ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL FACTSHEET

The Rother district is the eastern end of the county of East Sussex, England. The district's name is from the river Rother, which traverses north east from Ticehurst to Bodiam and Northiam; arriving at the English Channel at Rye.



The district is 197 square miles, with a coastline of 25 miles and 96,150 population in 46,950 properties (ONS 2025). One of five districts in East Sussex, the district geographically surrounds Hastings borough to the south and Wealden district is on the west and north boundaries. Wealden's rural make-up is similar to Rother's. On the east border are Shepway and Tunbridge Wells, districts in the county of Kent.



Battle Abbey

The area is steeped in history and known as '1066 Country', stems from the last invasion of England by William, Duke of Normandy following the Battle of Hastings on 14 October 1066. The battlefield site lies in Rother within the grounds of Battle Abbey in the historic market town of Battle, population 7,224 (ONS 2020).

Rye, with a population of around 4,800 (ONS 2020), is one of the Cinque Ports and an historic town of international architectural importance with its citadel comprising a mixture of medieval and Georgian houses, cobbled streets and fine public buildings.



Rye

De La Warr Pavilion



Bexhill-on-Sea, population 46,100 (ONS 2020), is the largest town. A peaceful, predominately residential resort with a late Victorian and Edwardian town centre, it is the administrative centre of the district. One of the main features of the town is the internationally renowned, modernist De La Warr Pavilion constructed in 1935. This Grade I Listed Building on the seafront is a major cultural centre with a theatre, art galleries and conference and meeting facilities.

In rural Rother the small 'bastide' town of Winchelsea, and the picturesque villages of Burwash, Northiam and Sedlescombe, amongst many, contributes to the character of the rolling Kent and Sussex Weald. The castles of Bodiam and Camber, Batemans, the former home of Rudyard Kipling, and the gardens of Great Dixter and Pashley Manor contribute to the underlying heritage which creates the character of Rother district.

Bodium Castle



Our residents value the amenities of coast and countryside. Rother is the third least densely populated district in the South East (Census 2021) and 16th most sparse district in the country and benefits from a great variety of woodland and farmland accessible through a network of rights of way. Except for the towns of Battle, Bexhill-on-Sea and Rye, the district is mainly rural with 52.3% of its population living in areas classified as rural (2011 census). 83% of the district falls within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, 7.4% is in Sites of Nature Conservation Importance and there are 45 sites of special scientific interest. The Council works hard to minimise threats to the environment through balancing development pressures, promoting heritage conservation, managing waste and recycling and reducing carbon emissions.

The age profile of the district is 14.4% under 15s (17.4% South East); 52.3% 15 to 64 (61.7% in South East and 62.9% in Great Britain) and 33.2% aged 65 and older (27.1% in East Sussex 2025). The proportion of older people has risen from 28.4% in 2011. 51% of the population are working age (18-65).

The six wards with the highest proportion over retirement age are Bexhill Collington 52.2%, Bexhill St Marks 43.9%, Bexhill Kewhurst 43.1%, Bexhill Sackville 40.2%, Southern Rother 40%, and Brede & Udimore 36.4% (2024).

The six wards with the greatest concentration of younger people are Bexhill Sidley (26% 0-19, 10.8% 20 - 29); Robertsbridge (24.1% 0-19, 7.6% 20-29); South Battle & Telham (24,4% 0-19, 8.5% 20-29); Hurst Green & Ticehurst (23.2% 0-19, 6.9% 20-29); North Battle, Netherfield & Whatlington (24.6% 0-19, 7.5% 20-29); and Bexhill Central (19.2% 0-19, 11.5% 20-29).

Median gross weekly earnings are £691 a week (ASHE 2025) for full-time employees living in the district, (£815.2 in the South East and £766.6 GB). Median means the mid-point where half earn more and half earn less. A comparison of those living in the district and those working in the district shows local jobs are paid less and comparatively fewer local high skill, high paid jobs. Rother has a higher proportion of people in part-time work 35.7% (South East 31.3%, GB 30.8%). 3.2% of 16-64 year-olds are on out of work benefits (3.1% South East and 3.9% GB).

Up to 1,050 homes and 50,000sqm of business space are under development on the north-east Bexhill land. This will give the area a much needed boost to its regeneration and it is anticipated that the north-east Bexhill business developments have the potential to support up to 3,000 new jobs by enabling local firms to expand and by attracting companies from outside the area, so creating a thriving new business community.