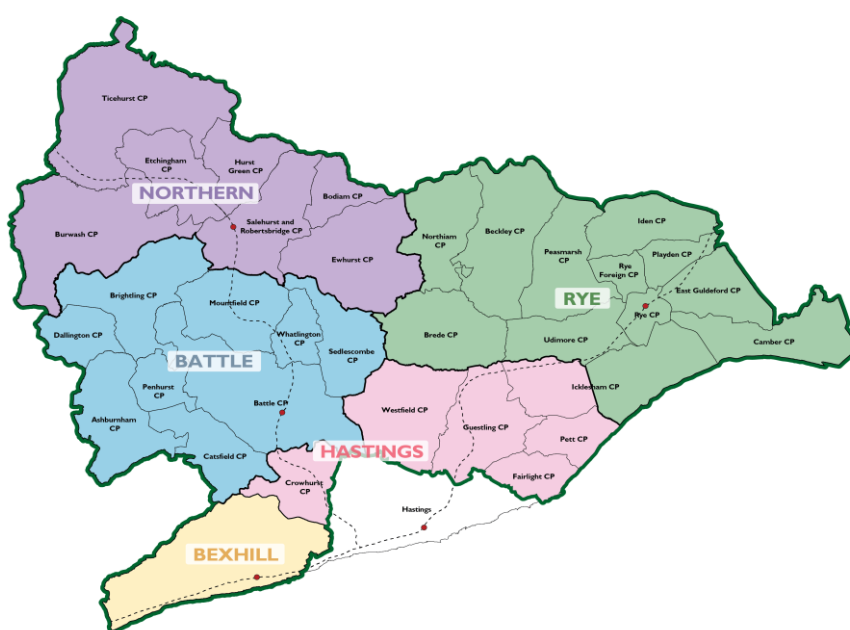
2.27   The table below was extracted from the Draft Rother Local Plan 2025-2042 showing development strategy for the district in terms of the numbers of dwellings and the amount of employment floorspace to be delivered over the Plan period.

Figure 5: Growth delivery across five sub-areas as per the Draft Rother Local Plan

Growth area	Housing (dwelling no.) (Existing allocations and sites with planning permission)	Housing (dwellings no.) (Proposed new allocations)	Total housing (dwelling no.)	Employment floorspace (sqm) (Existing allocations and sites with planning permission)	Employment floorspace (sqm) (Proposed new allocations)	Total employment floorspace (sqm)
Bexhill	1,949	2,815	**4,764**	30,472	24,200	**54,672**
Southern Rother and the Hastings Fringes	135	247	**382**	1,800	3,500	**5,300**
Battle and surrounding settlements	147	801	**948**	12971	0	**12,971**
Rye and connected settlements	332	459	**791**	20,481	0	**20,481**
Northern Rother	267	729	**996**	1,200	3,150	**4,350**

3. Transport

Cycling and walking

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

▼   East Sussex County Council (ESCC): local highway authority, responsible for the planning, design, delivery, and maintenance of footpaths, cycleways, and shared-use

routes. They coordinate funding, manage Rights of Way, and oversee local active travel initiatives.

- ▼ Active Travel England: government executive agency who oversees local active travel delivery in England.

- ▼ Transport for the South East (TfSE): sub-national transport body who provides regional strategic guidance, supports funding applications, and sets priorities for active travel corridors.

- ▼ Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans): a key national NGO partner supporting walking and cycling networks, often delivering or funding local active travel projects, including the National Cycle Network.

- ▼ Network Rail: relevant where cycling or walking routes intersect with rail corridors or stations (e.g., improving station access).

Relevant evidence base documents:

- ▼ Strategic Investment Plan for the South East (TfSE, 2023)

- ▼ Draft Transport Strategy for the Southeast (DfT, 2024)

- ▼ East Sussex Local Transport Plan 2024 – 2050 (LTP4) (ESCC, adopted 2024)

- ▼ LTP 4 Investment Plan (ESCC, 2024)

- ▼ East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) (ESCC, 2020)

- ▼ East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) (ESCC, 2025)

- ▼ West Bexhill Growth Corridor Study (Jacobs, 2022)

- ▼ Rother District Local Plan Shared Transport Evidence Base (STEB) (Jacobs, 2023)

3.1   Active travel is a central component of national, regional and local transport policy, reflecting its role in supporting sustainable growth, tackling congestion, improving public health, and contributing to decarbonisation. DfT's Draft Transport Strategy for the Southeast (2024) sets a clear direction to prioritise cycling and walking within an integrated transport system, ensuring that new development is underpinned by accessible and low-carbon travel choices. This aligns closely with the ambitions of LTP4 (East Sussex

Local Transport Plan 2024–2050), which places active travel at the heart of creating healthier, more inclusive communities and supporting a transition to net zero.

3.2   At the County level, East Sussex has already established a strong evidence base for investment in active travel through its Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP, 2020). The LCWIP identifies a series of priority routes and corridors to support everyday walking and cycling journeys, particularly those connecting residential areas to employment, education, health services and town centres. These schemes are carried forward into the LTP4 Investment Plan (2024), which provides a framework for delivery and funding, recognising the importance of phasing and aligning infrastructure with planned growth.

3.3   To support the emerging Local Plan, the Rother District Local Plan Shared Transport Evidence Base (STEB, 2023) provides the technical justification for interventions needed to mitigate the transport impact of planned growth across the district. It assesses the cumulative impact of site allocations and identifies specific gaps in the active travel network, particularly in rural service centres and market towns like Battle and Rye. The STEB emphasizes the need for small-scale but high-impact measures—such as new pedestrian crossings, footway widening, and secure cycle parking—to ensure new developments are connected to existing services and the wider active travel network.

3.4   Within the key growth area of the District, the West Bexhill Growth Corridor Study (2022) highlighted the potential for a multi-modal approach to support growth. While the delivery mechanisms for major road infrastructure in this area are being reviewed through the emerging Local Plan, the study demonstrates the potential for a stronger local cycle network across Bexhill with onward connections to Hastings, St Leonards and Eastbourne. Delivery of multi-modal measures will need to align with the East Sussex LCWIP, the Shared Transport Evidence Base, and national standards led by Active Travel England, ensuring safe, segregated infrastructure.

3.5   Enhancements proposed through the East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) will also be essential, maximising opportunities to coordinate bus, walking and cycling improvements.

3.6   Collectively, these studies provide a comprehensive understanding of the specific measures and interventions required to facilitate modal shift. By establishing the necessary infrastructure baseline, they ensure that future investment focuses on

improving local connectivity and meeting Rother's objectives for sustainable growth and decarbonisation.

Current provision

3.7   Rother District has an established but incomplete network of walking and cycling routes, with provision varying considerably between coastal and inland areas. The district's demographic profile, particularly in Bexhill, features an older-than-average population compared to other parts of East Sussex. Ensuring safe, accessible, and convenient infrastructure for walking and cycling is therefore critical to support independent mobility and inclusive access for all residents.

3.8   In Bexhill, the seafront promenade offers one of the most heavily used active travel corridors, accommodating both walking and cycling along the coast. This forms part of National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 2, which provides strategic east–west connectivity to Hastings, St Leonards and Eastbourne. A key asset is the continuous, traffic-free route linking Hastings and Bexhill-on-Sea (Glyne Gap), which provides a high-quality and scenic link for both leisure and commuting trips. Despite this, continuity is poorer in other areas to the west towards Eastbourne and inland, where NCN 2 often reverts to on-road sections, reducing safety and accessibility for less confident users. Improving these gaps and delivering more segregated infrastructure will be essential to unlock the full potential of this strategic corridor.

Figure 6: Hastings and Bexhill Waterfront - Traffic Free Cycle Route (Source: Walk Wheel Cycle Trust – formerly Sustrans)
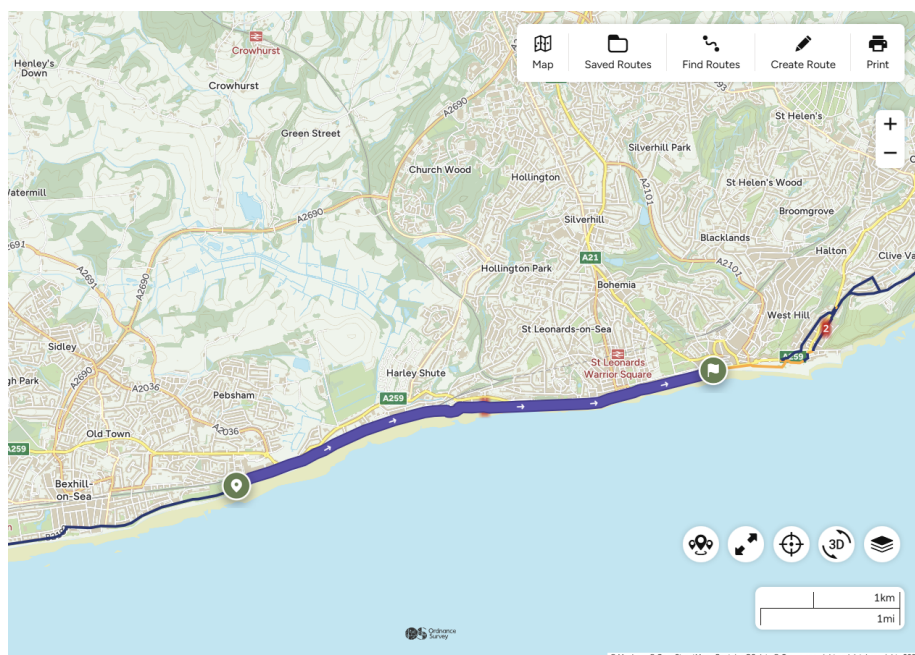
3.9 Beyond the NCN, there are several local cycle trails linking Rye to Camber, Winchelsea Railway Station, and Rye Harbour. Additional infrastructure includes a greenway running parallel to the Combe Valley Way (Bexhill–Hastings Link Road) and along the North East Bexhill Gateway and North Bexhill Access Roads. However, to the north, cycling provision is limited due to challenging topography and dispersed settlement patterns.

3.10 In terms of walking provision, there is good coverage of footways in town centres and extensive public rights of way in rural areas. However, pedestrian routes often lack continuity and accessibility for everyday journeys, particularly across barriers such as the A259 and railway lines. Battle and Rye, with their historic street patterns, also present challenges for safe and direct walking and cycling connections.

3.11 The LCWIP (2020) and STEB (2023) highlight a need for targeted improvements to pedestrian infrastructure, including resurfacing footways, increasing footway widths, adding pedestrian crossings and dropped kerbs, and enforcing restrictions on pavement parking. These improvements are particularly important in supporting the older demographic in Bexhill, enhancing accessibility, and contributing to town centre regeneration and public realm enhancements. Similar priorities are identified for smaller and rural settlements such as Battle and Rye, where local access to services and connectivity remain limited.

3.12 While some progress has been made through local improvements and developer-funded schemes, active travel provision in Rother remains fragmented. The absence of continuous, safe and segregated infrastructure is a key constraint, particularly in and around Bexhill, where significant growth is planned. Addressing these gaps will be essential to unlock modal shift, reduce car dependency, and ensure new development is fully integrated with sustainable transport options.

Future requirement

3.13 Future growth in Rother, particularly around Bexhill, will require a step change in the provision of walking and cycling infrastructure to deliver safe, direct and attractive routes for everyday journeys. Evidence from the East Sussex LCWIP (2020) and the West Bexhill Growth Corridor Study (2022) highlights the need to move beyond fragmented provision and establish a coherent network that supports both local trips within Bexhill and longer-distance connectivity to Hastings, St Leonards, Eastbourne and Battle.

3.14   Opportunities for active travel improvements include:

a. **Bexhill–Hastings corridor:** The LCWIP identifies Bexhill and Hastings as areas with significant potential to increase cycling and walking, driven by existing demand and opportunities to link planned growth with sustainable transport corridors. The West Bexhill Growth Corridor Study (2022) emphasises this corridor as part of a multi-modal strategy to support modal shift, proposing segregated cycle routes and improved pedestrian links. Complementary bus service improvements identified in the ESCC Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) – including increased frequencies, evening and weekend services, and fare incentives – further strengthen the corridor's capacity to reduce car dependency.

b. **Strategic cycling and walking routes:** Enhancements to the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 2 are highlighted, providing coastal connections from Bexhill to Hastings and Eastbourne. The STEB (2023) identifies potential for new provision of cycle parking at key locations, improvements to footway surfaces, increased footway widths, and additional pedestrian crossings to enhance safety, accessibility, and connectivity for active travel users.

c. **Local connectivity:** There is a need for targeted improvements to connect residential areas with the town centre, schools, health facilities, and the seafront. Given the additional population growth over the Local Plan period, integrating new local connections into the wider multi-modal corridor is critical. This includes creating continuous and safe walking and cycling routes that complement BSIP measures, such as improved bus frequencies, service reliability, and fare initiatives, thereby supporting a fully integrated active travel and public transport network for local journeys.

d. **Integration of sustainable transport into transport intervention to the west of Bexhill:** The West Bexhill Growth Corridor Study (2022) notes that planned developments in West Bexhill could accommodate zero-carbon transport ambitions if walking, cycling, and bus infrastructure are delivered in parallel with new housing and employment. Segregated routes and well-designed crossings are essential to overcome current barriers, such as the A259 and railway lines, and to facilitate a shift to active travel for everyday trips.

Financial & delivery requirements

3.15 Funding and delivery for public transport infrastructure will be secured through a number of mechanisms:

a. **Developer contributions:** including S106 (site-specific) and/or S278 agreements to fund on-site or off-site improvements, and strategic CIL receipts retained by RDC to support the delivery of key active travel corridors and associated infrastructure

b. **External funding:** national government funding streams and targeted transport grants, such as Active Travel England programmes, DfT funding for cycling and walking infrastructure, and local growth or sustainability grants

c. **Local and regional partnership**: collaboration with East Sussex County Council, neighbouring authorities, Transport for the South East, bus operators, and community groups to coordinate planning, delivery, and maintenance of integrated active travel networks

3.16 The table below pulls out the key walking and cycling infrastructure provision to support the Local Plan. It is recognised that further feasibility and business case analysis is required for some measures.

Ref	Item	Description
TRA013	Walking and cycling infrastructure	Improvements to walking and cycling corridors to ensure connectivity and accessibility across the district.
TRA016	Improved accessibility to stations	Measures may include cycle and car parking, pedestrian access and facilities, and improved mobility access introduced as part of the Access for All programme.
TRA030	Improved cycle parking	Improved cycle parking in urban areas and at new developments.
TRA031	District wide mobility hub	Mobility Hubs: explore potential to create mobility hubs for a range of travel modes at stations, larger residential developments, and villages.
TRA032	Mobility hubs at railways station	To improve interchange for bus and 'first and last mile' travel modes at Bexhill, Battle and Rye railway stations.
TRA034	District Wide Sustainable Movement Corridors.	Potential to create seamless public transport and active mode movement between Bexhill and neighbouring key urban centres, including Eastbourne and Hastings.
TRA039	Mobility hubs in Battle, Bexhill, Etchingham and Rye.	

TRA040	Inter-Urban Active Travel Schemes: Ashford-Hastings	Ashford-Hastings active travel enhancements. Indicative line from Hastings, past Rye and into Kent Ashford.
TRA041	Active travel enhancements	Active travel enhancements across the district.

Public transport

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

▼ Network Rail: owner and manager of rail infrastructure across the district.

▼ Train operating companies (e.g., Southern, Southeastern): responsible for passenger rail services.

▼ Bus operators (e.g. East Sussex County Council who provides the FlexiBus service, Stagecoach, Arriva): providers of local bus services.

Relevant evidence base documents:

▼ Draft Transport Strategy for the Southeast (DfT, 2024)

▼ East Sussex Local Transport Plan 2024 – 2050 (LTP4) (ESCC, adopted 2024)

▼ LTP 4 Investment Plan (ESCC, 2024)

▼ West Bexhill Growth Corridor Study (Jacobs, 2022)

▼ East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) (ESCC, 2025)

3.17 Rother District is served by a mix of rail and bus services that provide both local and regional connectivity. Public transport provision is concentrated around urban centres such as Bexhill, Battle, and Rye, with more limited services in rural areas.

Current provision

3.18   Rail services are primarily provided along the East Coastway Line. Service frequency is generally higher in peak periods, with reduced provision evenings and weekends, particularly in rural locations. Accessibility improvements, including step-free access and modernised facilities, have been undertaken at some stations, but gaps remain in ensuring full compliance with accessibility standards across the district.

3.19   Key stations in Rother include:

a.   **Bexhill Station** | Operator: Southern

Provides regular eastbound services to Hastings, St Leonards, Rye and Ashford International and westbound services to Eastbourne and Brighton. The station has step-free access to platforms, ticketing facilities, and passenger information systems. Other stations on this line, at Collington, Cooden Beach and Norman Bay have fewer facilities.

b.   **Crowhurst Station** | Operator: Southeastern

Smaller rural station serving Crowhurst village and surrounding areas. Offers local eastbound and westbound services connecting to Bexhill, Hastings, and Battle, and onwards to Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks and London. Facilities are more limited, with basic shelters and timetable information; accessibility is partial.

c.   **Battle Station** | Operator: Southeastern

Connects Battle with Hastings to the east, and Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks and London, as well as Ashford International via services toward Hastings. Supports commuting and leisure travel, with enhanced weekday frequency. Facilities include a staffed ticket office, waiting rooms, and step-free access to one platform.

d.   **Rye Station |** Operator: Southeastern

Provides regional connectivity to Hastings, Ashford International, Eastbourne and Brighton. Rye is a key access point for tourists visiting the historic town and surrounding rural areas. Accessibility improvements are partial, with step-free access to some platforms but limited parking. Cycle parking has been added to the station and its facilities in 2021.

3.20   Bus services are provided by a mix of operators, including Stagecoach, Arriva, and county-supported services such as FlexiBus operated by East Sussex County Council. These services deliver local and inter-urban connections, linking residential areas to town centres, employment hubs, schools, health facilities, and transport interchanges. The East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP, 2025) identifies both strengths and weaknesses in the network: while core routes along the A259 and between Bexhill and Hastings have relatively frequent services, rural areas and some peripheral neighbourhoods experience limited coverage, particularly outside peak hours. The BSIP also notes that opportunities exist to improve integration with active travel and rail networks to facilitate multi-modal journeys.

3.21   Key observations from other studies include:

a.   The West Bexhill Growth Corridor Study (Jacobs, 2022) highlights the potential for enhanced bus and multi-modal corridors to support planned housing and employment growth, noting the importance of connecting new developments to the wider public transport network.

b.   The LTP4 Investment Plan (2024) emphasises the need to maintain and enhance service reliability, accessibility, and frequency, and to target investment in locations where public transport can offer a viable alternative to private car travel.

c.   The Draft Transport Strategy for the Southeast (DfT, 2024) underlines the strategic role of public transport in supporting decarbonisation, regional connectivity, and inclusive access, reinforcing local priorities for improving service integration, reliability, and accessibility.

3.22   While Rother benefits from a functional public transport network, challenges remain in rural accessibility, frequency, and integration with active travel modes. Addressing these gaps will be essential to meet growth aspirations, support modal shift, and achieve regional and national transport objectives.

Future requirement

3.23   The Local Plan identifies significant housing and employment allocations that will increase travel demand, particularly along the A259 corridor and key locations. To support this, future requirements include:

a. **Enhanced bus services:** Increasing frequency, reliability, and coverage, particularly in growth areas and rural communities, to provide a viable alternative to private car use. Services should be aligned with local development phasing to ensure accessibility from day one. Flexibility, such as demand-responsive services (e.g., FlexiBus), will also be important for less densely populated areas.

b. **Rail service improvements:** Supporting increased capacity, frequency, and reliability on the East Coastway Line, alongside station enhancements (step-free access, real-time information, secure parking and cycle facilities) to accommodate higher passenger volumes from planned growth areas.

c. **Multi-modal integration:** Coordinating bus, rail, active travel infrastructure, and public realm improvements, to create seamless connections for commuting, education, and leisure trips. This includes improved interchange facilities, bus-rail timetabling alignment, and active travel links to stations.

d. **Network resilience and accessibility:** Ensuring public transport can accommodate population growth while maintaining accessibility for all users, including people with reduced mobility, those without access to private vehicles, and communities in rural locations.

e. **Sustainable and low-carbon transport:** Incorporating zero-emission bus fleets, low-carbon infrastructure, and measures to reduce car dependency, in line with the Draft Transport Strategy for the Southeast (DfT, 2024) and ESCC's decarbonisation objectives.

Financial & delivery requirements

3.24   Funding and delivery for public transport infrastructure will be secured through a number of mechanisms:

a. **Developer contributions:**

    i.   S106 (site-specific) obligations to secure on-site provision or contributions towards off-site improvements and maintenance

    ii. Strategic CIL receipts (retained by RDC) to support delivery of strategic public transport infrastructure

b. **External funding:** including national government funding streams and targeted transport grants, such as Active Travel England funding

c. **Local and regional partnership**: collaboration with highways authorities, local transport initiatives, and partnership arrangements with public transport operators, and other stakeholders

3.25   The table below pulls out the key public transport provision to support the Local Plan. It is recognised that further feasibility / business case analysis is required in some measures.

Ref	Item	Description
TRA003	Bus priority measures on A259 Bexhill Road	"A259 Bexhill Road – Bus Priority Measures to include: A259 w. bound bus lane on approach to Glyne Gap, A259 e. bound bus lane on approach to Harley Shute roundabout, A259 w. bound bus lane between Filsham Rd and Harley Shute Road.
TRA012	Bus improvements in Bexhill	Quality Bus partnership to improve infrastructure, services, waiting areas and information on key bus corridors in Bexhill.
TRA015	Bexhill to Ashford rail line upgrade	To accommodate HS1 service to stop at Eastbourne, Bexhill, St Leonards Warrior Square, and Hastings and Rye
TRA036	Bus-Based Rapid Transit (BRT)	District Wide and Cross-boundary phased roll out of core BRT and early infrastructure requirements.
TRA037	Marshlink High Speed Rail Service	Introduction of a new hourly service from Bexhill to London St Pancras throughout the day (dedicated train in the peak, joins Dover train in the off-peak) to result in a 35-minute journey time saving between Bexhill direct to London.
TRA038	Hastings/Bexhill Mass Rapid Transit	Intra and inter urban bus enhancements along the eastern section of A259, including bus priority measures.
TRA043	High Speed 1	High Speed 1 to Hastings, Bexhill and Eastbourne (route via Ashford International).
TRA044	Inter-urban public transport scheme/service: Eastbourne-Bexhill-Hastings	Eastbourne-Bexhill- Hastings bus enhancements (along A259).
TRA045	Inter-urban public transport scheme/ service Hastings Hastings-Rye-Ashford	Hastings-Rye- Ashford bus enhancements (Along A259 east to Rye and then via Camber and eastwards to Dover along the coast).
TRA046	Inter-urban public transport scheme/service Hurst Green- Uckfield	Hurst Green- Uckfield bus opportunities.

TRA047	Hailsham- Battle/Hastings bus enhancements along A271	
TRA048	On demand rural and village transport	Covering all rural villages and including connectivity within them and to/from market towns.

Strategic and local road network

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

- East Sussex County Council: the local highway authority, responsible for maintaining roads, pavements, and paths within the county.

- National Highways: strategic highways authority, concerned about the safety, reliability, and operational efficiency of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) in the case of Rother district this comprises the A21 and the entirety of the A259 situated within the district (noting that the connecting section through the intervening Borough of Hastings is managed locally).

- Department for Transport (DfT): government department responsible for the English transport network. DfT works with agencies and partners to plan, invest in, and oversee transport infrastructure to keep the country moving. It also sets out national policy and provides funding support.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- Draft Transport Strategy for the Southeast (DfT, 2024)

- Road Investment Strategy 2: 2020–2025 (DfT, 2020)

- Developing the third Road Investment Strategy (DfT, 2021)

- Road Investment Strategy 3: 2025–2030 (DfT, forthcoming)

- East Sussex Local Transport Plan 2024 – 2050 (LTP4) (ESCC, adopted 2024)

- LTP 4 Investment Plan (ESCC, 2024)

▼ Rother District Local Plan Shared Transport Evidence Base (STEB) (Jacobs, 2023)

▼ West Bexhill Growth Corridor Study (Jacobs, 2022)

3.26   The road network in Rother District comprises a mix of strategic and local routes that are critical for enabling movement within the district, connecting communities, and linking Rother to the wider region.

3.27   National Highways manages the Strategic Road Network (SRN), which in Rother includes the A21 (London-Hastings) and the A259 (South Coast Trunk Road), ensuring connectivity beyond the county. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is the local highway authority responsible for maintaining the remainder of the network, including primary distributor roads, rural lanes, residential streets, pavements, and paths.

3.28   National policy and investment strategies, including the Draft Transport Strategy for the Southeast (DfT, 2024) and the series of Road Investment Strategies (RIS2, 2020–2025; RIS3 forthcoming 2025–2030), provide guidance and funding frameworks for the maintenance, improvement, and strategic expansion of the road network. At the local level, LTP4 (2024–2050) and the LTP4 Investment Plan (2024) set out objectives for sustainable transport, road safety, and infrastructure maintenance, while integrating the need to accommodate growth, particularly in Bexhill, Battle, and Rye.

3.29   In supporting the Local Plan, evidence from the Rother District Local Plan Shared Transport Evidence Base (STEB, 2023) and the West Bexhill Growth Corridor Study (2022) highlights key pressures on both strategic and local roads arising from planned housing and employment growth. These studies identify congestion hotspots, capacity constraints, and opportunities to enhance network resilience through junction improvements, corridor upgrades, and targeted interventions to support multi-modal travel.

Current provision

3.30   The strategic road network in Rother is anchored by the A21, which provides north-south connectivity between Hastings, London, and the wider national network. This route is managed by National Highways and forms a critical corridor for both freight and commuter traffic. Within the district, the A21 experiences varying levels of congestion,

particularly at junctions near Hastings and along approaches to Bexhill, reflecting both local traffic and longer-distance travel demand. Capacity enhancements and maintenance are ongoing priorities, guided by national Road Investment Strategy (RIS) programmes.

3.31   The A259 is the district's primary east-west arterial route, connecting Eastbourne, Bexhill, Hastings, and Rye. The entirety of this route within Rother (both west of Bexhill and east of Hastings) forms part of the Strategic Road Network managed by National Highways. It supports significant volumes of coastal traffic but faces reliability issues, particularly around Little Common and the approaches to Hastings.

3.32   The local road network, managed by ESCC, consists of primary and secondary distributor roads, such as the A269 (Bexhill–Battle), A268 (Rye–Flimwell) and B2096. These routes serve as key links to inland settlements and employment hubs. Other local roads support daily commuting, school and health access, and service delivery, but many sections face capacity constraints during peak periods. Rural roads are often narrow with limited passing opportunities, which can restrict vehicle flow and present challenges for heavy goods vehicles, buses, and cyclists.

Junctions and corridor performance

3.33   Several junctions have been identified as congestion hotspots, particularly along the A259 and at intersections within Bexhill town centre. The STEB (2023) and West Bexhill Growth Corridor Study (2022) note that targeted junction improvements, including signal optimisation, lane reconfiguration, and capacity upgrades, could help maintain traffic flow as development increases. Other transport studies (listed above) also highlight the need for measures to manage travel demand, such as traffic calming, bus priority, and integration with walking and cycling infrastructure.

3.34   As part of these measures, the Queensway Gateway Road (QGR) has been identified as a strategic project within the Hastings Bexhill Growth Corridor, connecting Queensway to the A21 Sedlescombe Road North, via Whitworth Road. While the road itself is wholly within Hastings borough, it provides a key link between Bexhill and the A21 in Rother. Construction of the QGR began in 2017; following significant delays and complications, it was finally opened to the public in September/ October 2025.

Maintenance and condition

3.35   The district's road network varies in condition, with main arterial routes generally well-maintained and rural lanes requiring ongoing resurfacing, drainage improvements, and structural repairs. LTP4 Investment Plan (2024) prioritises maintenance and resilience measures, including proactive management of pavements, drainage, and bridges, to ensure network reliability and safety, particularly under increased traffic from planned growth.

Multi-modal considerations

3.36   Both strategic and local roads in Rother support multi-modal travel, including bus services, cycling, and pedestrian routes. The STEB (2023) highlights the importance of integrating active travel and public transport with road improvements, particularly in Bexhill and along growth corridors, to reduce congestion, improve accessibility, and support sustainable travel choices. Schemes such as the North East Bexhill Access Roads and the Combe Valley Way greenway provide examples of how multi-modal planning can complement road network capacity.

Future requirement

3.37   The Local Plan will place increased pressure on both the strategic and local road network. Planned housing and employment allocations are expected to increase traffic flows, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to maintain safety, accessibility, and network resilience.

Strategic corridor improvements

3.38   The A21 and A259 corridors will require capacity management and selective enhancements to accommodate forecast growth. Measures could include junction upgrades, signal optimisation, and improved lane arrangements, particularly where congestion currently limits reliability for commuting and freight traffic. These improvements should be aligned with National Highways' RIS3 (2025–2030) and LTP4 Investment Plan priorities to ensure strategic connectivity is maintained.

Local network enhancements

3.39   Key local routes connecting residential areas, town centres, and employment hubs will need targeted capacity and safety improvements. This includes Bexhill–Battle, Bexhill–

Robertsbridge, and other primary distributor routes that serve both local and through traffic, as identified in the Local Plan's transport evidence listed above. Interventions may involve carriageway resurfacing, junction realignments, traffic calming measures, and enhancements for pedestrians and cyclists to enable multi-modal travel.

Integration with multi-modal travel

3.40   Road interventions must support sustainable travel choices. New and upgraded infrastructure should be planned alongside bus priority measures, cycle lanes, and pedestrian infrastructure. The West Bexhill Growth Corridor Study (2022) highlights opportunities to integrate segregated cycle routes, greenways, and enhanced crossings along new access roads, supporting modal shift while maintaining road capacity.

Phased delivery and prioritisation

3.41   Delivery of road network improvements should be phased in line with housing and employment development to ensure that new capacity and infrastructure are in place as development comes forward and demand increases.

Financial & delivery requirements

3.42   Delivery of improvements to Rother's strategic and local road network will require coordinated investment from national and local funding sources, reflecting both the scale of infrastructure interventions and the phased nature of planned growth.

3.43   Delivery will need to be phased in alignment with Local Plan growth, prioritising areas with the highest forecast traffic pressures and opportunities for modal shift.

3.44   Collaboration with key stakeholders - including National Highways, ESCC, the DfT, local bus operators, and development partners - will be essential to coordinate design, funding, and construction, ensure alignment with multi-modal strategies, and maximise value for money.

3.45   Robust monitoring, evaluation, and risk management (e.g. through Monitor and Manage) will be essential to ensure that road network improvements are delivered on time, within budget, and achieve the intended outcomes for safety, capacity, and sustainability. Funding and delivery of these interventions will be secured through a combination of:

a. **Developer contributions:**

   i. S106 (site-specific) and/or S278 obligations to secure on-site provision or contributions towards off-site improvements and maintenance

   ii. Strategic CIL receipts (retained by RDC) to support delivery of strategic transport infrastructure

b. **External funding:** including national government funding streams and targeted transport grants, such as the Department for Transport's Road Investment Strategy (RIS), Local Growth Fund allocations

c. **Local and regional partnership:** collaboration with highways authorities, local transport initiatives, and partnership arrangements with other stakeholders

3.46 The table below pulls out the key road transport provision to support the Local Plan. It is recognised that further feasibility / business case analysis is required in some measures.

Ref	Item	Description
TRA001	A2036 Corridor Improvements	Improvements could include widening on approaches to junctions, signalisation of junctions or rephasing of existing traffic signals.
TRA002	The Ridge corridor	The Ridge corridor – to include junction improvements e.g. at Queensway, Junction Road and Harrow Lane to improve access to the A21 and strategic road network.
TRA004	*Queensway Gateway Road*	*Measures to improve capacity and traffic flow. (Note: Project has been completed in Sep/Oct 2025 and is therefore to be removed from the IDP).*
TRA005	A269/ A2036/ London Road Junction	Junction improvements at A269/Holliers Hill//A2036 Wrestwood Road / London Road
TRA006	A269/ Watermill Lane Junction	Junction improvements at A269/ Watermill Lane
TRA007	A259 Little Common roundabout	A259 Little Common roundabout Junction improvements
TRA008	Town centre accessibility improvements	Town centre accessibility traffic management improvements

TRA009	London Road corridor	Accessibility improvements and London Road/ Beeching Road junction improvement
TRA010	A259 corridor improvements	Measures include A259 / B2095 approach, A259/ Sutherland Avenue and A259/A269 London Road junctions
TRA011	A21 safety improvements	Road safety improvement schemes on A21 trunk road.
TRA014	Blackfriars Battle	Delivery of strategic road in Battle to open up the Blackfriars site for housing development.
TRA018	A259 parking enforcement	A259 Trunk Road between Glyne Gap and Barnhorn Road parking enforcement measures
TRA019	Traffic improvement in Battle	Management of cross-town traffic congestion in Battle. Improved traffic management. Implementation of measures to increase use of sustainable transport.
TRA020	Town centre congestion improvements.	Introduce measures to tackle heavy congestion in the town centre during the summer. Increase sustainable transport provision in the town. Promote initiatives to improve strategic connectivity between Rye and the wider region.
TRA021	Policy requirement	Road layouts in new developments need to be suitable for buses. New developments should link to existing road infrastructure by way of through- roads rather than cul-de-sacs wherever possible to facilitate access by buses. Bus services to serve new developments need to be put in place at an early stage of occupation.
TRA022	A259/ B2182/ Peartre e Lane (Little Common Road) - A259 Corridor	Potential conversion of existing roundabout to signalised junction.
TRA023	A259/West Down Road improvement	Potential conversion of priority junction to a roundabout or signalised junction.
TRA024	A259/ A269	Former High School Site Development to provide mitigation at this junction. Potential additional mitigation, such as changing pedestrian crossing arrangements to decrease the lost time in signal operation and additional right turn lane capacity on main approaches is recommended.
TRA025	Glyne Gap Roundabout	Potential increased flare capacity on A2036 and additional lane on Retail Park arm.

TRA026	A269/A2036 traffic signal	A269/A2036. Traffic signals to be considered.
TRA027	A269 Turkey Road	Potential additional flare capacity on A269 approaches and thereafter potential signalised of the existing mini roundabout.
TRA028	B2087/ A21	Potential additional right turn lane to increase capacity of A21 approaches and flare lane addition on A268 arm.
TRA029	Copper's Corner A21	Potential conversion of existing priority T- junction to a standard round about layout.
TRA033	EV and Hydrogen Infrastructure Expansion	Increased roll out of EV charging and hydrogen fuelling infrastructure on- street and at key destinations across district.
TRA035	A259 Corridor	Potential small scale local widening to improve capacity at the A259/A2036 Glyne Gap roundabout
TRA050	A21 Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst dualling	Note: This provision is outside of Rother however it will alleviate congestion in the A21 corridor around the northern part of the district.
TRA051	A21 Safety Enhancements (RIS2)	

4. Community & cultural facilities

Libraries

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC): the lead authority for library and archive services, responsible for strategic planning, funding, and overall service delivery.

- Rother District Council: works in partnership with ESCC to promote community engagement and access to services.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- East Sussex Libraries: The Way Forward 2022/23 to 2027/28 (ESCC, 2021)

- ESCC updated figures for calculating development contributions (ESCC, 2015)

4.1   East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a public library service that is "comprehensive and efficient" to residents, including for those who live, work, or study in the area. This legal obligation requires the council to deliver a library service that meets the diverse needs of its community, though the specific ways in which this is achieved, such as the number of libraries, their locations, and opening hours, are determined locally.

Current provision

Statutory libraries

4.2   Of the 17 Council libraries across the county, three are in Rother District:

(1). Bexhill Library

Address: Western Road, Bexhill on Sea, East Sussex, TN40 1DY

Facilities: Accessible public toilet(s), baby changing facilities, disabled access, display facilities, free computers with internet access, free Wi-Fi, letterbox for item returns, microfiche/microfilm reader, local history material, photocopier, printing facilities.

(2). Battle Library

Address: 7 Market Square, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 0XB

Facilities: Disabled access, display facilities, free computers with internet access, free Wi-Fi, letterbox for item returns, local history material, photocopier, printing facilities, study area.

(3). Rye Library

Address: 30A High Street, Rye, East Sussex, TN31 7JG

Facilities: Accessible public toilet(s), baby changing facilities, disabled access, free computers with Internet access, free Wi-Fi, local history material, photocopier, printing facilities.

4.3   These offering a wide range of books for loan, as well as providing access to other material including local history. Every library has free access to computers and Wi-Fi.

4.4   In addition, ESCC's eLibrary provides a wide range of online services and resources, available at any time. Using the eLibrary residents can:

- Download eBooks and eAudiobooks to their own device (computer, phone or tablet) without having to go to a library. This includes high quality fiction and non-fiction for adults and children.

- Download a wide range of eMagazines, both current and backdated copies, free of charge to their own personal device.

- Access online reference library, which includes lots of information resources such as newspapers, encyclopaedias and dictionaries, business information and family history sites.

- Search all the stock across East Sussex County Council libraries using online catalogue.

- Access their library account, renew their loans and place reservations on items they would like to borrow.

4.5   ESCC also provide a free home library delivery service to customers who cannot easily visit a library due to disability, frailty or caring responsibilities. This service allows library

materials to be delivered to their homes, providing an alternative option for borrowing books and magazines.

Community Managed Libraries

4.6   In addition to the statutory network, Rother District is also served by two community-managed libraries. These are run by volunteers or Parish Councils and are important for rural accessibility:

(1). Northiam Library

Address: Main Street, Northiam, TN31 6LP (Located within the Village Hall complex)

Status: Community Managed (Northiam Parish Council)

Role: Provides book lending and community information access for the northern rural parishes.

(2). Ticehurst Community Library

Address: Ticehurst Village Hall, Lower High Street, Ticehurst, TN5 7BB

Status: Community Managed (Volunteer run)

Role: Provides local access to books and serves as a social hub for the village.

Future requirement

4.7   ESCC has committed to a capital programme of expenditure for libraries until 2030. Each year they will work on projects to refurbish the libraries to ensure they are safe, in a good state of repair and that they meet the needs of our customers. The East Sussex Libraries: The Way Forward Updated Strategic Commissioning Strategy 2022/23 – 2027/28 estimated that for the 17 library buildings across the County, this will cost around £2.5 million over the next five years or approximately £513,000 per year; this is in addition to the annual maintenance costs of around £241,000 (ESCC, 2021).

4.8   ESCC stated that it aims to deliver a needs-based library service where resources are prioritised towards the achievement of the four strategic outcomes:

A.   **Improving child and adult literacy and numeracy.** This includes provision of a range of quality materials and personalised support for people's different needs, so they can enjoy the pleasure of reading as well as the better life chances that literacy and numeracy unlock for people.

B.   **Supporting the economy.** This includes delivering training and guidance for people of all abilities seeking to learn and to work, so they can build skills and confidence in a supportive environment.

C.   **Better health and wellbeing.** This includes promoting reading as a source of wellbeing, providing reliable information and services to promote good health, and supporting people to manage their own health and the health of those they care for.

D.   **Increasing digital inclusion.** This includes free access to computers and Wi-Fi, and paid access to printers and scanners, training for people to use technology and the internet, so they can independently access vital information and services and participate in the benefits of the digital world.

4.9   The ESCC's Contributions for education, libraries, household waste recycling centres and rights of way document (ESCC, 2015) requires financial contributions from development of 15 dwellings or more to provide improvements to existing facilities. The contribution rate is £263 per dwelling (2014/15 prices) and will be index-linked, with the final contribution adjusted to reflect the relevant index at the time of payment.

Financial & delivery requirements

4.10   The above contribution guidance set out by ESCC should be considered by site allocations of 15 or more dwellings in the Local Plan.

4.11   The below item in the IPD Part B is relevant to support the Local Plan.

Ref	Item	Description

COM001	Enhanced library capacity for Bexhill, Battle and Rye library services	Increased stock, modifications to buildings layout, and delivery of outreach programs to target need groups. e-Library Service: improved access to online library services including East Sussex Community Information Service (ESCIS) particularly in rural and hard to reach areas.

Youth facilities and services

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC): has statutory duty to secure access to relevant facilities.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- ESCC's website

- Rother District Council Health and Well-being: Leisure Facilities Strategy 2023 - 2033 (SL, 2023)

- Built Facilities Supply and Demand Audit (Appendix 2) (RDC, 2023)

4.12   Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 places a statutory duty on local authorities to secure access for all qualifying young people to a sufficient quantity of 'youth services', namely:

a.   a sufficient quantity of *educational* leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being and sufficient facilities for such activities; and

b.   a sufficient quantity of *recreational* leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities

4.13   The two forms of activity are not mutually exclusive but local authorities must, so far as reasonably practicable, secure access for young people to sufficient forms of, and facilities for, both types of activities. They include, but are not limited to:

    a.   sports and informal physical activities

    b.   cultural activities

    c.   outdoor residential, weekend or holiday-time activities

    d.   special interest clubs

    e.   volunteering activities

4.14   In Rother, ESCC is responsible for fulfilling this duty under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996.

Current provision

4.15   Youth work in East Sussex is delivered through a range of support and personal development services that fulfil a number of statutory obligations as well as providing personal development opportunities:

    a.   YES East Sussex (Youth Employability Service), a free service that offers teenage access to career advice, support and guidance to young people across the County. YES work specifically with young people aged 16-18 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), and those who are vulnerable and at risk of being NEET

    b.   East Sussex Youth Cabinet, a democratically elected youth organisation that represent young people's views to local government and service providers

    c.   Youth/ Family hubs. In Rother District, the Sidley Family Hub is in Bexhill

    d.   I-Rock: A virtual drop-in service for young people aged 14-25 to get advice and support for their emotional and mental wellbeing

    e.   Youth Justice Service, which helps young people keep going to school or college, even if they have been arrested or are going to court. Youth Justice Service work with schools, colleges, and other services to get young people back into learning or training

f. Various other youth services including safety and welfare, employment, housing advice

4.16   Local facilities, such as parish, village and neighbourhood halls, as well as sports and recreation facilities (discussed in the later section of this chapter) provide for a range of community and cultural activities, such as play groups, clubs, social activities and public meeting space that support young people.

Future requirement

4.17   Most youth provision is delivered through flexible community spaces. The need for developer contributions, therefore, needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis and in partnership with other services that may be delivered out of multi-functional community hubs.

Financial & delivery requirements

4.18   The contribution guidance set out by ESCC does not include youth facilities and services, as provision is largely integrated into multi-functional community spaces (see Community Facilities section). Site allocations in the Local Plan, however, will still need to take this into account and be considered on a case-by-case basis where a specific local deficit is identified.

Community facilities

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

- Rother District Council: provides strategic oversight, identifies local need, and may fund improvements or support new facilities.

- Parish and Town Councils: often manage and maintain community centres on behalf of local residents.

4.19 Community centres are local facilities providing flexible spaces for social, educational, cultural, and recreational activities. They act as hubs for community engagement, events, meetings, and support services, often supporting volunteers, local clubs, and health or wellbeing initiatives.

Current provision

4.20 Rother hosts several community centres across the district, often managed by parish councils or local committees. These include, but are not limited to:

(1). Battle Memorial Hall

(2). Bexhill Community Centre

(3). Camber Sands Welcome Centre

(4). East Dean Village Hall & Green

(5). Fairlight Village Hall

(6). Hurst Green Village Hall

(7). Icklesham Village Hall

(8). Mountfield Village Hall

(9). Northiam Village Hall

(10). Pett Village Hall

(11). Robertsbridge Hall

(12). Rye Community Centre

(13). Sedlescombe Village Hall

(14). Ticehurst Village Hall

(15). Westfield Village Hall

4.21   These centres vary in size, facilities, and accessibility, and many are available for hire for community events, club activities, meetings, and health and wellbeing programmes. They are integral to the social infrastructure of Rother, providing inclusive spaces for residents of all ages.

Future requirement

4.22   The growth in population, particularly through planned housing in the Local Plan, is expected to increase demand for flexible community space. While no formal national or local minimum standards exist for community centres, RDC will continue to liaise with parish councils, developers, and local organisations to:

a.   Identify gaps in provision or accessibility as a result of planned growth

b.   Ensure that new development supports the creation or enhancement of community spaces where required

c.   Integrate community centres into wider green infrastructure or mixed-use developments

4.23   Future provision may include the expansion of existing halls, creation of new multi-use centres, or shared-use arrangements within schools or other public buildings.

Financial & delivery requirements

4.24   Funding for community centres is typically delivered through a combination of sources:

    a.   **Developer contributions:**

        i.   S106 (site-specific) obligations to secure on-site provision or contributions to off-site improvements and maintenance where directly associated with new developments

        ii.   Strategic CIL receipts (retained by RDC) to support improvements of existing facilities

    b.   **Grants and partnerships:** with charities, philanthropic organisations, or regional funding schemes

    c.   Parish/Town Councils and volunteer groups for day-to-day operation, minor improvements, and community-led projects

4.25   The below item in the IPD Part B is relevant to community facilities infrastructure needs.

Ref	Item	Description
COM011	District-wide community & cultural facilities	Improvement, enhancement, and creation of community and cultural facilities across the district, including but not limited to arts and cultural venues, sports and recreation facilities, and youth facilities and services.

Arts and cultural facilities

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

▼ Historic England: government agency who provides advice, guidance, and sometimes funding for the conservation of historic records and heritage assets.

▼ Arts Council England: provides funding and strategic direction for arts and cultural initiatives across the region, working closely with local authorities and cultural organisations.

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC): collaborates with RDC through the East Sussex Arts Partnership to implement the East Sussex Cultural Strategy, which aims to enhance cultural experiences, support the creative economy, and promote cultural tourism.

- Rother District Council (RDC): leads on cultural strategy, funding, and regeneration initiatives.

- Community and cultural groups: local organisations and societies that contribute to the cultural landscape through events, performances, and workshops, for example, De La Warr Charitable Trust.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- East Sussex Cultural Strategy 2013 – 2025 (ESCC, 2014)

- De La Warr Pavilion Charitable Trust Annual Report for Rother District Council: 2023 – 2024 (Drew S., 2024)

- Talking of Bexhill: Measuring Values and Perception of a Home Town (18hours.org.uk, 2024)

4.26   The East Sussex Cultural Strategy 2013 – 2025 (ESCC, 2014), while needs updating, sets out the cultural strategy for the wider region. It establishes three priorities:

(1).   Priority 1: Create an environment where great cultural experiences are available to everyone to enhance their quality of life

(2).   Priority 2: Create an environment which enables the cultural and creative economy to expand and enhances our ability to attract and retain other businesses.

(3).   Priority 3: Develop and promote well packaged cultural tourism offers which celebrate the identity of East Sussex, raise its profile and attract more visitors and businesses to the County.

4.27   RDC has implemented several initiatives to contribute to the above priorities:

Current provision

4.28   Rother benefits from a relatively strong and diverse cultural offer for a district of its size, focussed on a small number of high-profile venues plus a widespread network of town and village cultural assets:

a.   De La Warr Pavilion (Bexhill): an internationally recognised modernist venue that functions as a regional gallery, performance venue and community hub. It has a major role in town centre footfall and the visitor economy and remains the district's flagship cultural anchor (the Pavilion reported c.328,500 visitors in 2023/24) (Drew S., 2024).

b.   Rye: a compact historic town with multiple galleries, studios and an annual Rye Arts Festival that draws regional audiences and supports the visitor economy.

c.   Heritage and attractions: nationally significant heritage / visitor attractions in the district (e.g. Bodiam Castle / Batemans / Great Dixter / Kent & East Sussex Railway / medieval Winchelsea) provide cultural tourism anchors and contribute to daytime economy and cultural tourism circuits.

d.   Festivals and events: recurring events (Rye Arts Festival, Battle re-enactment, local food festivals) provide seasonal cultural demand and support a local creative economy.

e.   Local & community-scale provision: parish and town halls, community centres, small theatres, art societies and studio spaces deliver grassroots activity but are uneven in quality and capacity across the district; there are recognised gaps for youth-oriented facilities and flexible rehearsal/performance spaces. Local consultations and community research highlight needs especially in Bexhill/Sidley, (18hours.org.uk, 2024).

f.   Recent capital investment: Rother District Council secured a major Levelling Up package for cultural-led regeneration in Bexhill (£19.192m including a £2m Sidley community hub project), demonstrating both need and a funding path for strategic cultural infrastructure.

4.29   These assets form the baseline cultural infrastructure that new development must sustain and where appropriate reinforce.

Future requirement

4.30   The emerging Local Plan proposes a significant uplift in housing planned for 2025–2042, with strategic growth focused on Bexhill and expansion that will materially increase resident population and daytime/evening cultural demand.

4.31   A key project that would help to deliver the cultural-led regeneration in the district is the De La Warr Pavilion restoration and refurbishment. This project received planning permission and listed building consent in October 2025 and is to be delivered in three phases. The Pavilion itself contributes significantly to the local economy, supporting jobs, tourism and skills development across Sussex, and the project will further strengthen its role in driving growth and opportunity across the Southeast. The project has secured £17m from the UK Government, following a funding bid made by Rother District Council in partnership with De La Warr Pavilion Charitable Trust and Heart of Sidley. Other funders that pledged support include Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund (development grant), East Sussex County Council, The Chalk Cliff Trust, Foyle Foundation and life-long supporter Suzy Eddie Izzard. Aside from these, the project has also secured an allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, but there is still a significant fundraising target to complete the full scheme.

Financial & delivery requirements

4.32   Delivery of cultural infrastructure for new allocations will require a mixed package of developer contributions, capital grants and long-term operating models. The funding sources and mechanisms include, for example:

a.   **Developer contributions:**

   i.   S106 (site-specific) contributions to secure on-site buildings or capital contributions for off-site cultural facilities

   ii.   Strategic CIL receipts (retained by RDC)

b.   **Capital grant funding:**

   i.   Arts Council England capital funds (Cultural Investment Fund and other open funds)

ii.   Levelling Up Fund / Levelling Up culture funding (Rother's successful LUF award demonstrates the availability of significant capital where projects demonstrate regeneration outcomes)

iii.   National Lottery Heritage Fund (for heritage-linked projects), Historic England grants for heritage assets, and other DCMS/DCI capital programmes

c.   **Local and regional funding:**

i.   UK Shared Prosperity Fund / Rural England Prosperity funding for community cultural activity and capacity building. Rother District Council has previously successfully secured funding from both sources.

ii.   Philanthropy / commercial sponsorship / venue trading: larger cultural venues (or trusts) will typically leverage philanthropic capital and trading income; new facilities should include a business plan demonstrating long-term sustainability (mixed income streams, café/retail space, room hire).

4.33   The following item from the IDP Part B is relevant to community and cultural infrastructure provision across the district.

Ref	Item	Description
COM011	District-wide community & cultural facilities	Improvement, enhancement, and creation of community and cultural facilities across the district, including but not limited to arts and cultural venues, sports and recreation facilities, and youth facilities and services.
COM015	De La Warr Pavilion phased restoration and refurbishment	Works include minor demolition, reconfiguration, a southwest extension, associated plant, and upgraded landscaping and access.

Sports and recreation facilities

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

- Sport England: government body responsible for growing and developing grassroots sport and getting more people active across England.

- Rother District Council - Neighbourhood Services: responsible for a wide range of services related to the local community and environment, including sports development.

- Local sports clubs and community groups: key stakeholders in facility use, maintenance, and local engagement, helping to identify community needs.

- Parish Councils.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy 2023 – 2039 (Continuum, 2023)

- Rother District Council Health and Well-being: Leisure Facilities Strategy 2023 - 2033 (SL, 2023)

- Built Facilities Supply and Demand Audit (Appendix 2) (RDC, 2023)

4.34 There is no single body with statutory duty to provide leisure facilities in England. Rother District Council (RDC) provides and maintains these facilities on a discretionary basis because it recognises the significant value of sports, recreation and leisure services to the communities.

4.35 Schools and higher education institutions have duties to provide PE and can make facilities available for community use, but this is generally a policy expectation, not a statutory obligation to the public.

4.36 At the higher level, while central government doesn't directly provide facilities, it influences provision through policy, funding, and oversight. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) sets national sport policy whereas Sport England has a statutory role to invest in and support community sport, protect playing fields (under statutory consultee powers in planning), and advise on local sports strategies.

4.37 RDC's Health and Well-being: Leisure Facilities Strategy 2023–2033 sets out objectives to ensure that facilities are accessible, sustainable, and aligned with population growth. The

Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy 2023–2039 provides the key evidence base on supply, demand, and future needs across football, cricket, rugby, hockey, indoor sports halls, swimming pools, and health and fitness facilities; a Stage E review of this work is currently underway. The Built Facilities Supply and Demand Audit (2023) highlights where existing stock is reaching end-of-life, where there are gaps in provision, and where opportunities for shared or community-led use exist.

Current provision

4.38   The district has a mixed portfolio of facilities, including:

Playing pitches

4.39   Rother has a network of football, cricket, rugby and hockey pitches, with higher concentrations in Bexhill and Rye, and a reliance on school sites for community use. The Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy 2023–2039 identifies a number of current and emerging issues:

a.   **Hockey:** There is currently no secure capacity for club hockey in the study area. The existing (unsecured) facility at Horntye Sports Complex is in poor condition and requires resurfacing or replacement at a suitable and accessible location.

b.   **Football:** There is insufficient secured capacity for youth and junior football on Sundays and for midweek training. Additional secured provision of 3G artificial grass pitches (AGPs) is likely to be required to meet growth in population, unmet club demand (especially for women's and girls' football), and the Football Association's aim to increase competitive play on 3G surfaces.

c.   **Grass pitches:** While some improvements to existing natural turf pitches can increase capacity, further grass pitch provision may still be needed by 2039. However, this potential need could be partly offset by the development of new floodlit 3G AGPs, which have much higher carrying capacities.

d.   **Cricket:** There are supply and distribution issues in areas of high demand (Hastings, Bexhill, Westfield) and a risk of losing the cricket pitch at Horntye Sports Complex, currently used by Hastings Priory Cricket Club.

e. **Rugby:** The main needs for rugby clubs relate to improving grass pitch maintenance and floodlighting and securing sufficient midweek floodlit training access. This may include enhanced use of the rugby-compliant AGP at Bexhill College or developing a new rugby-compliant AGP at Ark Academy, with secured access for Hastings and Bexhill RFC.

4.40   The strategy emphasises the need to protect all existing playing field sites for both formal and informal community use and to monitor capacity and quality through ongoing review.

Non-pitch outdoor sports

4.41   Bowls clubs, tennis courts, athletics track (Bexhill College), and water-based facilities such as Rye Harbour sailing and canoeing.

Built facilities

4.42   Bexhill Leisure Centre, Bexhill Leisure Pool and Rye Sports Centre, managed under contract by Freedom Leisure, form the core of the district-wide offer. Facilities include sports halls, fitness suites, swimming pools, and activity studios.

Community and school-based facilities

4.43   A network of community and school-based facilities provides important opportunities for local participation in sport and physical activity.

4.44   Parish and village halls across the district support a range of informal and recreational activities—such as badminton, table tennis, and fitness classes—although quality, capacity, and accessibility vary considerably between settlements.

4.45   In addition, school sites make a significant contribution to community sports provision, particularly where formal community use agreements are in place. Facilities at Battle Abbey School, Bexhill Academy, Buckswood School, Claremont Prep and Nursery, and Bexhill College offer access to sports halls, playing pitches, and artificial surfaces that extend the local facility network beyond dedicated leisure centres. However, access arrangements, maintenance standards, and facility quality differ between schools, with some sites offering open community use and others limited to club-based or restricted bookings.

Condition of facilities

4.46   Much of the facility stock is ageing, particularly Bexhill Leisure Centre and Pool, which require replacement or major refurbishment within the plan period.

Future requirement

4.47   Evidence indicates significant future needs driven by population growth associated with 2025-2042 housing allocations, the ageing condition of existing facilities, and evolving participation patterns. Strategic priorities focus on enhancing quality, capacity, and accessibility to ensure that provision keeps pace with demand.

Playing pitches

4.48   The Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy 2023–2039 identifies the following key requirements to meet current and future needs:

a.   **Securing provision in growth areas:** Housing growth areas create opportunities to secure developer contributions towards local community pitch improvements. The priority is to invest off-site contributions in existing strategic multi-sport or sport-specific sites with ancillary facilities, good management arrangements, and safe, sustainable access from new communities.

b.   **Quality improvements:** Upgrading natural turf pitches—particularly those used for Saturday cricket, Sunday adult football, youth football, and mini-soccer—is essential. Sustaining improved quality will require enhanced maintenance regimes.

c.   **Floodlighting enhancements:** Upgrading floodlights at rugby training sites is needed to improve safety and extend capacity for evening training.

d.   **3G artificial grass pitch (AGP) provision:** Additional full-sized 3G AGPs are required to meet training and youth league match-play needs across the area. Proposed locations include Hastings (x2), Bexhill, Rye, and Mid/North Rother. This investment will alleviate overuse of existing grass pitches and increase opportunities for women's and girls' football, while freeing up capacity on sand-based AGPs for hockey and community programmes.

e.   **New pitch provision:** Development of new cricket facilities—such as those at St Mary's Recreation Ground, Claremont Prep and Nursery, and Worsham—will provide dedicated club bases (e.g. Sidley CC, Hastings Priory CC) and expand capacity for future demand.

4.49   The study also identified key strategic sites for future development and protection of accessible community sport:

a.   **Polegrove Recreation Ground (Bexhill):** A key multi-sport site hosting senior football, cricket, and community events. The grandstand and changing facilities require upgrade to meet Step 6 National League System standards, and pitch quality improvements are needed to accommodate increased youth and recreational use. Given club growth, the Council may wish to consider relocation of one club to an alternative opportunity site to relieve pressure on the Polegrove and allow greater community access and flexibility.

b.   **Little Common Recreation Ground:** Home to senior football, youth football, and adult cricket. While recent maintenance has improved pitch condition, sustaining high-quality maintenance regimes is critical. The cricket square would benefit from enhanced maintenance, and the current basketball area could be reconfigured to create space for cricket nets and reorganised outdoor activity zones, maximising site functionality and safety.

4.50   It also identified further opportunities sites including:

a.   Kiteye Farm (North Bexhill): Football or outdoor sports facilities as part of the North Bexhill development.

b.   Northeye (West Bexhill): A full-sized adult football pitch or a senior cricket pitch with associated pavilion and parking facilities, to replace the existing pitch, as part of redevelopment of the site for housing.

c.   Worsham (Northeast Bexhill): Football outdoor sports facilities (3 pitches (1 senior, 2 junior)) and 2 team changing pavilion for the new community.

d.   St Richard's Catholic College, Bexhill: Pitches. Investigate the options to open the facilities for community use

e.   Education sites to open for community use: Work with Active Partnership to identify schools to open for community use or extend their current provision through the opening schools' facilities programme.

f.   New School Sites – Rother (as part of Worsham Development): Pitches. Ensure community use of facilities is included as part of any new development through planning policy.

Non-pitch outdoor sports

4.51   Improvements are required to sustain participation in non-pitch outdoor sports such as tennis, bowls, athletics, and water sports. Key priorities include upgrading ancillary facilities, increasing accessibility, and ensuring that key sites in Bexhill and Rye remain viable and well maintained.

Built facilities

4.52   Replacement of Bexhill Leisure Centre and Bexhill Leisure Pool with a modern, fit-for-purpose combined facility remains a strategic requirement within the next 10 years, addressing condition issues and meeting future demand. Rye Sports Centre also requires ongoing investment to maintain quality, accessibility, and community value.

4.53   The Built Facilities Audit identifies insufficient swimming pool capacity at peak times. Replacement and new pool provision in Bexhill is therefore essential to meet district-wide needs.

4.54   Growing demand requires additional sports hall space and expanded health and fitness facilities, especially considering strategic housing growth areas in Bexhill.

Community and school-based facilities

4.55   The Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy 2023 – 2039 (Table 4.2, page 59-62) also identifies coordinated actions with different timescale; many involve school-based and community facilities.

4.56   This underlines the importance of formal community use agreements and coordinated investment between schools, the local authority, and national governing bodies (FA, ECB, EH, and Active Sussex). Delivery should focus on maximising existing assets through maintenance, resurfacing, and secured community access.

4.57   A key project that plays an important role in delivering the wider cultural led regeneration is the Sidley Recreation Ground Community Hub. The project secured approximately £2.1m from the UK Government in 2023, following a funding bid made by Rother District Council in partnership with Heart of Sidley. The community hub is currently being built and is anticipated to be completed in May 2026.

Financial & delivery requirements

4.58   Delivery will require a blended funding approach:

a.   **Developer contributions:**

   i.   S106 (site-specific) contributions to secure on-site provision (e.g. playing pitches, sports halls) or capital contributions for off-site improvements and maintenance

   ii.   Strategic CIL receipts (retained by RDC) to support delivery of strategic leisure projects

b.   **Capital grant funding:**

   i.   Sport England capital programmes (e.g. Strategic Facilities Fund, Community Asset Fund) aligned with participation growth and health outcomes

   ii.   National Governing Bodies of Sport (FA, RFU, ECB, England Hockey) facility investment programmes to deliver new pitches and quality upgrades

   iii.   Government funding streams, including the Levelling Up Fund, where sports and leisure are tied to wider regeneration and health outcomes

c.   **Local and regional funding:**

   i.   UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) / Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF): potential to support community sport, active travel, and grassroots facility improvements

ii.   Partnership funding with schools, colleges and clubs: co-location or shared-use arrangements to reduce capital costs and maximise community access; and

iii.   Community and charitable grants

4.59   The table below pulls out the key infrastructure provision to support the Local Plan. It is recognised that further feasibility / business case analysis is required in some measures.

Ref	Item	Description
COM002	Bexhill Sports Leisure Centre Development	New wet and dry leisure facility.
COM003	Sidley Recreation Ground Community Hub	New skate park and improved BMX track, with ancillary facilities including floodlighting and public toilets. New community hub.
COM004	Battle Abbey Senior School – Hockey and Football improvements	Work with school to retain space to be available for community hockey use. Improve maintenance of football pitches and increase community use.
COM005	Battle Sports and Recreation Ground	Improved changing provision and improved maintenance of pitches. Resurface of AGP in 2025.
COM006	Guestling Playing Fields	New changing provision and improved maintenance of pitches.
COM007	Mid/North Rother option for 3G AGP	Development of new 3G AGP (subject to planning and funding).
COM008	Facilities and cricket pitches improvements, and improved maintenance	Improvements and improved maintenance of facilities including cricket pitches at Burwash, Battle, Burwash, Iden, Polegrove (Bexhill), and Bexhill Downs.
COM009	Northiam Playing Fields	New football pavilion and changing provision, and further improvement to the local recreational ground.
COM010	District-wide community & cultural facilities	Improvement, enhancement, and creation of community and cultural facilities across the district, including but not limited to arts and cultural venues, sports and recreation facilities, and youth facilities and services.
COM011	Kiteye Farm (North Bexhill) outdoor sports facilities	Football or other outdoor sports facilities as part of the Kiteye Farm / North Bexhill development. (Details to be determined through planning application.)
COM012	Northeye (West Bexhill) football pitch or a senior cricket pitch	Replace the existing pitch with a full-sized adult football pitch or a senior cricket pitch with associated pavilion and parking facilities, as part of redevelopment of the site for housing. (Details to be determined through planning application; if this site is not to be brought forward for sports pitches then an alternative location in the western part of Bexhill will be required.)

| COM013 | Worsham (Northeast Bexhill) football facilities | Outdoor sports facilities (football - 3 pitches (1 senior, 2 junior)) and 2 team changing pavilion for the new community. (Details to be determined through planning application.) |
| COM014 | Worsham (Northeast Bexhill) football facilities | Outdoor sports facilities (football - 3 pitches (1 senior, 2 junior)) and 2 team changing pavilion for the new community. (Details to be determined through planning application.) |

5. Education

5.1   Local authorities in England have a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for pupils of statutory school age within their local authority area.

5.2   In general terms, education infrastructure can be defined as:

a.   early years and childcare provision

b.   primary school and secondary schools (with and without sixth forms)

c.   special education needs (SEN) schools

d.   post-16 education and further education

Early years and childcare

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

- Department for Education (DfE): national authority who sets national policy, early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and funding allocations for early years and childcare.

- Ofsted: non-ministerial government department who regulates and inspects nurseries, preschools, childminders, and early years settings to ensure quality and safeguarding.

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC): ESCC has a statutory duty to secure sufficient, high-quality early years and childcare provision across the county. ESCC also has responsibilities to promote the take-up of childcare, provide advice and information for families, and support providers with guidance, training, and development. ESCC Children's Services is the relevant department.

- Children and Young People's Trust (CYP Trust): a partnership in East Sussex, led by ESCC, comprising all the services and strategies relating to children and young people and their families in the local area.

- Private, voluntary, and independent (PVI) sector providers: these are privately owned, run by voluntary organisations, or are otherwise independent of the government. They include nurseries, preschools, playgroups, and childminders forming the majority of provision in Rother.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- East Sussex Childcare Sufficiency Duty Annual Report 2025 (ESCC, 2025)

- East Sussex Children and Young People's Plan (CYP Trust)

- East Sussex County Council's Council Plan 2025-26 (ESCC, 25)

- Excellence for All Vision 2024–2030 (ESCC, 2014)

- ESCC updated figures for calculating development contributions (ESCC, 2015)

5.3   The DfE sets national early years policy through the EYFS statutory framework and determines funding allocations for free entitlement hours. Ofsted regulates provision and inspects all settings to ensure quality, safeguarding, and compliance with statutory requirements.

5.4   ESCC, through its Children's Services Department, has a statutory duty to secure sufficient, high-quality early years and childcare places to meet local need (Childcare Act 2006). ESCC also supports take-up, provides guidance and training to providers, and coordinates delivery through the CYP Trust. This approach aligns with ESCC's strategic vision set out in Excellence for All Vision 2024–2030, which emphasises improving outcomes for all children and young people by ensuring equitable access to high-quality education and early years services.

5.5   The quality and sufficiency of provision in Rother are closely monitored by ESCC through the Childcare Sufficiency Duty Annual Report (2025), which informs planning for future provision and identifies gaps in geographic coverage, flexibility, and extended-hours care.

Current provision

5.6   Rother District has a mixed portfolio of early years and childcare provision, dominated by the private, voluntary, and independent (PVI) sector. This includes privately run nurseries, preschools, playgroups, and childminders, which provide the majority of local childcare places. School-based nursery classes and maintained nursery provision offer additional capacity, particularly in Bexhill, Rye, and Battle.

5.7   According to the East Sussex Childcare Sufficiency Duty Annual Report 2025, provision is generally sufficient in urban areas, but rural villages often experience limited access, particularly for full-day or flexible childcare.

5.8   In terms of capacity and quality, the above report also shows that most settings achieve good or outstanding Ofsted ratings, and take-up of the universal 15-hour entitlement is high. However, there is growing pressure for extended 30-hour entitlement provision, holiday clubs, and wraparound care, which is not uniformly available across the district.

5.9   Recruitment and retention of qualified staff remain a challenge, particularly for settings offering extended hours or in more rural locations.

Future requirement

5.10   Future need is shaped by a combination of demographic growth, national policy changes and housing allocations. ESCC's Excellence for All Vision 2024–2030 underlines the importance of planning early years and childcare provision to support equitable educational outcomes, particularly in areas of population growth, ensuring that all children have access to high-quality, flexible, and inclusive provision that meets local need.

Population and housing growth

5.11   The emerging Local Plan allocations will generate demand for new early years places. ESCC's pupil yield model (2015 update) remains the basis for calculating childcare contributions from new housing developments.

Policy expansion

5.12   Government reforms expanding funded entitlements for children under three (rolled out nationally 2024–2026) will significantly increase demand, particularly for nursery places for 9–23 month olds.

Demands trends

5.13   The East Sussex Childcare Sufficiency Duty Report 2025 shows growing demand for childcare that covers term-time, holiday periods, and wraparound care. The data indicate that many parents now require year-round childcare, not only during school terms, with large majorities expressing a need for holiday and extended-hours provision.

5.14   The report also highlights that even where overall early years sufficiency exists, there are geographic shortfalls, especially in provision for extended hours or flexible care (e.g., pick-ups, drop-offs outside standard hours, or holiday clubs).

5.15   Parent/carer surveys show that families experience difficulty finding holiday club places, after-school clubs, and full-day care, particularly in growth areas or rural wards.

5.16   Population growth in the 0–17 age group in East Sussex (including Rother) is projected to rise, increasing demand for childcare support. ESCC's Excellence for All Vision 2024–2030 highlights the need to plan infrastructure and provision in line with population growth to secure positive outcomes for all children and young people.

Financial & delivery requirements

5.17   Delivery will depend on a combination of developer contributions, public funding, and the PVI sector investment.

a.   **Developer contributions:**

   i.   S106 (site-specific) contributions, using ESCC's updated pupil yield formulas, to fund expansion or establishment of nursery places associated with new housing developments

b.   **Government funding streams:**

<ol type="i">
Dedicated Schools Grant (Early Years Block) allocated by DfE to ESCC to fund statutory entitlements
Capital grants made available by DfE for expansion linked to entitlement reforms
Targeted funding programmes (e.g. wraparound childcare expansion funding)

c.   Local and partnership funding:

<ol type="i">
PVI sector investment to deliver new or expanded nurseries
School-led nursery expansion, supported by ESCC capital funding where demand aligns with school capacity

5.18   The table below list the relevant items to early year and childcare infrastructure to support the Local Plan.

Ref	Item	Description
EDU001	Early years places additional capacity	Provision of additional early years places in Bexhill through the construction of a new nursery on land at Northeast Bexhill.
EDU002	Secondary school places additional capacity	Provision of secondary school places through the expansion of existing provision
EDU003	New primary school	New primary school provision at West Bexhill (potentially at site BX27 Beeches Farm and land north of Barnhorn Road)
EDU004	New primary school	New primary school provision at North Bexhill (potentially at site BX39 Land west of Ninfield Road)
EDU005	New primary school	New primary school at site BX45 Land at Worsham Farm (East), Bexhill
EDU002	Secondary school places additional capacity	Secondary places additional capacity: Provision of secondary school places through the expansion of existing provision

Primary, secondary and SEND schools

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

- Department for Education (DfE): national authority who provides policy, guidance, and capital funding for school building programmes (e.g., Basic Need allocations, Free Schools).

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC): the Local Education Authority (LEA) whose statutory duties include securing sufficient school places across primary and secondary phases, managing school organisation and maintenance, and upholding standards for all pupils, among others.

- Local schools in Rother: provide day-to-day education and engage with ESCC on capacity, admissions, and investment needs.

- Academy Trusts (SATs) and Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs): school operators in Rother who run academies and free schools, responsible for governance and strategic planning of provision. They are key partners in delivering additional capacity where required.

- Diocesan education authorities: bodies within religious denominations that oversee and support faith-based schools within their geographical region. They collaborate with ESCC on school place planning, admissions, and capital works. In Rother, these include Diocese of Chichester for Church of England schools, and Diocese of Arundel and Brighton for Catholic schools.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- School Organisation Plan (2024–2028) (ESCC, 2024)

- East Sussex County Council's Council Plan 2025-26 (ESCC, 2025)

- Excellence for All Vision 2024–2030 (ESCC, 2014)

- ESCC updated figures for calculating development contributions (ESCC, 2015)

5.19   Rother District's education provision is overseen by ESCC as the LEA, which has a statutory duty to secure sufficient school places for all children in the district. ESCC manages school organisation, admissions planning, and the maintenance of existing school infrastructure. The DfE provides national policy guidance and capital funding for school expansion and building programmes, including Basic Need allocations and Free Schools.

5.20   Local schools, including maintained schools, academies, and free schools, deliver day-to-day education and work closely with ESCC to plan capacity, respond to demographic growth, and implement capital projects. Academy Trusts (SATs) and Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) are responsible for governance, strategic planning, and delivery of additional school places where required. Diocesan education authorities (Diocese of Chichester for Church of England schools, and Diocese of Arundel and Brighton for Catholic schools) collaborate with ESCC on place planning, admissions, and capital works to ensure faith-based provision meets local demand.

5.21   The School Organisation Plan 2024–2028 identifies current capacity, projected pupil growth, and investment priorities, forming the primary evidence base for strategic planning in Rother. These objectives are aligned with ESCC's Excellence for All Vision 2024–2030 and Council Plan 2025–26, ensuring education infrastructure supports broader social, economic, and demographic objectives in the district.

Current provision

School planning areas

5.22   For the purposes of school place planning, ESCC divides the county into school planning areas. These are geographic units used for forecasting pupil numbers, assessing capacity and need, and identifying where place creation, expansion or reorganisation may be required. Planning areas group schools that serve a town or collection of villages (and in rural districts some single-school admission areas are grouped under headings such as Rural Rother). ESCC uses these areas—rather than individual school catchments—to determine where additional places are needed and to work with district councils on infrastructure (CIL / S106) linked to housing growth.

5.23   The ESCC School Organisation Plan identifies the following planning areas covering Rother district (Primary and Secondary planning areas shown where relevant):

a. Bexhill and surrounding area (primary + secondary planning area)

b. Rye and surrounding area (primary + secondary planning area)

c. Battle and surrounding area (primary + secondary planning area)

d. Rural Rother (grouping of rural primary schools plus Robertsbridge Community College as the local secondary).

5.24   Note: ESCC's School Organisation Plan is the primary source for up-to-date planning-area definitions, capacities and forecasts and should be referred to when finalising IDP infrastructure schedules.

5.25   It should be noted that while ESCC's **'Battle and surrounding area'** school planning area is administratively distinct from the **'Hastings area'**, there is significant functional overlap at their shared boundary. Housing growth within the northern and western fringes of Hastings urban area (e.g., in the Greater Hollington area) frequently generates demand for school places within the **'Battle and surrounding area'** school planning unit. Conversely, development within Rother District parishes that border the Hastings conurbation (e.g., Crowhurst and Westfield) creates reciprocal demand for places within the **'Hastings area'** school planning unit. Consequently, ESCC capacity assessments and infrastructure provision must account for the cumulative, cross-boundary impact of planned growth across both administrative areas. This requires coordinated forecasting and ongoing dialogue between the Local Planning Authorities and the Education Authority to ensure education infrastructure in both districts remains resilient to shifting demographic pressures.

Primary schools: provision and capacity

5.26   **Bexhill and surrounding area:** 10 primary schools. Current provision is sufficient overall, with capacity exceeding demand across the area. Most schools are operating within their limits, though a few are already full or close to full. Others, particularly the larger academies, are carrying significant spare capacity, which provides balance at the area level. This means Bexhill is well placed to meet current need, though the picture varies between individual schools.

5.27   **Battle and surrounding area:** 1 primary school. Current demand slightly exceeds the capacity of the single school serving this area (Battle and Langton CE Primary School).

Provision is therefore already under pressure, with little flexibility to accommodate fluctuations in pupil numbers.

5.28   **Rye and surrounding area:** 4 primary schools. Provision comfortably exceeds current demand, with all schools in this area operating well below capacity. This results in a significant level of surplus places, giving families choice and ensuring there is no pressure on provision at present.

5.29   **Rural Rother:** 18 primary schools. Capacity across the rural area remains well above current demand. While some individual schools are close to capacity, the majority are operating below their limits, often with a notable surplus of places. This ensures the area overall has sufficient provision, though the position can vary between local communities.

5.30   ESCC's latest School Organisation Plan (extracted below) highlights the uneven distribution of capacity across the district: urban Bexhill is expected to see sustained demand growth (forecast Numbers on Roll - NOR)[7], whereas rural and coastal planning areas may maintain or even reduce intake.

Figure 7: Primary school capacities and forecast numbers on roll (Source: ESCC School Organisation Plan 2024–2028)

School planning area	Capacity	NOR 2024/25	NOR 2025/26	NOR 2026/27	NOR 2027/28
Bexhill and surrounding area	3097	2882	2862	2887	2832
Battle and surrounding area	420	424	420	439	442
Rye and surrounding area	770	496	478	460	439
Rural Rother	2625	2226	2194	2168	2138

Secondary schools: provision and capacity

5.31   **Bexhill and surrounding area:** Current provision is sufficient overall, with the two secondary schools together offering more places than are needed at present. While St Richard's Catholic College is operating at or close to capacity, Bexhill High Academy has a notable level of spare capacity, ensuring that the area as a whole can accommodate current demand.

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[7] NOR: the number of pupils actually on the roll (registered) at a school. When shown as a forecast, it represents the projected number of pupils expected to be enrolled at the school in future years.

5.32 **Battle and surrounding area:** Provision in this area is broadly balanced, with the single secondary school operating close to capacity. There is little spare capacity, meaning the school has limited flexibility to absorb additional demand.

5.33 **Rye and surrounding area:** Current capacity comfortably exceeds demand, with Rye College serving this area operating well below its overall limit. This means there is sufficient provision, though the level of surplus places is relatively high.

5.34 **Rural Rother:** Provision in this area is sufficient, with the Robertsbridge Community College operating within capacity. The school is generally well balanced against current demand, with a small margin available to accommodate fluctuations in pupil numbers.

Figure 8: Secondary school capacities and forecast numbers on roll (Source: ESCC School Organisation Plan 2024–2028)

School planning area	Capacity	NOR 2024/25	NOR 2025/26	NOR 2026/27	NOR 2027/28
Bexhill and surrounding area - Bexhill High Academy & St Richard's Catholic College	2650	2484	2428	2408	2393
Battle and surrounding area - Claverham Community College	1150	1129	1126	1131	1134
Rye and surrounding area - Rye College	750	609	623	631	618
Rural Rother- Robertsbridge Community College	800	759	754	759	749

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

5.35 There is a range of educational support for children and young people with SEND in Rother, aligning with the broader county strategy outlined in the East Sussex SEND Strategy. This strategy emphasises early identification, inclusive education, and the development of specialist provisions to meet the diverse needs of SEND students.

5.36 Within Rother, the following state special schools and alternative provision are operational:

a. Glyne Gap School, Bexhill: An academy serving students aged 2–19, offering specialised education for children with severe and profound learning disabilities.

b.   St Mary's School, Horam: An academy catering to students aged 9–16, offering support for pupils with learning difficulties plus emotional, behavioural and social difficulties.

c.   The Workplace, Bexhill: An alternative provision academy for students aged 11–16.

Future requirement

5.37   Future demand will be driven by new housing allocations, demographic growth, and national policy changes (e.g., pupil entitlement changes, inclusion requirements).

Primary phase

5.38   Additional places will be required to meet projected demand from planned housing allocations.

Secondary phase

5.39   Expansion or new provision may be required to accommodate growth in Rother, with consideration of travel distances for pupils from surrounding villages.

Specialist provision

5.40   East Sussex County Council has identified a significant increase in the number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), with projections indicating a rise. This upward trend is particularly notable in conditions such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), and Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH).

Financial & delivery requirements

5.41   Delivery of new or expanded school infrastructure will rely on a combination of developer contributions, government funding, and partnership approaches:

a.   **Developer contributions:**

    i.   S106 (site-specific) contributions to provide land, fund new or expanded school provision directly associated with new housing developments

b. **Government funding streams:**

    i.   Basic Need allocations from DfE to fund new school places

    ii.   Free School programme funding where appropriate

    iii.   Central government's capital grants for building maintenance and expansion in line with national policy priorities

c. **Local and partnership funding:**

    i.   School-led expansions coordinated with ESCC and Academy Trusts

    ii.   Diocesan contributions to maintain faith-based school provision

5.42   The table below list the relevant items to education infrastructure to support the Local Plan.

Ref	Item	Description
EDU002	Primary school places additional capacity	Provision of additional primary places in Bexhill through the construction of a new primary school and nursery on land at Northeast Bexhill.

Further and higher education

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

▼ Department for Education (DfE): national authority that sets national policy for post-16 education and skills. DfE oversees funding allocations for further education (FE) providers via bodies such as the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

- Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA): funding and oversight body who provides revenue and capital funding for FE colleges, sixth forms, and training providers.

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC): local authority whose statutory duties include ensuring sufficient post-16 education and training provision. ESCC coordinates with schools, colleges, and providers to shape provision aligned with local economic and skills needs.

- Local FE colleges and sixth form providers: deliver vocational, academic, technical and higher-level qualifications. In Rother, the relevant providers include Bexhill College and East Sussex College Group (Lewes, Eastbourne, Hastings campuses). They serve Rother students with a broader FE/HE offer.

- Relevant universities: provide higher education opportunities accessible to Rother residents. They also collaborate with FE colleges, local employers, and councils on widening participation and skills pathways. Nearby universities, with reach into Rother include University of Sussex, University of Brighton, and University of Kent.

- Local Academy Trusts with sixth forms: operate sixth forms in secondary schools within Rother or adjacent areas, expanding post-16 choice.

- Sussex Learning Network and Skills & Employment East Sussex (SES): local skills advisory bodies whose forum bring together councils, colleges, universities, and employers to align education with labour market needs. They identify priority sectors and future workforce skills.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- School Organisation Plan (2024–2028) (ESCC, 2024)

- East Sussex County Council's Council Plan 2025-26 (ESCC, 25)

- Excellence for All Vision 2024–2030 (ESCC, 2014)

- East Sussex Post 16 transport policy statement 2024-25 (ESCC, 2024)

- ESCC updated figures for calculating development contributions (ESCC, 2015)

5.43   Rother District's post-16 education provision is shaped by national policy, local authority responsibilities, and cross-sector partnerships. DfE sets the framework for post-16

education and skills, with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) providing capital and revenue funding to FE colleges and sixth forms. ESCC has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient provision, coordinating with colleges, sixth forms, and local skills networks to align education with workforce needs. Local stakeholders, including FE colleges, academy sixth forms, and universities, work with ESCC and regional skills partnerships such as the Sussex Learning Network and Skills & Employment East Sussex (SES) to ensure post-16 learners have access to academic, vocational, and technical pathways. The focus is on supporting learner progression, addressing skills shortages, and providing equitable access to education across urban and rural areas.

Current provision

5.44   Rother District currently offers post-16 education through a combination of FE colleges, secondary school sixth forms, and regional higher education institutions. Bexhill College is the main FE provider within the district, offering academic, vocational, and technical courses. Additional provision is available via East Sussex College Group campuses in Hastings, Eastbourne, and Lewes, which serve Rother residents seeking broader course options. Several secondary schools operate sixth forms, expanding choice for local learners.

5.45   While no universities are located directly in Rother, residents access higher education at nearby institutions, including the University of Sussex, University of Brighton, and University of Kent. Post-16 transport provision, guided by the ESCC Post-16 Transport Policy, supports students, particularly from rural areas, to access these opportunities. Current provision delivers a wide range of pathways but may face pressure from future population growth and evolving skills needs.

Future requirement

5.46   Future demand for post-16 education in Rother will be influenced by population growth, housing developments, and evolving local skills needs. The Local Plan housing allocations in Bexhill, Rye, and surrounding areas are projected to increase the number of 16–19-year-olds, creating additional pressure on existing FE colleges, sixth forms, and transport networks. Growth in vocational and technical sectors, aligned with the district's economic development priorities, will require expanded provision of applied courses, apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities.

5.47   To ensure equitable access, rural areas may need enhanced transport solutions or flexible delivery models, including blended learning and satellite campuses. Furthermore, coordination with nearby universities is important to support smooth progression pathways into higher education, particularly for learners from underrepresented groups.

5.48   Future provision must balance capacity, accessibility, and the diversity of pathways to meet both educational aspirations and local workforce requirements.

Financial & delivery requirements

5.49   Delivery of future post-16 provision will rely on coordinated funding and partnership approaches:

a.   **Developer contributions:** Using ESCC pupil yield calculations, S106 and CIL contributions may support new or expanded sixth form provision or transport access improvements.

b.   **Government funding streams:** ESFA capital and revenue allocations for FE colleges and sixth forms, as well as funding for higher education progression initiatives.

c.   **Local partnership funding:** Collaboration between ESCC, FE colleges, universities, and employers to deliver vocational programmes aligned with local skills needs; potential employer contributions to work-based learning and apprenticeships.

d.   **Transport provision:** Capital and revenue funding to support post-16 transport, ensuring equitable access across urban and rural areas.

6. Health & social care

Primary care: GP surgeries, health centres

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

- NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB): responsible for planning, commissioning, and funding primary and community care services across Sussex, including Rother.

- Sussex Health and Care Assembly: The Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) for the Sussex Integrated Care System. It's a formal joint committee set up between NHS Sussex, Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council. Its membership includes representatives from universities, voluntary and community organisations, Healthwatch, further education, housing and local enterprise, across Sussex.

- NHS Property Services (NHSPS): a government-owned company that owns, manages, and develops a large portfolio of NHS properties, including primary care facilities. They are a key delivery partner for the physical estate required to support new and improved GP surgeries and health centres.

- East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board: statutory forum where political, clinical, professional and community leaders from across the care and health system come together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities. It has statutory powers and meets in public.

- East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC): reviews health services in East Sussex and provides scrutiny to NHS Sussex.

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC): provides public health, adult social care, and children's services, which are critical for health and wellbeing infrastructure.

- Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and GP Practices: frontline providers of primary care across Bexhill, Rye, Battle, and rural areas.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- Health and Wellbeing Background Paper (RDC, 2024)

- Improving Lives Together: Our ambition for a healthier future in Sussex (Sussex Integrated Care Strategy Five-Year Plan) (Sussex Health and Care Assembly, 2024)

- ▼ Improving Lives Together Ambition to reality: Our Shared Delivery Plan (Sussex Health and Care Assembly, 2023)

- ▼ East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Strategy Health Lives, Healthy People (2022 – 2027) (East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board)

- ▼ Delivering Improving Lives Together - New Models of Care (NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board, 2025)

- ▼ Primary Care Network (PCN) Data & GP Practice Profiles (JSNA)

- ▼ East Sussex Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2025 (PNA,2025)

- ▼ Rother district area profile (JSNA)

6.1　Health and social care infrastructure is a critical component of Rother District's capacity to support current and future population needs. Primary care services, particularly GP practices and health centres, form the frontline of the health system, providing essential medical assessment, treatment, and preventative care.

6.2　The planning and delivery of these services are coordinated through a multi-layered partnership framework, including:

a.　NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB) – operates at the countywide level, setting strategy, commissioning services, and allocating funding for primary, community, and acute care across Sussex.

b.　Local Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and GP practices. PCNs bring together local GP practices, typically serving populations of 30,000–50,000. They provide extended services, including chronic disease management, community nursing, and social prescribing, acting as the primary organisational unit for neighbourhood-level care. PCNs and their constituent GP practices are directly responsible for day-to-day service delivery across urban centres such as Bexhill, Rye, and Battle, as well as in surrounding rural communities.

c.　Integrated Community Teams (ICTs) are emerging, place-based teams that bring together GPs, community health professionals, adult social care, mental health services, and voluntary organisations. They are designed to work largely around

PCN footprints, coordinating holistic and preventative care close to people's homes.

6.3   Alongside these, ESCC and broader partnerships – including the Sussex Health and Care Assembly (an ICP), East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board – provide strategic oversight and ensure health and care priorities are integrated with wider social, housing, and wellbeing agendas.

Current provision

6.4   Primary care in Rother District is delivered through a mix of GP practices, branch surgeries, community hospitals, and wider health and care facilities, coordinated through Primary Care Networks (PCNs). The following subsections set out the current health needs, service organisation, infrastructure, and challenges shaping provision.

Health needs and service demand

6.5   Health outcomes and service demand in Rother are shaped by wider social determinants, including an ageing population, higher prevalence of long-term conditions, and inequalities in access. As such, existing primary care infrastructure is under pressure to respond not only to clinical needs but also to broader public health challenges such as prevention, mental health, and social prescribing.

Primary care network and GP provision

6.6   Rother District has a network of GP practices and health centres concentrated in Bexhill, Rye, and Battle, with additional provision in larger villages. These facilities form the backbone of local primary care, coordinated through Primary Care Networks (PCNs). PCNs provide extended-hours services, chronic disease management, community nursing, mental health support, and preventative care initiatives.

6.7   There are five PCN footprints covering parts of Rother, in each PCN there are usually approximately 30,000 to 50,000 patients:

a.   Rural Rother PCN – entirely within the district boundary.

b.   Bexhill, Hastings & St Leonards, and High Weald PCNs – spanning across other East Sussex districts/boroughs.

c. Weald PCN – covering areas in Kent as well as Rother.

Health and care infrastructure

6.8 According to JSNA, current health and care infrastructure across Rother includes:

a. 2 community hospitals

b. 10 GP practices and 12 Branch practices

c. 16 community pharmacies

d. 65 care homes (April 2024)

Pharmacies

6.9 As of April 2025, the East Sussex Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) indicates that Rother District has 16 community pharmacies, a decrease from 18 in 2022. This reduction reflects a broader trend observed across East Sussex, where the total number of community pharmacies has declined by 6% since the previous assessment.

6.10 Despite the decrease in numbers, the PNA notes that access to pharmacies in Rother remains generally good. Detailed analyses have shown that the majority of residents can reach a pharmacy within a reasonable distance, ensuring continued access to essential pharmaceutical services.

6.11 The PNA also highlights the importance of pharmacies in delivering public health services. Pharmacies in Rother are encouraged to adopt the 'Healthy Living Pharmacy' approach, which involves providing opportunistic health advice, supporting self-care, and delivering prevention services. This initiative aims to enhance the role of pharmacies in promoting health and well-being within the community.

6.12 Existing pharmacies are expected to continue meeting the needs of the growing population, if they are supported in expanding their services and maintaining accessibility

Urban–rural access disparities

6.13 More than half of Rother's population live in rural or fringe areas, where access to GP services can be more difficult due to travel distances, reliance on branch surgeries,

workforce pressures, and variability in service availability. Access tends to be better in the urban centres, where provision is denser and more comprehensive.

System integration and future-readiness

6.14 The Improving Lives Together (2024) Document (Sussex Integrated Care Strategy Five-Year Plan) sets ambitions for integrated care across primary, community, social care, mental health, and voluntary services, shifting provision closer to people's homes. In Rother, primary care practices are evolving into hubs for Integrated Community Teams, coordinating holistic and preventative care.

6.15 Progress towards this integration is underway. The Shared Delivery Plan (2023) highlights improvements in aligning primary care, community, and social care delivery through place-based models, aiming to embed Integrated Community Teams that deliver a "core offer" across services.

6.16 Workforce shortages are a persistent constraint. The Improving Lives Strategy identifies workforce growth, support, and digital capacity as priorities, recognising the impact of recruitment, skill mix, and retention on service availability.

6.17 Many existing GP premises remain serviceable but face limitations such as restricted space for multidisciplinary teams, aging infrastructure, and inadequate digital systems for remote consultations. These challenges are expected to intensify with population growth and service integration demands. The Health & Wellbeing Background Paper notes that improving accessibility, connectivity, and spatial planning is essential to supporting health and wellbeing in future.

Future requirement

6.18 The Improving Lives Together Strategy sets out system ambitions to expand integrated community models of care. To support this, new or upgraded premises will be needed to host multi-disciplinary teams, shared community services, and flexible spaces for outreach, home visits, telehealth, and group clinics. Existing GP premises may need expansion or replacement to enable this integrated model.

6.19 Inequalities in rural access must be addressed. Where face-to-face premises are not feasible, greater use of mobile clinics, satellite hubs, and enhanced telemedicine services will be critical to ensuring equitable access in remote areas.

6.20 The NHS Sussex ICB's paper titled Delivering Improving Lives Together - New Models of Care highlights the need for redesign of services across urgent, community, and primary care settings in response to population change and fiscal pressures, including the redesign of neighbourhood health through ICT footprints.

6.21 Future primary care in Rother must evolve from standalone GP services to locally integrated health and care centres, capable of supporting preventative, chronic disease and population health interventions, delivered through collaborative working, enhanced use of digital tools, and flexible infrastructure responsive to growth and demographic change.

6.22 Population growth under the Local Plan, particularly in Bexhill, Rye, and adjacent parishes, is expected to increase the number of primary care users. Engagement with NHS Sussex ICB indicates this would result in increased capacity in primary care services, staff, infrastructure and preventative and early intervention strategies.

Financial & delivery requirements

6.23 Delivery of new or expanded primary care facilities will require a combination of funding sources and partnership coordination:

a. **Developer contributions:**

   i. S106 (site-specific) contributions to provide land, fund new or expanded primary care provision directly associated with new housing developments

   ii. Strategic CIL receipts retained by RDC to support wider strategic infrastructure in identified growth areas

b. **Government funding streams:**

   i. Revenue and capital allocations from NHS Sussex ICB, ESCC, and relevant national primary care funding programmes to expand or enhance facilities and workforce capacity, and service delivery

c. **Local and partnership funding:**

i. Collaboration with PCNs, voluntary and community organisations, and other stakeholders to deliver integrated care hubs, co-located community facilities, and innovative models of service provision, ensuring accessibility and resilience across the district

6.24 The table below pulls out the key infrastructure provision to support the Local Plan. It is recognised that further feasibility / business case analysis is required in some measures.

Ref	Item	Description
HEA002	Medical Centre at Robertsbridge	New GP surgery to be built in Robertsbridge to provide an improved primary care service for residents who currently use Oldwood surgery.
HEA003	Medical Centre at Beeching Road, Bexhill	New surgery and health hub.

Secondary care: hospitals, diagnostic hubs

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

- Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC): government department responsible for overseeing the provision, funding, and strategic direction of healthcare services, including hospitals and specialist secondary care.

- NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB): responsible for planning, commissioning, and funding primary and community care services across Sussex, including Rother.

- Sussex Health and Care Assembly: The Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) for the Sussex Integrated Care System. It's a formal joint committee set up between NHS Sussex, Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council. Its membership includes representatives from universities,

- voluntary and community organisations, Healthwatch, further education, housing and local enterprise, across Sussex.

- East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board: statutory forum where political, clinical, professional and community leaders from across the care and health system come together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities. It has statutory powers and meets in public.

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC): provides public health, adult social care, and children's services, which are critical for health and wellbeing infrastructure.

- East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHNT): the main NHS Trust providing hospital and acute care for Rother residents. ESHNT runs Conquest Hospital (Hastings) and Eastbourne District General Hospital, and community hospitals in Bexhill and Rye.

- Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust (MTW): Provides acute hospital services for residents in the northern parishes of Rother District (e.g., Ticehurst, Etchingham, Hurst Green), primarily via the Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury.

- Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT): Provides community health services, including district nursing, rehabilitation, and inpatient beds at Hawkhurst Community Hospital. KCHFT is a key delivery partner for residents in the northern parishes of Rother, offering intermediate care closer to home and reducing the need for travel to coastal facilities.

- NHS Community Diagnostic Centres (CDCs): local facilities allowing access to diagnostic testing and reduce waiting times for patients. Part of NHS England's national infrastructure investment to ease pressure on hospitals.

- Healthwatch East Sussex: Independent health and care champion who represents patients' and residents' views on hospital and diagnostic services. They provide evidence and feedback to shape service planning and delivery.

- Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (VCS): support patient pathways, particularly for vulnerable groups. VCS help reduce hospital pressures through community health support and aftercare.

- Private healthcare providers operating in Rother (e.g., Spire, Nuffield, independent clinics): complementary role in delivering elective and diagnostic services.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- ▼ Health and Wellbeing Background Paper (RDC, 2024)

- ▼ Improving Lives Together: Our ambition for a healthier future in Sussex (Sussex Integrated Care Strategy Five-Year Plan) (Sussex Health and Care Assembly, 2024)

- ▼ Improving Lives Together Ambition to reality: Our Shared Delivery Plan (Sussex Health and Care Assembly, 2023)

- ▼ Improving Lives Together: Our Plan for Our Population: A summary of our Shared Delivery Plan (Sussex Health and Care Assembly, 2023)

- ▼ Improving Lives Together Shared Delivery Plan Year Two (Sussex Health and Care Assembly, 2024)

- ▼ Estates and Infrastructure Strategy (Sussex Health and Care Assembly, 2024)

- ▼ Building for our Future Programme (ESHNT, 2022)

- ▼ Annual Reports & Quality Accounts 2023-24 (ESHNT, 2023)

- ▼ East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Strategy: Health Lives, Healthy People (2022 – 2027) (East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board)

- ▼ Rother district area profile (JSNA, 2025)

6.25 Secondary care services form a critical component of Rother District's health and social care infrastructure. These services provide acute medical care, specialist treatments, elective procedures, and diagnostic testing that cannot be delivered in primary care settings. The planning and delivery of secondary care is coordinated through a multi-layered framework (as discussed in the Primary Care section above).

Current provision

Hospital services and capacity

6.26 Rother District's secondary needs are met through a combination of acute hospitals and local community facilities. Due to the geography of the district, patient flows are split between providers in East Sussex and Kent:

a. **Conquest Hospital in Hastings:** Operated by ESHNT, this is the primary acute facility for many Rother residents (Bexhill, Battle, Rye). It provides emergency (A&E), inpatient, outpatient, and specialist services.

b. **Eastbourne District General Hospital:** Also operated by ESHNT, offering a full range of district general hospital services, including emergency care, surgery, and specialist services.

c. **Tunbridge Wells Hospital (Pembury):** Operated by MTW. This facility serves residents in the northern rural parishes of the district who are geographically closer to Pembury than Hastings.

6.27 According to the ESHNT Building for Our Future Programme (2022) and the ESHNT Annual Reports & Quality Accounts (2023-24), Conquest Hospital has approximately 500 inpatient beds, supported by multiple outpatient clinics, surgical theatres, and emergency care facilities. Eastbourne District General Hospital has a similar scale of inpatient and outpatient capacity, providing complementary elective and specialist services for Rother residents.

6.28 In addition to acute sites, the district is served by Community Hospitals which provide outpatient clinics, rehabilitation, and intermediate care, reducing the need for travel to acute sites:

a. **Bexhill Hospital (Irvine Unit)**: Hosting outpatient services, a range of clinics, and the new Community Diagnostic Centre.

b. **Rye, Winchelsea and District Memorial Hospital**: Providing intermediate care beds, outpatient clinics, and a minor injuries unit (MIU).

c. **Hawkhurst Community Hospital (Kent):** Operated by Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust. Located just across the northern district boundary, this facility provides inpatient rehabilitation beds and clinics, serving residents in the northern rural parishes (e.g., Hurst Green, Bodiam) who are geographically closer to Hawkhurst than coastal facilities.

Diagnostic and elective care capacity

6.29   A significantly expanded Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC) has been established at Bexhill Hospital. This acts as a diagnostic hub for the district, offering X-ray, MRI, CT, and ultrasound services to reduce waiting times and separate elective diagnostics from acute emergency flows at the Conquest Hospital.

6.30   Private providers, including Spire and Nuffield clinics, deliver elective procedures and diagnostic services, offering complementary capacity for patients. While these providers increase choice and reduce waiting times, their capacity is generally smaller and targeted towards planned procedures rather than emergency care

Capacity pressures

6.31   Current secondary care infrastructure faces capacity pressures, particularly for emergency care, elective surgeries, and outpatient services. Factors contributing to these pressures include population growth, an ageing demographic, rising prevalence of long-term conditions, and increasing complexity of care needs.

6.32   The Improving Lives Together: Five-Year Plan (2024) highlights that hospitals and diagnostic services must be modernised, expanded, and better integrated with community and primary care to meet current and future demand.

Future requirement

6.33   Planned growth in the Local Plan is expected to add additional demand on secondary care services; this could include increased hospital admissions, outpatient appointments, and diagnostic testing. The Council understands the importance of careful planning for future hospital infrastructure, workforce expansion, and community-based diagnostic facilities to ensure timely and effective care delivery, considering the ageing population and rising prevalence of long-term conditions. The Council will continue dialogue with its partner to identify any additional pressure on bed occupancy, emergency department capacity, and staffing levels.

Financial & delivery requirements

6.34   Delivery of any new or expanded secondary care facilities will require a combination of funding sources and partnership coordination:

a.   **Developer contributions:**

i.   S106 (site-specific) contributions to provide land, fund new or expanded secondary care provision directly associated with new housing developments (however, planning obligations towards secondary healthcare are not regularly sought, as this type of infrastructure typically receive funding from the Department of Health and Social Care)

ii.   Strategic CIL receipts retained by RDC to support wider strategic infrastructure in identified growth areas

b.   **Government funding streams:**

i.   Central government capital allocations for hospital expansion, redevelopment, or modernisation under national healthcare programmes (e.g., NHS Capital Funding Programmes)

ii.   Targeted government grants to support innovative service delivery, including diagnostic hubs, elective care expansion, or integrated care facilities aligned with the Improving Lives Together: Five-Year Plan

c.   **Local and partnership funding:**

i.   Local and partnership funding such as joint funding arrangements with neighbouring authorities, and collaboration with private healthcare providers will support the delivery of capital improvements, co-located facilities, and shared diagnostic services, ensuring coordinated investment in local secondary care infrastructure

6.35   Delivery of these facilities will require careful phasing alongside planned housing and population growth. Early engagement with developers, ESHNT, and other stakeholders will be necessary to:

a.   Identify appropriate sites for new or expanded secondary care provision

b.   Align funding contributions with infrastructure needs

c.   Ensure timely delivery to match the anticipated increase in demand from residential development

d.   Integrate secondary care expansion with primary care, community health, and diagnostic service networks to optimise patient pathways

6.36   The overall objective is to ensure that future secondary care provision is adequately funded, strategically planned, and delivered in a coordinated manner to meet both current and projected healthcare needs of Rother District residents.

6.37   Currently, no secondary care infrastructure has been identified as a result of planned growth in the Local Plan.

Community care: mental health, social care, care homes

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

▼ Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC): sets national policy, legislation, and funding frameworks for adult social care, mental health, and integration.

▼ NHS England: oversees national mental health priorities (e.g. Community Mental Health Transformation Programme) and workforce planning.

▼ NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB): responsible for planning, commissioning, and funding primary and community care services across Sussex, including Rother.

▼ Sussex Health and Care Assembly: The Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) for the Sussex Integrated Care System. It's a formal joint committee set up between NHS Sussex, Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council. Its membership includes representatives from universities,

voluntary and community organisations, Healthwatch, further education, housing and local enterprise, across Sussex.

- Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust: the specialised NHS organisation that provides mental health, learning disability, and neurodevelopmental services to people living in South East England. They offer care to individuals of all ages, including children, young people, adults, and older adults, across various settings like homes, clinics, hospitals, and secure units.

- East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board: statutory forum where political, clinical, professional and community leaders from across the care and health system come together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities. It has statutory powers and meets in public.

- Care Quality Commission (CQC): regulates, inspects, and rates all care providers to ensure quality and safety of services across care homes, domiciliary care, and community mental health support.

- Healthwatch East Sussex: local consumer champion for health and social care, gathering resident feedback on local services and holding providers accountable.

- Independent and voluntary sector care providers: operate residential care homes, nursing homes, and domiciliary (home-based) care services commissioned by ESCC or privately purchased by individuals.

- Rother Voluntary Action (RVA) and local charities (e.g. Age UK East Sussex, Mind in Sussex, Alzheimer's Society): provide community-based support, befriending, carer support, mental health drop-ins, and wellbeing programmes that reduce demand on statutory services.

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC): has statutory responsibility for social care services, including support for older people, people with disabilities, safeguarding, and commissioning care home placements. Also delivers community-based support, reablement, and prevention services.

- Rother District Council (RDC): while not a direct provider of social care, RDC contributes through housing and planning policy, enabling suitable accommodation for vulnerable groups, and supporting local community wellbeing initiatives.

- Neighbourhood Mental Health Team in Rother: established by NHS Sussex, the team bring together community NHS, voluntary sector, and primary care mental health services to help people access local information and more joined-up mental health support.

6.38   Community care in Rother District is provided by a wide range of services that support the health, wellbeing, and social care needs of residents. This includes mental health support, adult social care, care home provision, domiciliary (home-based) care, and preventative community services. These services are delivered through a combination of statutory, voluntary, and independent sector organisations.

Current provision

6.39   Rother District currently benefits from a mixed model of community care provision, but it also faces increasing demand for community care services due to population growth and an ageing demographic, resulting in higher pressure on care home placements and home-based support. The prevalence of long-term conditions and mental health needs is rising, placing additional strain on existing services. Recruitment and retention challenges across social care and community health sectors further limit the capacity to meet demand. There is also a shortage of specialist care home provision for residents with complex or high-dependency needs, while voluntary and community organisations are under pressure to deliver preventative and wellbeing services to reduce reliance on statutory care.

Mental health services

6.40   Mental health services are delivered locally by the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust via the Neighbourhood Mental Health Team, community clinics, and voluntary

sector support. Services include early intervention, crisis support, counselling, and specialist therapy.

6.41   A significant new facility, Combe Valley Hospital, is currently under construction in Bexhill (Mount View Street). Due to open in 2025/26, this 54-bed hospital will replace outdated inpatient services currently located at Eastbourne District General Hospital, providing modern, purpose-built accommodation for adults and older people with mental health needs.

Adult social care services

6.42   Rother has an older population compared to much of East Sussex, with about a third of residents aged 65 and over (2021 Census). This demographic drives a growing need for adult social care services for older and disabled people, including support to live independently at home and access to long-term care.

6.43   Adult social care in Rother includes home care services, support plans, and housing with care, such as sheltered and extra-care housing.

6.44   ESCC provides statutory adult social care, reablement, safeguarding, and home support. Services are commissioned through a combination of in-house teams and independent providers. ESCC has prepared the 'What Matters to You' action plan: 2025/26 which outlines the six key priorities and explains how ESCC will take those priorities forward in planning for the future of adult social care in East Sussex.

6.45   In response to these demands, Rother District Council has also implemented various initiatives to support independent living. The Housing Financial Assistance Policy 2021–2025 outlines measures to offer flexible assistance, including Disabled Facilities Grants, aimed at enabling residents to remain in their homes for as long as possible. Planning for both home-based and residential care services is essential to ensure the district can meet the needs of its aging population over the coming decades.

Care homes

6.46   Rother District is home to approximately 65 registered care homes (as of 2024), including both residential and nursing facilities, which provide essential support for older adults and individuals with disabilities. These homes are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to ensure they meet national standards of care. The majority of

these facilities are located in towns such as Bexhill, Rye, and Battle, with a concentration in Bexhill-on-Sea.

6.47   While current capacity figures suggest reasonable provision, the nature of the stock is a key challenge. Many existing homes are in converted older properties that may not meet modern standards for complex nursing or dementia care (e.g., lack of en-suite facilities or level access). Consequently, some older homes may exit the market, creating a need for new, purpose-built facilities even if total bed numbers appear sufficient.

Voluntary and community services

6.48   Organisations such as RVA, Age UK East Sussex, Mind in Sussex, and the Alzheimer's Society provide supplementary support, befriending, and wellbeing initiatives that reduce demand on statutory services.

Future requirement

6.49   The Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) Update 2024, which was prepared to support Hastings and Rother's emerging Local Plans, identifies a need for **559** Retirement Living or Sheltered Housing in Rother by 2043 to meet the projected demand.

6.50   The HEDNA 2024 also projects a need between **-137** to **961** additional care beds (including both nursing and residential care beds) in Rother by 2043 to accommodate growing demand. However, given the qualitative issues identified above, the effective need is likely towards the higher end of this range to account for the replacement of registered beds in facilities that are no longer fit for purpose.

Financial & delivery requirements

6.51   Delivery of community care infrastructure will require a combination of funding sources and coordinated planning:

a.   **Developer contributions:**

   i.   S106 (site-specific) obligations to deliver care home provision or facilities directly associated with new housing developments

  ii. Strategic CIL receipts retained by RDC to support wider social care and community health infrastructure in growth areas, including voluntary sector capacity-building

b. **Government funding streams:**

  i. Capital allocations through DHSC and NHS England to expand or modernise care homes, community mental health facilities, and social care premises

  ii. Targeted grants for workforce development, integration initiatives, and preventative care programmes

c. **Local and partnership funding**

6.52 Delivery will require early engagement with developers, ESCC, RDC, NHS Sussex, and voluntary providers to ensure infrastructure is provided in a timely and coordinated manner, aligned with planned growth and local population needs.

7. Green & blue infrastructure, & flood defence

Parks and open space

Context and overview

> **Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:**

- ▼ Natural England (NE): government's advisor for the natural environment in England. NE supports the creation and development of accessible local greenspace.

- ▼ Sport England: government body responsible for growing and developing grassroots sport and getting more people active across England. They also provide funding and strategic guidance for sport and recreation facilities.

- ▼ Fields in Trust: a charity that legally protects parks and green spaces for communities to enjoy in perpetuity.

- ▼ East Sussex County Council (ESCC): has a role in wider green infrastructure planning and rights of way (e.g. public footpaths and bridleways linking open spaces). ESCC works with RDC on accessibility, transport links, and children's play facilities associated with schools.

- ▼ Rother District Council (RDC): responsible for setting local planning policy, open space standards, and securing developer contributions for new or improved open space. RDC has a direct responsibility for maintaining some parks, open spaces, and playing fields across the district. The Parks & Open Spaces Team has a role in managing day to day maintenance and improvement of some facilities.

- ▼ Active Sussex (County Sports Partnership): supports participation in sport and physical activity, works with RDC and clubs to enhance playing fields and open spaces.

- ▼ Friends of Parks Groups / Community Trusts (e.g. Friends of Egerton Park, Rye Greenway groups): these volunteer-led groups support maintenance, events, and fundraising.

- ▼ Town & Parish Councils: key community delivery partners for grassroots projects and improvements.

- ▼ Local sports clubs and associations: often lease or manage pitches and facilities, contribute to investment and maintenance.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- ▼ Rother Climate Strategy 2030 (RDC, 2024)

- ▼ Rother Environment Strategy 2020-2030 (RDC, 2020)

7.1 Rother District's green and blue infrastructure (GBI) network forms an essential component of its natural capital, contributing to biodiversity, recreation, climate resilience, and community wellbeing. The district's geography — stretching from the High Weald's wooded valleys to the coastal plains and marshes — supports a rich mosaic of habitats and landscapes. Together, these assets enhance environmental quality and underpin the district's attractiveness and health outcomes.

7.2 Strategic guidance from Natural England, Fields in Trust, and ESCC provide support on landscape management, accessibility, and green infrastructure connectivity across the wider network. Guidance can be found via:

a. Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework page

b. Fields in Trust Standards page

c. Sussex Nature Recovery Strategy page

7.3 At the local level, the Rother Environment Strategy 2020–2030 and Rother Climate Strategy 2030 emphasise the importance of protecting and enhancing these assets as part of the district's approach to tackling climate change, improving air quality, and supporting biodiversity net gain. Green infrastructure also underpins flood mitigation, sustainable drainage (SuDS), and urban cooling—key elements in building climate resilience.

7.4 The Council manages a range of parks, gardens, and amenity spaces, working with Town and Parish Councils, community groups, and volunteers to maintain and enhance these assets.

Current provision

7.5   The district has a broad portfolio of open spaces, including formal parks (such as Egerton Park in Bexhill), recreation grounds, local amenity greens, allotments, coastal promenades, nature reserves, and the Combe Valley Countryside Park. Rother's settlements are generally well-served by accessible green space.

7.6   The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (PMP, 2006) and Green Infrastructure Study (RDC, 2011) remain the principal evidence base for open space planning, identifying generally good overall provision but highlighting deficiencies in some rural and peripheral areas. Key challenges identified include limited accessibility to natural greenspaces in certain settlements, ageing infrastructure in some parks, and under-provision of smaller amenity areas within new housing developments.

7.7   Blue infrastructure—comprising rivers, streams, wetlands, and the coastal margin—forms a critical component of Rother's green network. Assets such as the River Rother, Combe Haven Valley, and Pevensey Levels provide ecological connectivity, flood storage capacity, and opportunities for habitat restoration and nature-based recreation. These assets play an important part in managing flood risk and coastal resilience.

Parks and amenity green spaces

7.8   Formal parks such as Egerton Park (Bexhill) and Sidley Recreation Ground provide high-quality recreational and amenity functions within urban areas. Smaller neighbourhood greens and landscaped open spaces are distributed across settlements, though the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (PMP, 2006) and Green Infrastructure Study (2011) identified localised deficiencies in accessible urban green space, particularly in peripheral or rural settlements.

Natural and semi-natural greenspaces

7.9   Much of Rother's landscape is characterised by the High Weald NL, ancient woodlands, wetlands, and river corridors. Designated sites, including Combe Valley Countryside Park and Pevensey Levels SSSI/Ramsar site, provide regionally important biodiversity and ecosystem services. Smaller Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), such as Rye Harbour Nature Reserve and Gillham Wood, are managed by local authorities and conservation trusts.

Coastal and blue infrastructure

7.10   The district's coastline includes beaches, dunes, and coastal grazing marshes at Camber and Fairlight, offering flood storage, recreation, and wildlife habitat. The River Rother, River Brede, and Combe Haven act as strategic blue corridors, forming part of natural flood management systems and connecting inland habitats to the coast. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) have been introduced in newer developments to manage surface water runoff and enhance ecological value, though opportunities remain to retrofit SuDS and enhance riparian corridors in existing urban areas.

Green corridors and public rights of way (PROW)

7.11   Rother's public rights of way (managed by ESCC) and long-distance trails — including the 1066 Country Walk and Saxon Shore Way — form key green corridors linking settlements and open spaces. The Rother Green Infrastructure Study (2011) highlights the importance of these routes for ecological connectivity, recreation, and sustainable transport, recommending improved surfacing, accessibility, and signage.

Future requirement

7.12   As the district grows, there will be increasing demand for accessible, high-quality open space and connected green corridors to serve new and existing communities. The Council's strategic objectives, as set out in the Rother Climate Strategy 2030, place strong emphasis on enhancing the quality, accessibility, and multifunctionality of the green infrastructure network.

7.13   Future demand for open space and playing fields will increase alongside planned housing and population growth, particularly in Bexhill, Battle, and Rye.

7.14   A key project for meeting demand is the enhancement of Combe Valley Countryside Park, a 600-hectare area providing countryside access, recreational opportunities, and proactive wildlife habitat management. The Park was jointly established by RDC, HBC, and ESCC. In 2015, a Community Interest Company (CIC) was formed with a board comprising representatives from the three councils, local businesses, landowners, and stakeholders, including the Friends of Combe Valley Foundation. Park enhancements are delivered as a multi-year programme, shaped by community needs, dependent on external funding, and approved by the CIC Board, of which RDC is a member.

Financial & delivery requirements

7.15 Delivery of new and improved green and blue infrastructure will rely on a combination of developer contributions, public sector investment, and community-led projects:

    a. **Developer contributions:**

        i. S106 (site-specific) obligations to deliver site-specific parks and open space provision and/or facilities directly associated with new developments

        ii. Strategic CIL receipts retained by RDC to support wider provision

    b. **External funding sources**—including Sport England, Fields in Trust, DEFRA's Green Infrastructure Framework, and National Lottery or Active Sussex programmes—to support facility upgrades and accessibility improvements

7.16 Town and Parish Councils, community trusts, and "Friends of Parks" groups will continue to play an important role in maintenance, small-scale improvements, and local stewardship

7.17 The Council will continue to work with ESCC, Sport England, and local delivery partners to ensure that future provision supports both growth and environmental objectives, enhancing community wellbeing, biodiversity, and climate resilience across the district.

7.18 The below table lists relevant parks and open spaces infrastructure to support the Local Plan:

Ref	Item	Description
GRE001	Combe Valley Countryside Park enhancements	Green infrastructure and open space enhancements in line with the Combe Valley Countryside Park CIC strategy to make the park a key destination for people, health and nature interventions. The park is situated within the key strategic gap between Bexhill and Hastings. Delivery is multi-year project, responsive to community needs and external funding opportunities, and approved by CIC Board (of which RDC is a company member of).
GRE003	Manor Gardens	Refurbishment of the walled garden.

| GRE004 | Broad Oak Park | Scope to improve access, develop the site for play, education, and wildlife. |
| GRE005 | Collington Wood | Update play facilitates to cater for children. |

Biodiversity and nature conservation

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

- Natural England (NE): non-departmental public body that provides guidance and funding for biodiversity enhancement and nature conservation.

- Environment Agency (EA): non-departmental public body that manages watercourses, wetlands, and floodplains with ecological value. EA supports habitat creation and protection within river corridors.

- Marine Management Organisation (MMO): responsible for licensing, regulating, and planning marine activities in the seas around England, ensuring sustainable development in coastal and marine areas.

- Historic England (HE): non-departmental public body whose role is to advise the government and protect England's historic environment. Where heritage landscapes intersect with ecological conservation, HE ensures historic landscapes are managed in ways compatible with biodiversity objectives.

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC): provides strategic guidance on biodiversity, ecological networks, and habitat connectivity. ESCC supports local initiatives through environmental services, ecological advice, and rights of way management.

- Rother District Council (RDC): the Parks & Open Spaces Team manages some local nature reserves, biodiversity projects, and green infrastructure networks. The Planning department is responsible for local planning policies on biodiversity, protecting designated sites, and securing mitigation or enhancement through planning obligations.

- ▼ Town and Parish Councils: own and manage various local green spaces, village greens, and pocket parks, playing a key role in delivering biodiversity improvements at the neighbourhood level.

- ▼ Sussex Wildlife Trust: manages nature reserves, provides biodiversity advice, and delivers community engagement projects.

- ▼ Sussex Local Nature Partnership: a voluntary partnership of over 30 organisations covering the whole of Sussex. Local Nature Partnerships are specific consultation bodies in plan-making.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- ▼ Draft East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy (ESCC, 2025)

- ▼ South Inshore and Offshore Marine Plan (MMO, 2018)

- ▼ Rother Climate Strategy 2030 (RDC, 2024)

- ▼ Rother Environment Strategy 2020-2030 (RDC, 2020)

- ▼ Rother Biodiversity Audit 2023 (RDC, 2023)

- ▼ A Green Infrastructure Study (RDC, 2011)

- ▼ A revision of the Ancient Woodland Inventory for Rother district, East Sussex (Weald and Downs Ancient Woodland Survey, 2010)

7.19   Rother District is characterised by a rich and diverse natural environment, encompassing ancient woodlands, river valleys, wetlands, grasslands, and an extensive coastline. These habitats form part of the wider ecological network, contributing to national biodiversity and climate resilience. The district contains parts of the High Weald National Landscape and several nationally and internationally designated sites, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), a Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar wetlands, and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs).

7.20   The policy framework for biodiversity conservation is underpinned by the Environment Act 2021, which mandates Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and introduces Local Nature Recovery Strategies LNRSs as the main delivery mechanism for ecological enhancement.

The forthcoming Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy, coordinated by ESCC and the Sussex Local Nature Partnership, will identify priority habitats and species and set a spatial strategy for recovery.

7.21 Key local delivery partners include Natural England, the Environment Agency, Sussex Wildlife Trust, and community conservation groups, who collectively support habitat restoration, species protection, and public engagement. The Rother Environment Strategy 2020–2030 and Rother Climate Strategy 2030 commit the Council to protecting biodiversity, enhancing green corridors, and integrating nature-based solutions into local planning and climate adaptation measures.

Current provision

7.22 Rother's biodiversity resource is extensive and varied. The district has an exceptionally diverse and high-value natural environment, reflected in a range of international, national, and local biodiversity designations. These designations form a structured hierarchy of protection:

a. **International designations**, such as Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), safeguarded habitats and species of global importance

b. **National designations**, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs), protect areas of significant ecological or geological interest

c. **Local designations**, such as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), recognise and conserve areas of local ecological value and community importance. Together, these designations create an interconnected ecological network that underpins Rother's natural capital and green infrastructure

Designated sites

7.23 The district contains numerous nationally and internationally designated sites, including Rye Harbour, Pevensey Levels, Combe Haven Valley, and Darwell Wood SSSIs — representing some of the most ecologically valuable landscapes in the South East. Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, jointly designated as part of the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SPA and Ramsar Site, is managed by the Sussex Wildlife Trust and supports over

4,523 recorded species, including 736 species of conservation concern (Source: Sussex Wildlife Trust, accessed 2025). The Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site provide critical habitat for wetland invertebrates, waders, and aquatic vegetation of international significance.

Woodlands

7.24   The Weald and Downs Ancient Woodland Survey (2010) stated that approximately 15.54% of Rother's total land area is covered by ancient woodland—the highest proportion in East Sussex. These woodlands, largely within the High Weald NL, form a key element of the district's ecological network but face pressures from development, disturbance, and invasive species.

Wetlands and rivers

7.25   The River Rother, River Brede, and Combe Haven catchments provide important blue corridors supporting wetland habitats, otters, and water voles. The Environment Agency and Natural England coordinate habitat management and floodplain restoration along these corridors, integrating biodiversity enhancement with flood risk reduction.

Coastal and marine habitats

7.26   Rother's coastline is extensive, comprising two distinct stretches separated by the Borough of Hastings:

a.   **The western section** extends from Normans Bay to West St Leonards (including Bexhill)

b.   **The eastern section** stretches from Fairlight to Camber.

7.27   These areas are home to diverse marine and intertidal habitats—including mudflats, saltmarsh, shingle, and grazing marsh. This ecological value is recognised through international designations:

a.   **The western coastline** interacts with the Pevensey Levels (SAC, SSSI and Ramsar site),

b.   **The eastern coastline** is covered by the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay designations (SPA, SAC, and Ramsar site).

7.28   The latter designation adjoins the majority of the district's total coastal frontage, highlighting the international importance of the interface between terrestrial and marine environments. Together, these sites support critical biodiversity (including migratory birds) and provide resilience against sea-level rise.

Local Nature Reserves and Community Sites

7.29   At the local level, Rother District Council manages several LNRs, including Gillham Wood, Beech Farm Field, and Church Wood. These sites provide accessible opportunities for education, recreation, and wildlife conservation. Community groups and volunteers, such as the Friends of Gillham Wood and Bexhill Environmental Group, play an active role in site maintenance, habitat management, and local biodiversity monitoring, contributing significantly to the district's wider ecological network.

Future requirement

7.30   Future priorities for biodiversity in Rother focus on habitat connectivity, climate resilience, and nature recovery. The Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (forthcoming) will provide the primary framework for identifying and targeting areas for restoration, including degraded woodland, floodplains, and grassland corridors. It will guide the delivery of mandatory BNG through the planning process, ensuring that new developments contribute positively to the district's ecological network.

7.31   No specific new land allocations for biodiversity have been identified at this stage; however, RDC will work closely with ESCC, Natural England, Sussex Wildlife Trust and relevant developers and land owners through the Local Plan and IDP process to ensure that ecological networks are safeguarded and enhanced in tandem with development.

Financial & delivery requirements

7.32   The delivery of biodiversity and nature conservation objectives will depend on a mix of regulatory, partnership, and funding mechanisms:

   a.   **Developer obligations:** Delivery of BNG through the planning system will be secured via on-site provision, off-site habitat banks, or contributions to strategic enhancement areas identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

b.   **External funding sources:** such as DEFRA's Nature for Climate Fund, Local Nature Recovery Fund

c.   **Partnership delivery:** Ongoing collaboration with the Sussex Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Natural England, and Sussex Local Nature Partnership will enable co-delivery of restoration projects and community engagement initiatives

7.33   Investment in biodiversity will deliver multiple benefits across Rother — supporting ecosystem services, improving resilience to climate change, and enhancing the quality of life for residents. Future monitoring and delivery will be coordinated through the Local Plan, Infrastructure Delivery Plan updates, planning application process, ensuring ongoing alignment with national environmental policy and local priorities.

7.34   The below table lists relevant biodiversity and nature conservation infrastructure in the IDP Part B to support the Local Plan:

Ref	Item	Description
GRE006	Rye Harbour Farm Habitat Creation Programme	Benefits to biodiversity and habitats with improved access to greenspace and associated informal recreation. Will be part of the Rye Nature Reserve.
GRE009	District-wide green and blue infrastructure enhancements	To support local nature recovery, biodiversity and ecological resilience. (This excludes BNG responsibilities of developers).

Allotments

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

▼ Town and Parish Councils: The statutory allotment authorities within the district (including Bexhill-on-Sea, Battle, and Rye). They are responsible for the provision, management, and maintenance of allotment sites and for maintaining waiting lists. They are listed on RDC's website.

- ▼ Allotment Associations and Site Committees: Local voluntary groups that often manage the day-to-day operations of specific sites (e.g., lettings, minor maintenance) on behalf of the Town/Parish Council or as independent bodies.

- ▼ Rother District Council (RDC): responsible for strategic planning policy. RDC ensures new developments contribute to allotment provision where necessary (e.g., through CIL or S106) and protects existing open spaces through the Local Plan.

- ▼ East Sussex County Council (ESCC): may support initiatives that integrate allotments into wider green infrastructure strategies.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- ▼ A Green Infrastructure Study (RDC, 2011)

- ▼ RDC Allotment Service Data (RDC, 2016)

- ▼ Rother Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study – Section 11: Allotments and Community Gardens Amended Sept 2009 (RDC, 2009)

7.35   Allotments serve multiple purposes, including local food production, community engagement, physical and mental wellbeing, and biodiversity benefits.

7.36   Allotments in Rother are managed under the statutory framework set out in the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 and subsequent legislation. Following the creation of Bexhill Town Council, the statutory duty to provide allotments where there is demand rests with the **Town and Parish Councils**. Day-to-day management is often delegated to allotment associations and site committees, who oversee individual sites, allocate plots, and manage maintenance.

7.37   It should be noted that the Memorandum by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (AL 23), dated 1998, which outlines the legislative framework for allotments in England, provides clarification that while allotment authorities are legally obligated to provide sufficient allotments where there is demand, the legislation does not prescribe specific minimum standards or the extent of provision. It emphasises that local authorities have discretion in determining the level of allotment provision based on local needs and priorities.

Current provision

7.38   There are approximately 13 major allotment sites across the district meeting demand in both urban and rural areas. Sites vary in size and capacity, typically offering between 1 and 55 plots each. Following the transfer of assets, many sites in Bexhill are now under the ownership of Bexhill-on-Sea Town Council, though some remain privately managed or run by associations. Key sites, listed on RDC's website, include:

(1).   Sidley House, Turkey Road, Bexhill – managed by Bexhill-on-Sea Town Council

(2).   Preston Road, Watermill Lane, Bexhill – managed by Bexhill Allotment and Small Holders Association

(3).   Ingrams Avenue, Crowhurst Lane, Bexhill – managed by Ingrams Allotments

(4).   Barrack Hall Park, Belle Hill, Bexhill – managed by Barrack Hall Allotment Committee

(5).   Broad Oak Park, Bexhill – managed by Site Association

(6).   Collington Wood, Bexhill – managed by Site Association

(7).   Watermill Lane, Bexhill – managed by the Bexhill Allotments and Smallholders Association

(8).   Birchen Field, Ninfield Road, Bexhill – managed by the Bexhill Allotments and Smallholders Association

(9).   Summerhill – managed by Site Association

(10). Preston Road, Norfolk Close – managed by Bexhill-on-Sea Town Council

(11). Watch Oak, Battle allotments – managed by Battle Town Council

(12). Tillingham (Love Lane), Rye – managed by Rye Town Council

(13). South Undercliff, Rye – managed by Rye Town Council

Future requirement

7.39   Demand for allotments is expected to grow with population increases and interest in local food production, sustainability, and community-led green space. Town and Parish Councils will continue to monitor demand, working with associations to identify opportunities for additional plots, expansion of existing sites, or the creation of new sites within accessible locations.

7.40   The Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study (2009) recommended a rural local standard of 0.17ha per 1,000 population and an urban standard of 0.45ha per 1,000 population be set.

7.41   While no specific land allocations are identified in the Local Plan for new allotments, they will be considered as part of broader green infrastructure planning, particularly where development provides the opportunity to integrate community gardens or multifunctional open space.

Financial & delivery requirements

7.42   The delivery and maintenance of allotments is primarily funded through Town and Parish Council budgets (precepts) and rental income from tenants. RDC does not fund the day-to-day maintenance of these sites.

7.43   Expansion or creation of new sites *may* be supported through:

   a.   Developer contributions: Section 106 agreements or CIL funds (often passed to Town/Parish Councils),

   b.   External grants: funding from bodies such as the National Lottery or environmental trusts.

7.44   The below table lists relevant item in the IDP Part B to support the Local Plan:

Ref	Item	Description
GRE010	Allotments	Address demands in the district.

Cemeteries and burial space

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

▼ Rother District Council (RDC): burial authority, responsible for the management and maintenance of public cemeteries and burial grounds in their local areas, though there is no overarching statutory duty to provide burial space.

▼ Parish and Town Councils: in Rother, Battle Town Council and Salehurst Parish Council manage and maintain local burial grounds and churchyards in their areas.

▼ Churches and religious organisations: own and manage churchyards and religious burial grounds.

▼ Environment Agency (EA): provides regulatory guidance on groundwater protection and environmental impacts for new burial sites.

▼ Historic England / Local Heritage Groups: provide advice and oversight where cemeteries or burial grounds are of historical or architectural significance.

Relevant evidence base documents:

▼ RDC's Cemetery and Funeral Services webpage

7.45   Rother District Council (RDC) acts as the burial authority, managing and maintaining public cemeteries to meet local community needs, although there is no statutory duty to provide burial space. Parish and town councils, churches, and other religious organisations also manage local burial grounds and churchyards. The Environment Agency provides guidance on environmental protection, while Historic England and local heritage groups advise on sites of historic or architectural significance.

Current provision

7.46   Rother District Council will continue to monitor demand for burial space and work with parish councils, religious organisations, and community stakeholders to plan for future

needs. This includes identifying potential sites for expansion, optimising existing cemetery layouts, and ensuring that provision aligns with demographic trends and cultural needs.

7.47   No specific land allocations for new burial sites are currently identified in the Local Plan, but any future proposals would require appropriate environmental and planning assessments, including EA guidance on groundwater protection.

Future requirement

7.48   Rother District Council will continue to monitor demand for burial space and work with parish councils, religious organisations, and community stakeholders to plan for future needs.

Financial & delivery requirements

7.49   The provision and maintenance of cemeteries are primarily funded through RDC budgets and fees charged for interments, memorials, and related services.

7.50   Any future expansion or development of cemetery facilities would be delivered through a combination of Council funding, income from charges, and potential contributions from parish councils or other stakeholders.

7.51   Ongoing maintenance and infrastructure improvements, such as pathways, drainage, and accessibility upgrades, will continue to be managed through the Council's operational budgets.

Flood defences, sustainable drainage (SuDS), riverside improvements

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

- ▼ Environment Agency (EA): non-departmental public body responsible for strategic flood risk management from all sources, including river maintenance on main rivers and the regulation of flood defences. It holds a strategic overview role, provides national leadership for flood and coastal erosion risk management, and delivers flood defence projects, particularly for main rivers and the sea.

- ▼ Marine Management Organisation (MMO): responsible for licensing, regulating, and planning marine activities in the seas around England, ensuring sustainable development in coastal and marine areas.

- ▼ Rother District Council (RDC) - local planning authority, ensures development incorporates appropriate SuDS and manages minor watercourse maintenance.

- ▼ East Sussex County Council (ESCC): the lead local flood authority (LLFA), responsible for managing flood risk from surface water, groundwater, and ordinary watercourses within its administrative area. Flood Risk Management Team is the relevant contact.

- ▼ Romney Marsh Area Internal Drainage Board (RMAIDB): responsible for the control and maintenance of approximately 350km of watercourses in East Sussex and Kent.

- ▼ Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board (PCWLMB): responsible for water level management and the maintenance of watercourses in the western part of the district (Pevensey Levels and Normans Bay).

- ▼ South East Rivers Trust (SERT): the river restoration charity for South East England. SERT leads river and catchment restoration initiatives within Rother and hosts the Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels Catchment Partnership. They deliver nature-based solutions such as wetland creation and natural flood management that improve water quality, enhance biodiversity, and bolster landscape resilience.

- ▼ Hastings Borough Council (HBC): a key neighbouring authority for cross-boundary water management within the shared Combe Haven catchment, where development in Bexhill and Hastings has mutual hydraulic impacts.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- ▼ East Sussex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2016 - 2026 (ESCC, 2016)

- ▼ South Inshore and Offshore Marine Plan (MMO, 2018)

- ▼ Rother District Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (JBA Consulting, 2021)

- Draft SFRA Level 1 Update (JBA Consulting, 2024)

- Rother Climate Change Study – Net Zero Carbon Evidence Base Report (ARUP, 2023)

- Rother Climate Strategy 2030 (RDC, 2024)

- Rother Environment Strategy 2020-2030 (RDC, 2020)

- Rother tidal walls east flood risk management strategy (EA, 2021)

- Policy Statement on Water Level and Flood Risk Management (RMAIDB, 2019)

- A Green Infrastructure Study (RDC, 2011)

7.52   Geographically, the District spans two distinct Environment Agency hydrological areas (Management Catchments) which dictate the flow of surface water, fluvial flood risk, and opportunities for catchment-scale natural flood management:

a.   The majority of the District is centred around the Rother Management Catchment, specifically the Rother Levels, Rother Upper, and Brede and Tillingham operational catchments within it.

b.   However, the coastal settlement of Bexhill, hydrologically shares the Combe Haven operational catchment (which belongs to the Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels Management Catchment) with neighbouring Borough of Hastings. Because Bexhill shares this catchment with Hastings, water management in this area is a cross-boundary issue requiring integrated measures to manage fluvial and surface water flows.

7.53   Flood risk management and sustainable water management in Rother are delivered through a coordinated approach involving various authorities and stakeholders. The above listed organisations work together to ensure a comprehensive approach to flood risk and water management in the district, integrating climate adaptation measures, biodiversity enhancement, and community safety. In addition, this coordination also considers cross-boundary and catchment-scale impacts, particularly regarding downstream implications of the Eastern Rother catchment and the shared Combe Haven system.

Current provision

7.54   Rother's flood risk management infrastructure comprises a combination of hard-engineered and natural systems.

Coastal and tidal flood defences

7.55   Coastal and tidal flood defences are maintained along key settlements including Rye and Bexhill, complemented by EA-managed river embankments on the Rother, Brede, and other main rivers. RMAIDB maintains an extensive network of drainage channels, pumping stations, and sluices in the eastern low-lying areas (Rye catchment), while the PCWLMB manages the equivalent infrastructure on the Pevensey Levels in the west.

SuDS

7.56   Across urban and rural areas, SuDS have been implemented in new developments and retrofitted in existing sites to attenuate surface water runoff, improve water quality, and reduce peak flows into watercourses (JBA Consulting, 2021; ESCC, 2016).

Riverside and wetland improvements

7.57   Riverside and wetland improvements led by SERT and RDC include habitat restoration, riverbank reinforcement, and wetland creation to manage floodwaters naturally while enhancing biodiversity and landscape amenity (RDC, 2020; ARUP, 2023). Existing flood risk management provision is largely sufficient to meet current levels of risk, though climate change projections indicate increasing frequency of extreme rainfall events, sea level rise, and tidal surges, which will challenge existing infrastructure (RDC, 2024).

Future requirement

7.58   Future flood and water management in Rother will require ongoing investment, adaptation, and collaboration to address climate change and growth pressures.

7.59   Because the District's hydrological boundaries do not align with administrative borders, development must consider cross-boundary cumulative impacts; for example, increased runoff from development in Bexhill could exacerbate flood risk downstream in the Combe Haven operational catchment (Hastings). Similarly, development within the Rother Management Catchment must consider the cumulative effect of surface water

discharge on the low-lying Romney Marsh and the drainage networks managed by the RMAIDB.

7.60   Future infrastructure should therefore address cross-catchment attenuation to ensure that new development does not increase the burden on shared watercourses or bypass existing flood storage areas. Key requirements include the maintenance and reinforcement of coastal and main river defences, further implementation of SuDS in all new developments, retrofitting SuDS in existing urban areas, and natural flood management measures such as wetland creation, re-meandering of watercourses, and riparian habitat restoration (ARUP, 2023; RDC, 2024).

7.61   Enhancing coordination between RDC, ESCC, EA, RMAIDB, PCWLMB, SERT and Hastings Borough Council, will be essential to plan for infrastructure upgrades and manage flood risk across catchment areas.

7.62   Monitoring of flood risk zones and adaptation of planning policies will also be required to ensure that future development is resilient to projected climate impacts (JBA Consulting, 2021).

Financial & delivery requirements

7.63   Funding and delivery of flood risk management and SuDS improvements will rely on a combination of sources:

a.   **Developer contributions:**

    i.   S106 (site-specific) obligations to provide site-specific SuDS, river corridor enhancements, and flood mitigation measures within new developments or to contribute to relevant off-site measures

    ii.   Strategic CIL receipts retained by RDC to support wider strategic flood risk management infrastructure

b.   **Government and EA funding:** Capital investment for major flood defences and coastal protection schemes, including tidal walls and embankment upgrades.

c. **Local and partnership funding:** Organisations such as SERT use grants, volunteer effort, and partnerships to deliver ecological and nature-based solutions that enhance resilience and biodiversity.

7.64   The below table lists relevant item in the IDP Part B to support the Local Plan:

Ref	Item	Description
FLO001	Rother Tidal Walls East	Improvements to flood defence schemes in eastern Rother.
FLO002	Cliff End to Fairlight Cove	Debris from cliff erosion will front cliff toe and provide natural protection to the cliffs.
FLO003	Pett Sea Defences	Shingle renourishment.
FLO004	Fairlight Cove East (Sea Road) Clifftop village frontage	Cliff toe defence in place to limit erosion. Managed realignment. The cliff will retreat until a sustainable clifftop position is achieved.
FLO005	Fairlight Cove Central (Rockmead Road) slope toe defence	Construction of slope toe defence structure in 2016. Land sliding cliff activity attributed to elevated ground water levels and cliff toe erosion. The geological importance of these cliffs means that the long-term sustainable approach is to allow managed natural retreat.
FLO006	Bexhill to Cooden flood defence maintenance and improvement	Hold the line policy through maintenance and improvement of existing defence structures. Shingle recycling and beach re-grading protecting beach frontage. Groynes and a seawall have halted the historic erosion of this shoreline.
FLO007	Jury's Gap to The Suttons Broomhill Sands defence annual maintenance	Completed 2014. Annual maintenance of shingle beach in front of Suttons properties. Amenity beach backed by low coast road and properties. Links to Dungeness flood risk area.
FLO008	Camber Sands Continued dune management	Protect the dunes and local community. Links to Dungeness flood risk area.
FLO009	Pevensey Coastal Defence	Protect shoreline from coastal erosion. Pevensey Levels, 10,000 properties and caravan parks.
FLO010	Lydd Ranges Sea Defences	Protect the shoreline and local community from the impact of coastal processes, flood risk and climate change.

8. Utility & energy

Water supply and wastewater infrastructure

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

- Environment Agency (EA): regulates abstraction licences, discharges, and is consulted on planning proposals involving non-mains drainage solutions and environmental risk.

- Southern Water: the statutory sewerage undertaker for the whole of Rother District. They also supply potable water to the eastern part of the district (Rye and Hastings fringe).

- South East Water: Supplies potable water to the central and western parts of the district (including Bexhill and Battle).

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC): the lead local flood authority (LLFA), plays a strategic role in managing water resources, advising on local water infrastructure and drainage in the area.

- Romney Marsh Area Internal Drainage Board (RMAIDB): Responsible for the control and maintenance of watercourses in the eastern part of the district.

- Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board (PCWLMB): Responsible for water level management and maintenance of watercourses in the western part of the district (Pevensey Levels).

- Rother and Romney Catchment Partnership: a collaboration of organisations, including wildlife trusts and the Environment Agency, South East Rivers Trust, High Weald National Landscape, among others. The partnership's aim is to improve the water environment in the Rother and Romney catchments.

- South East Rivers Trust (SERT): the river restoration charity for South East England. SERT hosts the Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels Catchment Partnership and leads nature-based solutions to improve water quality and biodiversity.

- Rother District Council (RDC): local planning authority, ensuring linked infrastructure and policy compliance

Relevant evidence base documents:

- Rother District Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2021)

- Draft SFRA Level 1 Update (JBA Consulting, 2024)

- Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) for the Rother River Basin Catchment (Southern Water, 2022)

- Southern Water Business Plan 2025-30 (Southern Water, 2024)

- South East Water Business Plan 2025–30 (South East Water, 2024)

- South East Water Strategic Direction Statement (South East Water, 2023)

- Rother and Romney Catchment Plan 2014 - 2024 (Rother and Romney Catchment Partnership, 2014)

8.1 Based on Environment Agency's Hydrological Boundaries, Rother District spans two hydrological areas (also known as Management Catchments). Much of the district is centred around the **Rother Management Catchment** (specifically the Eastern Rother), which includes the River Rother and its tributaries like the Brede and Tillingham. However, the western coastal area (including Bexhill and Normans Bay) falls within the **Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels Management Catchment** and shares the constituent Combe Haven operational catchment with Hastings.

8.2 Rother District faces significant challenges related to water scarcity, ageing infrastructure, and increasing demand. The district is identified as an area of 'serious water stress. Furthermore, the hydrological connectivity to the Pevensey Levels (a designated SAC and Ramsar site) means that water quality and wastewater management are critical planning considerations. The Council's Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) highlights that water company investment is essential to prevent nutrient pollution and protect the ecological integrity of these internationally designated sites.

8.3 Southern Water provides wastewater (sewerage) services across the entire district and water supply to the east. South East Water provides water supply to the west. These

water companies have a statutory duty to invest in infrastructure capable of meeting the demands arising from projected population growth. While they are not statutory consultees on planning applications, where consulted they assess, on a case-by-case basis, the capacity and performance of the public water supply and sewer networks. They advise on any reinforcement or upgrades required to ensure that new development does not lead to an unacceptable reduction in service levels. Developers are responsible for providing appropriate on-site drainage and flood risk management infrastructure where required to support proposed development.

Current provision

8.4   The Rother River Basin Catchment, which covers the district, is served by a substantial wastewater infrastructure network. This includes over 1,349 kilometres of sewers, 56 wastewater treatment works (WTWs), and 212 pumping stations. Approximately 89% of homes and 82% of businesses in the region are connected to mains sewer systems.

8.5   Southern Water's Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) for the Rother River Basin Catchment identifies several key challenges and strategic objectives to address current and future drainage and wastewater management issues. The plan highlights the need to manage the impacts of population growth, urban development, and climate change on the existing infrastructure. It emphasizes the importance of reducing storm overflows, mitigating flooding risks, enhancing network resilience, and improving water quality through effective management of nutrient discharges. The DWMP outlines a comprehensive strategy that includes infrastructure upgrades, sustainable drainage solutions, and collaborative efforts with stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainability and efficiency of the drainage and wastewater systems in the Rother River Basin Catchment.

8.6   In terms of water supply, South East Water has committed to a £1.9 billion investment in infrastructure over the 2025–2030 period. This investment aims to improve service resilience, especially during extreme weather events, and to address challenges related to water scarcity and supply security.

Future requirement

8.7   The projected growth in Rother District, driven by new housing developments and population increases, will place additional pressure on existing water supply and

wastewater infrastructure. This necessitates proactive planning and investment to ensure that services can meet future demand.

8.8 Southern Water's DWMP identifies several key areas for investment, including:

a. Infrastructure upgrades: Enhancing capacity at Wastewater Treatment Works (WTWs) to accommodate growth

b. Flood risk management: Reducing the flood risk associated with wastewater systems

c. Environmental protection: Addressing nutrient discharges (Phosphates/ Nitrates) to protect the Pevensey Levels and other sensitive watercourses

d. Resilience building: Reducing storm overflows and hardening infrastructure against climate change

8.9 South East Water's business plan also outlines initiatives to improve service resilience and address water scarcity issues, ensuring a sustainable water supply for the district's growing population.

Financial & delivery requirements

8.10 To meet the future demands and challenges outlined above, significant investment and coordinated efforts are required from both utility companies and local authorities. Key financial and delivery requirements include:

a. Investment: Continued upgrades to WTWs and supply networks

b. Collaboration among stakeholders: Enhanced collaboration between Southern Water, South East Water, ESCC, RMAIDB, and RDC to ensure integrated planning and delivery of infrastructure projects

c. Regulatory compliance: Ensuring that all infrastructure developments comply with environmental regulations and contribute to the protection and enhancement of the local water environment

d.   Community engagement: Engaging with local communities to raise awareness about water conservation and the importance of maintaining and upgrading water infrastructure.

8.11   The financial commitments outlined in Southern Water's and South East Water's business plans are essential to achieving these objectives. However, ongoing monitoring and adjustments may be necessary to address emerging challenges and ensure that infrastructure developments align with the district's growth and environmental goals.

8.12   The table below pulls out the key infrastructure provision to support the Local Plan. It is recognised that further feasibility / business case analysis is required in some measures.

Ref	Item	Description
UTI003	Bewl Darwell water infrastructure upgrade	Replacement of the Bewl Darwell raw water transfer, with the expansion of the Bewl water treatment works with improved transfer links to WRZ3 at Hazards Green.
UTI004	Water supply infrastructure	Infrastructure to meet water supply shortfalls in areas of water stress, surpluses from 2028 could be transferred from WRZ1 to WRZ7 (Blackhurst to Bewl)
UTI005	Additional water supply storage	Additional water supply storage at Standard Hill Reservoir site near Hazards Green. *Note: This asset is located just outside the district boundary (in Wealden) but is critical for serving Rother residents.*
UTI006	Water mains reinforcement	Mains reinforcement to transfer additional water from both Hazards Green and sources to the west. Some more local reinforcement for the villages. *Note: This asset is located just outside the district boundary (in Wealden) but is critical for serving Rother residents.*
UTI007	Sewerage network infrastructure	Sewerage network reinforcement and connections to support new development.
UTI008	Wastewater treatment infrastructure improvements	To accommodate growth and/or meet higher water quality standards.
UTI009	Fairlight pathfinder	The promotion of sustainable drainage systems to control the quantity and rate of run-off as well as to improve water quality wherever practicable.
UTI010	Wastewater pumping station improvements for Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels River Basin/Bexhill and Hastings Wastewater System	To improve the operational resilience of wastewater pumping stations to reduce flooding incidences.
UTI011	Flood alleviation for Cuckmere and Pevensey	To separate or attenuate excess rainwater in sewer network using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to reduce risk of flooding.

	Levels River Basin/Bexhill and Hastings Wastewater System	
UTI012	Wastewater system enhancement Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels River Basin/Bexhill and Hastings	To increased capacity to allow for planned new development.
UTI013	Improve the Hydraulic Model for Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels River Basin/Bexhill and Hastings Wastewater System	Surveys and reverification of model to improve confidence and accuracy.
UTI014	Sewer rehabilitation for Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels River Basin/Bexhill and Hastings Wastewater System	Targeted CCTV or electro scan surveys and sewer rehabilitation to reduce the risk of sewer bursts and collapses.
UTI015	Storm discharges reduction for Penvensey Levels River Basin/ Bexhill and Hastings Wastewater System	To reduce the number of storm discharges by a combination of SuDS and storage options.
UTI016	Storm discharges screening for Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels River Basin/Bexhill and Hastings Wastewater System	New or improved screen to reduce aesthetics impacts from storm discharges.
UTI017	Nutrient neutrality measures for Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels River Basin/Bexhill and Hastings Wastewater System	To reduce total phosphorus and/or total nitrogen levels from discharges which drain to internationally designated sites where there is a risk from nutrients.
UTI018	Wastewater pumping station improvements for Rother River Basin/ Rye Wastewater System	Improve the operation resilience of wastewater pumping station (WPS) to reduce pollution incidents.
UTI019	Sewer rehabilitation for Rother River Basin/ Rye Wastewater System	Targeted CCTV or electro scan surveys and sewer rehabilitation to reduce the risk of sewer bursts and collapses.
UTI020	Sewer jetting improvement to Rother River Basin/ Rye Wastewater System	Increase targeted sewer jetting to reduce the number of blockages in the network.
UTI021	Increased treatment capacity improvement to Rother River Basin/ Rye Wastewater System	Increase treatment capacity to allow for planned new development.
UTI022	Increased capacity for Rother River Basin/ Rye Wastewater System	Increase capacity for planned new development.

UTI023	Storm discharges reduction for Rother River Basin/ Rye Wastewater System	To reduce the number of storm discharges from RYE SSO by a combination of SuDS and storage options.
UTI024	Nutrient neutrality measures for Rother River Basin/ Rye Wastewater System	To reduce total phosphorus and/or total nitrogen levels from discharges which drain to internationally designated sites where there is a risk from nutrients.
UTI025	Enhanced sewer maintenance for Rother River Basin/ Fairlight Wastewater System	Increase targeted sewer jetting to reduce the number of blockages in the network.
UTI026	Storm discharges reduction for Rother River Basin/Fairlight Wastewater System	Reduce the number of storm discharges from Fairlight SISO by a combination of SuDS and storage options.

Waste and recycling infrastructure

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC): acts as both the waste planning as well as waste disposal authority. They are responsible for determining strategic waste policy and planning applications, as well as managing the disposal of household waste across the county, through contracts for services and infrastructure such as disposal facilities, recycling centres, and energy recovery plants.

- Rother District Council (RDC): waste collection authority, handles household waste and recycling collection within Rother. The service is delivered through a contract with Biffa Municipal, which also covers street and beach cleaning.

- East Sussex Joint Waste and Recycling Committee: established by ESCC, Hastings Borough Council, Rother District Council and Wealden District Council, with the intention of facilitating the authorities in working together to improve the quality and effectiveness of the discharge of their waste collection functions.

- Biffa: waste collection and street cleaning contractor in Rother.

- ▼ Veolia: ESCC's contractor. Manages the disposal side of the waste system under the ESCC contract, including operation of the Newhaven energy recovery facility, composting in Whitesmith, MRF in Hollingdean, and several recycling sites.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- ▼ The Waste and Minerals Local Plan - Revised Policies (adopted 24 October 2024)

- ▼ The Waste and Minerals Local Plan - Revised Policies (amendments to) Adopted Policies Map (October 2024)

- ▼ The Waste and Minerals Sites Plan (adopted 7 February 2017)

- ▼ East Sussex Joint Waste Management Strategy (2014-2025)

- ▼ ESCC updated figures for calculating development contributions (ESCC, 2015)

8.13 Waste management in Rother is delivered through a two-tier system. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) acts as the waste disposal authority, responsible for the strategic disposal of waste across the county, including contracts for energy recovery, composting, recycling facilities, and waste treatment infrastructure. Rother District Council (RDC) is the waste collection authority, responsible for household waste and recycling collection, street cleaning, and beach cleaning, which is delivered through a contract with Biffa Municipal.

8.14 The East Sussex Joint Waste and Recycling Committee facilitates collaborative working across ESCC, RDC, Hastings Borough Council, and Wealden District Council to improve the quality, efficiency, and sustainability of waste management services. Veolia, under contract to ESCC, manages the disposal side of the county's waste system, including the Newhaven energy recovery facility, Whitesmith composting facility, the Hollingdean Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), and other recycling sites.

8.15 The strategic framework for waste and recycling is guided by the East Sussex Waste and Minerals Plan (2013) and the Waste and Minerals Sites Plan (2017), with supplementary guidance from ESCC on developer contributions for new residential and commercial development (ESCC, 2015).

8.16 The East Sussex Joint Waste Management Strategy (2014–2025) also provides a framework for reducing waste, improving recovery, and ensuring sufficient capacity for future growth.

Current provision

8.17 Kerbside collection of household waste, recycling, and garden waste in Rother is undertaken by Biffa Municipal, supported by a network of bring sites and civic amenity facilities. Residual and recyclable waste is transported to ESCC-managed facilities for treatment or disposal.

8.18 The system provides weekly residual waste collection, fortnightly dry recycling, and garden waste collections during the growing season. Public engagement programmes encourage waste reduction and recycling, with Rother achieving recycling rates broadly in line with county averages. Current facilities are designed to accommodate existing waste flows and projected household numbers under current planning assumptions, but capacity may be constrained in areas of significant growth.

Future requirement

8.19 Planned housing growth in the Rother Local Plan will generate additional household waste and recycling volumes, placing additional demand on both collection and disposal infrastructure.

8.20 The Council will continue to work collaboratively with ESCC to monitor, identify, and manage future waste and recycling infrastructure needs. This includes ensuring sufficient capacity at existing facilities, and planning for growth in household and commercial waste.

Financial & delivery requirements

8.21 Delivery of waste and recycling infrastructure in Rother will require:

a. **Developer contributions:**

    i. S106 (site-specific) contributions to facilities directly associated with new developments

ii.   Strategic CIL receipts retained by RDC to support wider infrastructure enhancement

b.   **Strategic funding streams:** County-wide infrastructure enhancements or other ESCC-managed funding mechanisms to increase energy recovery, composting, and materials recovery capacity

c.   **Local and partnership funding:** Coordination between ESCC, RDC, Veolia, and Biffa to ensure timely expansion and adaptation of facilities, including upgrades to transfer stations and recycling sites to accommodate growth

Energy infrastructure

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

▼ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) – Sets national policy, strategy, and funding for energy security and decarbonisation.

▼ Ofgem: the energy regulator for Great Britain and is responsible for regulating the energy market, including networks, supply, and generation.

▼ National Grid: owns and operates the high-voltage transmission network across the UK. While UK Power Networks manages distribution in Rother, National Grid ensures transmission capacity and resilience at the regional level, including upgrades needed to integrate renewable energy and meet growing demand.

▼ National Gas: owns and operates the high-pressure gas transmission network, ensuring regional gas capacity and security of supply, including future hydrogen and biomethane integration.

▼ UK Power Networks (UKPN): the statutory Distribution Network Operator (DNO) for Rother, responsible for local electricity distribution, network upgrades, and grid reinforcement.

▼ SGN: manages the local gas distribution network, with a focus on maintenance, upgrades, and decarbonisation (e.g. hydrogen readiness, biomethane).

- ▾ Community Energy Groups: deliver local renewable energy generation (e.g., solar, micro-wind), energy efficiency projects, and resilience initiatives. Examples in Rother include Energise Sussex Coast and Energise South..

- ▾ Independent Distribution Network Operators (IDNO): private licensed companies (e.g. GTC, ESP, Fulcrum, Last Mile) that design, build, own and operate electricity distribution networks on new developments, complementing UKPN's role as the statutory DNO.

- ▾ Energy suppliers (EDF, E.ON, Octopus, etc.): not infrastructure owners, but important in rolling out smart grids, demand management, and consumer-side initiatives.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- ▾ Rother Climate Change Study – Net Zero Carbon Evidence Base Report (ARUP, 2023)

- ▾ Rother Climate Strategy 2030 (RDC, 2024)

- ▾ Rother District Wind Energy Feasibility Study (RDC, 2021)

- ▾ UK Power Networks RIIO-ED2 Business Plan (2023–2028) (UKPN, 2023)

- ▾ National Grid RIIO-T3 Business Plan (National Grid, 2024)

- ▾ National Gas RIIO-GT3 Business Plan for 2026-31 (National Gas, 2024)

- ▾ SGN Environment Strategy (SGN, 2021)

- ▾ SGN Environmental Action Plan (SGN, 2024)

- ▾ Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (HM Government, 2021)

- ▾ RIIO-3 Draft Determinations for the Electricity Transmission, Gas Distribution and Gas Transmission sectors (Ofgem, 2025)

8.22   The delivery of energy infrastructure in Rother is guided by national, regional, and local evidence, as listed above. Together, these documents underpin the IDP's assessment of current and future energy infrastructure needs, supporting Rother's growth while aligning with decarbonisation and resilience objectives.

Current provision

8.23   Rother's current energy provision relies primarily on electricity and gas, with limited but growing renewable contributions.

Electricity

8.24   Low- and medium-voltage distribution in the district is managed by UK Power Networks, supported by private IDNO networks for new developments. Infrastructure includes overhead lines, underground cables, and primary substations. The RIIO-ED2 plan (2023–2028) prioritises resilience, reduction of outages, and integration of low-carbon technologies, including connections for solar PV and battery storage.

Gas

8.25   Local gas distribution is managed by SGN, supplying natural gas to homes and businesses across the district. Approximately two-thirds of homes in Rother use gas for heating, with the remainder off the gas grid (RDC, 2024; SGN, 2021).

8.26   The network is maintained to ensure reliability, with upgrades delivered in line with RIIO-GD3 targets. SGN is implementing environmental and decarbonisation initiatives, including hydrogen-ready infrastructure and biomethane injection (SGN, 2021; 2024).

Renewable and community energy

8.27   Several small-scale solar, micro-generation, and energy efficiency projects are underway, including initiatives led by community energy groups such as Energise Sussex Coast.

Renewable energy

8.28   Operational renewable energy sites in the district include St Francis Farm (4 MW solar PV) and Catsfield Solar Farm (12 MW solar PV), alongside landfill gas turbines at Pebsham providing 2.4 MW. Smaller-scale solar and energy efficiency projects continue to expand through community-led initiatives.

Transmission Infrastructure

8.29   Electricity is connected to the National Grid's high-voltage transmission network, ensuring capacity for peak demand and resilience, including future renewable integration. Gas transmission from National Grid high-pressure pipelines supplies SGN's distribution network.

Future requirement

8.30   Rother District Council has committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030, focusing on electrification, renewables scaling, and gas decarbonisation.

8.31   Planned housing, commercial, and industrial growth in Rother will increase demand for electricity and gas connections, while decarbonisation objectives require network reinforcement and the integration of low-carbon technologies.

8.32   Key considerations for energy infrastructure planning include:

   a.   Reinforcement of electricity networks to serve new developments, including new substations and underground/overhead cabling, in line with UKPN RIIO-ED2 plans.

   b.   Expansion of gas distribution capacity and potential hydrogen-ready connections in line with SGN decarbonisation strategy.

   c.   Integration of community and local renewable energy projects, including solar, heat networks, and battery storage, to support net zero carbon objectives (Rother Climate Strategy 2030, 2024).

   d.   Resilience improvements to withstand climate-related events, including flooding, heatwaves, and storms, aligning with national energy security objectives (National Grid RIIO-T3, 2024).

   e.   Smart grid and digital network upgrades to support flexible demand, electric vehicles, and energy efficiency initiatives (Ofgem, 2025).

8.33   Rother District Council will continue to liaise with UKPN, SGN, and developers to coordinate and identify infrastructure requirements, ensuring timely delivery to support growth while meeting environmental and resilience targets.

Financial & delivery requirements

8.34   Delivery of energy infrastructure will rely on a combination of funding and partnership approaches:

   a.   **Developer contributions:** Site-specific connections, network reinforcement, and low-carbon technology provisions are generally funded by developers, often through Section 106 agreements or direct connection charges. IDNOs may deliver localised electricity infrastructure for new developments.

   b.   **Network operator investment:** UKPN and SGN will fund upgrades required for broader network reinforcement and resilience, in line with RIIO-ED2 (electricity) and RIIO-GD3 (gas) price control business plans, which include allowances for low-carbon and renewable integration.

   c.   **Government and regulatory support:** DESNZ funding, Ofgem incentives, and Net Zero Strategy mechanisms support decarbonisation, resilience, and renewable energy deployment.

   d.   **Local and community initiatives:** Community energy projects and energy efficiency programmes may be funded via grants, local schemes, or third-party partnerships, contributing to local generation and network flexibility.

8.35   Coordination between Rother District Council, network operators, developers, and community energy groups is essential to ensure infrastructure is delivered in tandem with growth, supporting the district's net zero and resilience objectives.

8.36   The below table lists relevant item in the IDP Part B to support the Local Plan:

Ref	Item	Description
ENV002	Measures to improve energy efficiency and climate change	Including measures to support district heat network, solar and microgrids, heat mapping, etc.

| ENV003 | Solar and microgrid on landfill sites | Build solar arrays on council owned landfill sites to generate income and reduce emissions. |
| ENV004 | Solar potential in car parks | Investment in solar car ports to increase utilisation of car park land. |

Digital infrastructure

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

- Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT): national government department, sets policy, targets, and investment priorities for broadband, mobile, and digital infrastructure.

- Ofcom: national regulator, oversees telecommunications market, ensures fair competition, consumer protection, and spectrum management.

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC): local authority, coordinates digital infrastructure planning, supports broadband rollout in rural areas, and manages public sector ICT networks.

- Broadband network providers (such as Openreach (BT), Virgin Media O2, CityFibre, Hyperoptic, other ISPs): deliver fibre, fixed-line, and cable broadband, often partnering with local authorities and developers.

- Mobile networks and tower infrastructure operators (such as EE, Vodafone, Three, O2 and CTIL): provide 4G/5G coverage, backhaul, and manage shared towers to expand mobile connectivity.

- Independent Network Operators / Local Fibre Companies: private providers, deliver network solutions for new developments, business parks, and public sector sites.

- Digital Innovation Hubs / Tech Partnerships: local organisations, support community broadband projects, smart city initiatives, and SME digital adoption (e.g., Sussex Innovation Centre).

Relevant evidence base documents:

8.37   Digital connectivity is a key enabler of economic growth, social inclusion, and public service delivery in Rother. The district is served by a mix of urban and rural infrastructure, with ongoing improvements in broadband, mobile, and emerging smart technologies.

Current provision

8.38   **Broadband:** Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP) coverage is increasing but remains patchy in rural areas. Openreach reports partial fibre coverage in Bexhill and Rye, with slower DSL or hybrid fibre in more remote settlements/ rural areas (RDC Digital Strategy, 2024). The ESCC-led eSussex programme and the Universal Service Obligation (USO) ensure that all residents can request a basic broadband connection of at least 10Mbps (revised USO, 2020).

8.39   **Mobile networks:** 4G coverage is generally available across the district, but gaps exist in isolated rural areas. 5G rollout is limited to key towns and business hubs, with ongoing expansion by EE, Vodafone, and Three.

8.40   **Public sector and business connectivity:** Several schools, community hubs, and business parks have gigabit-capable connections, though speeds and resilience vary across sites (ESCC Digital Connectivity Portal).

8.41   **Community initiatives:** Small-scale community broadband and shared network projects support areas not served by commercial operators, often leveraging government schemes such as the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (House of Commons Library, 2024). These projects help hard-to-reach properties gain access to high-speed connections and are typically funded through a combination of grants, local partnerships, and third-party contributions.

Future requirement

8.42   No specific land use requirements for digital infrastructure have been identified at this stage. However, the Council will continue to liaise and work with broadband and mobile network providers, independent network operators, and regional partners to plan for any future needs arising from population growth, housing development, or changes in technology. This approach ensures that the district can maintain and enhance connectivity, particularly for hard-to-reach areas, and support emerging digital infrastructure requirements over the plan period.

Financial & delivery requirements

8.43   Delivery will rely on a combination of funding sources:

a.   **Developer contributions:** Site-specific ducting, cabling, and network connections funded via planning conditions or Section 106 agreements.

b.   **Network operator investment:** Openreach, Virgin Media O2, CityFibre, and others fund commercial network expansion.

c.   **Government and regulatory support:** DSIT funding, the Gigabit Programme, and Shared Rural Network support rural broadband and mobile expansion.

d.   **Community initiatives:** Grants and third-party partnerships support local broadband schemes and digital inclusion projects.

8.44   Coordination between RDC, ESCC, network operators, developers, and community partners is essential to ensure that digital infrastructure keeps pace with growth and supports economic, educational, and social objectives.

8.45   The below table lists relevant item in the IDP Part B to support the Local Plan:

Ref	Item	Description
UTI002	Superfast broadband	Upgrade of existing infrastructure to accommodate fibre to enable access to superfast services.

9. Emergency & security services

Police services

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

▼ Sussex Police: provides policing and public safety services across Rother, operating from local stations and community facilities. It works with partners, including local authorities and other emergency services, to ensure effective crime prevention, emergency response, and community safety infrastructure.

Relevant evidence base documents:

▼ Sussex Police & Crime Plan 2024/28 (Sussex Police, 2024)

▼ Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024–2028 (Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner, 2024)

▼ Sussex Police Estate Transformation Strategy 2025–2036 (Sussex Police,2025)

9.1   Policing in Rother District is provided by Sussex Police, which operates across three divisions: West Sussex, East Sussex, and Brighton & Hove. Each division is subdivided into districts, with Rother District being one of them. The district is further divided into Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs).

9.2   The Sussex Police & Crime Plan 2024–2028, developed by the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner, outlines the strategic direction for policing in Sussex. The plan focuses on three public priorities:

a.   Preventing crime and supporting victims and witnesses

b. Investigating crime and bringing offenders to justice

c. Improving trust in policing and building public confidence

Current provision

9.3 The below police stations are located within Rother District:

a. Bexhill Police Station (Terminus Road)

b. Rye Police Station (Cinque Ports St)

c. Battle Police Station (North Trade Road, Battle)

9.4 Sussex Police also maintain a visible presence in Rother District through its Neighbourhood Policing Teams, which are actively engaged in community policing, crime prevention, and addressing local concerns.

Future requirement

9.5 As Rother District continues to experience population growth, particularly in urban areas like Bexhill and Rye, there will be an increased demand for policing services. The Sussex Police & Crime Plan anticipates this growth and emphasises the need for:

a. Increasing the presence of officers in communities to deter crime and build public trust.

b. Ensuring that resources are distributed effectively to meet the evolving needs of the district.

c. Strengthening partnerships with local authorities and community organisations to address crime and safety concerns collaboratively

9.6 In addition, the Sussex Police Estate Transformation Strategy 2025–2036 identifies the need to modernise and optimise the police estate across Sussex, including Rother. The strategy highlights that much of the current estate is surplus to requirements, ageing, inflexible, and costly to maintain, with some buildings located in less optimal areas. Future

requirements will therefore include strategic decisions on retaining, reinvesting, or disposing of existing properties, exploring shared facilities with other public service partners, trialling flexible neighbourhood policing models, and considering the acquisition or construction of new, appropriately located facilities. This approach aims to ensure a sustainable, efficient, and operationally fit estate that meets the evolving needs of communities in Rother.

Financial & delivery requirements

9.7   The implementation of the Sussex Police Estate Transformation Strategy in Rother will require careful financial planning and multi-year delivery. Funding and delivery considerations include:

a.   **Developer contributions and partnership:** Collaboration with local authorities and other public service partners may enable shared facilities or community-accessible hubs, potentially supported by developer contributions where new housing growth generates additional demand

b.   **Capital investment and budget allocation:** The transformation will involve reinvestment in retained buildings, disposal of surplus assets, and potential acquisition or construction of new facilities. Capital funding will need to be allocated strategically to ensure operational effectiveness, meet equality and accessibility standards, and support the transition to NET ZERO carbon for retained estate

c.   **Efficiency measures and cost optimisation:** Disposal of surplus or high-cost leased properties, alongside trials of flexible neighbourhood policing models, will help reduce ongoing operational expenditure. Efficiency savings and careful prioritisation of capital projects will be required to ensure long-term financial sustainability while maintaining service delivery in Rother

9.8   The Council will continue to engage with Sussex Police through the Local Plan and IDP process to identify and plan for future requirements.

Fire services

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

▼ East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS): statutory fire and rescue authority, responsible for fire prevention, emergency response, community safety, and resilience across Rother and East Sussex.

Relevant evidence base documents:

▼ ESFRS Productivity & Efficiency Plan 2024-25 (ESFRS, 2024)

▼ Our Corporate Plan 2024-2025 (ESFRS, 2024)

9.9   East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) is the statutory fire and rescue authority responsible for fire prevention, emergency response, community safety, and resilience across Rother and East Sussex. As a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, ESFRS collaborates with other emergency services to maintain a public Community Risk Register produced by the Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF).

9.10   The ESFRS operates within the framework set by the East Sussex Fire Authority, which oversees the strategic direction and financial planning of the service. The Corporate Plan 2024–2025 and the Productivity & Efficiency Plan 2024–2025 outline the service's objectives and strategies for the upcoming year.

Current provision

9.11   ESFRS provides comprehensive fire and rescue services across Rother District, operating from several community fire stations, including:

a.   Bexhill Community Fire Station (Wholetime and On-Call)

b.   Battle Community Fire Station (On-Call)

c.   Rye Community Fire Station: (On-Call)

d.   Broad Oak Community Fire Station (On-Call)

e.   Burwash Community Fire Station (On-Call)

f.   Northiam Community Fire Station: (On-Call)

9.12   These stations are part of the Service's Eastern Area, which serves the Hastings and Rother districts. While Bexhill is staffed 24/7 (wholetime), the rural stations rely on 'On-Call' (retained) firefighters who respond from their home or place of work, ensuring a flexible and responsive service to meet the needs of local communities.

Future requirement

9.13   As Rother District continues to experience growth and development, particularly in urban areas such as Bexhill and Rye, there will be an increased demand for fire and rescue services. The Productivity & Efficiency Plan 2024–2025 identifies the need to:

a.   Enhance response times, by optimising station locations and staffing levels to ensure rapid response to emergencies.

b.   Invest in training and equipment, to equip personnel with the necessary skills and tools to address emerging risks, including those associated with climate change and urban development.

c.   Community engagement, strengthening partnerships with local authorities and community organisations to promote fire prevention and safety initiatives.

9.14   The East Sussex Fire Authority's Statement of Accounts 2023/24 outlines the financial strategies supporting the delivery of fire and rescue services. This does not provide specific details around future land use or infrastructure requirements for their services within Rother District. The Council will continue to engage with ESFRS through the Local Plan and IDP process to identify and plan for future requirements.

Financial & delivery requirements

9.15   Delivery of fire and rescue services in Rother is primarily funded through the East Sussex Fire Authority, which sets budgets and oversees expenditure on personnel, training, vehicles, equipment, and station maintenance. Capital and operational funding are aligned with statutory responsibilities, risk assessments, and service priorities as outlined in the

ESFRS Corporate Plan 2024–2025, and Productivity & Efficiency Plan 2024–2025. The East Sussex Fire Authority's Statement of Accounts 2023/24 also outlines the financial strategies supporting the delivery of fire and rescue services.

9.16   Where new development, housing growth, or changes in land use are likely to increase demand for fire and rescue services, Rother District Council will work with ESFRS to assess potential impacts. This may include considering site-specific contributions or mitigation measures to support enhanced response capacity, such as additional appliances, station upgrades, or on-call staffing enhancements, in line with national planning guidance and local planning policies.

9.17   Coordination between Rother District Council, ESFRS, and developers ensures that new developments are adequately served, maintaining effective emergency response times and public safety, while supporting the strategic objectives of ESFRS in resilience, community safety, and service efficiency.

Ambulance services

Context and overview

Relevant authorities, key stakeholders and delivery partners:

- South East Coast Ambulance Services (SECAmb): provides emergency and urgent healthcare response across Rother, operating from ambulance stations and rapid response units.

Relevant evidence base documents:

- South East Coast Ambulance Services Strategy 2024-29: Saving Lives, Serving Our Communities (SECAmb, 2024)

9.18   South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECAmb) is the statutory provider of emergency and urgent healthcare response across Rother District and the broader South East Coast region, encompassing Kent, Surrey, and Sussex. Established in 2006, SECAmb operates a network of ambulance stations and rapid response units, delivering services such as 999 emergency responses, NHS 111 triage, and urgent care

support. The Trust's strategic direction is outlined in the SECAmb Strategy 2024–2029: Saving Lives, Serving Our Communities, which focuses on enhancing patient care, workforce development, and system integration.

Current provision

9.19   SECAmb employs various facility types to deliver emergency and urgent care services across its operational area. These include emergency operations centres, ambulance stations, Ambulance Community Response Posts (ACRPs), Make Ready Centres (MRCs), Hazardous Area Response (HART) centres, and vehicle maintenance centres.

9.20   Ambulance Community Response Posts (ACRPs) are strategically located facilities that serve as bases for emergency response vehicles and crews. ACRPs are typically situated in areas where there is a need for enhanced response capabilities.

9.21   Make Ready Centres (MRCs) are central hubs where ambulances are cleaned, restocked, and prepared for deployment. These centres play a crucial role in ensuring that emergency response vehicles are ready for service.

9.22   In Rother District, SECAmb operates three ACRPs in Bexhill, Battle, and Rye.

9.23   The following MRCs, located outside Rother, also serve the district:

a.   Polegate MRC: Located in Polegate, East Sussex, this MRC supports the preparation of ambulances for deployment across the region

b.   Hastings MRC: Situated in Hastings, this depot plays a key role in ensuring that emergency response vehicles are ready for service in the surrounding areas

Figure 9: Map of SECAmb facilities (source: https://www.secamb.nhs.uk/our-locations/)
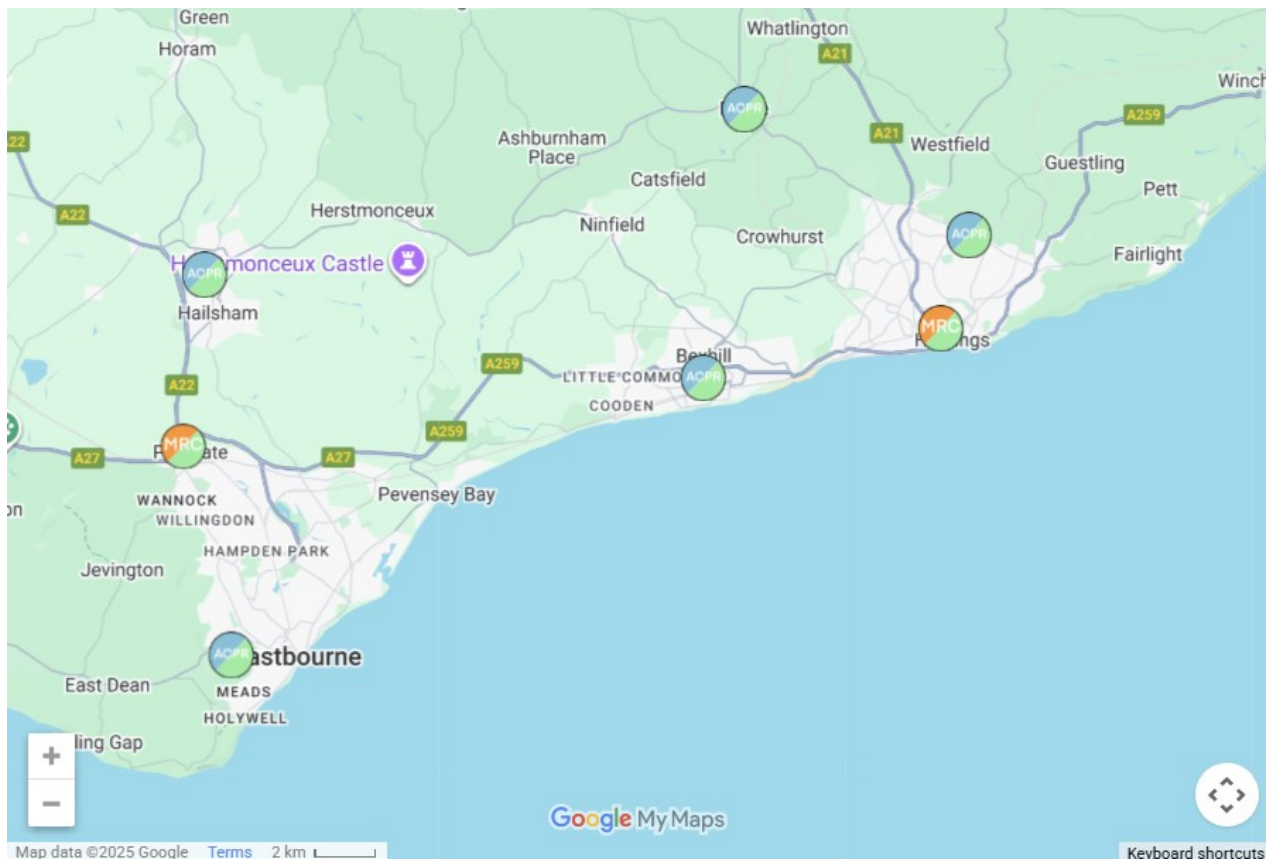
Future requirement

9.24   The SECAmb Strategy 2024–2029 does not include specific details regarding future land-use or infrastructure requirements for Rother. Rother District Council will continue to work closely with SECAmb through the Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) process to identify, assess, and plan for any future operational needs and infrastructure requirements.

Financial & delivery requirements

9.25   Delivery of ambulance services in Rother relies primarily on funding through NHS allocations, as managed by SECAmb, with capital and operational expenditure determined by national and regional commissioning priorities. SECAmb investments cover vehicle fleets, emergency operations centres, Make Ready Centres, Ambulance Community Response Posts, staff training, and equipment.

9.26   Where new housing, commercial, or mixed-use development increases demand for emergency services, Rother District Council may seek to engage with SECAmb to understand potential impacts and explore developer contributions and/or CIL

expenditure where appropriate, in line with national planning guidance and local planning policy. Contributions could support enhanced local response capacity, additional vehicles, or minor infrastructure improvements.

9.27 Coordination between Rother District Council, SECAmb, and developers will ensure that new development is supported by timely and effective emergency service provision, without placing undue pressure on existing resources, while aligning with SECAmb's strategic objectives for response times, patient care, and system resilience.

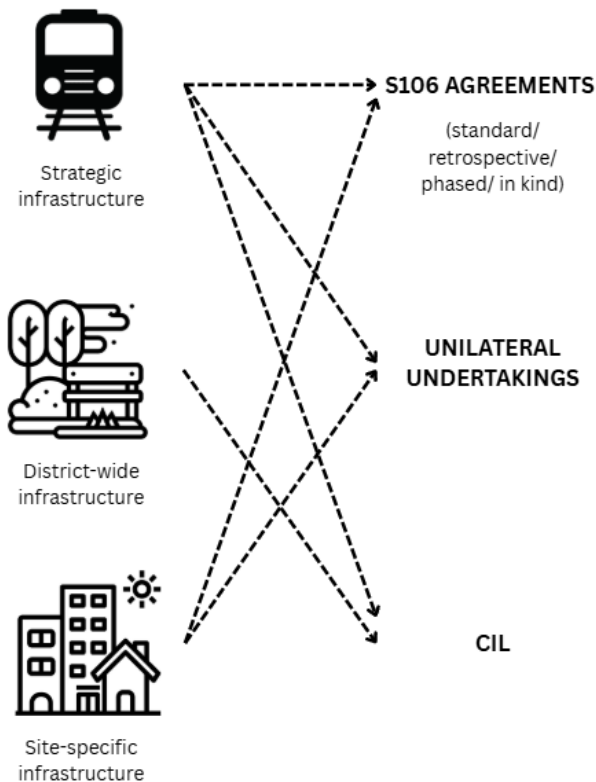# 10. Overcoming the infrastructure funding gap

Approach to secure funding

10.1 New development should meet its own infrastructure needs as far as possible; this is often achieved through seeking Section 106 (S106) and Section S278 (S278) agreements to deliver the required infrastructure.

10.2 S106 agreements are one of the main ways the Council secures infrastructure. S106 agreements are legal agreements with developers to fund or deliver the infrastructure needed to support new development, such as schools, roads, transport improvements, community facilities, and affordable housing. Depending on the type of infrastructure and when it is needed, these obligations may be met through financial payments or "in-kind" contributions such as the direct provision of facilities or land. Contributions can be paid or delivered upfront before development starts, phased in stages as the development progresses, or provided retrospectively even after development has begun or finished to ensure infrastructure is delivered. The ESCC updated figures for calculating development contributions (ESCC, 2015) details the scope and range of contributions towards infrastructure which the County Council may seek to make development acceptable in planning terms. It should be noted that this document by ESCC does not cover services

provided by second tier local authorities (District and Borough Councils), such as affordable housing or open space, nor contributions that may be sought by other infrastructure providers, such as the NHS or water companies.

10.3   In addition to S106 agreements, Section 278 (S278) agreements are also used by highways authorities (ESCC and National Highways) where transport infrastructure is involved. S278 agreements are legal contracts between developers and the highways authorities, enabling developers to carry out alterations or improvements to the public highway that are necessary as a direct result of their development. Such works can include new or altered access points, junctions, traffic signals, pedestrian crossings, and other highway infrastructure. The developer is typically responsible for the design, funding, and construction of these works, which must be approved by the highways authorities to ensure they meet required standards. Once completed and accepted, the infrastructure may be adopted by the highways authorities, transferring maintenance responsibilities to the public sector. These agreements are particularly important for mitigating the impacts of development on the existing highway network and ensuring safe and efficient access.

10.4   The Council's adopted Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be used to fund elements of strategic and growth-related infrastructure. However, it is recognised that CIL alone will not be sufficient to fund all Local Plan infrastructure requirements over the Plan period. Therefore, other funding mechanisms and partnerships will need to be explored.

10.5   Different types of infrastructure will require different approaches to securing delivery. The IDP outlines the main approach for each infrastructure item in the schedule; however, the precise mechanisms—whether through S106 agreements, planning conditions, other legal instruments, external funding sources, or a combination of these— will be determined through the development management process on a site-by-site basis.

10.6   The figure below illustrates the types of planning obligations and delivery mechanisms the Council may use to fund or secure different types of infrastructure; this excludes external funding sources.

Figure 10: Types of planning obligations and delivery mechanism to secure different types of infrastructure

Strategic infrastructure

District-wide infrastructure

Site-specific infrastructure

S106 AGREEMENTS
(standard/ retrospective/ phased/ in kind)

UNILATERAL UNDERTAKINGS

CIL

Developer's contributions in relation to transport measures

10.7   Strategic transport schemes that serve the whole district will be funded via CIL and/ or external funding where funding gap exists.

10.8   Where more than one site allocation in an area generates the need for a specific highways scheme, financial contributions will be sought through Section 106 Agreements. The approach to determine developers' contribution in relation to identified transport measures from each site allocation is as follows:

   a.   Transport measures or interventions are matched to those developments which result in that mitigation being required, based on available information in relation to trip generation and professional judgement

   b.   When considering traffic impacts of employment sites against residential sites, the dwelling equivalence based on forecast trip generation will be used as a suitable proxy

10.9 National Highways applies a vision and validate' approach (also known as 'monitor and manage'), as set out in DfT Circular 01/2022, which supports a shift from predicting traffic growth ('predict and provide') to planning for sustainable outcomes. This approach emphasises managing demand through sustainable travel measures, monitoring network performance, and implementing interventions only where necessary to maintain safety and reliability on the Strategic Road Network.

10.10 Under this approach, development proposals for site allocations will demonstrate how vehicle trip generation would continually be lower than the worst-case scenario baseline across the Plan period, which is the target set in their traffic monitoring and management plan. If, through monitoring, development fails to reach its target, contributions towards mitigation would be triggered.

10.11 The costs and mitigation measures in the IDP are based on the worst-case assumptions. It does not include the cost of monitoring, which is to be funded by developers.

10.12 Where development fails to reach its target, and contributions are triggered, the expected contributions for each development allocation will be reviewed and updated once greater certainty is available regarding the design, costs, and external funding of key strategic transport projects. The IDP Part B assumes that external funding is not available in calculating the developers contribution to inform site viability and ensure that critical projects can and will be delivered to support planned growth in worst-case scenarios.

Developer's contributions in relation to education infrastructure

10.13 The approach to calculate developers' contribution to education and early years is as follows:

a. Education infrastructure should be primarily funded from S106 contributions. This ensures that development directly mitigates its own impact on school capacity.

b. ESCC's general approach is to identify specific education projects or interventions in terms of additional new capacity. Where new schools are needed, all developments are expected to provide contributions (financial and non-financial) to adequately mitigate their impacts, this needs to be considered holistically based on

strategic development proposals and the mitigation required to meet the needs of the new communities.

c.   Where no specific project has been identified, all developments over a certain threshold will be required to make a general financial contribution towards education and early years provision as per the ESCC updated figures for calculating development contributions (ESCC, 2015).

Developer's contributions in relation to healthcare infrastructure

10.14   The approach to apportionment in relation to healthcare facilities is as follows:

a.   Schemes for new or extended/ upgraded health facilities will be matched to those developments which result in that scheme being required.

b.   The costs of each scheme will be apportioned based on the level of impact arising from each of these developments (the number of homes delivered).

c.   Where no specific project has been identified, developments over a certain threshold may also be required to make a more general contribution towards GP surgery capacity.

Developer's contributions in relation to sports facilities

10.15   The Council will refer to Sport England's playing pitch calculator to inform planning applications and S106 agreements with regards to developers' contributions.

Infrastructure that is not typically delivered or secured by developer's contributions

10.16   The following types of infrastructure are not typically delivered or secured by developer's contributions:

a. Dentists – dental services are provided by independent practitioners, with the addition of NHS funding to subsidise provision for NHS patients. It would not normally be the case for S106 to be sought for new dental capacity, unless part of a wider co-located health development.

b. Pharmacies – pharmacists are private practitioners, who receive NHS funding to provide free prescriptions to those qualifying, and additional NHS health services. It would not normally be the case for S106 to be sought for new pharmacy capacity, unless part of a wider co-located health development.

c. Secondary healthcare facilities such as hospitals are provided by hospital trusts, which are in turn receive funding from the Department of Health and Social Care. Planning obligations towards secondary healthcare are not regularly sought. Secondary healthcare facility requirement has not been identified in respect of planned growth in the district.

d. Utilities – most types of strategic utility upgrades are subject to separate charging regimes for the connection of new development. It is anticipated that providers will meet most of the costs of strategic upgrades unless stated otherwise in the IDP Part B.

e. Broadband – off-site broadband upgrades are coordinated by ESCC and are not normally expected to be funded through S106.

Understanding the IDP Part B (Schedule)

10.17   Part B (the Schedule) of the IDP presents the headline findings on the infrastructure required to support growth across the Plan period, as well as the estimated remaining funding gap. Consistent with the report's structure, the Schedule is organised into different infrastructure categories. The Schedule:

a. identifies the infrastructure needed to ensure all development is policy-compliant and capable of serving the additional population

b. outlines how the Council could prioritise and facilitate the delivery of infrastructure; and

c.   summarises potential funding sources that the Council could explore to meet its infrastructure requirements.

10.18   Chapters 1 to 10, together with the Schedule, should be read in conjunction with one another. Both should be reviewed periodically to reflect new information, including changes in adopted policies, emerging strategies, updated costs, and unexpected demographic shifts. This chapter explains the columns in the Schedule and provides guidance on how the information should be understood and applied.

Priority ranking of infrastructure

10.19   The proposed infrastructure interventions have been categorised according to their relative importance in supporting the delivery of the Local Plan, ranging from critical to desirable.

Priority ranking	Criteria
Critical	The infrastructure proposed is critical to the delivery of planned development as well as the overall spatial strategy objectives and should be identified as a priority at the appropriate stage in relation to implementation of the Local Plan.
Essential	The infrastructure proposed is required to support the planned development as well as overall spatial strategy objectives but does not need to be prioritised.
Desirable	The infrastructure proposed does not support significant development taking place but will facilitate the delivery of the overall spatial strategy objectives.

Timeframe of delivery

Timeframe	Explanation
Short term	Within 5 years.
Medium term	5-10 years.
Long term	More than 10 years.

Risk to delivery

10.20　In addition to priority ranking, each infrastructure intervention has been assessed in terms of the risk to its successful delivery. This reflects the degree of certainty associated with securing funding, identifying sites, resolving land assembly issues, and achieving political and community support. The following risk categories have been applied to provide a clear understanding of potential delivery challenges:

Risk	Explanation
High	Fundamental constraints attached to the delivery of the scheme e.g. no clear funding stream, no site identified, land/site assembly issues.
Medium	Some constraints attached to the delivery of the scheme.
Low	Strong certainty of delivery – costs identified, funding in place, political and community support.

Delivery partners

10.21　Infrastructure provision is a shared responsibility, as neither the Council nor individual stakeholders can deliver the full package of interventions in isolation. The Council's role is to coordinate and facilitate delivery through a diverse range of partners, each operating under specific frameworks. For clarity, a 'Delivery Partner' refers to any strategic stakeholder (public or private) involved in the planning, design, technical approval, or funding of infrastructure; they are not necessarily the body that directly delivers the infrastructure itself. These partnerships function based on the below principles:

a.　**Collaborative delivery:** The Council works with partners to oversee aspects such as modelling, preliminary design, or safety auditing. However, the role of a partner varies; while some may manage projects directly, others act solely in a technical or regulatory capacity.

b.　**Funding and contributions:** Financial arrangements differ across the delivery framework and between delivery partners. Certain infrastructure providers accept direct developer contributions to fund works whilst other strategic partners do not accept contributions and instead require developers to fund and implement the works themselves.

c.   **<u>Governance and legal agreements:</u>** Where a partner does not act as the delivery body, projects are typically governed by direct legal agreements—such as S278 agreements—between the developer and the relevant infrastructure authority. This ensures that the developer remains responsible for delivery while meeting the authority's technical and safety standards.

Estimated cost to be apportioned to LDP sites

10.22   The 'Estimated Cost to be apportioned to LDP Sites' and 'Relevant LDP sites/ settlement' columns in the Schedule outline high-level figures to be contributed by site allocations in the Local Plan. The Council acknowledges that there may be a need to consider instances where one developer has provided land and/or delivered infrastructure which will be used by several sites. In these cases, it is necessary to ensure that contributions provided by individual sites and developments will be proportionate and equitable, and to ensure that viability of individual schemes is not unduly affected. Detailed discussions with all relevant stakeholders will be required as and when detailed schemes / planning proposals are being put forward.

10.23   It is important to note that any costs in the IDP are based on a `reasonable' approach for plan-making, and represent the infrastructure and mitigation required in relation to the growth proposed and details provided at that time. The amount of contributions actually required may be different as it will be based on actual quantum, unit mix, project cost, viability considerations and detail design etc. at the time of the application. The details of the contributions will be linked to the latest evidence such as Transport Statements and Transport Assessments at the planning application stage, and when more details about the development are known.

Indicative nature of costs

10.24   As outlined in Chapter 1, an IDP provides a 'snapshot in time' of infrastructure requirements. The information supplied by infrastructure providers will inevitably evolve, reflecting changing priorities, needs, and circumstances. Therefore, the IDP should be regarded as a live document, with the figures in the Schedule treated as indicative rather than prescriptive. Infrastructure requirements to support growth will naturally change over the Plan period, and future iterations of the IDP may remove or update items as more detailed data becomes available.

10.25   While some schemes—such as highways interventions—have undergone more detailed costing, many others are based on a combination of best estimates, forward projections, and historical precedents. In most cases, costs are not derived from detailed designs, highlighting the need for caution in their interpretation.

10.26   All costs presented in the Schedule exclude land acquisition costs. This approach is considered appropriate, as estimated land values would still omit site-specific factors, such as abnormal development costs, and would therefore not materially improve the robustness of the cost assessment.

Current funding gap vs Remaining funding gap

10.27   **Current funding gap:** Reflects the situation at the time of writing. It should be noted that funding information is not available for some projects. In certain areas, it is expected that developers will cover the full costs, while in other areas, further work is required among relevant stakeholders to identify funding opportunities and apportion costs appropriately to site owners and other parties.

10.28   **Remaining funding gap:** Represents the current funding gap minus the estimated costs expected to be met through contributions from site allocations. This provides an indication of the residual infrastructure funding shortfall that will need to be addressed through alternative sources or strategic prioritisation.