



Rother District Local Plan 2025 - 2042

# **Development Strategy**

## **Background Paper - Update**

Draft (Regulation 18) Version – January 2026



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# 1. Introduction

## Purpose

- 1.1. This Background Paper has been prepared to support the preparation of the new Rother Local Plan and forms part of the Local Plan evidence base. It focusses on the Development Strategy for the district and the key planning considerations informing this. The Development Strategy sets out the framework for the amount and distribution of new development across the district over the plan period of 2025-2042, including for new housing and business space. It is an integral part of the Local Plan and provides the overall spatial approach to the delivery of sustainable development locally, in line with national planning policy.
- 1.2. A Development Strategy Background Paper (April 2024) was published in support of the Council's first Regulation 18 stage public consultation on the Draft Rother Local Plan 2020-2040, which commenced in April 2024. This report provides an update to that Background Paper in support of the second Regulation 18 stage public consultation on the Draft Rother Local Plan 2025-2042, which commenced in January 2026. When read together, the Background Papers help to illustrate how the Development Strategy has been considered and evolved through the preparation of the new Local Plan.
- 1.3. This Background Paper Update does not seek to repeat information presented in the previous report. Rather, the intention here is to provide updates to the key considerations informing the preparation of the Development Strategy. This includes changes to the legislative and policy framework for plan production, new evidence base, and feedback from public consultation – all of which have factored in the selection of the Council's 'preferred approach' for the Development Strategy, as set out in the Draft Local Plan (2026), when considered against other reasonable alternatives,

## 2. Planning Policy Framework

2.1. The following section sets out key changes to the planning policy framework guiding the preparation of the Local Plan, building on and updating the information set out in the Development Strategy Background Paper (2024).

### Legislation

- 2.2. The **Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023** (LURA) received Royal Assent in October 2023. The LURA is a wide-ranging piece of legislation focussing mainly on local governance, planning reform and regeneration / economic development, and therefore has key implications for local planning. However, several of its provisions are awaiting further Regulations or secondary legislation to bring them into force. It was expected that a new plan-making system under the LURA would be in place by the end of 2024, but following a change in Government timings have shifted, with, at the time of writing, the publication of further policy or legislation pending.
- 2.3. Notably, the LURA introduced the ‘landscape duty’, which primarily concerns the management and conservation of Protected Landscapes in England, which include National Parks and National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). This duty requires relevant authorities, such as local councils and planning authorities, to actively seek to further the statutory purpose(s) of these landscapes rather than merely having regard to them. This is significant given that some 83 per cent of Rother district is covered by the High Weald National Landscape. The statutory purpose of National Landscapes is “*conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty*”.
- 2.4. The Government’s Department for Transport (DfT) **Circular 01/2022 - Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development** advocates a new ‘vision-led’ approach to transport planning, which is now embedded in the NPPF (2024). The approach represents a departure from the ‘predict and provide’ model for transport planning, impact assessments and mitigations to the highway network. At its heart, the Circular seeks an integrated approach to transport and land-use planning, as well as place-making, with a focus on reducing car use and encouraging modal shift.
- 2.5. The **Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025** received Royal Assent in December 2025. The Act follows on from the LURA as its main aims are to streamline the

planning system as well as to better enable the delivery of critical infrastructure, particularly to support the Government's growth agenda. The Act includes planning reforms to facilitate cross-boundary working to address development and infrastructure needs. This includes the production of new sub-regional Spatial Development Strategies, which will set the framework for and guide the preparation of Local Plans in the future.

- 2.6. The **English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill** is making its way through parliament. The Bill aims to reshape the overall governance structure in England by rebalancing power away from Central government. This would happen through 'Devolution' and the introduction of strategic authorities with elected Mayors (covering areas wider than counties, with a population of roughly 1.5 million), along with 'Local Government Reorganisation' by replacing the current two-tier system of local authority areas with unitary authorities. The provisions link to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, with the devolved strategic authorities responsible for producing Spatial Development Strategies.
- 2.7. The Minister of State for Housing and Planning, on 25 November 2025, wrote to the Planning Inspectorate to set out that Government intends to revoke the **Duty to Cooperate** for the current plan-making system. This will be formalised by further legislation, which at the time of writing this report, is pending and yet to come into force. However, the Minister has also made clear that Local Planning Authorities should continue to collaborate across their boundaries, including on unmet development needs from neighbouring areas

### **National planning policy and guidance**

- 2.8. An updated **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** was published on 12 December 2024, which sets the Government's policies for plan-making and decision-taking in England. The revised NPPF introduced significant changes to the national policies and associated national Planning Practice Guidance, including:
  - The introduction of mandatory housing targets for plan-making authorities;
  - Revised approaches to housing needs assessments, including the Government's national 'standard method' for calculating local housing need in a local authority area;

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- Provisions around environmental and landscape protection, including National Landscapes;
- Renewed emphasis on the need for strategic planning across authority areas, within the context of the Duty to Cooperate; and
- New provisions for Green Belt land to enable housing development whilst protecting the principal function of the Green Belt.

2.9. On 16 December 2025, the Government published a consultation revised NPPF. The consultation is, at the time of writing, still open and due to close on 10 March 2026. The consultation NPPF proposes wide-ranging reforms to the planning system, building on the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, with the central themes around boosting housing delivery, economic growth and new procedures for plan-making.

2.10. The national **Planning Policy for Traveller Sites** (PPTS, updated 2024) sets out the Government's planning policy. Paragraphs 4 and 9 of the PPTS confirm that local planning authorities (LPAs) should make their own assessments of accommodation needs and, through Local Plans, set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers, and plot targets for travelling showpeople, which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring LPAs. It requires LPAs to identify, and update annually, a supply of specific, deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets; and a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for years 6-10, and where possible, for years 11-15.

## Regional and local planning policies and guidance

2.11. The **East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 2024-2050** (LTP4) was adopted in October 2024. Local Transport Plans are a requirement of the Transport Act 200, which provides that such plans must set out both an overall strategy and implementation plans. Key changes to this latest version of the plan include an increased emphasis on climate change, the need to decarbonise transport, and how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted user needs and the way in which people choose to travel. Furthermore, transport accessibility, equity and inclusiveness, and the opportunities to support healthy lifestyles have become a priority for transport investment.

2.12. The **East Sussex Climate Emergency Plan 2025-2030 and Climate Emergency Roadmap** set out an evidence base, objectives and action plan to achieving the vision for East Sussex to be a net zero and climate resilient county. The documents support wider national policies and objectives around climate change mitigation and adaptation.

2.13. The **Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove** (2025) is an emerging document that is relevant to the Local Plan. Nature Recovery Strategies are a legal requirement arising from the Environment Act 2021. They are spatial strategies which, when adopted, will cover the whole of England, intended to drive more coordinated, practical and focused action on nature recovery, including biodiversity net gain.

2.14. The **High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2024-2029** covers the extent of the High Weald National Landscape, large parts of which are situated in Rother district. The Plan is divided into two sections. The first describes the core components of natural beauty to be conserved and enhanced, along with key ambitions and proposed actions for stakeholders. The second section addresses the main drivers of change (or cross-cutting themes) affecting the High Weald, providing principles to underpin activities and a strategy for investment 2024-2029.

2.15. There are **neighbouring authorities** to Rother that have **adopted or emerging Local Plans**. These need to be considered during the preparation of Rother's new Local Plan. This will help to ensure coordination on strategic, cross-boundary matters. The Council is continuing to engage with neighbouring authorities through the Duty to Cooperate. Key adopted plans include Ashford Local Plan (2019); Folkestone and Hythe Core Strategy Review (2022); Wealden District Core Strategy (2013); Tunbridge Wells Local Plan (2025); Hastings Planning Strategy (2014); Eastbourne Core Strategy (2013) and Eastbourne Borough Plan saved policies (2003); and Lewes District Core Strategy: Local Plan Part 1 (2016).

2.16. Rother District Council adopted a new **Council Plan 2025-2029** on 16 December 2024. The Plan sets out what the Council aims to achieve by 2028 and beyond, reflecting its ongoing commitment to fostering a vibrant and resilient district. To achieve the vision for the district, the Council Plan outlines three supporting themes against which medium term priorities and progress can be identified – A Thriving

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Local Economy, Live Well Locally, and Green to the Core. These are underpinned by a 'Fit for the Future programme', which ensures that the Council can deliver the priorities through effective and efficient services.

- 2.17. There are currently 9 made (adopted) **Neighbourhood Plans** in the district, which form part of the statutory development plan. These cover the following areas: Battle; Burwash; Crowhurst; Hurst Green; Peasmash; Rye; Saleshurst & Robertsbridge; Sedlescombe; and Ticehurst. The Neighbourhood Plans include policies which help to support the implementation of the strategic policies set out in the Local Plan.

### 3. Evidence base

3.1. The following section provides an overview of new and updated evidence base which needs to be considered during the preparation of the Local Plan, and particularly for the Development Strategy.

#### Local housing need in Rother

- 3.2. The NPPF stipulates that the national '**standard method**' should be used to assess the minimum amount of housing required in an area. This takes existing housing stock estimates and applies an upward adjustment based on the affordability characteristics of the area.
- 3.3. At the time of the first Regulation 18 consultation on the draft Rother Local Plan in summer 2024, the standard method yielded a figure for the district of 733 net new homes per year. The NPPF was then updated in December 2024 along with changes to the standard method. It now yields a figure for the district of 912 net new homes per year. Over the 17-year plan period of 2025-2042, this amounts to a need of 15,504 net new homes. The annual housing need figure is subject to change on a yearly basis, and the Council will therefore monitor any updates to the standard method and its outputs as work on the plan progresses.
- 3.4. To put the Government's latest housing need figure into context, the adopted Rother Core Strategy Local Plan (2014) sets out a housing target of 335 net new homes per year. The standard method figure is roughly 3-times higher. Furthermore, monitoring records show that the Core Strategy housing target has not been met on a regular basis, with approximately 215 new homes per year having been built on average.
- 3.5. The national standard method deals with the overall number of new homes needed in Rother. It does not address other types of housing needs, such as housing size, tenure and type. It is up to the Council to assess these needs separately as it produces the Local Plan. It has therefore prepared a **Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HENDA)** jointly with Hastings Borough Council, as the respective authorities share a housing market area. Key findings of the HENDA (2024) included: a significant need for affordable housing throughout the district including rental and open market affordable housing; a need for specialist housing for older people; and a need for all sizes of dwellings but particularly smaller

dwellings to suit those looking to downsize and for first-time buyers. The Council intends to review the HEDNA shortly, ensuring it remains up-to-date, and will continue to use the study to inform the preparation of the Local Plan.

## **Economic development needs**

3.6. Rother district and Hastings borough also form part of a Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA). The **HEDNA (2024)** includes an assessment of need for employment land and floorspace across the FEMA. It identifies future employment requirements for Rother up to 2040, as set out in Figure 1 below, based on a forecast of 3,800 new jobs across all sectors.

*Figure 1: Rother employment requirement (2020-2040)<sup>1</sup>*

Measure	Office	Industrial	Storage and Distribution	Total
Land (ha)	7.6	6.3	10.8	<b>24.7</b>
Floorspace (sqm)	22,776	18,991	32,422	<b>74,189</b>

3.7. In reviewing Rother's pipeline of employment land supply (i.e., extant planning permissions and adopted site allocations), the HEDNA indicates that there is sufficient capacity in Rother to meet identified needs in full. However, there are variations between sectors, with a sufficient supply (oversupply) expected for office and industrial uses in the district but a shortfall for storage and distribution. Consideration may need to be given to a targeted restructuring of the employment land stock to meet these needs, subject to the findings of the updated HEDNA in 2026.

3.8. Since the HEDNA was produced, the Council has published an **Employment Land Supply Position Statement (December 2024)**. This identifies that 3 large sites in Rother, with outline planning permission for employment uses, have dropped out of the supply pipeline for various reasons. Therefore, the Council can no longer rely

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<sup>1</sup> A HEDNA update will be prepared and will identify requirements up to 2042 to cover the revised plan period.

on these sites to contribute towards meeting the district's employment needs. As a result, the Council will need to identify additional capacity to meet this need, and this is being considered through the preparation of the Local Plan.

- 3.9. The Council has produced the **Rother Retail and Town Centre Uses Study** (2023) to inform the preparation of the Local Plan. This study includes a needs (capacity) assessment for retail floorspace within the District over a 10-year period, in line with the direction of the NPPF, looking at both 'convenience' and 'comparison' goods. Overall, the assessment concludes that there is no need at the district-level for new retail floorspace over 10 years. The study also looks at a wider range of main town centre uses - these are broadly captured under the term 'commercial leisure' uses. It concludes that commercial leisure is a dynamic and rapidly evolving sector that is difficult to forecast for over the long-term.

#### **Needs for gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople accommodation**

- 3.10. The Council has worked with the other East Sussex LPAs to commission a joint **Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA)** (2022). This study provides a summary of permanent and transit accommodation needs for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople across the county, and also across each district and borough, over the period 2021 to 2040. An update to the East Sussex GTAA is in progress and will be completed in 2026, to give an up-to-date picture of need to the end of the plan period (2042).
- 3.11. The GTAA (2022) identifies a need<sup>2</sup> in Rother for permanent pitches as set in Figure 2.

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<sup>2</sup> The GTAA (2022) pre-dates changes to the definition of "gypsies and travellers" in national planning policy although the "ethnic definition" used in the Assessment aligns with the current government definition (i.e. based on the ethnic identity of gypsies and travellers, not taking into account whether they have permanently ceased to travel or not). The need figures detailed here are those of the "ethnic" definition.

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Figure 2: Rother gypsy and traveller pitches requirement (2020-2040)

	2021-2026	2026-2031	2031-2036	2036-2041	Total
Permanent pitch need (number of pitches)	14	4	5	5	28

3.12. Ten new pitches with permanent permission have been approved since the base date of the GTAA, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. Deducting this from the GTAA pitch requirement, and adjusting the year brackets to account for the plan period, means that the overall outstanding requirement to 2040, which the Local Plan must provide for, is as follows in 3:

Figure 3: Rother gypsy and traveller pitches outstanding requirement (2025-2040)<sup>3</sup>

	2025-2030	2030-2035	2035-2040	Total
Permanent pitch need (number of pitches)	7 (4 left over from 21-26, +3 from previous 26-31)	5 (1 from 26-31, +4 from 31-36)	6 (1 from 31-36, +5 from previous 36-40 figure)	18

3.13. The GTAA (2022) also assessed needs for transit sites, which provide temporary accommodation for gypsy and traveller households travelling through the area. The assessment found that while there may be a need for additional transit provision in the county, there is currently insufficient evidence to determine the number of additional transit pitches required.

3.14. The GTAA (2022) found there are no travelling showpeople yards in the district, and just 1 yard in the county, in Wealden district. While there is expected to be a demand for a small number of additional plots for travelling showpeople to 2040, this is expected to arise from natural population growth and should be met close to the existing yard in Wealden. There is no specific evidence of travelling showpeople accommodation need within Rother.

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<sup>3</sup> Taking account of pitches delivered/ permitted between 1 April 2021 and October 2025.

3.15. The GTAA also considered the accommodation needs of boat-dwellers but found that there is a lack of navigable waterways within East Sussex and few suitable locations for moorings, and a lack of evidence to quantify any accommodation need.

### **Infrastructure needs**

3.16. The Council has prepared updated draft **Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2026)**. This looks at the current situation and future requirement for different types of infrastructure, according to the following main categories:

- Transport and movement
- Community and cultural facilities
- Education
- Health and social care
- Green and blue infrastructure and flood defence
- Utility and energy
- Emergency and security services

3.17. The latest draft IDP has been informed by new technical evidence and ongoing engagement with key stakeholders. The Council will continue to work with infrastructure providers and others to update and refine the IDP as work on the Local Plan progresses. This will ensure they can take account of the latest demographic projections as well as the Council's current position on the Local Plan housing requirement, spatial development strategy and portfolio of site allocations, to ensure that new development is served by the right level of infrastructure in the right places. A final Draft IDP will be published at the Regulation 19 stage consultation of the plan process.

### **Housing and economic development land availability**

3.18. A Draft **Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)** (2024) was published alongside the first Regulation 18 consultation on the draft Rother Local Plan. The study helped to inform considerations on the emerging Development Strategy and indicative housing growth figures. Since then, the HELAA has been reviewed and updated. As part of this review, the Council has:

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- Relaunched the ‘Call for Sites’ in summer 2025, which has been open since Autumn 2020 (and remains open), and assessed new sites submitted<sup>4</sup>;
- Reviewed representations on the first Regulation 18 consultation on the Draft Rother Local Plan (April 2024), including comments on the Draft HELAA;
- Checked planning records to confirm the latest status of sites with planning permission (i.e., not started, under construction, built or lapsed);
- Re-assessed Draft HELAA sites to determine whether they are suitable for development. This includes re-assessing previously rejected sites, particularly those known to be available, to determine whether development could be made acceptable in principle across all or part of the site<sup>5</sup>;
- Undertaken extensive site visits;
- Engaged with landowners and developers to understand whether land identified is available for development, and if so, the expected timeframes for this; and
- Re-assessed the development potential of suitable sites by considering density options, to ensure the optimal use of land.

3.19. The **HELAA (2026)** has been produced in line with national planning policy and guidance. It is a comprehensive study that reflects how the Council has ‘left no stone unturned’ in its process of identifying land in suitable locations and specific sites to meet the district’s development needs. Over 900 sites have been assessed as part of this study. All sites that have been assessed through the revised Draft HELAA (2026) as suitable, available and achievable have been taken forward as proposed site allocations in the new Local Plan.

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<sup>4</sup> The Call for Sites provides the public with an opportunity to submit sites for consideration as potential development sites for inclusion in the Local Plan.

<sup>5</sup> Further details are set out in the local plan evidence base, including the HELAA.

3.20. Associated with the HELAA is the Council's **Density Study**, which provides a basis for understanding the indicative development capacity that could potentially be delivered on identified sites. A Density Study (2024) was prepared to support the first Regulation 18 draft Rother Local Plan.

3.21. The NPPF (2024) states that “where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site”. Accordingly, the Council has reviewed and updated the **Density Study (2026)**. It has also considered various density options for development in different locations of the district (through the Sustainability Appraisal). This is necessary to inform approaches to maximising housing delivery, as much as reasonably practical, to meet identified needs whilst ensuring that development densities are appropriate to their context (having regard to local character, infrastructure capacity and landscape sensitivity).

### **The Plan Period**

3.22. The period covered by the Local Plan (“the Plan Period”) has changed since the draft Local Plan was published in 2024. A Plan Period covering 2020 – 2040 was initially proposed. However time has moved on, and the Council now considers it appropriate to revise the Plan Period to 2025 – 2042. This is because the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) requires local planning authorities to have an up-to-date plan, with strategic policies that cover a period of at least 15-years from the date it is adopted. Moving the Plan Period on, to end in 2042, will ensure the Council meets this requirement if the Local Plan is adopted, as anticipated, in 2027. Where, appropriate, evidence base documents will be updated to respond to the slight amendment to the Plan Period.

## 4. Revisiting the key issues for the Development Strategy

4.1. The Development Strategy Background Paper (2024) identified the key strategic issues for the Local Plan and the preparation of the Development Strategy. These issues are considered by the Council to remain relevant in the context of delivering sustainable development, consistent with the NPPF. However, given changes to the planning policy framework and new evidence base, as discussed above, there are several key issues which are important to highlight at this stage of the plan-making process.

### **Environmental and land-use constraints**

4.2. Through the new Local Plan, the Council must assess the extent to which identified needs for development can be met, including housing needs calculated using the Government's 'standard method'. For Rother, there are key environmental and other constraints that limit the amount of land suitable for the future development of housing and other types of development.

4.3. The presence of the High Weald National Landscape, which covers some 83 per cent of the district, is a significant constraint to major development as it is given the highest level of protection in relation to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty both by the NPPF and legislation. Rother also contains internationally and nationally designated habitats sites, covering roughly 7 per cent of the district, that must be conserved. Other constraints include areas at risk of flooding, many heritage assets and the highest proportion of ancient woodland (compared to land area) in South-East England.

### **Land availability**

4.4. It is important that there is a sufficient supply of land and sites that are 'deliverable and developable', as defined by the NPPF, that can demonstrably contribute towards meeting identified development needs in the district. The HELAA (2026) explains how the Council has left 'no stone unturned' in its process of seeking to identify suitable land and sites for future development, and which can be allocated in the new Local Plan to help give certainty about their future use in this respect. The Council has also prepared an updated Density Study (2026) to explore opportunities to optimise the use of land (and maximise development on it), and this has informed considerations for the indicative development capacities of sites in the HELAA.

4.5. Despite these rigorous assessment exercises, the Council has identified a shortfall of anticipated housing land supply to meet the Government's local housing need figure in full, as set out in Figure 4. This will require further consideration as work on the plan progresses, including opportunities for neighbouring authorities to accommodate some or all of Rother's unmet housing need through the Duty to Cooperate. However, the Council is currently in a good position with respect to meeting the district's identified needs for economic development and gypsy and traveller accommodation. Further details are set out in Chapter 3 of the Draft Rother Local Plan (2026).

#### **Securing the timely delivery of infrastructure to support growth**

4.6. The Local Plan must ensure there is a clear framework in place to not only identify the different types of infrastructure required in the district now and over the long-term, but also to facilitate the delivery of this where and when it is needed. The draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2026) is an important evidence base document that supports both the preparation and implementation of the Local Plan; the latest version of this sets out future requirements for different types of infrastructure, including existing or expected gaps in provision. The Council will continue to engage with infrastructure providers and other key stakeholders to ensure that the levels of growth and development envisaged by the Local Plan can be adequately supported.

*Figure 4: Current position on housing need and supply*

Identified housing need (national standard method)	Dwellings
Standard method = 912 dwellings annually x 17-years (2024-2042)	<b>15,504</b>
Unmet need from other authorities that can be accommodated in Rother	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,504</b>
Sources of housing land supply	Dwellings
Housing completions	
Completions 2025/2026, from 1 <sup>st</sup> year of plan period	To be included from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2026
Committed sites	
Planning permissions (including resolution to grant) as of 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2025	

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Permitted site allocations	
Permitted large windfall (non-allocated sites) (5+ units)	
Prior approval (for change of use to residential, 5+ units)	
Existing (adopted) site allocations (without planning consent)	
Subtotal	<b>2,830</b>
<b>Housing windfalls</b>	
Small site allowance of 39 units annually, starting Year 4 of plan period	<b>546</b>
<b>New/updated site allocations<sup>6</sup></b>	
Existing (adopted) site allocations (without planning consent) with revised capacity (residual figure) <sup>7</sup>	
New site allocations (without planning consent, as of 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2025)	
Subtotal	<b>5,051</b>
<b>Unmet need accommodated outside Rother</b>	
Unmet need agreed to be accommodated in other authority areas	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,427</b>

<sup>6</sup> Existing (adopted) site allocations (with planning consent) are included in the permitted development category

<sup>7</sup> The residual figure (additional capacity) arises from an expanded site area and/or a higher density assumption, than set out in the adopted site allocation policy.

## 5. Development Strategy options and preferred approaches

5.1. The following section provides an overview of the preparation of the Development Strategy to-date, building on information contained in the Development Strategy Background Paper (2024).

### **Draft Rother Local Plan (2024)**

5.2. At the early stage of the plan process, the Council considered various options for the Development Strategy for the district. The assessment of these options informed the selection of an emerging ‘preferred approach’, which was set out in the first draft Rother Local Plan (2024).

5.3. The initial list of options was compiled with reference to the Local Plan evidence base and considered the following factors:

- The existing distribution of settlements across the district, their scale and importance in the settlement hierarchy;
- The transport network and the connectivity and interaction between settlements in relation to accessing services and facilities;
- The development potential outside the High Weald National Landscape (formerly known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty);
- Opportunities for new settlements, or significant extensions to existing settlements; and
- Opportunities for development on the edge of the District boundary where it is close or adjacent to other settlements.

5.4. In total, there were 13 options initially identified as high-level, ‘in principle’ strategic growth options for the Development Strategy. These are set out in Appendix 1 of this Background Paper – the table is duplicated from the Draft Local Plan (2026) and Interim Sustainability Appraisal (2026). The options were then assessed by the Interim Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (2024). Findings from the SA and other evidence base documents were used to inform the selection of an emerging

‘preferred approach’, as set out in the first draft Rother Local Plan (2024). This comprised a combination of options.

- 5.5. The Development Strategy options were considered in terms of their feasibility, amongst other criteria, by taking account of findings of the Draft HELAA (2024). Options were generally appraised less favourably where there was an insufficient supply of identified sites to enable their delivery in practical terms. In this way, the Development Strategy reflected the broad distribution of deliverable sites identified in the draft HELAA.

## **Consultation Feedback on the Draft Rother Local Plan (2024)**

- 5.6. The following is a summary of main issues and comments raised on Chapter 5 of the Draft Local Plan (2024), dealing with the Development Strategy. Further details on the public consultation and feedback received on the Chapter 5, as well as other chapters of the plan, are set out in the Interim Consultation Statement (2026).
- 5.7. The main issues and other comments raised by representations on the Development Strategy proposals were:
  - Whether the Development Strategy is appropriate and deliverable. This reflects a wide range of comments on the Development Strategy options, including support and objections to selected options together with concerns that the preferred approach, combining multiple options, will not provide for a cohesive strategy.
  - Concerns about the levels of growth being planned for with suggestions that this will lead to overdevelopment, particularly in rural areas and the countryside.
  - Site promoters, developers and agents indicate that the Council must seek to meet identified needs for housing in full.
  - Concerns about the coalescence of settlements and the loss or compromising of strategic gaps.
  - Concerns about growth being planned in areas at risk of flooding or where water/wastewater infrastructure is insufficient.

- Concerns that growth and new development will not be adequately supported by infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. This includes concerns about the lack of public transport and that new development may create or add to existing issues of traffic and congestion on the highway network.
- Concerns about the adverse impact of growth and new development on local character, the National Landscape, protected habitats and agricultural land, and whether allowing for development on greenfield land is appropriate.
- A wide range of comments on visions for spatial areas of the district along with potential development sites within them, as identified in the Draft Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. This includes objections to and issues raised with specific sites. Conversely, landowners and agents indicate support for sites as well as seeking clarifications on the outcomes of the HELAA (e.g. why some sites have been discounted or considered unsuitable).
- Clarifications sought on proposed policy DEV3 concerning development boundaries. Concerns that the policy is vague or lacks clarify (does not sufficiently define 'appropriate development' outside of the boundaries) and will ultimately lead to harmful development in the countryside. Site promoters, developers and agents suggesting the policy may preclude appropriate development from coming forward.
- Whether the proposed policy DEV5 concerning strategic gaps is appropriate and justified. This includes support for the approach together with suggestions for additional gaps to be set out in the Local Plan, and conversely, concerns that these may preclude new development coming forward to meet identified needs.
- Clarifications sought on the role of Neighbourhood Plans, together with suggestions that the Draft Local Plan should be informed by Neighbourhood Plans.
- Objections to the use of a stepped trajectory to manage the delivery of housing over the plan period.

## **Refining the preferred approach: assessing additional options**

5.8. As noted above, there were a wide range of comments received from the public during on the proposed Development Strategy, as set out in the Draft Rother Local Plan (2024). This included suggestions for additional options which the Council had not previously considered. Therefore, it prepared additional options based on this feedback, as discussed below. These additional options were considered at the second Regulation 18 stage of the plan process, as set out in Appendix 1 of the Background Paper.

### **A21 Corridor Option**

5.9. At the first Regulation 18 consultation, an 'A21 growth corridor' option was considered and taken forward as part of the preferred Development Strategy. This option provided for development along the A21 trunk road within an identified corridor of settlements, together with a sustainable transport corridor (including improved sustainable travel options such as bus routes, cycling and walking infrastructure). Representations to the consultation, including from statutory bodies, raised concerns with the deliverability of this option due to a lack of identified funding and justification for potential works to the Strategic Road Network, and need for further cross-boundary discussions with relevant authorities.

5.10. The latest HELAA findings indicate that there are potential development sites in some of the larger settlements along the A21 corridor that can assist in meeting Rother's identified development needs. As such, the Council considered that there is still merit in exploring an option for new development in this area. Rather than wholesale growth along all settlements within the corridor, the revised option is for focussed development only within and on the edges of those larger settlements which already have a level of services and facilities and offer existing opportunities for sustainable travel (including improvements to bus services, cycling and walking infrastructure).

New spatial development option	Description/ vision	Focus areas for growth in settlements/ areas of built form
<b>SDO13 – A21 corridor growth, focussed within</b>	Development along the A21 road corridor, focussed within and around existing	The following settlement areas: Robertsbridge/Salehurst,

and around existing larger settlements.	settlements, where there is a reasonable level of local services.	Silverhill, Hurst Green, and Flimwell.
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5.11. The Council assessed this option through the Sustainability Appraisal process. Based on this, the Council is proposing to take this option forward for the Development Strategy. Overall, it is considered that the option will bring forward some larger sites in sustainable locations and provide for opportunities for enhanced cycle and walking routes within villages, benefiting both new and existing residents.

### **Strategic Gap Option**

5.12. It was suggested through the first Regulation 18 public consultation that opportunities should be explored to develop within the district's strategic gaps. This option had not previously been considered for the Development Strategy. Therefore, the Council has prepared and assessed an additional option based on this representation, as set out below:

New spatial development option	Description/vision	Focus areas for growth in settlements/ areas of built form
<b>SDO14 – Development within the strategic gaps</b>	Significant new development within identified strategic gaps, with new or improved linkages to the nearest settlements.	<p>The strategic gaps identified through the adopted Development and Site Allocations Local Plan (2019):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bexhill and Hastings/St Leonards – gap along the A259 corridor.</li> <li>• Crowhurst and Hastings/St Leonards – gap between the settlements, including between edge of Crowhurst to Hastings-London railway.</li> <li>• Battle and Hastings – gap between settlements, including edge of Telham and Breadsell Farm.</li> <li>• Fairlight and Hastings – boundary of Hastings borough and edge of Fairlight Cove.</li> <li>• Rye and Rye Harbour - between Rye citadel and Harbour Road industrial area/Rye Harbour village.</li> </ul>

5.13. This option was assessed through the SA process. Based on this, the Council is not proposing to take this option forward for the Development Strategy. Overall, it is considered that this option would undermine the principal intent of the strategic gaps, which is to: maintain the separate identity and distinctiveness between settlements; to maintain the strategic settlement pattern; and to prevent the coalescence of settlements. However, sites within the strategic gaps, and also more

localised green gaps adopted through Neighbourhood Plans, have been assessed through the HELAA process and consequently, it is important to note that the rejection of this option as part of the overall Development Strategy will not necessarily preclude future site allocations within one or more of the strategic gaps or Neighbourhood Plan green gaps (and a subsequent re-drawing of the strategic/green gap boundary), if a site is assessed as suitable, available and achievable.

## Reviewing Development Boundaries

5.14. Feedback from the first Regulation 18 consultation also included a suggestion that the development boundaries of settlements in the district should be amended and enlarged, so to enable more development to come forward within them. The Council notes that this option has already been considered through work on the plan to-date.<sup>8</sup> This option forms part of the emerging Development Strategy. However, at this time, it is proposed that this approach will comprise limited updates to existing development boundaries to reflect any new site allocations within or at the edge of settlements. The extent of development boundaries is therefore being considered through the plan process and will be contingent on the final site allocations policies.

## Reconsidering development densities

5.15. To support context-sensitive growth, Policy LWL1 of the draft Rother Local Plan (2024) divided Rother into five area types, each with tailored density expectations, as defined by Rother's Density Study (2024). These density figures are measured as dwellings per hectare (dph). This is shown by Figure 5 below.

*Figure 5: Density Options by Settlement Type (Policy LWL1, Draft Local Plan 2024)*

Area Type	Density Range (dph)	Notes
Urban areas in Bexhill, Battle and Rye	60–90+ dph	Strong infrastructure and public transport

<sup>8</sup> As set out in the Development Strategy Background Paper, spatial development strategy option SDO4 (Sustainable Settlement Growth) includes scope for the extension of settlement boundaries, where appropriate.

Suburban areas in Bexhill, Battle, Hastings Fringes and Rye	45–75 dph	Residential character, service proximity
Live Well Locally (Urban Edge of Bexhill)	45–60 dph	Planned strategic growth with new infrastructure
Villages with development boundaries	25–45 dph	Sensitive to historic and landscape context
Countryside (including villages and hamlets without development boundaries)	To reflect the existing character of the area	Rural character and policy constraints

5.16. Since the first Regulation 18 consultation, the Council has further examined whether these density expectations are appropriate, having regard to the need to optimise the use of land and maximise housing delivery.

5.17. To explore and help assess the appropriateness of different density levels across Rother's settlement types, three strategic 'in principle' options were developed, as set out in 6 below:

*Figure 6: Housing Density Options*

Density option	Principle	Description
<b>Option A.</b> Business as usual	Current density standard and baseline for comparison.	Reflects density levels based on the adopted Development and Site Allocation Local Plan.
<b>Option B.</b> Higher density	Higher density with a moderate uplift in development density (compared to the baseline).	<p><b>Urban areas (120dph):</b> Compact low-rise development at the lower end of the high-density spectrum.</p> <p><b>Suburban areas (60dph):</b> Low-rise development at the upper end of the medium-density spectrum.</p> <p><b>Live Well Locally Areas (40dph):</b> Low-rise development at the mid-range of medium density, located on the urban edge.</p> <p><b>Village Areas (35 dph):</b> Low-rise development at the lower end of the medium-density spectrum, with a strong emphasis on rural character, landscape sensitivity, and integration with existing village form and scale.</p>

<b>Option C.</b>  Higher density plus	<p>Higher density with a significant uplift in development density (compared to the baseline)</p> <p><b>Urban areas (150 dph):</b> Mid-to-high-rise development at the upper end of the high-density range.</p> <p><b>Suburban areas (75 dph):</b> Compact low-rise development at the lower end of the high-density spectrum.</p> <p><b>Live Well Locally Areas (50 dph):</b> Low-rise development at the higher range of medium density.</p> <p><b>Village Areas (40 dph):</b> Compact low-rise development at the mid-range of medium density, located in rural settlements.</p>
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5.18. The strategic density options have been established for the purpose of considering reasonable alternatives for housing density that could potentially be delivered on sites, along with their implications for housing capacity across the district. These have been based on good practice examples of higher density development achieved within the district as well as in other authority areas, including those with comparable attributes to Rother. The assessment of densities is based on assumptions of dwellings per hectare (dph) on sites, with ranges (and average densities within this range) which have been assigned for each of the area types.

5.19. Further information on the density options is set out in the evidence base, including the updated Density Study (2026). The options have also been appraised through the SA process, and the Interim Sustainability Appraisal (2026) published as part of should be referred to for further information.

## Scenario testing residential development density options

5.20. The residential density options set out in Figure 6 above have been ‘scenario’ tested to aid with understanding their implications for the amount (quantum) of housing development that could be delivered, in principle, both across the district and within the 5 sub-areas set out in the draft Rother Local Plan. Further details on the scenario testing exercise are set out in the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (2026).

5.21. In summary, the main outputs of the scenario testing exercise are set out in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Residential development density scenario testing

Sub-area	Developable area (hectares) <sup>9</sup> of site allocations	Option A capacity (units)	Option B capacity (units)	Option C capacity (units)
Bexhill	94	3,563	5,317	6,357
Southern Rother & Hastings Fringes	10	379	458	543
Battle and Surrounding Settlements	24	1,125	1,301	1,575
Rye and Eastern Settlements Cluster	22	931	1,190	1,429
Northern	31	718	959	1,078
<b>Rother District</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>6,716</b>	<b>9,225</b>	<b>10,982</b>

5.22. This assessment of options has led to a ‘preferred approach’ (Option B) for appropriate densities in the different area types, as shown in 8 below. The Council’s reasons for selecting this preferred approach are set out in the Sustainability Appraisal, which has informed this decision. Notably, the preferred approach density assumptions have then been used to inform the site allocations and proposed indicative development capacity for each.

Figure 8: Preferred approach for housing density, by area type

Area Type	Option B (Higher density)
Urban areas in Bexhill, Battle and Rye	110 – 125 dph (avg. 120)
Suburban areas in Bexhill, Battle, Hastings Fringes and Rye	45–75 dph (avg. 60)
Live Well Locally (Urban Edge of Bexhill)	35–55 dph (avg. 40)
Villages with development boundaries	25–45 dph (avg. 35)

<sup>9</sup> Figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

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Countryside (including villages and hamlets without development boundaries)	—
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5.23. The “preferred approach” density option is presented both as a density range and a simple average density for each area type, to reflect the diversity of housing forms and layouts within each context. The range captures the flexibility needed to respond to site-specific circumstances, design aspirations and infrastructure capacity, while the average offers a clear benchmark for strategic planning and comparative analysis. This dual approach supports more nuanced decision-making and avoids oversimplifying the character of different area types.

5.24. It is important to note that the actual density that will be delivered on sites across the district will be determined on a case-by-case basis, through the development management process and having regard to the adopted Local Plan.

## **Draft Rother Local Plan (2026)**

5.25. The Draft Rother Local Plan (2026) includes an updated proposed Development Strategy for the district, set out in Chapter 6 of the plan, which has been informed by the direction provided by the latest planning policy framework, new technical evidence (including the Sustainability Appraisal) and consultation feedback, as well as the applied assessment of this.

5.26. The proposed Development Strategy is as follows:

*The Council will meet the local need for all forms of housing, jobs, facilities and services by strengthening Rother’s pattern of development through a landscape-led spatial development strategy that focuses on the ‘Live Well Locally’ concept. To achieve this, a minimum of 7,881 dwellings<sup>10</sup> and a minimum of 74,189 sqm<sup>11</sup> additional employment floorspace will be constructed by the end of the Plan period in 2042. Bexhill will continue to be a town that acts as a main transport and community hub. A network of settlements*

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<sup>10</sup> This excludes the housing windfall allowance.

<sup>11</sup> This excludes the housing windfall allowance. 40 The stated employment target in this box is the employment need figure in the HEDNA, 2024. The employment figures presented as a range for each sub-area represent the employment supply – which is higher than the need figure.

*surrounding both Bexhill and Hastings (outside the local authority) will be able to access the two towns' wider services and facilities by sustainable modes of transport. Rye and Battle will be the centre of clusters of settlements that collectively provide what most residents need for their daily lives. Rye and Battle will continue to be key transport and community hubs, with improved active and public transport, better connecting the cluster of settlements to the towns. There are opportunities for sensitive growth in these clusters alongside new facilities and services for both new and existing residents to benefit from. Based on these principles, the focus for growth will be in the following broad locations:*

- *West and North Bexhill to consolidate Bexhill as the most sustainable town, within the capacities of the existing transport network;*
- *The towns of Battle and Rye which act as key transport hubs, along with the clusters of villages based around them;*
- *Settlements on radial routes connected to the main urban areas of Bexhill and Hastings, allowing sensitive development in locations that rely on the larger towns for services and facilities;*
- *Development at Hastings Fringes, providing sensitive growth;*
- *Urban intensification and redevelopment across the district in appropriate and sustainable brownfield site locations;*
- *Sensitive development in other rural settlements of the district; and*
- *Growth along the A21 corridor, focussed within and around existing larger settlements.*

### **Summary of growth opportunities for Rother's sub-areas**

5.27. The draft Local Plan sets out five sub-areas for Rother. Figure 9 provides a summary of the growth opportunities and development potential of the five sub-areas, as. The table reflects the outcomes sought by the Development Strategy, which has been informed by identified development needs, an assessment of the overall

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sustainability of settlements<sup>12</sup> and site development opportunities identified through the HELAA<sup>13</sup>

- 5.28. The Council acknowledges that the delivery figures set out in the Local Plan are different to those 'modelled' through the scenario testing of development densities in the Sustainability Appraisal. This is because the scenario testing for the SA is undertaken for comparative purposes, to help inform the overall strategic direction for the policy approaches. The draft Local Plan (2026) figures, and site allocations underpinning them, have considered site development constraint in detail and indicative capacities of individual sites respond to this.
- 5.29. Further consideration will be given to the phasing and delivery of new development over the plan period as work on the Local Plan progresses, including considerations for the need for the use of a 'stepped trajectory' for housing.

*Figure 9: Summary of Growth Opportunities for Sub-Areas*

Sub Area – Total Growth	Housing (dwelling nos) (Existing allocations and sites with planning permission)	Housing (dwelling nos) (Proposed new allocations)	Total housing (dwelling nos)
Bexhill	1,949	2,815	4,764
Southern Rother and the Hastings Fringes	135	247	382
Battle and surrounding settlements	147	801	948
Rye and the eastern settlements	332	459	791
Northern Rother settlements	267	729	996
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2,830</b>	<b>5,051</b>	<b>7,881</b>

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<sup>12</sup> Rother's Settlement Study provides an assessment of the overall sustainability of settlements across the district.

<sup>13</sup> Figures are provided for housing and employment. Figures for retail are not included as evidence indicates there is no need for additional floorspace at the district level, however some site allocations make provision for this.

Sub Area	Employment floorspace (sqm) (Existing allocations and sites with planning permission)	Employment floorspace (sqm) (Proposed new allocations)	Total employment floorspace (sqm)
Bexhill	30,472	24,200	54,672
Southern Rother and the Hastings Fringes	1,800	3,500	5,300
Battle and surrounding settlements	12,971	0	12,971
Rye and the eastern settlements	20,481	0	20,481
Northern Rother settlements	1,200	3,150	4,350
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>66,924</b>	<b>30,850</b>	<b>97,774</b>

5.30. The Council is now inviting representations on the updated Development Strategy, and indicative development delivery figures, as part of the Regulation 18 stage public consultation on the draft Rother Local Plan 2025-2042 (2026). Feedback received to the consultation will be considered as work on the plan progresses and inform the preparation of the Regulation 19 stage ‘Proposed Submission’ version of the Local Plan.

## 6. Sustainability Appraisal

### Background

- 6.1. The Council is legally required to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) during the preparation of the Local Plan. The role of SA is to promote sustainable development as part of the plan-making process. It provides an opportunity to consider ways by which the plan can contribute to improvements in environmental, social and economic conditions, as well as a means of identifying and mitigating any potential adverse effects that the plan might otherwise have. A key part of the SA process is considering options or 'reasonable alternatives' for the plan's strategies and policy proposals.
- 6.2. SA is carried as an iterative process during the preparation of the Local Plan. Interim Sustainability Appraisal reports have been prepared for and published alongside draft Rother Local Plan 2020-2040 (2024) and draft Rother Local Plan 2025-2042 (2026) respectively.
- 6.3. The Interim Sustainability Appraisal (2026) should be referred to for further information on how the SA process has informed the preparation of the Development Strategy, including the options considered (and assessment of them) and the preferred approaches taken forward, including the Council's reasons for selecting the preferred approach. It also includes a suite of proposed measures for the Development Strategy (and other plan proposals), to help avoid or mitigate potential adverse effects on the sustainability objectives.

### Key findings

- 6.4. Overall, the SA concluded that the preferred approach for the Development Strategy, as set out in the Draft Rother Local Plan (2026), was positive overall, particularly for objectives around housing and employment. This scoring however recognised that it was unlikely that the Government's housing target would be achieved but still provides for a significant increase in housing supply.
- 6.5. There were a number of neutral scores recorded against the SA objectives, as well as a negative score in association with emissions. This reflects the tension between increasing development in the district, whilst seeking to protect the environment,

such as the National Landscape and countryside, and addressing climate change. The SA includes suggested mitigation measures in response to this.

## 7. Appendix 1: Development Strategy options summary

7.1. The following table provides a high-level summary of the options considered and assessed for the Development Strategy, including those taken forward for the ‘preferred approach’. This includes options considered during the preparation of the first Regulation 18 consultation on the draft Rother Local Plan (2024), as well as this second Regulation 18 consultation on the Draft Rother Local Plan - Development Strategy and Site Allocations (2026). The associated Sustainability Appraisal Reports should be referred to for further information on the assessment of these options including the ‘preferred approach’ for the Development Strategy.

Spatial Development Option (SDO)	Description	Focus Areas for Growth in Settlements/Areas of Built Form	Taken forward ‘preferred approach’ for Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan (April 2024)	Taken forward ‘preferred approach’ for Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan (January 2026)
<b>SDO1: Village Clusters</b>	A cluster of villages that are connected with each other to form a sustainable community. Two clusters identified centred around Rye and Battle as key transport and service hubs.	Rye Cluster – Rye, Camber, Northiam, Playden, Iden, Rye Harbour, Winchelsea, Winchelsea Beach, Peasmarsh, Broad Oak, Beckley, Northiam, Broad Oak/Brede, Udimore  Battle Cluster – Battle, Crowhurst, Sedlescombe, Catsfield, Catsfield Stream, Whatlington, Mountfield, John’s Cross, Netherfield.	Yes	Yes
<b>SDO2: Radial settlement network</b>	A radial network of smaller settlements connected to the facilities and services of Bexhill	Bexhill network: Crowhurst, Catsfield, Lunsford Cross, Normans Bay,	Yes	Yes

<b>Spatial Development Option (SDO)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Focus Areas for Growth in Settlements/Areas of Built Form</b>	<b>Taken forward 'preferred approach' for Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan (April 2024)</b>	<b>Taken forward 'preferred approach' for Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan (January 2026)</b>
connected to Bexhill and Hastings	and Hastings to create sustainable communities.	Hastings network: Hastings fringes (Rock Lane and Austen Way, Chowns Hill and Ivyhouse Lane, Westfield Lane, Bachelors Bump, Friars Hill, Woodlands Way and Parkwood Road),  Sedlescombe, Westfield, Guestling Green, Icklesham, Three Oaks, Pett and Fairlight		
<b>SDO3A:</b> Bexhill Greenfield Growth Option 1 –within the existing road network	Development on the edges of North and West Bexhill that creates new compact, connected communities, or additions to Sidley or Little Common, accessed by the existing transport network.	North and West Bexhill. The quantum of development that would be acceptable would be tested through landscape, sustainability and transport assessment. A Bexhill-wide place-making strategy would be required to successfully integrate new development.	Yes	Yes
<b>SDO3B:</b> Bexhill Greenfield Growth Option 2 –with new multi modal transport corridor	A higher level of growth in North and West Bexhill through new sustainable communities that are masterplanned, accessed and served by a new multi-modal transport corridor between the A259 and the A2691 (Haven Brook Avenue). Opportunity to remove through traffic and potentially reallocate road space	North and West Bexhill, with the development of new sustainable communities which links to and provides greater accessibility to community facilities and services in the wider Bexhill area. Mixed use development with a potential range of residential development from 1,500-5,000 dwellings	No	No

<b>Spatial Development Option (SDO)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Focus Areas for Growth in Settlements/Areas of Built Form</b>	<b>Taken forward 'preferred approach' for Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan (April 2024)</b>	<b>Taken forward 'preferred approach' for Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan (January 2026)</b>
	in Bexhill for shared and active transport.			
<b>SDO4: Sustainable Settlement Growth</b>	Prioritise new development on the edge of sustainable settlements, providing major development and extending settlement boundaries where appropriate	On the edge of settlements that score highest with regards to sustainability in the Settlement Study: Bexhill, Rye, Battle, Robertsbridge, Ticehurst, Northiam and then smaller growth for other settlements.	Yes	Yes
<b>SDO5: Hastings Fringes Urban Growth</b>	Development on the edge of Hastings in sustainable locations, which may provide opportunity for joint delivery of sites by Hastings BC and Rother DC	On sites around Hastings Fringes, accessed from The Ridge, Queensway, Hastings Road, Stonestile Lane, Ivyhouse Lane, Rock Lane, and Rye Road.	Yes	Yes
<b>SDO6: Brownfield development</b>	Development within the existing areas of built form, focusing on brownfield development at higher densities	Larger settlements, but principle applies to all settlements, but with different scales and opportunities	Yes	Yes
<b>SDO7: New rural settlement(s)</b>	Opportunity for (a) standalone settlement(s), with the provision	No specific locations have been identified, but in principle this would include around 1,000-2,000 dwellings in a new settlement.	No	No

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<b>Spatial Development Option (SDO)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Focus Areas for Growth in Settlements/Areas of Built Form</b>	<b>Taken forward 'preferred approach' for Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan (April 2024)</b>	<b>Taken forward 'preferred approach' for Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan (January 2026)</b>
	of facilities and services to ensure sustainability			
<b>SDO8:</b> Proportional growth across the District (by population)	Proportional distribution of development based on the current population of each settlement.	50% of development in and around Bexhill, with proportionate growth in Rye and Battle and the larger villages of Robertsbridge, Northiam, Ticehurst, Westfield and Burwash for example.	No	No
<b>SDO9:</b> Proportional growth by settlement form and function	Proportional distribution of development based on the order of the settlement in the network of settlements (service centre or hierarchy approach which does not take account of constraints)	Bexhill, Rye and Battle, and then lower order settlements as identified in the Settlement Study.	No	No
<b>SDO10: A21 Corridor growth, with focus on creation of a sustainable transport corridor</b>	Development along the A21 within an identified corridor of settlements, with opportunities for growth. Opportunities for sustainable travel through	The following settlement areas south to north: Hastings Fringes/The Ridge, Kent Street, Sedlescombe/Blackbrooks/Marley Lane, Whatlington, Vinehall Street, Johns Cross/Mountfield, Robertsbridge/Salehurst, Silverhill, Hurst Green, Swiftsden, and Flimwell.	Yes	No  See revised option SDO13.

<b>Spatial Development Option (SDO)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Focus Areas for Growth in Settlements/Areas of Built Form</b>	<b>Taken forward 'preferred approach' for Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan (April 2024)</b>	<b>Taken forward 'preferred approach' for Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan (January 2026)</b>
	enhanced bus services and cycle track along this corridor.			
<b>SDO11: Growth in settlements with train stations</b>	Development around train stations in settlements served by them <sup>14</sup> .	Bexhill (Cooden Beach, Collington and Central), Normans Bay, Crowhurst, Battle, Robertsbridge, Etchingham, Stonegate, Three Oaks, Rye	Yes <sup>15</sup>	Yes
<b>SDO12: Outside the AONB</b>	Development only outside the High Weald AONB, which would result in a coastal development strategy including Bexhill and Rye	Bexhill and its edges, Normans Bay, Catsfield (southern section), some areas of Hastings Fringes/Westfield Lane, Rye, Rye Harbour, Playden, Winchelsea Beach and East Guldeford	Yes	Yes
<b>SDO13 – A21 corridor growth, focussed within and</b>	Development along the A21 road corridor, focussed within and around existing settlements,	The following settlement areas Robertsbridge/Salehurst, Silverhill, Hurst Green, and Flimwell.	N/A	Yes

<sup>14</sup> This does not include places where the station is not in the settlement - i.e. Winchelsea, Stonegate and Doleham

<sup>15</sup> This option was progressed as a preferred approach at the first Regulation 18 stage, but was not accurately signposted in the Local Plan due to an editorial error.

Spatial Development Option (SDO)	Description	Focus Areas for Growth in Settlements/Areas of Built Form	Taken forward 'preferred approach' for Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan (April 2024)	Taken forward 'preferred approach' for Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan (January 2026)
around existing larger settlements.	where there is a reasonable level of local services.		This is a new, refined option considered following the first Regulation 18 consultation. See option SDO10.	
<b>SDO14 – Development within the strategic gaps</b>	Significant new development within identified strategic gaps, with new or improved linkages to the nearest settlements.	<p>The strategic gaps identified through the adopted Development and Site Allocations Local Plan (2019):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bexhill and Hastings/St Leonards – gap along the A259 corridor.</li> <li>• Crowhurst and Hastings/St Leonards – gap between the settlements, including between edge of Crowhurst to Hastings-London railway.</li> <li>• Battle and Hastings – gap between settlements, including edge of Telham and Breadsell Farm.</li> <li>• Fairlight and Hastings – boundary of Hastings borough and edge of Fairlight Cove.</li> <li>• Rye and Rye Harbour - between Rye citadel and Harbour Road industrial area/Rye Harbour village.</li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p> <p>This is a new option considered following the first Regulation 18 consultation.</p>	No

