

CHAPTER 4 SPATIAL STRATEGY	
POLICY SS1	Spatial strategy for Wealden
Q2	As we can't say to some extent, our response is no, as a number of points are missing.
a) Do you agree?	
b) Is there an alternative strategy?	<p>Part of the Wealden strategy should enable employment space to be included within major developments of around 300 plus homes to help mitigate climate change, vehicle movements, busy road infrastructure and further use of green infrastructure. This would not only improve proximity to employment for Wealden residents, but also meet Wealden District Council's Climate Change agenda.</p> <p>It is positive to see retail growth encouraged in Wealden's town centres. This would protect the central hub of a community rather than encourage out of town retail which requires more reliance on vehicle usage, adding further pressure to the highway network and meet climate change objectives.</p>
c) Do you agree or disagree with the settlements that are identified to have development boundaries? Please set out your reasoning.	<p>We disagree.</p> <p>The map at the start of Chapter 3 (Fig. 4 Pg. 53) Wealden District Key Diagram doesn't show the High Weald landscape area accurately. If you refer to the Natural England NCA Character Profile 122 and East Sussex County Landscape Character Assessment, you will see that the High Weald landscape characteristics sweep across the upper half of Uckfield. The lower half of Uckfield falls within the Low Weald landscape area. Whereas Wealden DC's depiction of the High Weald boundary is that it falls quite far north of Uckfield. This is incorrect.</p> <p>The maps within this chapter need to be checked for consistency. Your maps don't align. The Site Allocations mapping documents in a separate wallet, identify Ringles Cross as a separate settlement, but Fig. 7 Pg. 67 (Wealden District Settlement Hierarchy) doesn't include Ringles Cross. And if it's meant to be one of the secondary villages up near Maresfield, the key on the map is incorrect. We consider Ringles Cross to be part of Uckfield (and the majority falls within the parish/town boundary) comprising of a small cluster of homes, so if you do wish to separate, you need to reflect the sizing of this cluster of properties accurately and not refer to it as a secondary village, and reference it within the table on page 65/66.</p> <p>It would be good to see policy protect existing high street uses to reduce change of use and conversion to residential. In Uckfield there appears to be no restriction to the areas in which residential conversions can occur within the High Street/Town Centre, with conversions taking place in the central section of the High Street (101 High Street) as well as The Smokehouse (upper High Street). Cannadines is also now residential and the Old Post Office building is now residential on two floors. Residential conversions should be restricted to the outer edges of the high street only.</p>
d) Do you agree with the boundaries as drawn? Should any changes be made, if so, what changes would you make to which settlement boundary and why?	<p>No. Our main observation relates to Ringles Cross. Ringles Cross is part of Uckfield Town and is being treated as a separate settlement within the Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Please refer to Wealden's own online mapping, where you will see that 70-75% of Ringles Cross falls into the parish boundary of Uckfield Town.</p>

<p>e) Anything else that needs changing?</p>	<p>We would like the High Weald National Landscape area shown on the maps within this Chapter and referenced within the draft plan to show the AONB and the total High Weald National Landscape as per NCA122 (NE508). The High Weald sweeps across the northern half of Uckfield, with sandstone outcrops evident in many parts of Uckfield and our surrounding communities as far south as Lewes Road opposite Highlands Avenue.</p> <p>We have already seen some areas of ancient woodland removed from mapping in our area. To ensure we don't fall into this mine field again, mapping needs to be double checked and clarified.</p> <p>The spatial strategy should also reference and align with NPPF 7. We have to ensure what's developed now doesn't compromise the future in terms of planning layout and connectivity. It would be better to take the time needed to plan ahead and be proactive rather than reactive.</p> <p>Comments on Draft policy as written:</p> <p>1.a) We feel this should be expanded to also address affordability. Perhaps reworded to 'meet the varying needs of our communities at the different stages in their lives, in terms of homes, and jobs'</p> <p>1c) We can't see how you can realistically keep towns and villages compact when many of the developments are on the periphery of existing development boundaries and even breach these (Owlsbury Farm). We would suggest removing the word 'compact' as this is not feasible and would challenge further para. 4.17 and the concept of the 20 minute neighbourhood. Planning officers advise themselves that developments on the periphery of development boundaries and facing away from the town are more likely to encourage resident to use services elsewhere rather than the town centre, and most of the developments in the Uckfield proposals are greater than 20 minutes walk into town e.g. approved Horsted Pond Farm site – it would easily take 35 minutes to walk into town for an able-bodied person.</p> <p>2). We would support the use of brownfield sites over agricultural land but this has not been possible in Uckfield, and we would therefore object to development where it would be detrimental to enable the expansion of existing employment land, key vistas and important local green spaces e.g. Land off Eastbourne Road, Ridgewood Farm, proposals for White House Farm.</p> <p>4). This should be expanded to reflect the need for a range of skill levels to meet the levels of population growth (school leavers to highly skilled, to retirement age). Please re-word: <i>'which will deliver growth in a range of skill levels to support school leavers, high skilled jobs and those transitioning to retirement, as well as expanding the tourism sector. Thus providing sustainable economic prosperity for the district for the future.'</i></p>
<p>f) Have they missed anything?</p>	<p>We would like to see a full review undertaken of the district's conservation areas (historic) in Wealden District, with reference to non-heritage assets.</p> <p>Existing and future tourism facilities should be seen as an employment asset to the area (hotels, caravan/camping sites need more protection and tourism), beneficial to support the district's economic prosperity alongside the push for growth in the viticulture sector.</p>

	<p>Para. 4.1(pg.54) – consideration needs to be given to further than 2040 – ensuring future sustainability of connectivity, new communities and consideration of NPPF7. An example would be the Owlsbury site. This currently attaches itself to the Uckfield bypass. It is neither connected to Uckfield nor the small settlements/hamlets of Little Horsted or Isfield. A community governance review would have to be undertaken and electoral boundary review to consider the placement of these 2,000 homes and within which boundary they fall (parish or town). Uckfield will not see the CIL contributions regardless of the residents utilising the service centre of Uckfield adjacent.</p> <p>Para 4.2 (pg. 54) there is already a high dependence on cars/vehicles in Wealden District due to the rural character of the district and its topography. By developing further away from existing towns dependency on vehicles will increase and at present, none of these major developments are providing local, medical, sport and community facilities. Developers should build a shop and provide a sum to start up their business. If a village has a local store or farm shop, developer should contribute a sum into that business to improve its longevity and if necessary, expansion.</p> <p>Para 4.7 (pg. 54) Other than para. 4.12, often reference here and within the wider plan to the High Weald AONB area, but not the wider High Weald Landscape character profile which is evident as mentioned previously on Lewes Road, Uckfield, and partially on the Ridgewood Farm site.</p> <p>Para 4.10 (pg. 55) says that the draft spatial strategy seeks to limit growth in sustainable settlements that are located within or washed over by the High Weald National Landscape yet, the proposed White House Farm, and approved Mockbeggars Farm are in the Natural England’s High Weald NCA 122 character profile area, as with sites identified for Buxted Parish. Contradictory.</p>
POLICY SS2	Provision of homes
Q3 a) Do you agree?	No, we do not agree.
b) Anything else that needs changing?	<p>A number of the sites listed, have not been previously discussed as being developed to the scale detailed within the draft Local Plan. For example:</p> <p>Land at Springfield, Lewes Road was first mentioned as being built to approx. 9 homes with no affordable. Now it is being listed as 15 units in the draft local Plan.</p> <p>Land at Selby Road, Uckfield is owned by Uckfield Town Council, and as previously advised, Uckfield Town Council does not wish to develop this land, and hasn’t done for the past eight to nine years (at least two terms of office).</p> <p>The proposed major application for White House Farm completely contradicts key points suggested that need balancing elsewhere in the draft plan – Chapter 4 (para. 4.12 – High Weald National Landscape Profile area) and Chapter 11 Visitor Accommodation (para. 11.64) retention of visitor accommodation. The location of White House Farm is pivotal within the green corridor of high weald landscape characteristics across the northern section of Uckfield.</p> <p>The 100 homes proposed south of Victoria Pleasure Ground, is poor forward planning. Sitting adjacent to an existing sports ground, this would have been prime site for expanding the town’s sports and leisure provision and offer to the town’s population growth and wider catchment area.</p>

	<p>The figure shown, we guess does not include Ringles Cross, and does not allow for Owlsbury Farm, which does not appear to feature in the Local Plan allocated dwellings (net).</p> <p>The maps within the document could also be misleading on first glance as the map on page 73 (fig. 9 housing allocations) is only presenting the allocations within the local plan period and does not incorporate the already committed dwellings.</p> <p>It should also be reminded, that Uckfield is regularly recorded in planning documentation as being a key service centre for the neighbouring villages and settlements so the pressure and impact on highway, utilities and day to day infrastructure (education, medical care, sports, leisure, community) will be further exacerbated.</p> <p>For the towns and villages in north Wealden, the plan is proposing the north takes 7,542 of the 15,729 total houses, a fraction under half. Uckfield gets the majority of this proportion with 1,993 houses on 11 sites of which 941 houses already have permission, 861 are on allocated sites and 191 are windfalls.</p> <p>There is a great expectation that these 2,000 homes plus the further development of Owlsbury Farm (2,000) can be supported by the existing facilities of Uckfield Town – a small market town, severely restricted physically by its linear highway layout, a railway line and flood plain.</p>
<p>c) Have they missed anything?</p>	<p>The importance of spreading the load across the district.</p> <p>Is there a reason why we don't have our own Housing Market Assessment area? We are the largest district in East Sussex and similar in size to Mid Sussex DC. Why is this?</p> <p>The South Downs National Park is not subject to the standard method. To what extent does the weighting of the High Weald AONB and Pevensey Levels have an impact on build out in Wealden?</p> <p>In accordance with the 2016/17 Annual Planning Monitoring report, less than 50% of developments have been on brownfield sites. There is an acute need for employment space, and the need to develop brownfield land before greenfield.</p> <p>The proposed Owlsbury Farm development of 2,000 homes and infrastructure is not accounted for in the site allocation figures.</p> <p>Flood risk seems to have been taken into account and given high weighting against development along the coastline, particularly around the urban areas of Eastbourne, but where is there consideration for building on floodplains such as Uckfield. The water table in New Town is already so high that in heavy periods of rainfall such as winter 2023/24, Uckfield Town Council owned Foresters hall is impacted by water levels. Snatts Road Cemetery at the north of the town is impacted by a high water table. Much of the woodland adjacent to New Road and Ridgewood Village Hall Car Park, is waterlogged throughout the autumn/winter. The rear of the new development off Mallards Drive (Persimmons) is a fast running river at periods of high river flow. These locations are not immediately adjacent to the river Uck, but demonstrate the power of water around Uckfield. This shouldn't be ignored.</p>

	Based on the calculations required, the draft Local Plan shows a shortfall of housebuilding of up to 4,000 homes in the plan period. Is this why this and the High Weald landscape characteristics of Uckfield are being omitted from the plan?
Q4 Do you have any comments at this stage in relation to the site at Land at West of Uckfield – Owlsbury?	<p><u>Environmental</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looks like there would only be pedestrian access on the western side of the SANGs from Buckham Hill – in reality seeing the experience of Horsted Green and the size of the car park there, this may need to be reconsidered; - We would expect the buffers to be greater than the recommendations in the NPPF for the ancient woodlands and green corridors; <p><u>Infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - important that a site of this scale considers all other forms of infrastructure – such as allotment space, cemetery space, sports facilities which see a mix of grass football pitches and hybrid; - we would welcome thorough forward planning for education provision; <p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the design and density of properties on the Ridgewood Place site is poor, and would request that the densities and character/design of properties reflect the local area, and topography of the site; - must meet affordable housing ratio, with a mix of social rented, private rented and shared ownership with consideration of local residents at different stages in their life – starter flats/homes, young families, through to larger families, and retirement; - adequate parking provision for houses and on-street for visitors and deliveries; <p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - would prefer an element of employment space to be incorporated within the site; - Horsted Place, and constraints around listed and heritage/non-heritage assets in the area need to be factored in appropriately; - need to consider current impact on Uckfield sewage treatment works, and increasing issue with flies all year round;
POLICY SS3	Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Showpeople Accommodation needs
POLICY SS4	Retail provision and town centres
Q6 a) Do you agree?	Overall, we agree with the policy.
b) Anything else that needs changing?	Yes, change the policy by placing more focus on sustainability.
c) Have they missed anything?	<p>The need to encourage the provision of space for local skills, artists, crafts, studios and galleries.</p> <p>Concentrate on improving town centres – out of town retail parks should be resisted as history has proven that they contribute to the loss of the High Street retail and jobs. An example of this would be Margate – the town centre is struggling, with the majority of retail now closed down or moved out to the out of town retail park.</p>

	<p>Uckfield Town Centre would benefit from having a focal point in the centre that is more attractive and create a destination in itself. Libraries should be utilised to their fullest extent. They are often the perfect venue for community activities and hubs.</p> <p>The Draft Local Plan needs to emphasis further the importance of farmers markets and encouragement for residents to shop local, to reduce vehicular movements and meet climate change objectives.</p> <p>Towns must retain personal banking on the High Streets, to be available to all, and in a local branch. Driving up to 30 minutes to the nearest bank is not good for the environment or climate change and does not support small business enterprises, as well as the retail and hospitality sector who still take cash from customers.</p> <p>We would echo the comments of Mrs Debra Channon relating to the Protection of Rural Character and Biodiversity: The policy may not adequately address the need to protect Wealden’s rural character and biodiversity. Future employment space should be planned to minimize impact on the countryside, protect green spaces, and preserve habitats. Strategies for achieving this include focusing development in already urbanized areas and employing landscape-sensitive design that integrates new buildings into the natural and built environment seamlessly. Promotion of Mixed-use Developments: Incorporating mixed-use developments can create more vibrant, integrated communities where living, working, and recreational spaces are in close proximity. This approach can reduce the need for long commutes, support local businesses, and provide a more balanced and resilient economic landscape. Encouraging Innovation and Technology: The policy might overlook the potential for fostering innovation and technology-based industries. By including provisions to support sectors such as information technology, renewable energy, and green technologies, Wealden can position itself as a leader in emerging industries that promise growth and sustainability. To include these considerations, Policy SS4 should be revised to explicitly address sustainability, infrastructure capacity, and the protection of Wealden’s unique environmental and social fabric. Additionally, incorporating guidelines for mixed-use developments and focusing on sectors that offer sustainable and innovative employment opportunities will make the policy more robust and forward-looking.</p>
POLICY SS5	Provision of employment floorspace
Q7 a) Do you agree?	No because we agree with 1d) and 1e) but not 1a).
b) Anything else that needs changing?	<p>Agree with 1d) for the reasons below: Many of the existing business units and employment spaces in Wealden DC are no longer adequate, particularly in Uckfield. We have been advised by local businesses, that the quality of the existing units needs to be improved, they need to be easily accessible with improved facilities, and a range of sizes to meet the varying needs of local businesses seeking to expand as well as being attractive to larger regional or UK wide companies. Agree with 1e) – diversification of agricultural land by farmers to welcome the creative industries, would be supported, as well seeking to support the further expansion of tourism in Wealden.</p> <p>We do not agree with 1a) – the proposed site allocations listed in Policy SS6 are limited as is the proposed site at Figure 12, pg. 85. The allocation of employment space should be considered in all developments over 300 residential units, not just large-scale sites like Ashdown Business Park, or Lower Dicker/Golden Cross off the A22 bypass.</p>

c) Have they missed anything?	As above.
POLICY SS6	Strategic employment allocations
Q8 a) Do you agree?	No.
b) Anything else that needs changing?	We feel the proposed sites are limited, with next to no provision in the upper half of the district. Accessibility and connectivity is key to attract medium sized and large sized businesses to locate in this area of the South East. Access is limited in the central section of Wealden District. Accessibility by road, rail and air would be greater at the northern part of the district, with the ability to access either the A22 towards London, M23 to reach Gatwick/Crawley Manor Royal, or nearer Tunbridge Wells to access the A21 north. There would also be less risk of flooding.
c) Have they missed anything?	We feel the proposed sites are limited, with next to no provision in the upper half of the district. Accessibility and connectivity is key to attract medium sized and large sized businesses to locate in this area of the South East. Access is limited in the central section of Wealden District. Accessibility by road, rail and air would be greater at the northern part of the district, with the ability to access either the A22 towards London, M23 to reach Gatwick/Crawley Manor Royal, or nearer Tunbridge Wells to access the A21 north. There would also be less risk of flooding.
Q9 Do you have any comments at this stage in relation to the site at Ashdown Business Park, Maresfield?	<p>It appears the plans are already in place, and public consultation is really just a means to tell residents that ‘this is what is happening.’ The strategy for employment isn’t robust enough, if the flood risk issue is not addressed. With the site being in flood zone 3 high risk, businesses may struggle to get insurance and this would reduce the likelihood of companies securing tenure in this location.</p> <p>As we have said previously, the site known as land of Eastbourne Road, could have been a suitable extension of Ridgewood Industrial estate and allowing this to be redeveloped for residential use only, was poorly planned.</p> <p>Alternative sites need to be considered in this northern half of the district. If the Ashdown Business Park is unable to expand due to flood risk. The Bellbrook estate is struggling because of limited parking, and flood risk, the age and size of the existing units and all other greenfield sites on the periphery of Uckfield are seen as prime real estate for housing, opportunities have become limited. Don’t put all the district’s eggs in one basket!</p> <p>We need to ensure there are a variety of site allocations from small to large, not just large scale industrial estates. This would enable smaller local businesses to expand and retain their business in the Wealden economy and deliver what would be more successful in Wealden District, when connectivity is limited with poor travel times and distances to dual carriageways, and motorways.</p>
POLICY SS7	Ensuring comprehensive development and housing delivery
Q10 a) Do you agree?	Yes, we would agree.
b) Anything else that needs changing?	No.
c) Have they missed anything?	Masterplans and design codes are critical to successfully integrate both residential and employment sites into existing communities. But, our only concern, relates to 1c. By allowing the sub-division of sites, would there be a risk that developers/agents would seek to reduce

	the affordable housing ratios. A condition would be welcome on developers to ensure that the affordable housing ratio/mix agreed at the point of planning approval, be maintained.
POLICY SS8	Responding to the climate crisis
Q11	We would largely agree with the points included, but there are still a few points for consideration.
a) Do you agree?	
b) Do you feel the strategic policy covers the key issues we need to address in our approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation	<p>We feel some of the policies contradict the proposals to mitigate climate change, particularly where sites are allocated on or over existing development boundaries. This will naturally create an increase in vehicle use.</p> <p>We are pleased to see the policy include the incorporation of measures in planning applications to the units developed, and to the reference to 'the Weald to Waves Nature Recovery Corridor' in Policy SS8 2h).</p>
c) Anything else that needs changing?	Is reference to 'nationally binding targets' concrete enough? What if these targets are watered down in the future?
d) Have they missed anything?	<p>Reference should be made to 'Wealden's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan' in this policy, to direct them specifically to the further intentions of the district.</p> <p>Reference needs to be included to measures that sustain and improve biodiversity (this is alluded to, but not specifically mentioned)</p> <p>The creation of neighbourhoods that minimise need for unnecessary car journeys needs to be strengthened in 2j).</p>
POLICY SS9	Health, wellbeing and quality of life
Q12	We welcome the policy, particularly 2a) and 2d).
a) Do you agree?	
b) Do you agree with the threshold levels set out within the policy for undertaking a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) in the Wealden context?	-
c) If disagree, what levels should it be?	-
d) Have they missed anything?	<p>1). How will this be implemented in practice? Often at outline planning stages community hubs, allotment space, etc is allocated but by the time the application gets to reserved matters or is built out these have been lost to allow for more houses to be built to offset lost profit or limited viability for the developers. For example, allotments lost in the Land at Mockbeggars planning application, the community building/space has been lost in Phase 2 - 750 at Ridgewood Place. In the end all developers incorporate is the bare minimum - a small children's play area. What penalties could be put into place if the original planned outcomes were not achieved?</p> <p>2). Where does the extra 'green space' allocation come from? Is this to be linked to SANGS or new green space? Green spaces are being used up for development. Space for allotments, orchards and community growing are already very limited in Uckfield, where is the extra space for these going to come from to support 2g). We have been approached by the 'We Grow' initiative in Forest Row, and already struggling to find a suitable space in the existing landscape of the town, for risk of vulnerability, access, flooding etc.</p> <p>3). Cycling is an issue in Uckfield. The steep inclines throughout the area do not encourage cycling. Our road systems are already very congested and dangerous for cyclists, the state of road repair is also dangerous for cyclists. To mitigate this, cycle routes would in essence</p>

	<p>need to go through ancient woodland which is not acceptable. More foresight is needed on utilising existing and level highway verges such as the A22, Bell Farm Road, Eastbourne Road, Coopers Green Road for example.</p> <p>4). Building developments on the outskirts of Uckfield for example Ridgewood place have already been found to cause issues with community integration and cohesion with new residents experiencing difficulties in learning of what's happening in the town, and limited communication with the town's facilities and businesses. This matter has also been raised with the agents for the proposed Owlsbury Farm site as new residents will avoid the town centre of Uckfield, and travel up to the Ashdown Business Park.</p> <p>5). Parking in Town Centre is now at capacity and accessing local services by car and parking will become increasingly challenging with the houses proposed. We perfectly understand that residents and visitors should be encouraged to use other means of transport, such as public transport, walking or cycling, but the facilities are not currently present to support this.</p> <p>6). Increased vehicle congestion especially to the south of Uckfield will not improve air quality. Water pollution in our streams and rivers will be increased by the increase of SuDs being fed into the water courses, leading to the River Uck.</p> <p>7). People choose to live in and move to a rural location to improve their quality of life, health and well-being. The urbanisation of the area is in direct contrast to the policy SS9.</p>
<p>e) Anything else that needs changing?</p>	<p>Should reference be made in this policy to policies HO1, and HO2 – in terms of housing mix, and density. For example Uckfield has an incredibly low number of level access properties such as bungalows and apartments. This limits options for those living with physical and visual impairments, and those moving into retirement age who may wish to downsize or consider their future options for housing. Independence remains important to people, and the increasing demand on UK Government Disabled Facilities Grant funding and Better Care Fund year on year in this area, demonstrates the impact of an ageing population, in an area of high property prices and limited size and mix of stock. By encouraging developers to create a better variety of units to meet all age groups and needs from the point of designing a new community/site, will support residents in Wealden District into the future. Let's not just think to 2040 but beyond.</p>
<p>POLICY SS10</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure</p>
<p>Q13 a) Do you agree?</p>	<p>No improvements needed to strengthen the policy framework around conservation, restoration and protection as identified below.</p>
<p>b) Do you feel the strategic policy covers the key issues we need to address in our approach to the retention, protection, enhancement and creation of green infrastructure?</p>	
<p>c) Anything else that needs changing?</p>	<p>Page 95 - should refer to Green and Blue infrastructure as per your vision. Para. 4.108 - reference should be made to NPPF para. 185 Do the plan policies cross reference the SDG goals on page 15 and are they implemented in the plan? Is there a table where these are cross referenced to each policy?</p>

	<p>Policy should also refer to other evidence based documents produced by Natural England and other key authorities, for balance to the materials provided. Within these policies, material evidence and other opportunities are included and identified in the NCA 122, NCA 121 and NCA 124. Using evidence in national documents and material considerations in sustainability assessments / site allocations</p> <p>National Character Area 122 : High Weald National Character Area 121 : Low Weald National Character Area 124 : Pevensey High Weald Management Plan and the map of NCA122 High Weald in addition, as per GI 2017 Map (zone 6 and NC122 map on pdf NCA122), will be updated to the GI infrastructure policies as a material consideration incorporating ALL the High Weald NCA 122 transition boundary to the Low Weald.</p> <p>Green to include woodland DEFRA Keepers of Our Time May 2022 species and woodlands in the protection hierarchy Woodland Trust Sites with high ecological value will be avoided Page 97 - 3. Change the word “will” to “may” a) and k) and key to add the words RECOVERY AND RESTORATION (I think this is the phase in blog by chair of NE)</p>
<p>d) Have they missed anything?</p>	<p>Green and Blue Infrastructure is recognised as important to the emerging policy. The Natural England Nature Recovery Network (NRN) policy is emerging which proposes to allocate 500,000ha in addition to designated areas and we propose that these are added as buffers around all our Wealden habitats. In addition, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) across the UK is emerging, halting species decline by 2030 in legislation and the environmental commitment . Wealden will therefore have a significant part to play in this recovery linking Ashdown Forest, SDNP, Pevensey etc to all the designated sites across Wealden.</p> <p>LNRS national policy objectives are creating nature recovery for wildlife, biodiversity, ecology and habitat corridors which should all be recognised in the Reg.19 Local plan alongside building. This research is ongoing and likely to be confirmed between reg 18 and reg 19 by ESCC Designated authority, or DEFRA or Natural England if other priority areas emerge between reg 18 and 19 therefore the option must remain open that as this emerges the plan in Wealden will need to consider new evidence and change site selections considered alongside new / emerging new policy directives.</p> <p>Reference should be made to Natural England Nature Recovery Network (NRN) and associated corridors / landscape led across Wealden; Natural England Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and habitat maps (found on ArcGIS priority habitats inventory (PHI) and MAGIC MAPS) linking corridors will be included in reg.19 (including connecting designated areas across Wealden and the maps of LWS and LGS from SxBRC included).</p> <p>Emerging Policies should inform site selection in this consultation and withdrawn where wildlife corridors and habitat protection are required to meet NRN/LNRS or other important corridors as evidence bases grow. Kent evidenced policy informs material issues such as priority habitats ahead of Sussex but relates to Wealden priority habitats Support and inclusion of Sussex corridors in the plan such as Weald to Waves https://www.wealdtowaves.co.uk/ Add a corridor from Ashdown Forest to link to Pevensey Levels</p>

Sussex Wildlife Trust Wilder Ouse.
Forestry Commission - National Forestry Inventory (connect these corridors) and other Nature Reserves supporting functional connecting between all these types of habitats and conserve / protect the BOA Biodiversity Opportunity areas.
Recognise and Strengthen policy to protect designated Priority Habitats and increase the NRN network in Wealden (NRN extends buffers around existing designated areas)
The Green Infrastructure natural environment will include the Forestry Commission National Forestry Inventory as per MAGIC maps, and protect the mapped Woodland Improvement Habitat and High Spatial Biodiversity Environment.
Water Framework Directive and Wealden Blue infrastructure will use the surface water and groundwater maps to implement / protect Water Framework Directive rivers and streams from ground and surface water contamination or pollution, WFD directive will include rivers and streams restored to good and improving ecological condition. Example notes Catchment Based Approach
Water Policy extended. The main Rivers of Wealden, and Pevensy RAMSAR will be restored to good ecological condition as the lifetime of the plan extends over a considerable period of time. To include a Rivers Trust catchment based approach.
Uckfield request to have 30% of parish protected green and blue space meeting the Uckfield Council Vision and National objective <https://naturalengland.blog.gov.uk/2023/12/11/30-by-30-a-boost-for-nature-recovery/> This could apply to each parish in Wealden as an Objective of Green Infrastructure?
Wealden and the New Marine Conservation area - how is that restored in Wealden policy supporting its initiative ?
Green Infrastructure will add protection, restoration and conservation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and extend their buffers
NPPF 15 Conserving and Enhancing the natural environment (need to add words “ restoring and nature recovery”), and in particular words from para. 185 and protection of woodland, trees, hedgerows and priority habitats etc supported fully in Green and Blue infrastructure Farming.
Databases of species records should also be considered in addition surveys e.g. Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre and NBN Atlas or other wildlife databases in evidence of local knowledge in addition to environment impact assessments, and the habitats of principal important and species of principal importance to be used to identify priority in the plan making process, meeting NPPF 2.8 environment and NPPF 15, and supporting NRN and LNRS strategies.
Sites supporting Notable Sussex and Rare species should be afforded more protection in the plan making process including IUCN Red Listed species in Wealden and UK noted species on the government database now known as HPI / SPI nationally important species
RIGS are now known as Local Geological Sites for earth science (Uckfield MAP)
GEODiversity should receive more protection in the plan and NCA122 High Weald Geodiversity and protection / conservation and as per maps designated and non - designated geodiversity / LGS SxBRC
The LNRS and NRN are not identified on the suggested plan maps hence working out where to add this (it may fit in Natural Environment).
NPPF 185 words “Habitats and biodiversity
185. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
(a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity 65 ; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation 66 ; and
(b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.”

Supporting Text Page 97 4.110

The above applies. Adding Green and Blue - trees, woods, rivers, streams, all the natural resources and policies.

To ADD priority objectives to halt species decline before 2030 and Wealden's part to play in this national imperative.

Include the emerging policy directives of Natural England, DEFRA, Environment agency where they apply.

DEFRA MAGIC and other arcGIS mapping tools for the natural environment and habitats apply to supporting text such as the National Forestry Inventory